



Basil's News

2020

Treasurer's News

Since last year's newsletter we have had a busy year, even though dealing with Covid 19 has made things more difficult - as it has for everyone!. The Trustees meet three times a year to discuss all aspects of the Trust and we have continued with these meetings via zoom. Our main task is to consider applications made to the Trust for funding and we try to be scrupulously fair in this. It is surprising, however, that some do not include the required references and some ask for things outside our remit as clearly laid out in the Guidelines for Applicants on our website.

It is my job to keep the finances in order and make sure we are achieving our vision for the trust. The main bulk of the trusts funds are held as units in Charifund, M&G Equities Investment Fund for Charities, which is dependent on the current financial market, therefore Charifund will go up and come down. In February this year, Charifund reached its highest ever value in recent times. This was brilliant, and we, the Board of Trustees were extremely pleased. However, as with everything in 2020, Coronavirus has affected the market and our funds. I am confident this will improve as our economy improves over time.

I would personally like to thank you for your continued support to the Philip Bates Trust. We could not do it without you!

Karen Moulton



A Touch of Basil 2019



Martin Bates welcomes everyone to A Touch of Basil 2019

Here we are again for the fourth year running at Bishop Vesey's Grammar School, friends and family coming together for the annual *A Touch of Basil* concert.

On the 28th September 2019 in Big School a wide variety of genres will take us through the evening which is kicked off by Philip's mum with a reading of W.H Auden's poem *Many Happy Returns* and a recital of Philip's A level composition *In Stiller Nacht* - a contemplative, tuneful setting of these words.

Choir regulars The Heart of England Singers next give us three songs, the early *Summer is Icu-men In*, *Kashmiri Song* and *Ramo-*

na, expertly conducted by Martin Bates himself and accompanied by Jean Hamilton, the choir's new accompanist. Welcome Jean and thank you for your sensitive playing.

As is tradition, winners of any of the Philip Bates prizes are invited to participate - we next meet Angus Carter ably performing Bohme's *Trumpet Concerto* and the catchy *Bewitched* by Richard Rogers, clearly demonstrating his mastery of this instrument and confirming his title of winner of this performance prize at BVGS.

Next on stage we are treated to the young voices of Darcy Humphries



and Katherine Rawlings-Smith, who Martin discovered when he was asked to accompany them, singing the beautiful *Pie Jesu* from Lloyd Webber's *Requiem* which is delivered with much poise and musicality to the audience's obvious delight.

Bishop Vesey's own saxophone ensemble joins the programme - I think for the first time - with a selection of popular pieces arranged for this lineup and what a delight it is to hear them!



Jonathan Styles, Philip's School Friend

It is always a pleasure to hear the winners of the Ashleyan Opera Prize singing operatic repertoire from the Classical and Romantic eras. Alexandra Anusca performs the idyllic aria *Ach, ich fühl's* from Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* and Michael Lam, *Avant de quitter ces*



George Stackhouse

lieux from Gonoud's *Faust*. Both are an absolute credit to the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire where they have been studying.

Moving our focus onto the winners of the Philip Bates Prize for Composers and Songwriters, we hear James Abel's *Emotion Zero*, a captivating interpretation of depression and stress. Through his music, James creates a series of dissonances and resolutions whilst exploring a range of textures set to his own text.

Bringing the first half to a close, the Ex Cathedra Academies make their welcome contribution to the evening. The Children's Academy performs its *Restaurant Song*, demonstrating how the children are developing their singing skills and confidence with a choice of



food items told through solos and chorus sections. This is followed by *Belle Mama*, an expert introduction to part singing through this catchy, simple round. The slightly older Junior Academy performs the energetic and rhythmical *Yo le canto el día* by David Brunner, again displaying excellent control and concentration when led by Rebecca Ledgard, before the Senior Academy sings Will Todd's arrangements of *The Lord is my Shepherd* and Chydenius' *Deep in the Night*. All the academies display all that is good about singing in education and the secure performances at all levels leave the audience going off for their interval refreshments enriched and uplifted.

The second part of the evening begins with another prize winner, George Stackhouse, and his compositions *Awake* and *Steel Cold Heart* sung and accompanied by himself. After this we are treated to the lovely tenor voice of Steve Davis singing two 20th Century English songs. Gurney's *'Tis Time, I Think* and Ireland's *Goal and Wicket* capture a picture of the natural beauty of the countryside, always a joy.

