



friends of the martyn donaldson music trust

Newsletter 4 | January 2005

Happy New Year!

Welcome to our latest Trust newsletter. We hope you will enjoy reading the first despatch from our volunteer at Starehe, Matthew Brooks, as well as catching up on plans for future events, particularly our Celebrity Auction, which takes place on 26th Feb. A great evening's entertainment is guaranteed!

Those of you with email addresses will notice that we have been emailing Trust correspondence in the last few months. This cuts down on stationery, postage costs and Trustee time! However, if you have experienced difficulty reading any of these documents or would prefer to receive information as hard copy, please do let us know. If we don't currently have your email address and you would like to receive information electronically, please do contact us at stephania1705@yahoo.co.uk and we'll add you to our email list.

We wish you all the best for 2005 and thank you for your continued support of Martyn's Trust.

*Stephanie Donaldson &
Jane Silvester*
Friends Co-ordinators

Chetham's Pupils bring Christmas Joy

On 4th December we welcomed string players and choristers from the world-famous Chetham's School of Music, Manchester to Macclesfield, to give a concert of classical and Christmas music. The Chamber Choir and Serenata Strings gave breathtaking performances, clearly displaying the musical talent for which they are rightly renowned. An enjoyable evening was had all (particularly the pupils, who ate every last scrap of food we provided for them!!). We hope to invite these amazing young musicians to give another concert in 2006/7.

LIFE AT STAREHE - THE FIRST THREE MONTHS

by Matt Brooks

I have been Music Volunteer at Starehe Boys' Centre and School for three months now. A lot has happened - I have been involved in many different musical activities - both at school, and also around Nairobi in general. I will try to give some idea of what I've been up to, along with my impressions of life here in general - some flavours of Nairobi, and Kenyan culture.

Leaving, and First Impressions of Nairobi

My flight to left on 17th September - an early morning flight from Heathrow, so after a few hours sleep we (me and my parents) left my home town of Ashbourne around three o'clock in the morning. Although I had been preparing myself - I had sorted out pretty much everything that needed organising before departing (mostly in the two weeks before leaving - a hectic and chaotic time for me, and also my family! - thanks to them for giving me so much help in preparing for this), and had discussed the trip with many different people - it was still only on this drive to the airport that it fully hit home and I realised - 'I'm going to live in Nairobi for over a year! Wow! This is going to be an experience!', mixed with a bit of (or maybe a lot, if I'm honest!) - 'Oh my God! What's it going to be like? What will I have to do? What sort of place will I be living in?...' etc., etc.!

On arriving at the airport, checking-in was a somewhat traumatic experience, as I had packed quite a bit more than my baggage allowance (kind of hoping they might take pity and let me get away with it!), and ended up having to completely re-pack in the middle of the airport! Anyway, after negotiating this hurdle, and saying goodbye to my parents (along with half of my treasured possessions!) I was on my way.

The flight was good (though even a die hard Tarantino fan like myself would have to admit that *Kill Bill: Volume 2* does get a little boring after about two and a half consecutive viewings), and it was a fantastic experience flying over North Africa, looking out to see the vast expanse of desert below. I spent some time gazing out of the window, fascinated by this sight, - and then after turning back to Bill and Uma for a couple of hours, to look out the window again and see that we were still flying over more desert was quite incredible!

I arrived at Kenyatta airport in Nairobi in the evening, and was successfully retrieved off the baggage carousel by John Odor, who works in



Matt plays for the Leavers concert

publicity at the school, and my two new flatmates - Stuart Gray and Edwin Martin, both of them also volunteers like myself. Stuart is from England and is the Computer Volunteer at the school, and Edwin is an American Peace Corps volunteer working for CFSK (Computers for Schools, Kenya) who have their main workshop on the Starehe compound.

