



MINSTREL NOTES

FEATURING LINK TO CHRISTOPHER PLUMMER VIDEO ON BACK

December 2020

www.minstrelfoundation.org

Year End Report - The Year of the Pandemic

Covid-19 has changed our lives in myriad ways. Schools closed and the first full shutdowns began in March. The Dixon Hall Music School had to cancel its March Break overnight camp at Hart House Farm. The two weeks of overnight summer camps were also cancelled. The National Music Camp scheduled for two weeks in August also had to be cancelled.

Despite all, **University Settlement Music School** continued with individual music lessons through virtual learning all summer, using in part the unspent school year grant from the Minstrel Foundation. Given the closure of its summer camps and other programs, this was a vital link to continue with children from the area who were accustomed to USMC events. Along with the virtual lessons, USMC established a ukulele summer program for 20 students. Minstrel provided the ukes and USMC teachers set up the virtual lessons which found new string players by summer's end. Minstrel paid the full \$2,500 cost of the ukuleles.

The **Hammer Band** was also able to offer violin instruction virtually during the summer.

The "Summer Jam" virtual summer camp reached out for eight weeks to more than 200 youngsters with lessons, games and events. The Minstrel Foundation's contribution of \$10,000 covered approximately 75% of the cost of the program during July, including cost of teachers, Zoom pro subscriptions and administration.



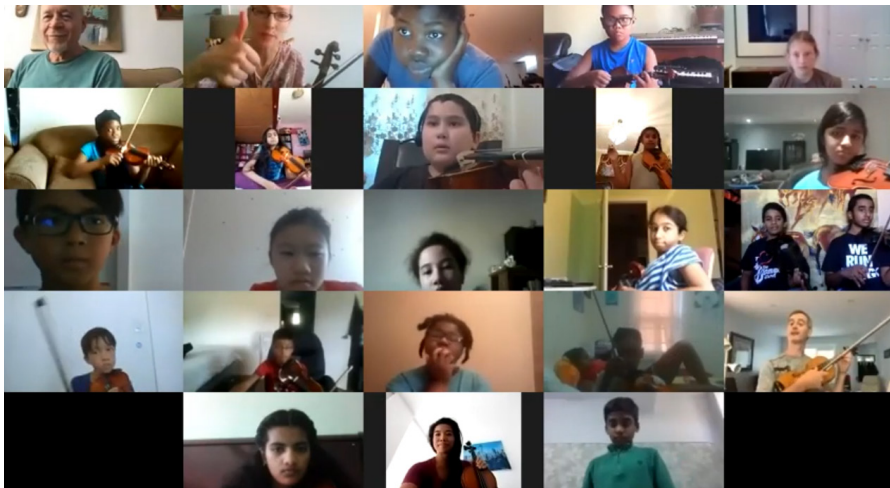
New This Summer

We are pleased to announce a new program for the summer of 2021.

Reaching Out Through Music has been providing free musical enrichment programs to children and youth of St. James Town.

Our grant of \$11,600 will launch the Summer Arts Camp to be held from August 9th – 20th 2021. The Camp will consist of workshops in Music, Drama, Dance and the Visual Arts, culminating in the co-creation and performance of a multi-faceted arts production and short film (5-10 mins). Professional staff will be assisted by counsellors from the community, volunteer parents and volunteer interns from Ryerson's social work program who will accompany participants to classes and provide supervision during breaks.

It is planned that 12 children (8-11) and 18 youth (12-18) will attend the 2 week camp to be held at the St. James Town Community Corner and the Church of St. Peter and St. Simon. Subsequent performances will at the St. James Town and Cabbagetown Festivals. ■

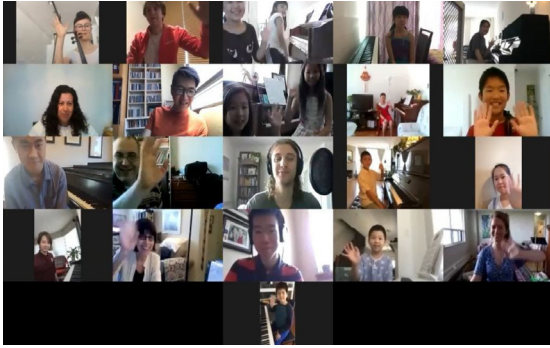


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Year End Report (continued)

The experience gained in the Summer Jam program provided the **Hammer Band** with the know-how to operate all of their programs online for the duration of the 2020-2021 school year.

With a grant of \$10,000, The Minstrel Foundation has covered the cost of 25 Hammer Band students for the 30 weeks of the 2020/2021 school year and funds needed to purchase 10 tablets to distribute to students who do not have a computer or tablet and 20 violins to replenish inventory and provide new students with an instrument.



Minstrel's Grant of \$35,000 for the 2020-2021 year will provide the subsidy needed for about 90 students to attend the **University Settlement Music School**, covering about 90% of the total number of students that receive financial assistance. This fall the Minstrel Foundation is also covering the cost of online classes for everyone.

We have provided the **Harbourfront Centre** a \$5,000 grant to be used for their Accessible Education Initiative. Through this initiative, schools from lower socioeconomic and at-risk communities will be able to participate at no charge in Harbourfront Centre's School Visits Program which runs all year. This year's program has been modified for online delivery.

