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Basil's News

Hello and Welcome

to the 2014 edition of Basil's News, the newsletter of the Philip Bates Trust. This year we received an unprecedented number of applications for support and we are very excited to be working with so many creative and talented young people. If you'd like to know more visit us at:

philipbatestrust.org.uk

Who did we help this year?



Georgina Bloomfield at A Touch of Basil 2013

We were able to help a record number of applicants during our 2013-2014 season. Georgina Bloomfield, 9, and Beth Zheng, 12, both violinists, received help with their fees for the National Children's Orchestra. (Georgina wowed the audience at last year's Touch of Basil concert too!)

We also helped two dancers who perform in very different styles. Genevieve Eveleigh is training to be a ballerina



while Jamal Wolfe has won prizes for tap and contemporary dance and is now studying on a 3 year course in dance for musical theatre. We gave grants towards the cost of ballet/dance shoes and leotards.

To Helen Lacey we gave funding towards a choral course with the National Youth Choir of Great Britain.

Jonathan Daniel Tindall, a flautist from the USA, was studying for his master's degree at the Royal College of Music in London under Susan Milan who recommended him highly. We gave some funding towards the cost of buying scores, sheet music and books for his course.

Katie Turner, who is taking a post graduate course in theatre performance, needed help with purchasing books which we were able to give.

Rebecca Blackwood has had to overcome many disadvantages in her life but managed to turn her life around by discovering a talent for photography. She needed a better camera for her studies and we were able to fund this.

Anna Drysdale, a French Horn player just beginning her professional career, needed help with the cost of auditioning across Europe.

Christopher Schlechte-Bond, a composer studying on a Music for Screen postgraduate course, needed



Perrott's Folly



help with the cost of scores and sheet music and attendance at master classes, workshops and concerts.

Jonathan Hyde is a baritone studying on the artist master's course at the Guildhall. We gave money towards the purchase of scores and sheet music.

Regal Tenbury Trust, a cinema and arts centre in Tenbury Wells, Worcester, was setting up a scheme to give musical performance opportunities to youngsters and mentor them through the process of organising and advertising gigs. We were able to fund some hours of mentoring.

We covered the cost of mirrors and materials for the Mirror-Space Art Project at Perrott's Folly examining, photographing and drawing the Folly through mirrored images. This tower in Birmingham is famous for influencing Lord of the Rings author Tolkein and now belongs to the Trident Reach the People Charity, who organised the project.

Based in Digbeth, Birmingham, the Arches Project aims to help disadvantaged youngsters develop their potential and self-confidence through music and the arts. We funded a tutor for a number of workshops with the eventual aim of the young people gaining an award in the arts which carries UCAS points to encourage further study. *Sue Bates*

Games and Quiz Night 2014

The Philip Bates Trust Games and Quiz Night took place on Saturday 8th March 2014 at Arden Hall in Water Orton. The quiz began with a general knowledge round organised by Stan & Sue Gamble which covered a wide range of topics and difficulty levels so everyone had a good chance of getting some answers right!

The Pictionary round on the subject of films was very challenging but good fun and was won by a team of artistic film buffs. A music round organised by Martin Bates where he played the first few bars of different songs by the Beatles was tricky but no match for the avid Beatles fans in the audience.

Railway Riot was the usual organised chaos, and the alphabet game and all the table quizzes completed the evening and gave every participant a chance to flex their grey matter.

A dinner break of jacket potatoes with a tasty selection of fillings followed by giant chocolate and carrot cakes was eagerly consumed by all. Together with a raffle, buy a square on a grid of 100 squares, and 'roll a coin at the whiskey bottle game', overall the quiz night raised £650, and great fun was had by all those who attended. *Julie Larkin*



Last Year's Touch Of Basil

On the 28th September 2013 the annual 'A Touch of Basil' celebration concert took place in the Adrian Boult Hall, Birmingham.

This fantastic evening yet again, brought together an eclectic mix of performers, some old friends and some new.

The evening opened with a magnificent reading of Rudyard Kipling's 'If' by Philip's cousin George Kao who was followed by the faithful Heart of England Singers performing a selection of songs including two newly composed works by Chris Davis.

Another vocal piece followed by Robert Mead, who sang 'Brother, can you spare a Dime?' from Jay

Gorney's New Americana. Robert's character and voice filled the room with this dramatic highlight. We saw Robert perform again in the second half where he played the role of the Judge in Gilbert and Sullivan's Trial by Jury with the Heart of England Singers – a rôle with which he was completely at home.

