

Seasons Greetings and Best Wishes & Peace for the New Year



Minstrel NOTES



December 2014

www.minstrelfoundation.org  

Record Number Write RCM Exams

Every year, Minstrel enables students to take the Royal Conservatory of Music exam to measure achievements and goals. In addition to the exam fee, there are additional costs for theory and music lessons and auditory training for vocal students. This year 31 students from the Dixon Hall Music School took the exams in percussion (our very first), flute, voice, theory, piano, viola and recorder. The best news was that the average mark was 81%. Congratulations on the hard work.

Summer Fun 2014



Every summer we send dozens of kids to camps both in and outside the city. These programs offer fun and play for the younger children and a chance to advance skills for those who want to learn more. This past summer, we funded programs for students of all ages and talents.

More than two dozen youngsters played, swam, danced and generally enjoyed life at this year's summer camp at Hart House Farm. For the first time we were able to offer two one-week overnight programs and that meant double the kids for double the fun.

(cont'd. on page 2)

Our Mission

The Minstrel Foundation funds music programs, lessons, music camps and scholarships for advanced studies to give youth in our inner cities a proven foundation for success both academically and socially. We endeavour to ensure that the commitments we make can be sustained through our fund raising.

Our 2015 commitments are to:

- Dixon Hall Music School summer overnight Camp at Hart House Farm (a second week was added this year)
- The National Music Camp of Canada in Orillia
- The Dixon Hall Music School March Break overnight Camp
- March Break Day Camp at the Dixon Hall Music School
- Heather Bryant Christmas Break overnight Camp operated by Dixon Hall Music School
- Harbourfront Camps
- Humber College Community Jazz Summer Programs

THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

- The Dixon Hall Music School
- University Settlement House Music School
- Regent Park School of Music iPad Ensemble program
- Pia Bouman School of Ballet
- From Violence to Violins
- Canadian Children's Opera Chorus Outreach Program
- Humber College Community Jazz Program
- Post-secondary financial assistance to our graduates
- Minstrel Foundation Scholarships

SUMMER FUN 2014 (cont'd.)

For the day-camp crowd, we sponsored 29 kids for the Harbourfront/ROM summer music camp where everyone enjoyed sports, trips, theatre and, of course, music.

Minstrel sponsored four high-school students for the summer session of the Humber College Jazz Program. Young people from across Toronto come to this program for training with local professional jazz musicians. One Minstrel scholarship student is currently a member of the Humber College Community Music School Quartet.

Fourteen talented kids went to Orillia for two weeks of training at the National Music Camp on Minstrel Scholarships. Students have fun with the usual camp activities but also get extensive extra work in theory, performance and group work. There are also master classes for older teenagers who demonstrate exceptional ability.

Sip, Savour & Celebrate – Our 16th Annual Fund Raiser

Over 180 partiers gathered on Sunday, Dec. 7, at the National Ballet School, for Minstrel's annual evening of entertainment, festive savouries, wine tasting and merriment. The Humber College Community Music School Jazz Quartet provided the music as guests sipped vodka from Finlandia and Jack Daniels whiskey. Urban Fare served up wonderful one-bite yummys that included risotto balls, mini-grilled cheese sandwiches, a wonderful cheese maple syrup treat by Ninutik and to finish the night, delicious cupcakes. Wines were provided by Peninsula Ridge Wineries.

Along with the jazz group, guests cheered to the powerful vocal blues of Divine Brown, whose latest CD *'Something Fresh'* shows just how divine Divine can be. Ms. Brown also spoke movingly about the importance of music to young people, particularly those from marginal neighborhoods. Thompson Egbo-Egbo, a Minstrel graduate accompanied Ms. Brown and also treated the crowd to one of his

own compositions, "Trinity" from his own CD *'Short Stories'*. Other star performers included current Minstrel scholarship recipients Maxwell Tong, aged 12, on the piano, tiny delightful Celine Tan, just 11, on the violin, and the incredibly talented and award-winning Cindy Hong whose fingers fairly danced through a classical guitar piece.

Beth Harrington, a Minstrel champion, was our MC and managed the raffles and auction. Auction trips included a week at a private villa in Costa Rica, a week at the Four Seasons in Scottsdale, a week in a Puente Romano villa in Marbella, Spain, and a week in Hilton Head. Fortunes Fine Jewellers sponsored the raffle and donated a pair of diamond earrings for the occasion. Our thanks (and those of hundreds of kids) to our sponsors, donors, and everyone who worked, volunteered, and came out to make it a wonderful evening.





iPad Ensemble Classes at RPSM

One of our new projects this year was to fund the iPad Ensemble classes at the Regent Park School of Music.

Under the tutelage of Thompson Egbo-Egbo and the experience he gained at the Berklee College of Music, two groups of students meet late Friday afternoon for their iPad lesson and jam sessions. Using their iPads with especially designed apps, students can create a band made up of drums, acoustic and electric guitars, bass, vocals and piano. The iPads can be used for each stage of production—from recording and mixing all the way to mastering and SoundCloud distribution. The classes not only fulfill the students' interests in music but also perk their interests in technology.

March Break Camps

Thanks to generous donors, we were able to provide assistance for kids from age 6 and up over the March School Break. Dixon Hall Music School held a day camp for younger children and a week-long overnight camp at Hart House Farm for older students. We also sponsored 13 kids at the Harbourfront March Break arts camp where they learned about art from architecture to Rock Stars and sculpture.

