



Registered Charity No. 0194937

Basil's News

Welcome..

to the 2011 edition of Basil's News, the newsletter of the Philip Bates Trust. This edition has details of some of the events we have hosted this year, as well as the causes we have supported. If you'd like to see how we're getting on in between newsletters, or want to check what events are coming up, you can get the latest on our website at:

philipbatestrust.org.uk

We Need Your Support!

This year we are asking all of our supporters to make a special effort to attend our annual A Touch of Basil Concert. The event is not just for fundraising - it also provides a opportunity for talented young people to perform in front of an appreciative audience in a large and exciting venue.

A Touch of Basil has been going strong for over a decade and has featured a wide range of performers ranging from school children to professional musicians. If the concert is to continue to be a success we need you, our supporters to come along.

If you can, bring someone new and help us to introduce new people to the work of the Trust so that we can continue to assist young people to make the most of their creative talents.

See page 2 for a preview of this year's concert.

A Touch Of Basil 2011

Adrian Boult Hall, Birmingham Conservatoire

Saturday 24th September at 7pm

NEW EARLIER START TIME

This annual celebration concert includes a wide variety of musical styles and genres from classical through to Irish Folk and Rock Music.

Performers include:-

Francesca Costigan - Winner of the Ashleyan Opera Prize

“Poems for Walt Whitman” by Michael Bettendge

Ayse Osman - double bass

Miriam Panter - bassoon

Amy Farrell - vocalist

Chris Davis - percussion

Eastern Moon Rock Group

Basil's Bunch

The Millman Family Irish Folk Group

Isaac Cartwright

Jonathan Styles

Winning performers from Castle Vale Performing Arts College

Sue Bates - Soprano

Rachel Bates - Soprano

Steve Davis - Tenor

Heart of England Singers – conductor Martin Bates

Tickets

In advance: Adults - £8 Children and Students - £6

Group Ticket: Four tickets - £25

On the door: Adults - £9 Children and Students - £6

Tickets available from 0121 747 5705 or email info@philipbatesttrust.org.uk

Review: Castle Vale's Got Talent

Last year was my first time as judge for Castle Vale's Got Talent and I must have done a reasonable job because they asked me back again this year! I was one of four judges and just like in Britain's Got Talent we were there at the front with the audience behind us and an amazing array of talent on the stage.

If anything, the quality of the performances was consistently higher this year. We had a really difficult job to sort it out after the acts had all finished. The top few acts were so so good!



Jhell bringing down the house

It was great to see Amy Castle, Sarah Heard and Michael Nott involved in one of the staff numbers – a special thanks to them. They are three of the six trainee teachers I have been regularly visiting this year.

For two years now I have worked with Teach First at Castle Vale School and it almost seems to be

my second home. Yes, you are right, I *did* retire in 2008 from full-time teaching at John Willmott School; but I felt I still could offer some advice to young aspiring teachers just starting out on their careers.

The winner of Castle Vale's Got Talent was a young singer called Millie Langton from year 7. She sang "Danny Boy" unaccompanied. What a voice! So pure and so strong with the potential to go right to the top in the musical world. A special award went to the singing group Jhell which was perhaps the most entertaining act of the night.

Needless to say another big thank you to Trevor Evans and his team at Castle Vale – I received a cheque from them for £550 to go to Philip's Trust. Millie and Jhell will be performing for us at Touch of Basil on September 24th. Don't miss the second chance to see them live.

Martin Bates



First Prize winner Millie Langton

A Touch of Basil 2010

Yet another year had passed and it was time for the annual musical celebration of Philip's life, with many family, friends and musicians coming together at the Adrian Boult Hall to share an evening of music and entertainment.

The evening opened with Basil's Bunch proclaiming that 'Music is Life' from every corner of the hall. They later returned to perform an arrangement of the Dylan song *Make You Feel My Love*.

The first half of the concert saw notable performances from Holly Reardon on the Bassoon, Anthony Williams singing two of his own songs accompanying himself

It was a treat for the audience to hear and see such drama delivered by a group of talented performers; and it was clear to see why this composition won the Philip Bates Prize for Composers and Songwriters 2009. We also heard a composition from Chris Davis, *Shall I Compare Thee*, performed by the home team, The Heart of England Singers.

The first half closed with the rousing sound of the Bilton Silver Band directed by Mark Allen who treated us to familiar tunes *Radetsky March* and *Shendoah*. However, it was Jack Fisher who stole the show with his agile and charismatic xylophone solo *Jack in the Box*, the commissioning of which was partially funded by The Philip Bates Trust.