Continuing with the first half, the audience had the pleasure of meeting Georgina Bloomfield for the first time. This talented young violinist gave an exquisite performance of Gluck's 'Mélodie', expertly accompanied by our own Martin Bates.

To follow this, Ashleyan Opera Prize winner Claire Barnett-Jones (mezzo-soprano) delighted the au-



Robert Mead in 'Trial by Jury'



dience with three arias by Massenet, Saint-Saëns and Handel.

The first half was closed with two songs from the Ex Cathedra Junior Academy under the expert direction of Rebecca Ledgard. The flowing melodic lines of Chilcott's *Can You Hear Me?* displayed expert control



Ashleyn Opera Prize Winner Claire Barnett-Jones

of their young voices. This was followed by the rousing 'Every Time I Feel the Spirit' sending everyone out for refreshments humming.

John Willmott Music Theatre Prize winner Chloe Child sang 'Nothing Stops Another Day' from *Ghost* to get the second half underway. This was followed by the Tom Walker Trio who performed an acoustic set of appealing and original songs, show-

ing themselves to be very talented and able musicians. Sopranos Susan Bates and Karen Moulton brought a touch of 19th century England to the programme with their charming rendition of Elgar's 'The Dance'.

Yet again a performance from regular group 'Basil's Bunch' brought together some of Philip's friends to entertain the audience with Neil Diamond's 'I'm a Believer' and a moving performance of 'As Long As I Have Music'.

Moving away from vocal music, Bishop Vesey's Grammar School performance prize winner Nathaniel Coxon performed Rachmaninov's 'Prelude in C# Minor', captivating the audience with his seemingly effortless interpretation.

The Heart of England Singers finished the evening with selections from 'Trial by Jury' before the entire company and audience joined together for Roger and Hammerstein's uplifting 'Climb Every Mountain'.

A rich and varied programme catered for all tastes and ensured that all audience members, once more, took away some special treats.

Well done to all performers who so willingly come together to create this wonderful event full of such high musical standards. Let's look forward to what 2014 can bring! *Sarah Dudley*



Ashleyan Opera Prize 2014

Soprano Niamh Fitzgerald opened the concert with “Elle a fui” from Offenbach’s Tales of Hoffmann followed by “My Man’s Gone Now” from Porgy and Bess. She has a great voice and gave a wonderful performance of the Gershwin, full of raw passion, but there were a few glitches in the Offenbach.

Victoria Adams, soprano, had a bright forward tone that suited Mozart’s “Batti, batti” but managed to convey successfully a completely different mood in Stravinsky’s “No Word from Tom”.

superb diction. Audience member Liz Brown commented afterwards that she particularly remembered Carrie-Ann’s performance as she had never heard of the composer Floyd and really loved “The Trees on the Mountains” which she sang, finding it a beautiful and moving piece of music. This was followed by Gounod’s “Dieu! Quel frisson court dans mes veines” Joe Zainul, countertenor, displayed an unfortunate a lack of consistency in tone and phrasing, singing a few very loud notes and then running out of breath, particularly



Margaret Asher with joint winners Carrie-Ann Williams and Jessica Wise

Next came Carrie - Ann Williams looking stunning in a blue diamanté gown. After a slightly nervous start she completely won the audience over with her wonderfully powerful voice, expressive facial expressions and

in his Vivaldi aria. “J’ai perdu mon Eurydice” from Orfeo was a little better with more sense of line. Elizabeth Adams, soprano (not sure whether she was related to Victoria) was next with another rendition



of “Batti, batti” She possessed a very beautiful voice but had some intonation problems, probably due to nerves, which seemed to have settled down in Marenka’s aria from The Bartered Bride.

Soprano Jessica Wise ended the concert with a contrasting programme showing lots of variety and great acting skills. “Trübe Augen” from Der Freischütz was followed by Puccini’s “Quando m’en vo” from La Bohème, a spirited performance echoed by a dramatic red diamanté gown.

All the contestants were accompanied impeccably by pianist Jonathan French, who was given a well-deserved round of applause. Adjudicator Sara Clethero made pertinent comments and gave helpful advice to each singer individually afterwards. She decided to split the prize, awarding it jointly to Carrie-Ann Williams and Jessica Wise. *Sue Bates*



Sinead Kenny returns to Arthur Terry

Sinead Kenny in West Side Story

You may remember Sinead Kenny taking part in Touch of Basil 2010. She left Arthur Terry School in Sutton Coldfield to attend ArtsEd, a leading London college offering training in musical theatre whose president is Andrew Lloyd Webber

Sue had been her singing teacher for some while and had coached her through her Grade 8 exam - what a privilege it was for me to be able to accompany her at the end of that process.