So my first views of Nairobi were in the dark - driving up from the airport through town (stopping on the way to buy 'Kenchick' for dinner!) and then out towards Eastleigh, before arriving at the Starehe compound. It was all quite strange to begin with - the heat, the smells, the fires by the side of the road where people were burning rubbish, the vague glimpses I got in the darkness of these shack-type buildings by the roadside in the slum area next to Starehe. It was all quite different to anything I had seen or experienced before.

The next day was something else again. After being shown round the school by Stu, we went into town. I just remember thinking how crazy the place was! All the matatus along Tom Mboya Street, with their touts shouting for business (*matatus*: the common form of public transport in Nairobi - garishly spray-painted vans, often with incredibly loud music playing, and coloured neon lights inside at night! - they can seem like a kind of mobile nightclub! The drivers are invariably crazy, - as are the touts, who have a habit of holding on to the top of the door frame and swinging their legs out the door on the corners when taken at high speed! - though fortunately safety has apparently improved a great deal - they now only take the number of passengers

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Life at Starehe - The First Three Months by Matt Brooks

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that they actually have seats for!); the crowds moving down the pavement, spilling into the street (OK - you get this sort of thing in London - but it's ten times more chaotic over here!); the street vendors selling all manner of things from mangoes to mobile phones; the different sights, sounds, smells, the different clothes; and just the dirt, the dust, and pavements with gaping holes which the city council would be sued thousands for on a daily basis if this were in England!

It was all very different to life back home - and although it wasn't exactly a shock, as this was what I had been expecting, - still, experiencing the reality of it is something you can't really prepare for. Also, the poverty and living conditions, especially near the school (and other areas - Starehe is by no means the worst, but it is literally very close to home) are things that I had never seen first-hand before, and again, although you go prepared, it still makes an impression.

The School

On Sunday morning I met the Director of the school - Dr. Geoffrey Griffin - who founded the whole place in 1959. He took me for a walk around and showed me the two tin huts where it all started. He has gradually expanded and built around that original site, and the school is now home to over 1000 boys and stretches to 48 acres. Dr. Griffin has devoted his whole life to this school and the boys who pass through it, and he is a truly remarkable man.

On the Monday of my first week I was introduced to the boys in assembly, and asked to say a few words - a somewhat daunting experience in a huge hall packed with over 1000 students! But the Director seemed happy - so it must have come out alright!

Teaching

The first few weeks were spent getting to know the place, my way around, getting to know the people I needed to know, etc. Stu has been a great help in showing me the ropes and during the first few weeks he really helped me settle in to my new life here. I am extremely grateful to him for all his assistance!

I started teaching piano in my second week. I was allocated several students from each of the Forms 1,

2 and 3, and have been giving them all one-to-one tuition. The Form 4s had their final practical exams for their KCSEs just after I arrived, so I have not been working with them, but from January I will be teaching boys from all four forms.

I was initially a bit nervous about giving my first piano lessons here - but after my first day teaching I was very happy with how it had gone. I was confident they all had potential as piano students - though all in very different ways - and also felt I was going to be able to offer something useful and help them in their musical development.

I've also started organising listening sessions for some of the boys. This came about from a request from one particular student, who wanted to know what CDs I had, and could he listen to them. It has turned out to be very successful - we often have a full classroom of boys eager to sit through a whole Beethoven symphony, or whatever I throw at them! After playing a piece, I tell them a bit about it, let them ask questions, and then ask them what they thought about the music etc. After initially being quiet and cautious about offering ideas or opinions, many are now starting to open up and contribute their thoughts to what I would like to be an informal discussion of varying types of music. I hope we will be able to continue with and build on these sessions - and hopefully get more of the Form 1s and 2s involved, as the sessions have provided the boys with a chance to hear lots of different pieces that they wouldn't normally have the opportunity to hear.

We have also started rehearsals for a musical, which will be staged around May. John Odor had already started to organise this and has brought in a director from a theatre group in town. Roy Lawrence, and asked me to be the Music Director - to which of course, I agreed. The production is Roy's own version of 'Beauty and the Beast', with songs taken from various musicals and other sources.