From Violence to Violins

This year we were able to support 60 students in the From Violence to Violins program in the Jane Finch corridor. This outstanding program now reaches several hundred children across Toronto and has been praised for giving students in priority communities both musical training and life skills. Minstrel was one of the first groups to fund Moishe Hammer's Hammer Band and his vision is now to continue to work with students from grade school to the end of high school. There are waiting lists for entry to the program and more than 80 percent of enrollees are returning students.

Matthew Ferguson Scholarship Fund at National Music Camp

In addition to providing 14 Minstrel Scholarships to the National Music Camp in Orillia, Minstrel is delighted to work with the National Music Camp through participation in the Matthew Ferguson Scholarship Fund. Each summer the NMC provides advanced training in all aspects of music for exceptionally talented youngsters. Through the years many Regent Park, Dixon Hall and University Settlement kids have benefitted from a week at the NMC where music joins with outdoor activity for a great week in the country. The Matthew Ferguson Fund will allow us to send more kids to this beneficial and educational program.



Pia Bouman Combines Dance and Music

The Pia Bouman School offers dance and creative movement to young people in the downtown area. Students who, for a variety of reasons, are unable to pay receive bursaries from Minstrel as needed and anonymously. Ms. Bouman keeps us abreast of the students' achievements throughout the year. Among others, this year we assisted a girl whose mother has been diagnosed with ALS (Lou Gehrig's Disease), a child with leukemia, and a talented dancer with ADHD. Other students with exceptional talents or needs found outlets in dance as well. We will continue our work with the Pia Bouman School and her talented and deserving students.

Our last endeavour for 2014 is the Heather Bryant Christmas Music Camp which runs from Dec 28th to Jan 2nd at Hart House Farm under the direction of Bob McKittrick of the Dixon Hall Music School. Your support of all our programs is very much appreciated. Please use our donation form or make your donation through our website.
Thank You.

University Settlement House

We have already received this year's request from the University Settlement House Music and Arts Program. Director Victoria Medeiros says this is one of USH's most important and well-used programs which has now been extended from 35 to 40 weeks a year. More than 70 children receive subsidized lessons (parents pay half the cost). The cost of these lessons is \$42,640 for the next year. Minstrel's funds will go towards this goal. Your donations are part of that subsidy.

Alumni News

Thompson Egbo-Egbo performs regularly at the Shangri-La Hotel and Jacobs Steak House. He has just released his album '*Short Stories*' and teaches at the Regent Park School of Music and is a Board member of Dixon Hall.

Matthew Brown has been nominated by BroadwayWorld Toronto for Best Performance by a Male in a Featured Role for his role as Tom in *To Kill A Mockingbird* in the Young Peoples Theatre production.

Eric Tan will be graduating in June from Cornell University with a double major in music and engineering.

Minstrel Award Winners for 2014

It's always important to reward exceptional talents and we are always fortunate to have patrons who want to celebrate young people's efforts in a special way.

Daniel Guerrette, a Grade 12 student at the Etobicoke School of the Arts, was the recipient of the Cassels Brock Music Award. Daniel won the Humber College Community Music School's Outstanding Jazz Drummer Award for 2014 and was Musicfest Canada's National Lou Williamson Outstanding Drummer Player (2014).

The Hagood Hardy Protégé Award went to eleven year old violinist, **Celine Tan**, from Dunlace Public School. Her enthusiasm and hard work has paid off, as the award allowed her to attend the National Music Camp in Orillia. **Cynthia Chung**, a 13 year old pianist studying at University Settlement House was also awarded a Hagood Hardy Protégé Scholarship. Cynthia achieved First Class Honours in both her grade 7 piano and advanced theory exams. She is described by her teachers as an extraordinary girl with superb musical talent.

Maxwell Tong is a talented twelve year old pianist studying under Gloria Saarinen. Last summer he passed his Grade 8 piano and Advanced Theory exams with First Class Honours. The Fan Po Chu award will assist him with his private studies in preparing for his Grade 9 RCM piano exams.

Thanks to our Sip, Savour & Celebrate sponsors, committee and volunteers

PLATINUM SPONSORS



GOLD SPONSORS



The Honourable Margaret McCain

SILVER SPONSORS



Judy & David Galloway | Anne & Brian Miatello
Donald K. Johnson & Anna McCowan – Johnson
Frances Price | Avril Wendt
Dr. Tammy Hermant & Richard Andreansky
Gerry & Caren Ruby Family Foundation
Manuel & Cheryl Buchwald

John B. Cameron, TD Wealth Private Investment Counsel

PRODUCT SPONSORS



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Susan Collins, President
Christina Blair, Honorary President
Harris Kligman, Treasurer
Brenda Berge
Frances Carmichael

Martha Hardy
Dr. Tammy Hermant
Margaret Cannon Mays
Anne Miatello

FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE

Kristen Aiello
Susan Beckerman
Tanya Bevington
Christina Blair
Frances Carmichael
Susan Collins
Martha Hardy
Janet Jenkins
Edu Kligman
Donna Koegl
Jane Lawson
Daly McCarten
Caren Ruby
Sylvia Vilim
Avril Wendt

The Minstrel Foundation
For Music & Arts Advancement

99 Lyndhurst Ave.
info@minstrelfoundation.org

Toronto Ontario M5R 2Z8
www.minstrelfoundation.org

Tel: 416-944-8244
Charitable # 87445 8029 RR0001