

Phrased & Confused

Which came first, the Music or the Words?

Commission information for artists

Phrased & Confused @ Summer Sundae Weekender
8 - 10 August 2008

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1. The overview

Which came first - the music or the words? Phrased & Confused (www.phrasedandconfused.co.uk) explores the creative common ground between lyrics and spoken word.

We're looking to commission four poets and spoken word artists interested in creating and performing new work for our latest Phrased & Confused outing - the Phrased & Confused Tent at the Summer Sundae Weekender, a cracking festival which takes place in Leicester 8-10 August. Each commission is worth £1000.

2. Phrased & Confused: what it is and what the story has been so far

Phrased and Confused was born out of the question 'Which would you save if your house was on fire? Your books or your records?' We love music and poetry and were convinced that there were people like us all around the country who love poetry, but have never been to a reading in their lives. So we thought that we'd have a go at putting on live literature events that had all you would expect from a music gig - great sound, good lights and a really relaxed environment. Our aim from the outset has been to introduce music fans to high quality spoken word, and to build audiences for spoken word around the country.

To date, we've put together two national Phrased & Confused tours, featuring poets, songwriters and musicians who were interested in the P&C ethos - including Patrick Neate, Charlie Dark, Emma Pollock, Brendan Cleary and Chris TT. With the spotlight on the words poets turned up the beats and songwriters presented their writing talents as words took flight from the page to the stage.

It seems to have worked too. Audience research shows how successfully the Phrased & Confused format does attract music fans to spoken word: 37% of our audiences at the last tour hadn't been to a spoken word event in the previous year, but 42% had attended 1-10 live music gigs in same period, and a whopping 92% of them had attended between 11 and 50 gigs. The majority of them said they came for the 'mix of live music and words', and only 18% said 'the line up' was what made them come, suggesting that they trust us and are happy to experiment.

Alongside the last tour, we also ran a scheme which supported emerging producers to develop the skills and knowledge they need to put on spoken word events, hoping to



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increase the number of spoken word gigs there are for artists and audiences around the country, and to contribute to the development of a spoken word touring circuit.

You can find out about all of this by going to www.phrasedandconfused.co.uk/2006

3. This year's outing at The Summer Sundae Weekender

This year we're taking Phrased & Confused to Leicester's Summer Sundae Weekender, where our Phrased & Confused tent will feature around 20 hours of spoken word and music programming over three days.

Summer Sundae Weekender (www.summersundae.com), now in its seventh year, is a quality boutique festival with a capacity of 6000. It values its independence and has a reputation for putting together really creative line ups, featuring some of the UK and world's biggest names, and for spotting tomorrow's talent before the rest of the country has even got out of bed in the morning. It has a long-standing partnership with BBC 6Music, and was named as Best Small Festival at UK Festival Awards 2006. In addition to its music programme, the festival has had a comedy tent for the past couple of years, programmed by Leicester Comedy Festival (the UK's longest running comedy festival!), which has proved massively popular amongst audiences. All in all, it's a little bit cheeky.

We've been plotting the Phrased & Confused tent with the Summer Sundae team since last year. Given what the festival's about, and that it's programmed by - and attended by - people who are real music fans, it's the natural place for us to spread our Phrased & Confused wings. Over the weekend we're expecting to programme around 20 artists, and our line up will feature poets, songwriters, singers, MCs, plus some ideas we're still developing for a poetry/graffiti wall, a spoken word quiz, a poetry collection etc, as well as four new commissioned works.

We're expecting around 1500 people to visit the tent and take in some spoken word - probably for the first time ever. And to keep those festival memories intact, and help them stay in touch with the artists they see, we'll be dishing out Phrased & Confused memory sticks and fanzines, containing information about artists and bite-sized articles about the national scene.

4. Our festival commissions

So, on to the commissions... This is the first time we've formally commissioned artists to create new work for Phrased & Confused. On previous tours, artists did work up some new ideas - sometimes on their own, sometimes together working on each other's pieces -



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while they were on the road. Typically though it took them till the end of the tour to finally get to where they wanted to. So, what we wanted to do with our festival outing was to give four artists we really rate the chance to explore the question 'Which came first - the music or the words?', and to create new work which played with the connections - and differences - between poetry and lyrics, and the conventions attached to their presentation.