Basil's Bunch rehearsing for A Touch of Basil 2010

on the guitar and Ashleyan Opera Prize Winner Xu Lei singing two beautiful arias *Una Furtiva Lagrima* by Donizetti and *Che Gelida Manina* by Puccini. Another prize-winner was *Pleiades*, a chamber opera scene composed by Simone Spagnolo.

After the interval we heard a reading from Hazel Teale: *Birmingham at War* by Eunice Jones. Continuing the theme of war, Jonathan Styles performed an emotional movement from Messiaen's *Quartet for the End of Time - Praise to the Immortal-*

ity of *Jesus* which was both thought provoking and challenging for the listener. Soprano Susan Bates spoiled us again when joining with



Sinead Kenny singing "I Had Myself a True Love"

tenor Stephen Davis and lutenist Mike Ashley for an intimate performance of songs by John Dowland.

We were also treated to solo performances by vocalist and guitarist Tom Browne and trumpeter Adam Boulton, winners of The Philip Bates Music Theatre and Performance Prizes. Castle Vale Glee Club entertained the audience, performing two songs with energy and enthusiasm. Sinead Kenny sang a charming rendition of *I Had Myself a True Love* before the evening closed with African music from the Heart of England

Singers and the entire company singing *When You Walk Through a Storm* in remembrance of Oscar Hammerstein II who had died 50 years ago.

It was another evening of impressive and enjoyable performances and the audience went home happy and musically indulged with such a diverse range of styles. Let's look forward to this year's show which will have a tough act to follow!

Sarah Dudley

Ami Egdell

Last year the Trust supported ballet student Ami Egdell with a grant towards the cost of ballet shoes. Ami had been studying with Ballet West in Scotland and one of our trustees, Rev. Margaret MacLachlan was able to meet up with her in Taynuilt near Oban while on a family visit.



Ballet dancer Ami Egdell

Philip Bates Trust Quiz Night 2010

On the evening of Saturday 12th March 2011, the second Philip Bates Trust Games and Quiz Night took off to a flying start. Arden Hall in Water Orton was inundated with eager quiz goers, all chomping at the bit to unleash their wealth of wisdom upon the rounds of brain teasing questions that lay ahead.

a gruelling test of intelligence and lateral thinking was posed by Alan Spiers, whose numbers-related round pushed quiz athletes to the limit.

The sprint relay of the drawing game involved teams guessing Beatles songs from team members' scribbles, then running for more song titles to pass on to their team mates. After contestants mopped the sweat from their brows and caught their breath,



The Quiz Night in full swing

The mental agility Olympics began with two challenging rounds of general knowledge, kindly organised by Stan & Sue Gamble which strained the bulging grey matter of all contestants. This event was followed by Martin Bates' testing series of music questions, in the form of "name that 'TV theme'", for contestants to hurdle. After a short breather,

a well earned recharge of batteries and brain cells was gained from a slap up feast of fish and chips.

This was followed by a raffle in which the main prize was a beautiful embroidered picture, created and kindly donated by Sue Lapin.

The 'Shopping Dash' event was the 400 metre sprint of the evening, with quiz goers darting all over the hall, frantically looking



for the next item on their list.

Next was the triple jump of the quiz, as contestants ran, then hopped, skipped and jumped towards Rachel Bates with the requested random object; including an unlaced shoe, 8 feet, 62 pence and..... an armadillo?

The last event of the mental agility Olympics involved huge team efforts, where teams of 26 members, each holding a letter of the alphabet, spelt out the answers to the questions shouted by Martin. There was much jostling for position and some questionable spelling, but team spirit conquered any spelling disasters at the finish line.

Our heartfelt thanks go to Stan, Sue & Mark Gamble and Chris Fielder, who had the arduous task of collating the scores, which surely earned them all a place on the medal rostrum. Our thanks also go to the staff at Arden Hall, who were extremely helpful and accommodating. The evening was a great success, with final takings coming to £464.

An exhilarating and fun time was had by all competitors. For those contestants eager to try their mental agility skills at next year's game and quiz Olympics, the event in 2012 will be held at Arden Hall on Saturday 10th March, so book early as tickets go fast (but not as fast as the real Olympics!). *Julie Larkin*

Treasurer's Report

I am pleased to report that the Trust is in a stable financial position. In total £1,950 has been paid out this year, which would not be sustainable without your donations, ongoing support and kindness in memory of Philip.

The Trustees meet twice a year in order to discuss any applications against the criteria in order to award any financial grants. This year we have been able to support several applications, including a local charity based at NHS Foundation Trust Heartlands Hospital which particularly appealed to the trustees.

The Trust has also continued to make its annual awards through the Composition Prize at Birmingham's Conservatoire and prizes at Bishop Vesey's Grammar School and John Willmott School. In addition, grants have been made to various other individuals and groups - see "This Year We Helped" on page 12 for further details.