In October we had several sessions where we taught the boys some of the songs, and Roy came in to help audition and select candidates for the lead parts. Since then we have been teaching some of the songs, and putting some initial choreography to them, and John has had a couple of read-through sessions of the script with the principals. I have been greatly assisted in the song-teaching by two senior boys - Patrick Gatonga and Stanley Kamau - who are no longer actual music students, but have evidently kept things running whilst there has been no music volunteer at the school, and who have helped me out a great deal since I've arrived - many thanks to these guys!

I hope we will be able to produce a really good show, as there has not been one for some time, and it would be good to try and re-install what used to be a tradition here.

Musical Life in Nairobi

I have also been getting involved with other musical activities around Nairobi: as has been something of a tradition, the Starehe Music Volunteer tends to play in the Nairobi orchestra, - so I have been



Matt visits Crater Lake

playing percussion and we gave two successful concerts in November (for one I organised a school trip and got free tickets for a bus-load of boys, who seemed to thoroughly enjoy it!), then another couple in December with the Nairobi Music Society choir; - whom I have also been working with as rehearsal pianist, as well as playing for auditions for soloists for the concerts; and finally, I have been playing for a theatre group called the Phoenix Players whose Christmas show is a cabaret with songs from the musicals and other popular numbers, so this has been great fun, and keeping me busy since the end of the school term!

And for the future ...

The boys gave a very lively(!), informal 'leavers' concert just before the Christmas holiday, which went really well, and I am hoping to make this a more regular occurrence. I am also planning (with the other piano teacher, Levi Wataka) to give a short recital of piano duets and solos for the boys in the new year, and I have been speaking to some of the musicians in the Nairobi Orchestra about having them come into school and do similar things (workshops and concerts on different instruments - some of which the boys may never have seen before!).

The first three months here have been very productive and successful, and also very busy! I hope we can build on this next year.

I have managed a couple of brief holidays to see some of the country, which has been a great experience! On the first trip we camped in Hell's Gate (a National Park) and near Lake Naivasha - involving some rather exciting (indeed, scary!) wildlife encounters, and a cycle up to the beautiful Crater Lake - and on the second we stayed in Kisumu (on Lake Victoria) and Kakamega Forest (the last remaining patch of an equatorial rainforest that once stretched across the whole of Africa). So I am hoping to do more of this sort of thing as well!





MDMT Celebrity Auction!

the martyn donaldson music trust

Celebrity Auction

Date: Saturday 26th February 2005.
Venue: The Tytherington Club, Macclesfield, Cheshire.

Featuring:
3 Course Dinner, Live Music, Dancing and
Celebrity Auction with Special Celebrity Guests.

**Spend an evening in the company
of the Stars of Coronation Street!**

Tickets: £30.00

For more information or to book call Mary on:
01260 275087
Advance Bookings Only



Our grand Celebrity Auction (as endorsed by the regulars of The Rover's Return as you can see!) takes place on Sat 26th February at The Tytherington Club, Macclesfield.

We are delighted to offer **SPECIALLY REDUCED TICKETS** for Friends of MDMT **ONLY** at £20, for an evening of live music, dancing, an auction with the stars from Coronation Street and a three-course meal.

During the evening there will be the opportunity to take part in a raffle to win signed photos and other goodies from the likes of *Bruce Forsyth, Ant & Dec, Michael Owen, Bill*

Bailey, Victoria Wood, Penelope Keith and Bobby Charlton. The really big prizes are reserved for the auction and include items such as an exclusive *Harry Potter 'Howler'* and crew t-shirt direct from the set of the most recent film, *Gary Lineker's* script from the Euro 2004 Final Match of the Day, *Ian Hislop's* tie as worn on BBC's Have I Got News For You, and a fully signed and mounted *Manchester City* football shirt!

To book tickets for a unique evening of entertainment please contact **Mary on 01260 275087** (advance booking only).