As featured on page 1, we have granted \$11,600 to the **Reaching Through Music Program** in St. James Town for a new summer camp. The camp will reach out to 30 children ranging in age from 8 to 18 with activities including film making, musical events and performance. ■



University Settlement Music School to celebrate 100th Anniversary in 2021

The University Settlement Music & Arts School will be celebrating its 100th anniversary in 2021. Plans are underway for celebratory concerts and music events, their nature being dependent on the status of the pandemic.

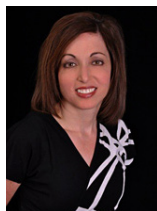


Since 1921, University Settlement's Music & Arts School has offered high-quality, affordable music and art education to children, teens, adults and seniors from both the Grange neighbourhood and Greater Toronto Area. The School is located at 23 Grange Road in the heart of downtown Toronto.

The school accepts students from across the GTA with the majority living in six social service housing complexes in its neighbourhood around the school. The caliber of teaching is high. Each year students are invited to participate in music festivals, students achieve high marks on their RCM exams and many go on to university.

At the Music & Arts School, students may study music in private lessons or in group classes. Lessons are offered on a variety of instruments, including: strings, piano, winds, and voice. The Minstrel Foundation is a proud partner so many more students can afford to attend the school. ■

New Scholarship



Dr. Tammy Hermant has established a \$25,000 scholarship in her name to begin in 2021. This means extra lessons, master classes or tuition for another student each year. Minstrel's scholarships mean more than musical training. Students have gone to university and have obtained advanced degrees. Musical training also means better grades and participation, even in on-line learning. Dr. Hermant has been a member of the Minstrel Foundation Board of Directors since 2008.

2020 Award Winners

MINSTREL FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP

Audrey Cai, 9 years old, received a scholarship for private lessons to advance her studies at the University Settlement Music School. Audrey has already advanced to the grade 5 RCM level in piano and performed at the Kiwanis Music Festival in February 2020. As her piano teacher has remarked "her performances at the piano are already moments of introspection and searching that capture and hold the attention of listeners". Last fall she began taking violin lessons as well. Her violin teacher has noted "she learns fast, has good listening ability and plays with good intonation".

MARTHA and HAGOOD HARDY PROTÉGÉ AWARD

Vivid Ma is now in her third year at the University of Toronto studying for her Bachelor of Music in Performance and earning top marks. She is deserving once again for the Martha and Hagood Hardy Protégé Award to continue with her university education towards her dream of a musical career.

LOIS CALLANDER SCHOLARSHIP

Thaanya Aswathaman, 16, is an outstanding young vocalist in the Reaching Out Through Music/St. James Town Children's Choir programs and a student at Riverdale Collegiate Institute. Currently studying for her RCM Grade 8 Voice and Grade 7 Piano, her scholarship will further her studies through private lessons to further her goal of advancing her education in voice performance. She is described by one of her teachers as "gifted with a beautiful soprano voice, with a rich lower end and an easy, clear, bell-like upper range".

CASSELS BROCK MUSIC AWARD

Abimbola Teniola, 17, is a repeat winner. "Tenni", as he is known, is a very talented drummer. His award will pay his fees for private drum/percussion lessons and his participation in the Senior Jazz Ensemble Program at the Humber College Community Music School.

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Please Support the Minstrel Foundation During the Pandemic



Charity Adams
Violinist - The Hammer Band

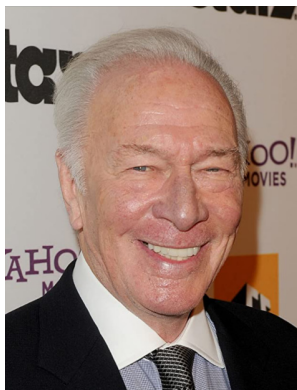


Thannya Aswathaman
Vocalist - Reaching Out Through Music



Covid-19 has changed our lives in myriad ways. Like most charitable organizations, we have had to cancel our annual fundraising gala which each year has contributed more than half of our annual fundraising. Despite the pandemic, music programmes have found new and original ways to continue their work with the underprivileged children in Toronto. We have been

able to continue to fund virtual programs offered by the University Settlement Music School, the Hammer Band and Harbourfront Centre and have also been able to commit to a new summer camp which we are all hoping will be able to take place near the end of August. We are also hoping that the two weeks of overnight camps we sponsor at the Dixon Hall Music School will take place this summer. If camps can open this summer, we will have two seasons of campers to send to the National Music Camp which fortunately is able to accommodate double the number of students we have been sending to this renowned camp which offers extraordinary music instruction, a camp experience with a wide range of sports and boating activities and the opportunity to make friends with youth from more fortunate backgrounds.



This year our fundraising has gone Virtual. We are excited to announce our new video showcasing the Minstrel Foundation and the young people whom we are excited to support. The video required many talents but we have to particularly thank **Nona Heaslip** who generously sponsored it and, especially the multi-talented Academy Award Winning actor, **Christopher Plummer** who agreed to donate his time to narrate it. Special thanks are also due to Christina Blair, George Yemec and Leigh Tynan who worked tirelessly on it. We ask you to continue to support the foundation so we can continue to assist the very worthy—and very needy—organizations who depend on us to keep the dreams of hundreds of youngsters alive.

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



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FOR MUSIC AND ARTS ADVANCEMENT

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