



friends of the martyn donaldson music trust

Newsletter 11 | July 2008

Welcome to our summer newsletter. We have plenty of activities, both past and future, to report, and I hope you will find the newsletter interesting reading! We are especially looking forward to seeing you at our next 'Martyn's Music' concert on Sat 13th September. Please bring along your friends and family for a great night's entertainment.

Thank you as always for your generous support of Martyn's Trust.

*Stephanie Donaldson
Vice Chairman*

Live Music Now! in Macc

MDMT is once again sponsoring a summer series of concerts by the young professional musicians of the Live Music Now scheme, which aims to take music into places it would not normally be experienced.

The performances take place during July at the Peatfield Centre, East Cheshire Hospice and the Stroke Rehab Unit at the hospital. This year's musicians are Calum Stewart (flute) and Jamie Smith (accordion) playing a mixture of British/Irish folk and traditional tunes.



An Insightful Experience at Coulson

When volunteering becomes a learning opportunity!

Since January of this year, MDMT has been sponsoring the work of Joseph Wasonga, a volunteer music assistant at Coulson School in Gilgil, Kenya. Joseph was a pupil at Starehe Boys and is waiting to start University. He has no family to return to, so our Starehe volunteer Chris Walters was resourceful enough to find Joseph this position at Coulson in the meantime. MDMT is supporting Joseph with living expenses and costs to travel back to Nairobi for music lessons. Read Joseph's report on his achievements so far at Coulson below:

My experience at Coulson as a music volunteer Hmmm, well I'd have to say it's been quite pleasant and insightful over the last six months since I completed school at Starehe Boys Centre. I've learnt many lessons with a practical approach on what it really involves to teach music and exactly what it meant to my teachers coming to teach me less than a year ago.

Coulson Schools consist of a boy school and girl school at Gilgil, about two hours drive from Nairobi with a total population of 298, 160 boys and 138 girls. They are about five miles apart and I teach at both.

On my arrival at Coulson schools I was happy of the fact that it was quite an appropriate place for me to volunteer as a music teacher in that there was much I could offer considering the vast difference there is between Coulson School and my former school, not only in a musical aspect but on general perspective. I felt greatly honored particularly because it was evident to me that I would get well on with my students as they are roughly my age and we would have similar views on many issues. At some point though I felt it would be more of a challenge than an advantage. Anyway I took to the task

and started off preparing for an end of term music Gala which we held on 12th of April. I taught the students a variety of music items I learnt at school and let them build up on them for an inter-house competition during the gala. These involved choir music group traditional songs as well as skits. There was also a provision for solo pop songs, poems, public speaking and one student managed to stage a piano performance we had worked on for the gala. I enjoyed preparing for the gala and on the day we invited the parents. It was a success and a fantastic music experience for us all! The outcome of the gala actually gave rise to an idea of holding a school function, Appreciation Day, for the first time in the schools history when the management was eventually assured that the students could provide entertainment on the day of the event.

After the April holidays we've embarked on choir rehearsals as we prepared for the music festivals taking place this term. The girls did a traditional folk dance at the District level and are yet to present an piano accompanied choral piece and a negro spiritual at the National level while the boys are getting on well with traditional folk dance and they've qualified through to the Provincial level having been first both

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An Insightful Experience at Coulson *(continued from page 1)*

at the District and Regional festivals. The choirs are doing well and all the students involved are enjoying music as a co-curricular activity. However, we did not have any instrumental performances apart from the choir items and poems. For the first time Coulson Schools are taking part in the music festivals and the students have already done excellently as per the standards! They are glad to receive certificates for their performance.

At the moment I am preparing the boys and the girls choirs for a total of five items at the National Music Festivals in August. The students are very determined to succeed and are very faithful to rehearsals. We shall be meeting many other schools nationwide including Starehe Girls Centre and Starehe Boys Centre. Coulson is at the same time competing against Starehe in the accompanied pieces and spirituals at the National level. This is a big challenge ahead of us considering that we have never taken part in this exercise before.

At the end of this term we shall have a talent show which I intend to leave to the students to organize and run the event. The idea is for them to present items they are gifted in, especially music and I shall give them the guidelines they require on this. Principally this is to nurture a capability to independently run an event amongst the students. This is something we used to do at Starehe.

