

Events in Edinburgh and Montrose 6 to 9 October, 2017

The BCA joined with the duo 'Na-Mara', Edinburgh band 'Gallo Rojo', and the Edinburgh Spanish Film Festival for three very well attended events in Edinburgh and Montrose over the week end of the 6 to 9 October. The events remembered the ninos who came to Britain in 1937 and the 25 children who stayed in Montrose for 2 years in the Colony at Mall House, and to celebrate the help given to them by people in Scotland.



Na-Mara

There was a lively gig at the Jaffle Joint in Portobello, Edinburgh, and an afternoon of music in the Neptune Bar in Montrose hosted by the Angus Refugee Aid who collected for a music project for Syrian Refugees. The money raised will, together with donated instruments, provide regular music lessons.



Gallo Rojo

The Edinburgh Spanish Film Festival showed the award-winning documentary 'The Guernica Children' to a full house. 'Na-Mara' performed songs about the experiences of the ninos to frame this moving and informative film. There followed a panel discussion and questions with four children of the Niños Vascos: Simon Martinez, Roberto Garcia, Carmen Coupland and Kaldo Sanz.



Simon Martinez, Kaldo Sanz, Roberto Garcia

Roberto's father and uncle stayed in the Montrose colony. It was an emotional weekend for him visiting Mall House in Montrose with its blue plaque to the ninos and their helpers. The panel members were asked what their parents had told them about the experience of leaving their own parents and homes to flee the bombing and come to Britain. None of their parents had talked very much about it; we can only guess how traumatic it must have been. The panel members praised the support their young refugee parents received from ordinary people in Britain. The ninos who stayed in Britain were given the opportunity to access a good education and to choose a trade or profession and go through their training with support from the Basque Children's Committee.

New friendships were established and the BCA looks forward to joining with these friends in Scotland for future events. Thanks to in particular the children of the Ninos on the panel Simon, Carmen, Roberto and Kaldo, Marian Arechaga of ESFF, Roberto Garcia of Na Mara and Euan Johnston of Gallo Rojo.

Barbara Coombs