Through the wonders of Facebook we have been following her career on the professional stage and most recently as a cast member in the very successful, acclaimed touring production of Bernstein's great musical "West Side Story".

Sue and I went along to the Alexandra Theatre in Birmingham to see her on a day when unfortunately she was not singing the central part of Anita. Even so, she shone on stage - we had not seen her dance before - wow, what a talent - look out for her as soon as you can and try to get to see her!!

Sinead appeared on The One Show on July 14th promoting her West Side Story production. *Martin Bates*



Composition Prize 2014

Bonfire Night 2013 brought a few fireworks to Birmingham Conservatoire's Recital Hall in the form of cracking new compositions. After Philip's "Idea 1" heralded the opening of the Philip Bates Prize for Composers and Songwriters final, we heard two songs from 'Sideshow' by Leo Geyer. Leo is currently studying in Manchester and the complete 'Sideshow' cycle comprises four songs, all to poems by Martin Kratz .

"The Dancing Bear" displayed rhythmic, idiomatic and accomplished writing both for the instrumentalists and mezzo-soprano



Leo Geyer

Rachel Maby. "The Bearded Lady" was more sinuous but equally effective. Rose Hall from York University was next with "Broken

Love", a setting of a William Blake poem for alto and strings. This proved to be suitably sombre with some effective string writing and word setting in the opening



Blanka Stachelek

section. However, this was not maintained to quite the same level throughout and could have done with more variety in the texture.

The remaining composers were all from Birmingham Conservatoire. "Tryptyk" by Blanka Stachelek was a cycle of three songs to poems by Krzysztof Kamil Baczyński, a Polish poet who died in the Warsaw Uprising at the age of 23.

The mood of these songs for alto, viola and cello was mysterious, dark and gloomy. These pieces were beautifully and effectively written.



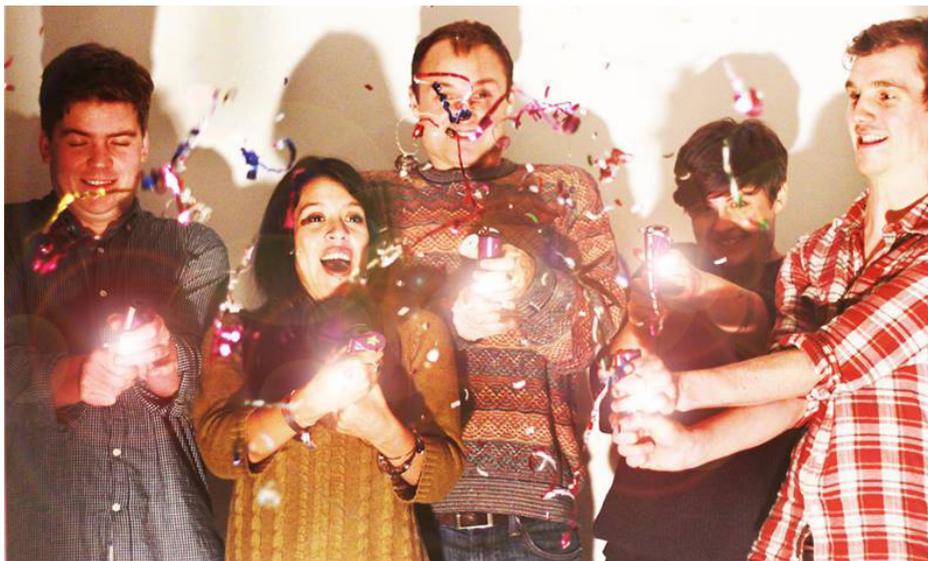
I was looking forward to hearing ‘Student Cookbook’ by Rob Jones as it sounded like fun. The four songs were named after typical student fare – “Cheesy beans on toast”, “Vodka Jelly”, “Pot Noodle” and “Bacon”. However, in spite of an excellent performance by mezzo-soprano Suzie Purkis and ensemble and some interesting props and business I didn’t find the music itself as interesting as the concept.