Philip's friend and contemporary from BVGS, Jonathan Styles, makes an appearance on the piano this year to perform and improvise upon the abstract yet exquisite *Kinderstück* by Webern - a sensitive and thought-provoking performance.

is becoming synonymous with ATOB and this year not only do we hear Georgina on the violin we get to hear her as a composer too when she performs her own piece *Barn Dance* before playing the marvellous *Adagio* from Max Bruch's *Violin Concerto*.

The familiar group known as 'Basil's Bunch' met together again during the day of the concert and rehearsed *Can You Feel the Love Tonight*, *Heal the world* and *Bohemian Rhapsody*. I can't really say how it sounds from the audience point of view but from my place conducting it is pretty exciting and I am very proud of them all!! - a great bunch of singers who just enjoy coming together for a good old sing.

It is an absolute pleasure in the programme to have Alexendra and Michael return to the stage to deliver more opera - Mozart's *La ci darem la mano* and Massenet's *Gavotte* from *Manon* - before the Heart of England Singers' final offering brings three uplifting popular songs from Leo Friedman, Cole Porter and Irving Berlin. The audience are certainly foot-tapping by this stage before having to join in with the whole company for *Que Sera, Sera* - a fitting nod to the late Doris Day.

Well, whatever will be, will be.....
Until next time.....

The sound of Georgina Bloomfield

Sarah Dudley



Ways to Support Us

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You will find this Donate button at the top of our website <http://philipbatesttrust.co.uk/> to send a donation straight to the Trust through our PayPal account..

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When you shop online through smile.amazon.co.uk, Amazon will donate to The Philip Bates Trust and support us every time you shop..

4. Direct Bank Transfer

Anyone wishing to donate in this way please contact me directly on moulton.k@icloud.com and I can send you details.

Electronic Grant Applications

The process by which you can apply for a grant from the trust has always been paper based. We have been developing an online application form which will be going live any day now. This will be promoted through our website and Facebook page to encourage all future applicants to apply electronically. Paper-based applications will still be accepted for those who do not want to use the new forms.



Philip Bates Composition Prize

As of writing we aren't sure whether we will be holding a 2020 competition. Once the autumn term is in full swing at Royal Birmingham Conservatoire the situation should become clearer.

bright. In this piece the viola took on the character of the tiger while the soprano represented the prey. The prowling nature of the tiger was well suggested by the meandering viola part but ultimately I felt it lacked structure.



*Georgia Denham, Rob Laidlow & Kai
Moohan-Shotan*

The final of the 2019 competition took place in The Lab at Royal Birmingham Conservatoire in November last year and achieved an excellent standard, despite one of the entries unfortunately being withdrawn on the day itself due to illness. This meant there were five pieces to be enjoyed by the audience that evening. Host Andy Ingamells gave lively and informed introductions to each piece.

First was 'The Tyger' by Royal Birmingham Conservatoire student Joshua Dowling, a setting of William Blake's famous poem that begins *Tyger, tyger, burning*

Next came // *for Paul* by previous prize-winner Georgia Denham. Written for friend and colleague Paul, this piece documented the second time they met, on a train journey from London to Birmingham. Set in two movements, the lyrics represented first her perspective then his on their meeting and were sung by them respectively. Accompanied by accordion, bass clarinet, chamber organ and celeste, this piece had a chatty informal almost sprechgesang feel to it.

Aroha by London-based Rob Laidlow was the first piece to be performed conforming to the new competition regulations. It had been decided since the previous competition to allow purely instrumental compositions as long as they had been inspired by a text, in addition to those with a vocal setting of the words. *Aroha* was an extremely accomplished composition for string quartet, inspired by a Maori love song and featuring sliding and other



motifs passing between the instruments. At the beginning the texture was quite complex and it gradually simplified until at the end we heard fragments of the love song theme. It was superbly performed by the Echea Quartet, a young professional ensemble Martin and I happened to catch later in a lunchtime concert down in London.

Emily Abde sang her own composition *Iktsuarpok*, a setting of a poem by Yorkshire poet Gill Lambert. *Iktsuarpok* is an Inuit word meaning a feeling of anticipation leading you to keep looking outside to see if anyone is coming: in this case it was anticipation concerning uncertain weather. This piece had a slightly folksy feel and was for mezzo soprano and piano.

