



MINSTREL NOTES

FEATURING LINK TO NEW FUNDRAISING VIDEO ON BACK

December 2021

www.minstrelfoundation.org

Year End Report – On the Road to Recovery

RECENT PROGRAM FUNDING

This year has seen many difficulties for arts organizations that carried on throughout the Covid shutdowns. Minstrel has been pleased to assist groups reaching out either virtually or in person to young people in Toronto. In December, we were thrilled to be able to support some groups who've made it into, what we hope, will be a happier 2022. Among the grants are \$10,000 for the **Hammer Band**. Moshe Hammer's group managed to keep the music playing through virtual meetings. Now, the band returns with professional music instruction for kids from inner city neighborhoods and new immigrant communities. Minstrel will sponsor 50 youngsters from two downtown schools for a year of instruction, fun, and fellowship.

Impact studies done for the Band indicate that student participants gained in social skills, mathematics, ability to focus, and improved self-esteem. Hammer Band has spread from two schools in North York to schools across the GTA. Minstrel is proud to be a continuing funding source for this terrific program.

Along with Hammer Band, Minstrel has renewed its funding for the **Pia Bouman School of Ballet and Creative Movement**. Bouman also continued online programs during Covid and students are overjoyed that in class learning is back. Minstrel is providing \$5000 for subsidized lessons. Three advanced level students, Alaia, Ningdi, and Maria, and two younger students Katie and Sh. whose parents/guardians are feeling the on-going Covid-19 stress will be given full scholarships for their studies.

We are once again working with the **University Settlement** music program which reaches dozens of inner-city youngsters. Their Music and Arts School has been granted \$35,000 for subsidized lessons. Currently, Minstrel funds support one-on-one lessons for approximately 100 young people in the downtown core.

Culture Shock Canada Charity approached Minstrel with a proposal for an online dance program for youth. Through structured urban dance-based education and enrichment programs for youth, they address issues of social isolation & self-esteem, and build relational, teamwork, and leadership skills. A successful virtual program in the

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SUMMER CAMPS REPORT

Summer 2021, wasn't the usual summer for most Canadians but some camps managed to meet and continue their summer events and Minstrel funding helped kids learn and have fun.



The Summer Arts Camp at **St. James Town Community Arts** provided in person music and arts for 25 youth for two weeks. Sandra Trehub, director, sent us a report that the camp was a "whopping success leaving children and parents begging for more." She also sent a video link which is on our website (minstrelfoundation.org/camp). We were delighted to see kids enjoying summer in the city.

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spring 2020 enabled Culture Shock to increase their online learning for 2021. We were able to provide a \$2000 grant. The Culture Shock website shows just how talented these young people are.

We are pleased to report the return of the **Canadian Children's Opera Company** and their community outreach program. Minstrel is a supporter of this group and their music education program that provides an introduction to opera for children who otherwise could never have access to this experience. A Minstrel grant of \$10,000 has enabled the CCOC to beef up their on line programs and continue their musical education programs in the public schools. Their efforts also support more than 90 students who are continuing some form of music training.

The Minstrel Foundation is funding the **St. James Town Children's Choir** from Sept. 2021 to June 2022 with a grant of \$5,450 plus rental costs. The program will be operating virtually from September to December at the very least and most likely until March break. The program cost includes online rehearsals, virtual choir videos and accompaniments.

We are pleased to be able to continue to support these worthwhile endeavors and we thank you, our donors, for making these ongoing programs possible.

Slaight Family Foundation Donates \$100,000

In 2003, Aida Slaight made the first of her 5 year pledges to the Minstrel Foundation. Since her passing in 2020, the Slaight Family has continued with its generous support. We are pleased to announce that this year the Slaight Family Foundation made a \$100,000 pledge to the Minstrel Foundation to be advanced in equal installments of \$20,000 over the next five years.

What They Are Doing Now?



We recently received a letter from **Hayley Naunton**, a former student at the Dixon Hall Music School and a Minstrel Scholarship recipient. Hayley's dream was to become a music therapist. In December 2020, she graduated with a degree from Wilfrid Laurier University and is currently employed as a music therapist working with people with brain injuries. She has also reconnected with the Dixon Hall Music School where she began her own studies and plans to assist them in setting up an adaptive music program for children with disabilities. What an exciting prospect!

And what a gracious and articulate young woman Hayley is. Your donations years ago assisted her musical training and put her on the path to her dream and now she's assisting other youngsters to realize theirs. Thanks Hayley for reminding us how important our work can be to someone's life.

Thompson Egbo-Egbo, whom many of you know as the leader of a local jazz trio, is also a former student of the Dixon Hall Music School and the Regent Park School of Music. On a Minstrel Scholarship he graduated from the Humber College School of Jazz and the Berklee School of Music in Boston. This year Thompson and Lauren have a new baby, Zeus Zion, and in 2022 Thompson and his trio plan to release a new album in the spring. Lots of creativity flowing in the Egbo-Egbo household. Congratulations.

The **National Music Camp** also managed a one week summer program including master classes and performance training.

This year, Minstrel funded 13 kids from Dixon Hall Music School, 5 from University Settlement, and 7 from Matthew Ferguson Scholarship Fund. Once again, youngsters reported a season where they increased their musical training and also enjoyed games and sports. Cost for 25 campers to attend was \$24,000.