We hope these commissions will give artists the chance to create new material which will 'speak to' music fans, opening up a new audience to them along the way. We're looking to commission work which will look at home in an independent music festival environment, but which will also have the potential to tour the country, or feel equally at ease in another festival contexts too. We have plans, you see, to take Phrased & Confused to more festivals next year, and we'd like to give our commissioned artists the chance to take their words to more people. Plus, we reckon the commissions might help our selected artists to work up material that they could take on tour. We like to think ahead...

The way you respond to the commission is entirely up to you. We have just one real specification - if you are commissioned we'll be looking for you to create at least 15 minutes of new material, and to perform at least once over the period of the festival. As part of the development process, our commissioned artists will also expect you to workshop ideas with each other and with Stuart Silver, of Perrier Award-winning duo, Noble and Silver.

5. The deal for commissioned artists

We want to commission four artists, each of whom will get the following as part of their commission:

- A commissioning fee of £1000
- One weekend pass for you and one for a guest, plus passes for any artists working with you on the commission
- Camping space in the artist field at the festival
- Travel expenses to and from the festival and to the creative workshop day in London
- A stand-alone video of your commissioned festival performance for you to use in your own promotional activity after the festival

We'll expect each of our commissioned artists to:



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- Create at least 15 minutes of new material, to be performed at least once during the three days of the Summer Sundae festival
- Attend the creative workshop day in London on 23 July 2008
- Provide (free of charge) one MP3 track, licensed to the hub for distribution via the Phrased & Confused memory stick and Phrased & Confused site
- Contribute to Phrased & Confused's digital presence, by allowing us to include samples of your work on our site, by blogging about your commission and your work in progress, and linking to our site etc.
- Allow their festival performance to be recorded (both audio and visual) for future podcast and archive use by the hub and by the artist him/herself (this will include a stand alone video of each commissioned artist's festival performance, which will be made available to the artists after the festival)
- Take part in press and marketing activity secured by Phrased & Confused
- Appropriately credit Phrased and Confused if they re-use the new material (ie if it is released on an album, printed, used in subsequent performances, hosted on web sites etc)

6. How to apply

Now that you've read all this, we hope you're interested in applying for a commission. There's no nasty form to fill out. We just want you to tell us your big idea - but here's the hard bit - you need to do that in no more than **2 sides of A4**, and you need to do it by **11 June**. Our email address is info@phrasedandconfused.co.uk.

Some questions you might want to think about to help you explain your idea are:

- What do you want to do and why does it excite you? What might it sound and look like? Will you do it on your own? Do you want to work with other people, and who might they be?
- What's your inspiration for it? Is it another artist? An event? An experience? An album? Or maybe a collection of poetry?
- Why do you think your idea is right for Phrased & Confused and Summer Sundae Weekender? How do think it will 'speak to' music fans?
- Songwriters, like Bob Dylan, Leonard Cohen and Pete Doherty are often called poets, because of their lyrics; artists like Gil Scott Heron, Henry Rollins, Lynton Kwesi Johnson and Dana Bryant blur the boundaries between music and spoken word; hip hop is poetry for the 21st Century. Is there something in making a connection between lyrics and spoken word, or is simply just a load of old b*****s?



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Feel free to send in supporting material too - examples of your work and that of any other people you want to work with, links to relevant sites or blogs, gig lists, MP3 tracks etc. You know the kind of thing - whatever you think will help us to understand your idea, and where you're coming from. Please remember to include a phone number too.

We'll let short-listed artists know by 13 June, and interviews will be held in London on 18 June.

7. Any questions

Hopefully we've covered everything you need to know, but if you do have any questions then just get in touch with Jenny Harris at info@phrasedandconfused.co.uk or on 07505 127631.

Good luck and happy plotting!

