

MINSTREL NOTES

25TH ANNIVERSARY NEWSLETTER

Spring 2023

www.minstrelfoundation.org

25th Celebratory Gala held at Casa Loma

The Minstrel Foundation celebrated 25 years of support for the arts at a Gala event in December 2022. Over 250 supporters arrived at Casa Loma which was gorgeously decorated for Christmas and enjoyed cocktails, dinner and entertainment. All agreed that, after three years of Covid lockdown, it was great to be out and about.

The evening began with a new addition. For the first time, a special family ticket allowed children to roam freely and, best of all, chat with Santa in the Casa Loma light tunnel. Fifty delighted young people wandered the halls amazed at giant Christmas trees and lots of chocolates provided by Ferrero Chocolates, while their parents sipped cocktails to the tunes of the Humber College Community Music School Jazz Quartet.



After Santa and toasts, guests headed for dinner and a welcome from Catriona Delaney, General Manager Casa Loma of Liberty Entertainment Group. Master of Ceremonies Thompson Egbo-Egbo, noted composer and jazz performer, kept the evening entertainment moving. Moshe Hammer, founder of the Hammer Band, opened with his violin and Manuel De Falla's "Spanish Dance". Mariammal Sridharan sang a Mozart aria. Pianists Vivid Ma and Eric Tan played a Mozart duet. Mariammal, Vivid, and Eric (as well as Thompson) began their musical studies in Minstrel-funded music programs.

After a slight intermission, Thompson took to the piano with a solo and then accompanied singer and songwriter Liz Rodrigues and Mike Ruby singing "You Make It Feel Like Christmas". Mike Ruby closed the show with his new single "Close" to delighted applause. Attendees agreed that this was the best Gala ever. All in all, the evening raised more than \$195,000 which means that camps, lessons and scholarships for 2023 are already en route to waiting youngsters.

Special thanks to our generous sponsors (see back page), to everyone who donated to the Silent Auction, to the Liberty Grand Entertainment Group, and, particularly to all you supporters who remained with us over the past three years of the pandemic.

Where your donations go!

Despite the pandemic, 2022 was a big year for our music and arts programs. Minstrel support went to the St. James Town Children's Choir (\$5,500), The Royal Conservatory Music Exams for eight students in theory, voice, flute, and piano (\$1,400), The University Settlement Music and Arts programs (\$45,000), the Hammer Band (\$10,000), the Pia Bouman School for Ballet and Creative Movement (\$7,000) and the Harbourfront Centre Subsidy Program (\$5,000).

Minstrel was pleased to be able to send 27 youngsters, including 19 from the Dixon Hall Music School, to attend the **National Music Camp in Orillia** for \$27,000. Master classes, ensemble work and lots of fun kept the kids active and excited especially since this was their first camp experience in three years with overnight stays. Eleven music and arts students were able to attend Harbourfront Camps at a cost of \$4,700. Minstrel also funded five children for the **Royal Conservatory summer music camp** where they studied chamber music and orchestration.

Thanks to our supporters, Minstrel was able to fund - at a cost of \$18,000 - the **St. James Town Community Arts** where 30 young people aged 7 to 15 learned the ropes of musical theatre over a two-week period. A tight focus allowed them to work on acting, vocals technique, dance, and extensive collaboration. The end result was a performance of *Seussical the Musical* which left the audience cheering. Everyone agreed that the production was outstanding and the young performers really earned their applause. Cheers to everyone. But the summer wasn't all hard work. "We had lots of fun," reported a camper.

The **Hammer Band Summer Jam Session** was one where kids spent time on virtual learning and fun. Eighty students joined in interactive games, jam sessions and practice challenges on-line. The high point was the end of summer personal party and the first opportunity for the students to interact with one another in person. As one young person put it "Summer jam sessions allowed me to continue my lessons and made my time at home a bit less depressing." Minstrel provided \$5,000 for the summer jam and expects to do the same this summer.