Hammer Band also had their Summer Jam program, a virtual cornucopia that included games, on-line concerts, practice challenges, and all-round fun. The on-line event reached 275 children across the city and lasted for 12 weeks. Costs, primarily for teachers and administration came to \$39,000 and Minstrel was pleased to participate with the \$5000 grant requested.

In addition, Minstrel also provided \$2,100 to allow 5 youngsters to attend the **Royal Conservatory** summer virtual camp and another 5 youngsters to take their RCM exams. Congratulations to them all.

Award Winners in 2021

Fortunately, pandemic rules didn't affect this year's scholarship awards. Selection committees met and reviewed a spate of talented youngsters and were pleased to hand out awards. Let's hope that next year, we can do it in person.

The brand new **Ivy Rose Scholarship** made its debut this year. The award is named for a young woman who was diagnosed with Ewing's Sarcoma at age 4. Despite an amputation to save her life, Ivy Rose danced and danced until the disease took her life but her spirit continues through other young dancers.

Pia Bouman chose **Lily Chavez-Muir**, aged 12, for this award. Lily is not only a talented dancer, with years of study already but is a support and inspiration to her peers and a model for younger dancers. This year, she plans to dance as Clara in the Nutcracker as well as a doll in Columbine. Congratulations to Lily.



The **Tammy Hermant Award** this year goes to **Mariammal Sridharan**, aged 14, of Toronto. Mariammal is a member of the St. James Town Community Arts program and is a student in vocal training. She is also a member of the Canadian Children's Opera Company and recently participated in a summer opera camp. In addition to her musical talents, Mariammal was also recommended for the award by her visual arts instructor. We'll hear more from Mariammal. Congratulations.



The **Minstrel Foundation Scholarship Awards** this year go to **Leanne Abalos**, of St. James Town Community Arts and **Teni Abimbola** of the Humber College Community Music School. Leanne is fifteen and already composing her own music. In addition to composition, Leanne sings and teaches music at St. James Town Community Arts. The scholarship will allow her to continue her study of piano and composition. We renewed our scholarship for Teni who has continued to grow as a musician, is highly regarded by his teachers and is dedicated to furthering his music education. Our best wishes to both of them for a great year.



The **Cassels Brock Award** for 2021 goes to **Shaun Lin**, age 13, a budding violin prodigy. Shaun has been studying for five years at the University Settlement Music & Arts School and excelled in his favored instrument. His instructors applaud his curiosity and "voracious desire to learn more" as reasons for his continued improvement. He is already a member of the University Settlement chamber music group and yearns to connect with professional musicians to learn more technique. Onward and upward, Shaun.



The **Fan Po-Chou Award** for this year goes to **Quinton Lin**, aged 16, the brother of Shaun whom he sometimes accompanies. Quinton is a gifted pianist, "enthusiastic and very talented" say his instructors at the University Settlement Music School. In January 2021 Quinton earned first class honors for his level 8 RCM exams. He also earned gold and two bronze medals in the North York Music Festival and was a recipient of the 2019 George Rigg scholarship for community Participation and Volunteering from the Kiwanis Boys and Girls Club. Our congratulations to a well-rounded young man.



Martha and Hagood Hardy Family Gift

Sadly, two years ago, the Minstrel Foundation lost a founding member and long-time supporter of community music and activism when Martha Hardy passed away. Fortunately, her legacy continues with the fund she established in the name of her late husband, the performer and composer, Hagood Hardy. For years, youngsters have benefitted from Hagood Hardy Protégé Awards. Now the fund, which was renamed last year the **Martha and Hagood Hardy Protégé Award**, will continue its good works. To insure the fund, the Hardy family made a donation of \$17,000 to the fund this year and the fortunate recipient for this year is **Vivid Ma**. Vivid, a pianist, was known to Ms. Hardy who recognized her talents early. Now, Vivid is a fourth year student in performance at the University of Toronto in the very competitive Bachelor of Music program. Vivid is known for both talent and hard work and the Award supports both. Best Wishes to Vivid.

Minstrel Annual Fundraising Campaign Again Goes Virtual

For the second year, the Minstrel Foundation was not able to hold its annual fundraising Gala because of Covid restrictions. In its place we are again conducting an online video campaign which began in December and will continue into the early part of the new year. We have relied on our annual fundraising gala for more than 50% of our annual funding requirements. Last year, thanks to our major sponsors and many donors, we were able to achieve our goal. Our major donors are recognized at the end of the campaign on our website. This year's campaign got off to a fantastic start with a donation of \$20,000 from Unilock which has been our lead sponsor for many years.

We are honoured that Elaine Taylor Plummer has given her support by allowing us to use extracts from Christopher Plummer's narration of our 2020 video campaign. His narration of last year's video was the last project he completed before his death last February. This year, our video features students from the Dixon Hall Music School and its director Bob McKittrick and is produced by Tynan Studio.

ADDITIONAL BENEFIT FROM DONATING SECURITIES

Many of our donors have been donating securities to the Minstrel Foundation to realize the additional benefit of not paying capital gains tax on the disposition of the securities. When donating securities you receive a tax receipt for the market value of the securities on the date your securities are received by the Minstrel Foundation. You do not pay any capital gains tax on the securities you have donated. For information and to receive the donation form you need to send to your investment advisor or online broker, contact us at info@minstrelfoundation.org.



OPEN YOUR PHONE'S CAMERA
ON THE QR CODE TO WATCH
THE VIDEO NARRATED BY
CHRISTOPHER PLUMMER AND
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