‘When Morality Becomes Lax’ by Tom Armitage examined the viewpoint of a person torn between her conscience and her desires. Some violent instrumental writing contrasted with the use of words from a Lenten prayer to indicate her conflict. Overall this was an effective piece, ably

performed by soprano Carrie-Ann Williams and an ensemble which included a tubular bell and organ.

Two songs by jazz student Josh Herring, “The Librarian” and “The Holy Man”, were performed by him and his ensemble The Steady Hands to provide a great conclusion to the competition. These two songs were from an album ‘Fault Lines’ featuring songs about a number of different occupations. Influences for Josh ranged from pop and folk to contemporary classical.

This was a really interesting competition and the adjudicators, after much deliberation, awarded the two first prizes to Blanka Stachelek and Leo Geyer with Josh Herring receiving the audience prize. *Sue Bates*



Josh Herring with ‘The Steady Hands’



A Touch Of Basil 2014

Who “headlines” a Touch of Basil? The answer might seem rather tricky but after a little thought I realise it is quite easy to fathom. All participants are headlining, whether professional or amateur, adult or youngster, soloist or member of a larger group.

Everyone takes part on equal terms at one of the country’s most prestigious music colleges - Birmingham Conservatoire. For 2014 many young performers return; welcome back to violinist Georgina Bloomfield and clarinetist Sarah Brienza, who you may remember had an unfortunate accident be-

tween rehearsal and concert last year preventing her performance. Ex Cathedra Vocal Academies will follow up last year’s great success.

Prize winners are there in abundance: Chloe Child from John Willmott School and Lucy Licence from Bishop Vesey’s, Jessica Wise and Carrie-Ann Williams from the Ashleyan Opera Prize and Blanka Stachelek with her composition from the Philip Bates Prize for Composers and Songwriters.

Many many thanks to all of our wonderful performers, some of whom sing each year and travel great distances to be with us. *Martin Bates*



Rebecca Ledgard directs the Ex Cathedra Junior Academy



Inspiring Academies

Back in 1998 Philip was one of the very first members of Ex Cathedra's Academy of Vocal Music. Ex Cathedra, a purely adult choir, sang from strength to strength during the last quarter of the 20th century and is now a choir of national and international prowess.

Ex Cathedra runs a lively education programme. As well as "Singing Playgrounds" in schools around the city and "Singing Medicine" in local hospitals it also now runs a comprehensive programme with its own training choirs:

- Children's Choir (Boys and Girls): School Years 1 – 3
- Junior Academy (Boys and Girls): School Years 4 – 8
- Girls Academy: School Years 9 – 13
- Boys Academy: School Years 8/9 – 13 (when the voice begins to break)

The Philip Bates Trust has recently been able to renew its support of Ex Cathedra's education programme and Sue and I were inspired during a Sunday choir workshop visit a few weeks ago.

There was so much skill being shown by these young people but they were also having so much fun. Come and see them again at Touch of Basil on September 27th. *Martin Bates*

Martin & Sue's Big Do

On 15th April 2014 Martin & Sue Bates celebrated their ruby wedding anniversary, marking 40 years since their big day! They celebrated on Easter Monday at Castle Bromwich Hall which provided a fabulous setting. They enjoyed a meal with family at lunchtime and were joined by friends for a ceilidh in the evening.



Sue and Martin

The weather was fine and a good time was had by all. Instead of gifts they asked for donations to The Philip Bates Trust or Water Aid. When these donations were counted up the collection had raised an amazing £715 for The Philip Bates Trust and £80 for Water Aid. Sue and Martin and the trustees would like to thank anyone who contributed to this; what an amazing sum of money! Congratulations again to Martin & Sue.

New Arrival



Welcome to Jessica Lorna Larkin who was born on 31/08/2013. Many congratulations to proud parents Julie and Kieran



Forthcoming events

A Touch of Basil 2014

Saturday 27th September 7:00 p.m.

Adrian Boulton Hall

Birmingham Conservatoire

ADULTS £9 CHILDREN/STUDENTS £7 GROUP - 4 TICKETS £30

Cheques made out to: "Philip Bates Trust"

Please send a stamped self-addressed envelope to:- Martin Bates,
24 Elmfield Road, Castle Bromwich, B36 0HL

Tel: 0121 747 5705

Games and Quiz Night

Saturday March 14th 2015

Arden Hall

Castle Bromwich

Doors open 7:00 p.m.

Ashleyan Opera Prize

Provisional date Wednesday April 15th 2015

Recital Hall

Birmingham Conservatoire

7:00 p.m.