



MINSTREL NOTES

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Minstrel students Dhanis Rajasegar, Frank Jiang, Brianna Da Costa, Lily Liao, Eric Tan and Jack Hang at the 10th Anniversary Gala.

Top Students Win Awards in 2008

At the May 27th Gala, the Minstrel Foundation presented their annual awards to exceptional students. Each year this group seems to be more talented and hardworking than the last group, if that's possible.

The **Hagood Hardy Protégé Award** went to two wonderful young men, Jack Hang, 12, and Frank Jiang 12 years old. Frank is a talented drummer, a student at the Dixon Hall Music School for 6 years and is one of their most serious and dedicated students. He plans to use his Protégé award to attend the National Music Camp for the second time.

Jack Hang, the second Protégé winner, has been studying with Gloria Saarinen for three years. To his credit he won an amazing list of competitions and awards in everything from the Kiwanis Music Festivals to the ORMTA Senior Scholarship awards.

This was the first year for the **Fan Po Chu Music Award** which aims to support students who plan a career in music. The recipient is 16 year old pianist Eric Tan. The short list of Eric's accomplishments is more than a page long, but this summer he managed to achieve 100% on a math course, volunteer at a centre for disabled youth, teach music theory workshops, and "watched a little bit of the Olympics." Eric was accepted into the Young Artist Performance Academy at the Royal Conservatory Music in 2008, all before starting grade 11. He is an honour student and studies piano master classes, music history, harmony and musicianship. Eric's commitment to his music continues to delight all who meet him.

Minstrel Foundation receives \$400,000 gift from Ada Slaight

The Minstrel Foundation is proud to announce that we have received a special donation of \$400,000 from Mrs. Ada Slaight, a long-time supporter of our work and one of Toronto's most dedicated philanthropists. Mrs. Slaight's bequest will extend over a five year period and is intended for year-round music and arts classes, summer camps, and extra classes for promising older students. This means dozens of deserving children will be able to enjoy music and have weeks of summer fun. It also means scholarships for study for dedicated music students in high school and college. We consider it a privilege that Mrs. Slaight has selected our foundation for her generosity. We, and the children, thank her.

10th Anniversary Gala raises Record Amount



More than 275 people gathered at the Granite Club on May 27th, 2008 to celebrate the Minstrel Foundation's Tenth Anniversary. It was a grand evening and a time to show off the talents of the youngsters in Minstrel's programs. Scholarship students Thompson Egbo-Egbo and Andreas Tucci Clarke provided background music and students Eric Tan, Lily Liao and Jack Hang performed.

Canadian Jazz greats **Carol Welsman** and **Guido Basso** as well as **Robert Pilon** and their band were the evening's stars. To everyone's surprise, they were joined by saxophonist **Mike Ruby** and the old fashioned jam session capped off an electrifying evening of entertainment.



Along with the music, Robert Pilon worked his magic as auctioneer for items that included weeklong stays at estates in Ireland, Hilton Head, N.C., and The Four Seasons Aviara and Marbella, Spain. The surprise item was the opportunity to fly the Boeing 747 Simulator at the Institute for Aerospace Studies.



The evening raised \$140,000 in support of year-round music and arts programs, summer music camps, and post secondary scholarships for inner city children and youth.

The Minstrel Foundation thanks the many people who made the evening possible by their hard work. Special thanks go to those who donated items for auction and to all our sponsors.

Platinum sponsors were Unilock and Sullivan Entertainment. Gold sponsors were HSBC, Cassels Brock, Cornerstone 52, St. Lawrence Cement, Cedar Ridge, Dr. Eggert Boehlau Orthodontist, the Gerry & Caren Ruby Family foundation and Judy & David Galloway.

Platinum sponsors



Gold sponsors



Dr. Eggert Boehlau Orthodontist, The Gerry & Caren Ruby Family Foundation, Judy & David Galloway



We have enclosed a coupon for your use if you would like to make a donation at this special time of the year. Your generous support throughout the year is very much appreciated.

Awards (Continued from front page)

The **Lister Sinclair Award**, presented to an outstanding student, was presented to adorable Alex Yang, just 7 years old! Alex has been studying piano for two years at the University Settlement House and has already progressed to the grade 6 level of Royal Conservatory of Music, a remarkable feat for one so young. This year, Alex will begin theory lessons and continue his studies at USH in a program supported by Minstrel.