We were very pleased when **Dixon Hall Music School** re-opened its March Break Overnight Camp at Hart House Farm this past March after a three-year hiatus because of the pandemic. We financed this camp for 12 students at a cost of \$8,500.



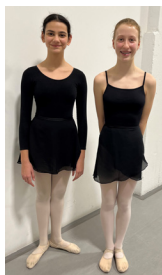
4 Students Rewarded with Concert Tickets

A big thank you to Dale Lastman and his firm Goodmans LLP.

Four music students, with their parents or chaperons, were rewarded in March last year with tickets to the Goodman's box at the Scotiabank Arena to see the Justin Bieber concert.

Scholarships and Awards, 2022

Ivy Rose Scholarship - Brooklynn Turnbull & Ella Reid



It was a pleasure to be in Pia Bouman's light and bright performance space on Sterling Avenue to award the Ivy Rose Scholarship to two talented 12 year old young women. They are apprentices with Bouman's youth Company YMI Dancing and both appeared in this year's production of The Nutcracker. **Ella Reid** and **Brooklynn Turnbull** are committed to hard work, as well as serving as role models for other dancers. They have demonstrated team spirit and proved they are infused with the vitality of the late Ivy Rose. They both plan to continue their training in dance and we look forward to seeing them in next year's Nutcracker.

Fan Po Chu Award - Mariammal Sridharan

Mariammal Sridharan has already shown special ability in vocal music as a member of the St. James Town Children's Choir and through vocal music lessons with Brooke Dufton. After only one year of training, she impressed everyone with her rendition of Mozart at the Minstrel Gala. The Fan Po Chu Award will enable her to continue specialized lessons for a year and take her to the next level. Kudos to Mariammal for hard work and dedication.

Cassels Brock Award - Leanne Abalos

Multitalented **Leanne Abalos** excels in piano, violin, dance, visual arts, as well as vocals. She is a valued member of both the St. James Town Children's Choir and the St James Town Ukulele Ensemble. The Cassels Brock Award will enable her to take advance training in piano to improve and strengthen her musicianship. She's also interested in musical theatre so we may see her on the stage soon.

Minstrel Foundation Scholarships - Andy Chen & Daisy Cardick-Sonia

Andy Chen, a student of piano at the University Settlement Music School, has impressed teachers with his commitment to music and his raw talent. His teachers describe him as "sincere, dedicated and hardworking" and his performances are marked by his combination "of strength, beauty and boldness." He seems destined to follow in the footsteps of the talented and brilliant Eric Tan.

Daisy Cardick-Sonia, the other Minstrel Foundation Scholarship winner is also from University Settlement Music School. She is 16 and has been studying voice for the past five years. She performs in public regularly and was selected to perform at the Ontario Provincial Music Festival last year. Daisy's dedication to music is clear in her travels from Scarborough to the University Settlement Music School for her lessons.

Martha and Hagood Hardy Protege Award & the Tammy Hermant Scholarship - Vivid Ma



Vivid Ma continues to reap superlatives for her talent and performance. A graduate of the University Settlement Music School and the University of Toronto (BMus), Vivid is now studying for her MA in performance at the University of Texas under the acclaimed tutelage of Anton Nel, aided in part by her Minstrel award and scholarship. When in Toronto, she continues to support students at the Dixon Hall Music School and the University Settlement Music School. She also works with students studying for their RCM exams and often accompanies vocalists.

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Please Support our Summer Campers

This year we expect many more requests for funds as camps such as **The Dixon Hall Music School Overnight Summer Camps at Hart House Farm** reopen to full capacity and youngsters look forward to seeing friends and exploring new fields. Thanks to you, we will be able to assist and keep the creative spirits moving.

Please support our Summer Camp drive by returning the Summer Camp Pledge Card enclosed with this newsletter; scanning the QR code below with your mobile phone or making a donation through our website.

<https://minstrelfoundation.org>



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