Special Kenyan Guest

We were delighted to see **Kennedy Hongo**, Assistant to the Director at Starehe, in the UK during 2004. Kennedy joined us at our November Trustees meeting to tell us how life is progressing at Starehe and give us some exciting news about Starehe Girls Centre, which is finally becoming a reality, with 72 girls enrolled and beginning their education this month. We also discussed some future plans with Kennedy. More anon.

Kennedy brought with him two videos. One outlines the history of Starehe from its inception in 1959 in two tin huts that still stand at the centre of the campus to its pre-eminence in 2005 as a beacon of hope not only in Kenya but the whole African continent. The other is called 'A Chance for Thomas'

and traces this young man's journey from his life on the streets of Nairobi to being offered the chance of an education at Starehe. If any Friends would like to see either of these videos, please contact Andy Donaldson.



FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Celebrity Auction!

Saturday 26th February 2005

(see preview on page 3)

Chamber Music for a Summer's Evening

Friday 22nd July 2005 - 107 Byrons Lane, Macclesfield

A trio of professional young musicians who met whilst studying at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music in Glasgow will be performing in the home of Vin and Sue Thomas. Matthew Brown (piano) is well known to Macclesfield people as a past pupil of All Hallows High School. Matt will be joined by Shuna Sendall (soprano) who has sung with Scottish National Opera and Alex South (clarinet) who is a member of the Scottish Clarinet Quartet. MDMT is delighted that Vin and Sue have agreed to be our hosts and we thank them very warmly in advance. We hope to serve strawberries and cream / wine / coffee to enjoy as you listen to the music. More details nearer the time.

St Aidan's Swing Band

Date TBC - Macclesfield Methodist Church

We're inviting the worthy winners of the 2004 Outstanding Performance Award at the National Festival of Music for Youth (sponsored by MDMT) to bring their special blend of jazz to delight audiences in Macclesfield (you may remember previous award-winners Abraham Darby School Jazz Band performed for us last year). Look out for a date in the summer.

Martyn's Music 2

Date TBC - Macclesfield Methodist Church

Plans are afoot for a second evening of music connected in various ways with Martyn, encompassing a vast range of musical styles performed by friends and family. More details in due course.

Saxophone on Loan

In the summer newsletter, we reported that the Trust has purchased a baritone saxophone, which is now on loan to **John Plevin**, a pupil at Tytherington High School, Macclesfield. Here is an update from John on his musical progress:

"I have been playing the alto saxophone since year 7, when I started high school. I was introduced to a wide range of musical styles, which after four and a half years, whittled down mainly to jazz and blues. After three years I took up the tenor saxophone, which opened more doors for me and allowed me to progress.



I play in the Cheshire Youth Jazz Band as well as the two school bands. In this I am able to hear and learn from good saxophonists. Recently I have been able to progress musically and gain a bigger repertoire by playing the new baritone sax from Martyn's Trust, both on my own and with the schools bands, adding a new level of sound.

I hope to progress further in the next few years through playing this new instrument, as it has already helped me greatly."

John Plevin

CONGRATULATIONS!

...to our Jersey trustee representative, Jane, who has recently married Tim Silvester. Best wishes to the happy couple.

MDMT CD's Now Available!

Alongside the compilation CD, 'Dreaming', we have two further recordings on offer. **Mozart's Requiem** was performed at Macclesfield Methodist Church in Martyn's memory in April 2003. 'Martyn's Music' was our first sell-out event featuring the music Martyn loved performed by many of his friends and family, which took place in September 2003. CDs are priced £5 each. Please contact Andy Donaldson if you would like to order one.



Your Friendly Trustees

Chairman: Andy Donaldson	Treasurer: Matthew Berry	Fund-raiser: Lis Murphy
Vice-Chairman and Friends Co-ordinator: Stephanie Donaldson	Publicity: Chris Brown	MDMT Trustee: Colin North
Secretary: Linda Donaldson	Fund-raiser: Katie Muncaster	Friends Co-ordinator: Jane Silvester