Thanks to your generous donations, and the efforts of the Action committee, who successfully organise the annual Touch of Basil Concert and the Social Evening, the Philip Bates Trust is continuing to thrive and support its mission statement. *Karen Moulton*

Tom Walker

Those of you who have been in the audience at the Touch of Basil concerts will have enjoyed watching the performances of the talented young people who have participated over the past eleven years. Back in 2007 a group called The Flood took to the stage and wowed the audience with their rendition of *Sunshine of Your Love*.

One member of The Flood was Tom Walker; he was twelve at the time, and had been invited to participate by his music teacher, Martin Bates.



Tom Walker with Eastern Moon

Tom's musical inspiration came in the form of his dad, a keen guitarist. Listening to him playing each day and hearing blues music by the likes of Eric Clapton, Jimi Hendrix and Stevie Ray-Vaughan encouraged him to do something himself. Tom has now played the guitar for eleven years and has been writing his own songs for quite a while. Tom's first major musical experience came in 2006 when he started at John Willmott School. It was here that he formed 'The Flood', along

with other pupils. They played a range of songs that they liked and after a while began to play in shows and concerts. As well as performing at A Touch of Basil they had the opportunity to play at the NEC for the Birmingham Youth Service.

The Flood split up after three years and Tom moved on to another band called Basic Terms. They had a young, vibrant sound and wrote their own material. After only a couple of months they got their first gig at the 02 Academy. They also recorded an album at Robannas studios in Birmingham. This recording was financed by John Willmott School's Gifted and Talented fund. Tom describes playing on the main stage at the Sutton Arts Festival as one of their biggest moments. The band only lasted a year but Tom thoroughly enjoyed the experience.

Tom is now sixteen and will be returning to A Touch of Basil this year with his new band Eastern Moon. The band has enjoyed playing at a range of venues across Birmingham and say that they are really looking forward to it. We will certainly be pleased to see Tom make his return and wish him and Eastern Moon all the very best for the future. If you would like to find out more about Eastern Moon you will find a page about them on Facebook.

Kirsty Hopson

Composition Prize 2010

Review

or Audience Votes for “Bread”

The excitement level was high on the evening of November 5th 2010. As in previous years there was a great atmosphere and an enthusiastic audience. The evening began with “Until Dark”



Prize winners Kirsty Devaney, James Oldham & Michael Betteridge.

by Kirsty Devaney, a moody and effective piece. This composition represented the emotions of a person suffering from depression, with mood swings and suicidal thoughts.

I wasn't convinced by the theatre piece called 'River of Awakened Dreams' by Nikolai Westgarth. The concept was good but the writing didn't live up to the promise of the idea and the instrumental interludes were banale.

“Hand of Clod” was an innovative performance piece that used a long scroll that gradually unrolled and moved across the music stands of the instrumentalists, indicating low or high and short or long sounds. DJs scratched charity shop records

while two singers sang along with random short extracts heard only by them over earphones.

“Tiny Things on my Bedside Table” was a song cycle using three poems about miniature things. Sung by composer Rachel Nicholas, this was initially very effective; the middle section seemed to lose direction but it ended with a flourish.

“Bread” by James Oldham was an amusing dialogue between two characters whose relationship began when they were shopping for bread: as there was only one loaf left they decided to share it – hence the title! The piece consists of their gradually worsening arguments about various things including what to watch on TV. This piece would have been even more effective if the instrumental brass writing hadn't been quite so overpowering.

“Poems of Walt Whitman” by Manchester graduate Michael Betteridge had some effective writing, clearly showing the influence of Benjamin Britten. The instrumental writing was idiomatic and spare, allowing interesting phrases to make their full effect. Adjudicators Ian Wallman and Martin Bates awarded Michael Betteridge's piece first prize and Kirsty Devaney's second prize. The audience prize went to Bread. *Sue Bates*



The Ashleyan Opera Prize

Most music lovers take pleasure in singing competitions. This one was of a high standard, with arias from opera composers as far apart historically as Handel and Stravinsky, but above all it was extremely enjoyable.

The Ashleyan Opera Prize is awarded annually and is open to post-graduate students of the Birmingham Conservatoire. The only negative factor was the number in the audience. Perhaps the 'Boobs and Brass' concert in the neighbouring Adrian Boult Hall with the girls of the Brighthouse and Rastrick Band had something to do with it.

personality would have been better suited to a more joyful excerpt, particularly since she chose the same repertoire to begin last year's Mario Lanza Competition (another regular in the Conservatoire diary, this year's contest takes place on June 4th). The second soprano, Olga Zhorova, sang three excerpts: I thought Volkhova's Lullaby from Sadko by Rimsky Korsakov suited her best.