The **Frieda Clarendon Griggs Award** was presented to Brianna Da Costa, a 13 year old student of piano and voice at the Dixon Hall Music School. Brianna's effort is, according to her teachers, "second to none and her love of music is very evident as is her dedication." Brianna has been studying piano for three years and voice for two and is a mainstay of the Dixon Hall Music School Choir.

The **Cassels Brock Music Award** went to Dhanis Rajasegar, a multi-talented youth (drums and piano) who shows remarkable talent in computer music. Dhanis, a student at the Dixon Hall Music School impressed teachers with his creativity and understanding of the concepts of computer music as well as his performance on the snare drum. Dhanis also studies and performs Sri Lankan drumming.

Another Summer of Learning and Fun

Thanks to Minstrel donors, fourteen music students from the Dixon Hall Music School spent a week at the **Hart House Farm** on the Niagara Escarpment. For five students, this was their first time at overnight camp. Students and five staff spent time in practice and learning new music but that was just part of the day. There were sports, arts and crafts, and plenty of free time. Judy, a student, sent us a brightly coloured note decorated with hand painted irises and smiley faces. "Thank you for giving us the chance to go to the overnight camp for free." You're welcome, Judy.



Once again, we were able to fund five students for two weeks at the **National Music Camp**. Two students had been before but for three, it was their first exciting time away. The students, all from Dixon Hall, participated in senior jazz classes, junior orchestra and Suzuki Strings. Frank Jiang, a winner of this year's Hagood Hardy Protégé award, wrote: "I had so much fun kayaking, canoeing, playing golf... Most memories come and go. But this is the one that I will never forget, the one that I will treasure."



Minstrel provided funds for several advanced students to continue specialized summer classes at the **Royal Conservatory**. These included four students attending Master Classes with international pianists Menahem Pressler and Sasha Starcevich. These classes are essential for students who plan to enter competitions and hope for careers in music.

And More of your Donations at work...

Thanks to our donors, we were able to assist a number of music and dance programs this fall. This year, the Foundation was pleased to give \$16,000 to **University Settlement House** to subsidize lessons for 32 students as well as provide the funds to maintain and tune their pianos.

The **Canadian Children's Opera Chorus** was awarded \$5000 to subsidize low-income members. This year our donation enabled 5 students to attend the CCOC summer camp and will provide them with full tuition for the year. In addition, nine students in the Ruby, Youth, and Intermediate Chorus' will be sponsored. All the young singers were able to participate in fully staged performances and sing with internationally recognized Toronto performing art companies.

This fall, the Minstrel Foundation donated \$5000 to the **Pia Bouman School for Ballet & Creative Movement** bursary fund. Julia Jones-Whitehead, fund recipient, had an outstanding year. She auditioned for the National Ballet School summer program and the Quinte professional program and was accepted into both. She also completed her grade 7 RAD exam in May with distinction. In the words of a young student, "When I'm dancing, I feel more focused and strong... thank-you for giving me and the kids in the same situation as me the opportunity to dance."

Students and Grads on the Go



Singer/Dancer/Actor **Matthew Brown** is appearing as Barry in the “Jersey Boys” at the Toronto Center for the Arts.



Thompson Egbo-Egbo continues his performances. He spent this summer at the prestigious Berkley School of Music in Boston, following in the footsteps of talents like Diana Krall and Quincy J ones.



Cellist **Andreas Tucci Clarke** performed in a string trio at the Lake District Music Festival in England this summer and has received a fellowship to study for his Master’s Degree in Music at the University of Ottawa.



Eric Tan was selected to perform in “The New Discoveries” at Hugh’s Room in October.

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Note from a Student

“I would like to thank you very much for sponsoring me to go to the National Music Camp. I could never get to N.M.C. without your support. I had a very good time. I enjoyed making new friends and having very nice counselors, playing violin with the groups and of course very good meals. It was a fantastic summer. I love you and again thank you very much.”

Note from a Parent

“This is just a little note to show our appreciation in receiving a bursary from the Pia Bouman School of Ballet. She has been able to accomplish her RAD exams up to grade four and is now working towards her grade five and hoping to eventually get into pointe shoes... I can’t express how fortunate I feel as a parent to be able to give this opportunity to my daughter through the generous gift of the Minstrel Foundation. It is very seldom that anyone can find a school that would support any Boy or Girl to dance there heart out. I am single mother and caregiver for my mom.”

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Tuesday, June 9th, 2009

The Minstrel Foundation Annual Fundraising Gala
The Granite Club



Yuval Fichman, one of the truly great Romantic pianists with **Michael Ruby**, one of the brightest young jazz stars on the international scene.