

Allegretto

allegretto | ali gretol Music adjective & adverb (esp. as a direction) at a fairly brisk tempo.



challenging preconceptions
www.art-beyond-belief.com

First quarter report:

August 2007



Art Beyond Belief's pilot project Music into Upton took live music into the geriatric wards of Slough's Upton Hospital during the first half of 2006. The project, jointly funded by the Trusthouse Charitable Trust and Arts Council England was a success from the start. Originally planned for four wards, within the first month, musician Frank Doherty was in demand by the day hospital too. Rearranging of the timetable enabled Frank to spend time with the day hospital, a move which was applauded by staff and patients alike as "enlightened" and "a huge social advance".

It was while Frank was playing at the day hospital that Senior Physiotherapist Catherine Bray noticed an improvement in the walking ability of some patients suffering from Parkinson's Disease. "It really is very interesting. Walking patients with the parallel bars is definitely different when the music is playing. It makes for a social interaction rather than a purely medical one. It has led me to think that patients with Parkinson's could benefit from an anticipatory musician. They have problems initiating their gait, and with the rhythm and fluency of their gait. You couldn't do it with recorded music, but with live music ...I would love

Catherine Bray with Harold Aubrey Powell and Frank Doherty during one of the first sessions. Care taken to look out for potential accidents and falls means that some attention is diverted from patient monitoring. Art Beyond Belief's now established use of video for monitoring projects means that post sessional assessments can be made using video footage.

the opportunity to try it." Thanks to the Trusthouse Charitable Trust, Catherine is making this dream come true. After lots of reorganising of the hospital, and a winter not knowing whether there would still be a day hospital or

not due to NHS – PCT reshuffles and renames, the project is now well and truly on course. "The last six months have not been easy for us. Half of the hospital is to be knocked down, as the site is re-developed. We're still keeping





the Geriatric Wards, but they've all had to be moved to a different part of the building. We've now got a new physio department, which is really lovely." Early in the year came news that Slough's acute hospital, at Wexham Park, would be closing its Physiotherapy department for Parkinson's patients. The team at Upton were quick to make their own facility available and develop a programme especially for these patients. Working again with Art Beyond Belief, the new programme was able to incorporate the anticipatory musician, and has proved again that music has the power,

quite literally, to move people. Before the musical part of the programme started, it was decided to run a test session involving Frank Doherty, and members of staff, who were to be seen walking up and down at various turns of speed. With a "test course" set up, the walking in earnest started, and soon it was decided to bring in a real patient. So successful was the trial, that music was incorporated from the very start, to the delight of both patients and staff. The new programme started in July, and runs with each group of patients for a six week period. After a two week break, the next group

The brand new physiotherapy unit at Upton Hospital, together with assorted patients, all of whom suffer from Parkinson's Disease. Frank finds that his Irish jigs seem to transcend any cultural barriers. The staff respond well too, and all agree that it's an excellent project

starts its course. The music part of the programme is being managed by Art Beyond Belief, who have named the project Allegretto (not too quickly, but at a fairly brisk pace). Art Beyond Belief have developed a reputation over the past two and a half years for their novel use of new technology, both in the areas of art, and in the important area of project management. With Catherine having to look out for the patient's wellbeing as paramount, it is not always possible for her to see the small differences that walking to the music can make. "Of course, it's easy to see the big changes, the improved stride, the more determined gait, but there are subtleties that I can miss, and being able to go over the session on my computer is an invaluable tool."

The patients too, are delighted. "I feel that I walk better" said Marina after a session that had clearly demonstrated a more determined pace and command of direction. "I think it could be that when the music is being played, you forget your troubles, forget that you're ill."

Jill Monk drives her husband Ron to the sessions at Upton, and sits in the ward while Ron goes through his physiotherapy. "It is amazing", she says "I can see the difference the music makes to him."