The final competitor was Birmingham-based Kai Moohan-Shotan with *Pulse*, a jazz fusion composition in 5/4 time. This was an exciting piece featuring the composer on piano together with saxophone, bass guitar and drums. Inspired by the short poem *Song* by Seamus Heaney, the repeated and varied motifs created a satisfying structure in this rhythmic instrumental composition.

Royal Birmingham Conservatoire adjudicator Mantas Krukauskas chose Georgia Denham's piece for its prize while we split the Philip Bates Trust adjudication between

Aroha and *Pulse* These prizes were worth £400 each, while the audience prize (also won by *Pulse*) was £200. The money for all the prizes was given by Philip Bates Trust.

Sue Bates

Wiesniacy

70th Anniversary

On October 12th 2019 fellow trustee Rev Margaret MacLachlan, Sue and I went on a trip to Birmingham University to watch the Wiesniacy Folk Song and Dance Group presenting their 70th anniversary concert in the Bramall Music Building

Philip Bates Trust had supported them after they put in an exciting bid to help buy a new set of costumes for their young dancers. They had invited us to come along and watch; we saw a really colourful collection of stylishly presented Polish dances performed to authentic live music rather than recordings. What a fantastic evening!

Martin Bates



Wiesniacy dancers showing off their new costumes



Virtual Games and Quiz Night 2020

As a sign of the times the Annual Games and Quiz night was a little bit different this year. A socially distanced event via Zoom™ was arranged with everyone participating from the comfort of their own homes. The number of participants in each team ranged from one to six with approximately fifty devices involved and there was no pressure to submit scores. The evening was about taking part and not winning

To begin the evening the participants' screens were taken over by a selection of animal eyes and both adults and children quickly gathered around to try to identify which animal they belonged to. Children all happily took to the screen to share their answers.

Microphones were all muted and the first of two general knowledge rounds organised by Stan and Sue Gamble took place. These rounds covered a diverse range of topics and difficulty levels giving everyone the opportunity to get something right.

Sue Bates then challenged everyone to dash around their homes to find a selection of 20 items within five minutes. This brought much laughter to all especially when on Sue's prompt everyone held up the

items that they had found.... fortunately, all of the 'pants' appeared to be freshly laundered!

A music round organised by Martin Bates followed. Homes were filled with snippets (with some singing along) of famous songs from the world of musical theatre.

It was time for a break, during which many drinks were poured and snacks consumed, but just to keep everyone's brains ticking Karen Moulton put our film knowledge to the test. A large picture was displayed and hidden within it were clues to fifty films.

The final round was hosted by Julie Larkin. This had everyone testing their knowledge of famous brand logos.

As the evening drew to a close smiling faces filled everyone's screens, a sure sign that great fun was had by all.

The event was not ticketed and was organised in the first instance as an opportunity for people to socialise in a safe way. However, after lots of generous donations from those participating the virtual quiz night raised a phenomenal £600 along with lots of laughter..... Mission accomplished!

Kirsty Robinson



Ex Cathedra Academies Scholarship

Philip Bates Trust has always had a special relationship with Ex Cathedra Academies due to the fact that Philip was a founder member of Ex Cathedra's first youth choir, the Academy of Vocal Music. This is now an umbrella title for several such choirs: Children's Academy, Junior Academy and Senior Academies.



Jacob Cotgreave

For many years sponsorship meant that young singers could reap the benefits of belonging to these choirs without payment as the cost of tutors and accompanists was covered. However, this sponsorship unfortunately ended and in September 2019 it became necessary to charge a fee for membership.

The Trustees of Philip Bates Trust decided to inaugurate a scholarship where, each term, a deserving

young singer would be rewarded with a certificate and have the fee for that term paid by the Trust. The first recipients of this Philip Bates Scholarship in 2020 have been Kirsty Fernie (Senior Upper Voices) and Jacob Cotgreave (Senior Lower Voices). There has been much excitement generated by this award and we hope it will continue to prosper and encourage both these and future recipients.

We have also contributed towards a hardship fund for the Academies to which families can apply if they are in straightened circumstances and cannot afford the fees.

Despite the lockdown, Ex Cathedra Academies have continued with rehearsals via zoom. Several impressive virtual choir videos have also been created and released.

Sue Bates



Kirsty Fernie



Who did we help 2019-20?