The plans for next term are to focus on instrumental music whereby I'll work on piano lessons more and begin lessons on the descant recorder of which we have three, donated to the school by Mr. Chris Walters, MDMT volunteer at Starehe Boys Centre. We shall also have a lot of music during the carol service which will

be held in November before the schools break for the Christmas holidays.

The staff is quite supportive of the progress of music in schools and one or two have accompanied me to the competitions with students except that there are those who consider music not worth giving time thereby dismissing students proud of being members of the music club. On one occasion the students have been told off having celebrated at school after clinching the first position at the District Music Festivals.

By contrast, the students are very determined to make music despite the challenge. It's been hectic getting transport to attend the festivals because the school does not have enough finances to pay for transport and not much music material. Essentially, all is well at Coulson and I'm enthusiastic about the progress.

I'd say that it's been a great experience for me teaching music at Coulson Schools and really educative as well since I've been out of school. I'm looking forward to offering all I can to the students for as long I will be a teacher at Coulson Schools. I have not got much practice time though since I have no place to do my practice over the week and I have to wait for the weekend and practice while at Starehe. I'll be sitting for my piano grade four exam in two weeks time. I'm sure it will be great!

Finally, I am very grateful to the Martyn Donaldson Music Trust for the support they've given to us as the Coulson schools and we can be sure of a fantastical musical experience at Coulson. Thank you all!

Joseph Wasonga

Macc Youth Band to support MDMT!

We are really pleased to announce that Macclesfield Youth Band has this year chosen MDMT to be its charity to support over the next 12 months. We are looking forward to working with the band in a number of joint collaborations. David Kisiaky will be visiting the band in early September to talk to them about life in Kenya and we hope to arrange a pen pal scheme between the band members and young musicians in Kenya. More news on our plans to come...

Music for Youth News

MDMT has continued to support national charity Music for Youth over the last six months.



In January we were delighted to present a concert by St Aidan's Swing Band from Harrogate, the recipients of the MDMT-sponsored Jazz award at the National Festival last year, who blasted away the winter blues with a night of jazz and swing! In the same month, we provided funding for travel expenses for the Primary Proms, a series of free concerts for primary schoolchildren held at major concert venues such as Birmingham's Symphony Hall.



In March, MDMT sponsored the Birmingham Regional Festival, a day of performances from groups as varied as a concert orchestra, recorder ensemble and dhol drummers! In July we once again have a presence at the National Festival of Music for Youth which attracts over 10,000 young musicians to Birmingham. MDMT is presenting awards in the Choirs and Jazz categories, to be hosted for the first time in Birmingham's prestigious and newly-refurbished Town Hall.



Update from Mr Bumble!

James Kisiah reports from Keele University

James Kisiah, a former student at Starehe who took the part of 'Mr Bumble' in the production of 'Oliver!' is now studying at Keele University and sent us this report:

The singer who reminded us that time wanes as our journeys draw nigh must have been inspired from above – for I do have a personal testimony of the same. About nine months ago, I was an unknown boy who was yet to use a mode of transport other than the road. Little did I know about life outside my village in Kitale Kenya, or Kenya's Capital, Nairobi, where I went to high school. The only inkling of how things were out of these two places harboured in the blancmange between my ears thanks to the Geography learnt in class. Now I can look back and see how far away from the realisation of my full potential I was, having experienced eight good months of stay and study in the UK.

James and Kisiah, which means 'born after twins', are my two commonly used names. I am the youngest in a family of six including mum, one brother and three sisters. I call them brothers and sisters albeit that I was born of a different father as I grew up not knowing that they were my step-siblings. The state of things surrounding my family made it turn into one that cannot support itself beyond basic needs. Six years ago, a smile came to all of us when I got a place in the top Kenyan high school, Starehe Boys', as a fully sponsored student for the whole duration of my four years of study. After the four years, I got admission into the college division of the same centre to do C.P.A. (Certified Public Accounting). In my second and final year of the course, I met Chris Walters (whom some of us called either Walters, or Mr. Chris - perhaps because we did not know which of the two names was the first name). Chris had just come to the centre as the new Music volunteer teacher. This actually made me cancel a job I was to quit college for, as I wanted to see how the new teacher was like. It was then that he decided to reintroduce an eight-year-buried tradition of annual musicals in the school. This was to be 'Oliver'.

