

OMMABI

PERFORMANCE GROUP

BIM

COMMUNITY, INNER PEACE AND WELLBEING

BrainLink
Services Limited

peacemusic
meditations

Photography—Marcus Thomson
Funding—BrainLink Services, Auspice—Brain Injury Matters Inc
Facilitator & Consultant—Jarek Czechowicz, Peace Music Meditations
Project Worker—Lyn Macdonald, Community, Inner Peace and Wellbeing

OMABI

In 2004 spiritual musician and meditation teacher Jarek Czechowicz was presenting his programs at the Augustine Centre in Melbourne and was talking with friends about bringing some of his work to the community sector to promote wellbeing. Among the many participants in Jarek's programs was a man who had an acquired brain injury and a woman who was going through nine months of chemotherapy. During that period Lyn Macdonald a grief counsellor and project worker from Brain Injury Matters Inc (BIM) began attending Jarek's events.

For some years Lyn had struggled with a neurological disorder caused by vitamin B deficiency. She noticed Jarek's presentation had a very calming and energising effect on people. It was not religious and was not promising cures, but it had a positive effect in increasing a sense of wellbeing. It occurred to Lyn that people with an acquired brain injury might find this type of program beneficial. Jarek soon received an invitation to present his work at the annual general meeting of Brain Injury Matters.

It wasn't long before Lyn championed the idea of offering this service more regularly to members of BIM, and the BIM committee agreed to host a series of sessions led by Jarek. These soon blossomed into a number of successful major projects that attracted funding from local government and non-government organisations. The most recent project is OMABI, an all-abilities music performance group comprised mainly of people with an ABI.

OMABI members initially attended interviews with Lyn to join the group. A key consideration was their ability and willingness to work together, as well as demonstrating relevant skills and a desire to perform. In addition to those initial interviews Lyn's project work included seeking funding through grant writing, liaising with venues, providing refreshments, coordinating attendance, catering for special needs, as well as performing in the group.

The name OMABI was coined by Jarek and was created by joining the ancient meditation mantra OM with the acronym ABI. Jarek's program for OMABI was designed intuitively to encourage maximum group participation. In addition to his facilitation and musical direction, he has provided advice and expertise in the areas of writing, editing, audio, graphic design, information technology and event management.

During the 18 sessions leading up to their first performance Jarek guided OMABI members through meditation, relaxation and creative practices to assist in the development of their skills. He also encouraged the group to become progressively more involved in the creative process.

After the first two sessions Jarek composed a song titled 'The Dream' and invited group members to be involved in its arrangement. Consequently a poem by OMABI member Kelvin Thomas was included. The group was later introduced to improvisation. As a result OMABI member Jacqueline Roussel created the seed for the theme of a second song titled 'Footsteps in The Sea'. Words from Kelvin's poem 'God Works In Mysterious Ways' were used for the lyrics and the title. Jarek then added additional melodies, harmonies and guided the process of musical arrangement.

A third song titled Magic is predominantly based in improvisation and draws its inspiration from a poem penned by OMABI member Amanda Gordon-Young. This song, and the other songs, include the talents of blind musician Ross De Vent who plays the piano with one hand. They also occasionally include vocalist Sarah Mainwaring whenever she is able to attend.

OMABI members have had to overcome significant personal challenges to bring this music to you, including re-learning certain skills that others take for granted. After attending a few sessions as an observer Jacques Roussel said "The progress is amazing!". Liz Tunnecliffe, Communications and Media Adviser for the Transport Accident Commission described OMABI as, "...an inspirational group who have a wonderful story unfolding."

OMABI PERFORMERS: Jacqueline Roussel (vocals), Kelvin Thomas (poetry), Ross de Vent (piano & vocals), Amanda Gordon-Young: (poetry & vocals), Lyn Macdonald (flute, percussion & vocals), Sarah Mainwaring (vocals)

PROJECT WORKER: Lyn Macdonald (Community, Inner Peace and Wellbeing)

To attend a private OMABI session as a guest, or to book OMABI for a performance, or to provide sponsorship to sustain OMABI please contact Lyn Macdonald on (03) 96397222 or 0418 811 143

FACILITATOR & CONSULTANT: Jarek Czechowicz (Peace Music Meditations)

Organisations wishing to provide meditation and/or creative team-building programs for their staff or clients can contact Jarek Czechowicz on 03 9754 8741 or 0411 639 081.

SPONSORS: Funded by BrainLink Services and presented under the auspices of Brain Injury Matters Inc.



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