Ex Cathedra Academies – Philip Bates Scholarship scheme (please see article on Page 9)

Asmall Primary School, Ormskirk – a professional textile artist for their banner project (please see article on Page 11)

The Lighthouse Charity, Norfolk – Ignite Youth Drama Project – contribution towards school holiday workshop & drama equipment

OHMI Trust, Birmingham – Arts Award Music Makers workshop for disabled pupils

Wiesniacy Folk Song & Dance Group, Birmingham – contribution towards cost of traditional Polish costumes for their 70th anniversary concert (please see article on Page 7)

Artspace Dudley – art materials for this visual arts project for home educated pupils in Dudley

Hereford Sixth Form College – contribution to cover the cost of a day's visit from a jazz / pop professional to work with A Level music students

Shropshire Youth Folk Ensemble – towards Beats & Bows project

The James Hornsby School, Basildon, Essex – Sing It! & Create It! singing & songwriting workshops

The Meadows Primary Academy, Stoke on Trent – materials & artist in residence to lead creation of whole school artwork to reflect new school name

Amblecote Primary School, Stourbridge – money to buy glockenspiels, recorders & ukeleles

Get Set Girls, London Boroughs of Hackney & Haringey – cost of choir leader for 12 weeks (this project has been delayed due to Covid)

Queen Alexandra College, Birmingham (for disabled students) – cost of 4 externally-led workshops for their QA Artsfest 2020 (cancelled due to Covid, will hopefully take place next year)



Central Youth Theatre, Wolverhampton – Letters in Lockdown project – ‘Play in a Box’ materials for pupils to participate from home

Alec Banner – towards cost of National Children’s Brass Band course

Gemma Winfield – towards National Children’s Orchestra course

Tommy Hill – contribution towards the cost of a professional quality cor anglais

Toby Fox Evans – cost of dancewear for Musical Theatre course

Asmall Primary School Banner Project

We were impressed by the application from Asmall Primary School in Ormskirk: a two day art project was proposed and all 156 pupils would be involved. Textile artist Victoria Hough would lead the project to create a dramatic banner for the school’s entrance foyer that would last for many years.

The children would be engaged in a collective creative task, expressing what they valued in their school community. Many repurposed and recycled materials would be used and the children would be introduced to handicraft and sewing techniques.



Detail of our logo



Asmall School Foyer

We loved this project and were able to underwrite the textile artist’s fee. What a delight it was to see that our logo was incorporated into the finished piece, which is now displayed in pride of place near the school entrance. Our invitation to view the work in person has had to be delayed because of Covid, but we hope to visit when possible.

Sue Bates



A Virtual Touch of Basil 2020

Looking back at the video recording John Moulton made at last year's Touch of Basil concert, I can be clearly heard inviting everyone to come to our 20th Anniversary Concert which was booked to take place at Bishop Vesey's in Sutton Coldfield on September 26th 2020. No-one can have known then how things were going to turn out. As some of you will know by now our 2020 concert will still be on September 26th but it will be a virtual one involving past and present performers.

I have had to rely to some extent on recordings made over recent years by some groups no longer able to meet together at present. This clearly applies to Heart of England Singers and Basil's Bunch. However, working online presents new possibilities. We have had the chance to show dancing which would not have been possible in the live concert: Matthew Bates, a Trust beneficiary, joins us from the stage at the Royal Ballet School.

We wanted to include performers from across the 20 years to show how performers have moved on in their lives since we first saw them as youngsters, such as Mike Davis with the Mikey Davis Big Band, Alison Meek and Tom Walker (now known as Thomas Atlas),.

Some of the regular soloists and groups are also performing, including Georgina Bloomfield, Devon Brown, Basil's Bunch, Heart of England Singers and Ex Cathedra Academies. It is also exciting that we will be able to hear for the first time SongSquad from St Alphege School in Solihull led by Allison Taylor.

Unfortunately there has not been an Ashleyan Opera Prize so far this year so we have invited 2018 winner Samantha Oxborough to contribute and she will be performing *Widmung* by Schumann. Also from Royal Birmingham Conservatoire we will hear the Philip Bates Prize - winning composition *Pulse* by Kai Moohan-Shohan

Please do join us via YouTube and the link on our website for this online concert. It should be available from 7.00 on Saturday 26th September and hopefully will remain so for some time.

Martin Bates



Alison Meek