Andrea Pfenninger was next and her offering of Ännchen's arietta from Act II Scene 1 of Weber's Der Freischütz was the best item so far, convincing in her encouragement for girls to play the field.



Francesca Costigan (Winner), Janis Kelly (Adjudicator) & Julian Pike (Organiser)

It's always difficult being first on the bill on such occasions, but Helen Latham held our attention with Michaela's big number from Bizet's Carmen and Mimi's 'Donde Lieta' from La Boheme. I thought her

Her German diction, plus her English and Italian in her other two selections, all came across well. Performers need confidence to pull off their character portrayals and Anna Jeffers has it in spades.



A regular at these Conservatoire events, she has caught my eye before: I vividly remember her as Ruggerio in an excerpt from Handel's Alcina in last year's Opera Scenes (another annual Conservatoire feast to look out for).

This time it was as Juno, choosing 'Iris, hence away' from Semele. This fach may be the key to her future. Although possibly not the best quality voice on display, there was an evenness of tone and some fluid Italian phrasing in her other contribution, 'Crude Sorte' from Rossini's L'Italiana in Algeri. Her animated style delighted her fellow students present.

The lone male on the programme was tenor Edward Harrison. His choices of 'Ombra mai fu' from Handel's Serse and 'Che gelida manina' from Puccini's La Boheme were unusual and ambitious, but I thought he showed potential. Ella Casanova demonstrated she was a natural for opera's female comic roles with both her offerings.

First there was 'La Folie' from Rameau's Platée, complete with all the actions and a touch of hysteria. And then came her juicy rendition of Norina's cavatina from Donizetti's Don Pasquale - the wistful dreams of a lovesick teenager, the wicked little laugh, the scheming minx, the py-

rotechnic finale, they were all there.

Francesca Costigan was the last contender. She opened with Dvořák's 'Song to the Moon' from Rusalka. Singing such a well-known aria opens the door for comparisons with the numerous commercial recordings around. But with a voice like hers, she can bear the contrast.

With beautiful timbre, sure technical control and a clear understanding with her own accompanist this was a breathtaking performance. And her 'No Word from Tom' from Stravinsky's The Rake's Progress was equally impressive, although I might have preferred something in a more contrasting vein.

I very rarely agree with the adjudicator at such events. My markings gave Jeffers, Casanova and Costigan identical totals; they were all excellent and good luck to them and the other contestants in the future.

If I had had to choose one above the others, it would have been Casanova. Janis Kelly summed it all up and was left with a difficult decision, but she gave it to Costigan, while Jeffers was highly commended. *Geoff Read*

Geoff Read's daughter Madeline used to attend Moseley Secondary School where Martin was Head of Music in the 1980s. Geoff also provides reviews for "Seen and Heard International" MusicWeb International's live concert, opera and ballet reviews.



This Year We Helped:

One of the main tasks of the Trustees is to decide how to allocate the available money to applicants needing support. This year we had an increase in applications but not all of these met our criteria or were satisfactory in other ways.

If anybody is considering applying to the Trust for funding there are guidelines for applicants on our website www.philipbatestrust.org.uk under "Financial Support".

Two organisations and one individual gained support from us this year in addition to the five prizes we give annually.

The Heart of England NHS Foundation Trust has put in place an impressive arts initiative scheme. This scheme involves six different projects in all and the one we are supporting is the Holiday Music Club, based at Heartlands Hospital in Birmingham. Young patients at the hospital will benefit from this project, and it will give them opportunities to take part in extra-curricular activities they will have missed out on due to illness. This project will be running throughout the summer of 2011.

First Steps Derbyshire is a charity that helps young people with eating disorders. We have given some financial support towards their drama

therapy workshops, which apparently have achieved success in quite a few cases of this difficult-to-treat problem. This application was especially meaningful to us, the Bates family.

Bassoonist Miriam Panter is our individual applicant gaining support. After completing her undergraduate studies in the UK, Miriam is now studying for a Masters at the Robert Schumann Hochschule in Dusseldorf and studying bassoon with the principal bassoonist of the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra. She is hoping to become a professional orchestral player.

The Philip Bates Performance Prize at Bishop Vesey's Grammar School was won this year by Michael Hogg, a saxophonist, and the Music Theatre Prize at John Willmott School by Jack Marshall. For the three winners of the Philip Bates Prize for Composers and Songwriters at Birmingham Conservatoire, see the article "Audience Votes for Bread" *Sue Bates*

A New Addition



Congratulations to Rachel and Mark on the birth of their daughter, Beth Miranda Bates-Gamble who was born on 27th January 2011 at Heartlands Hospital, weighing in at 8 lb 12 oz.