In spite of the tough hurdles that placed themselves on the way to the achievement of the great shows, Chris, Joel (my closest friend in college) and I put the cast of boys together and brought back the much needed enthusiasm amongst the boys. It was this hard work that got me sponsors through Chris for my study in the UK. This has been the great turning point in my life as I have experienced a lot of things that have changed me for the better. I



have just completed my first year studying Maths and Computer Science. In line with my singing talent, I am a member of four choirs in the University: the Keele Philharmonic Choir – where I am also the Chairman for 2008/09, Chapel Singers, Rock Gospel Choir and the Catholic Music Group. Through them, I have interacted with people from all over the world and shared different views from different perspectives. The atmosphere in the university is good and very conducive for meaningful learning. The people are great, very polite, mindful and generous. My mates have supported me when needed and have been quick to tell me about Alton Towers, which remains my most memorable place – thanks to the ride Oblivion!

In essence, the last two years have been the best years in my life, firstly because I discovered an acting talent, when I took part in 'Oliver' as 'Mr. Bumble', and secondly because I met and interacted with Chris without whom I would not be studying in the UK. I give my credit to him for being very strong, focused and committed to his course in his stay in Kenya and above all, for going an extra mile by teaching me, and others too, how to fish. All the boys got something positive from him and he will be dotingly missed as he goes back home. All these would not have happened without the Martyn Donaldson Music Trust which sponsored his stay and work in Kenya. Therefore, thanks to the ladies and gentlemen who constitute this great course for through you, many lives are inspired and many smiles made.

There really is a lot to learn from!

James Kisiah

Frances Donaldson

We are sad to report the death earlier in the year of MDMT's oldest 'friend', Frances Donaldson. Frances, who was Martyn's grandmother, had been in failing health and died 3 days before what would have been her 91st birthday on 17th January. She had been a 'friend' since MDMT's early days in 2003 and always supported everything we did in her quiet and loving way. She came to all our events even those when the music rose to high decibel levels and she could be seen covering her ears!



The highlight for her was meeting HRH Princess Royal in September 2005 at MDMT's reception. As an ardent monarchist she'd even dug out a newspaper cutting reporting the Princess's birth in 1952 and duly brought it to the reception. In the heat of the moment she forgot to show it to the Princess during their brief conversation. Fortunately we managed to pass it on to the Lady in Waiting and several weeks after Frances received a letter of appreciation from the Palace! She was a wonderful mother, grandmother and friend to many people during her long life and will be greatly missed.

It's never too early to buy Christmas Cards!

For the first time, MDMT will be selling specially-designed Christmas cards this year. The card design is by local artist and MDMT Friend, Maggie Williamson and will be on sale at our September concert and from any Trustees in the run-up to the festive season!



Many thanks to Maggie for her donating her time and talent!

Donations

Heartfelt thanks to all who've donated to MDMT over the last six months, including:

- A major donation from an MDMT Friend, made on 14th April, Martyn's birthday
- Donation from the wedding of Helen Betteridge and Rob Herring
- Donation from Ann Muncaster in lieu of presents on the occasion of her 60th birthday
- Donation from the wedding of Carolyn Jones and Chris Hendry
- Donation from the Alto section of Macc Methodist Church Community Choir, who organised a choir social evening!
- Donation from Gerard Campbell in lieu of presents on the occasion of his 60th birthday
- Donations in memory of Frances Donaldson

PREVIEWS OF COMING EVENTS:

Martyn's Music 4

Saturday 13th September 2008, Macclesfield Methodist Church

Our fourth celebration of the music Martyn played and enjoyed takes place on Sat 13th September at Macclesfield Methodist Church. Another eclectic mix of vocal, instrumental and solo performances includes music by Irving Berlin, Monteverdi, Bach, Lionel Bart, Rachmaninov and Queen!

We are also looking forward to welcoming 6 students from Starehe Boys' School, Nairobi, together with our two most recent music volunteers, Chris Walters and Niamh Molloy, who will bring a true taste of musical Kenya to the evening! We also hope to introduce our next two volunteers to the audience. It's another one not to be missed! Tickets are on sale now from any Trustee or by calling 01625 433187.



Many thanks to Gusto Restaurant and Bar, Alderley Edge, for kindly sponsoring this concert

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MDMT Barn Dance

Saturday 11th October 2008, Wilmslow Parish Hall

Everyone enjoys a good knees-up, so now's your chance! MDMT is hosting a Barn Dance on Sat 11th October at Wilmslow Parish Hall, complete with supper, caller and live band The Jolly Machine! Lots of fun to be had by all, so grab you partners and get set to do-si-do the night away! Tickets will be on sale soon.