



Brighten up your day after all the rain we've been having recently with the 2012 edition of Basil's News. We've had another very successful year with a bumper Touch of Basil, a great Composers and Songwriters Prize final and a sell-out Games and Quiz evening. See the articles inside for more information plus details of the causes we've supported.

A Touch of Basil 2012

Our new group ticket scheme proved to be very popular at last year's concert, boosting our audience size and introducing new people to the work of the Trust. So we've decided to retain it this year along with our earlier start time of 7.00 and hope that you'll all bring along even more audience members. Philip's cousin Kay Bromhead, Head of music at Rossett High School in Harrogate, is bringing some sixth form pupils to perform for us and we will welcome back VOX from Bishop Walsh School in Sutton Coldfield. Old friend Devon Brown will also return, now famous for his appearances with Christian composer Roger Jones. Vocalist C.J. Webley, who gave a tremendous performance in John Wllmott School's production of "The Little Shop of Horrors", will be singing, as will post-graduate ex-Conservatoire opera singer Rachel Bowden, albeit in a very different style! More details are on page 2 overleaf.

A Touch of Basil 2012

Adrian Boult Hall, Birmingham Conservatoire Saturday 22nd September at 7 pm

This annual celebration concert includes a wide variety of musical styles and genres from classical through to rock music.

Performers include:

Rachel Bowden - Winner of the Ashleyan Opera Prize

"Silhouettes Smiling" by Pete Yelding

VOX - Bishop Walsh School Choir

Sixth Form Pupils from Rossett High School, Harrogate

Josh Tooley - violin

Daniel James - piano

Devon Brown C.J. Webley Neil Robinson Kelly Tye - vocalists

Sue Bates – soprano Stephen Davis – tenor Basil's Bunch

Heart of England Singers - conductor Martin Bates

Tickets

In advance: Adults - £8 Children & Students - £6

Group Ticket: Four tickets - £25

On the door: Adults - £,9

Children and Students - £,6

Philip Bates Games and Quiz Night 2012

The annual games and quiz night took place this year on March 10th 2012 at Arden Hall in Castle Bromwich. The evening was very well attended as usual, with all the tickets sold out.

zoomed around the hall looking for their 'railway connections'. Fish and chip suppers supplied by Gregory's were served after this game to help contestants recover and refuel. The ever popular 'Roll Your Coins at the Whisky Bottle' was next, which involved rolling money at



Alphabet fun at the Games & Quiz Night

The night kicked off with round one of the quizzes, kindly organised by Sue and Stan Gamble, which was challenging and set the pace for the night ahead. The Philip Bates Trust's version of Pictionary was the next game, requiring quiz goers to produce scribbles reminiscent of flowers in a race against other teams of eager budding Picassos.

Alan Spier's quiz round pushed all contestants to the limit through a picture quiz and naming famous parent/children combos, with much head scratching and beard stroking indicating the brain effort being employed.

Railway Riot followed with much pandemonium as contestants

a whisky bottle to see who could get closest and win the whisky. Round 3 of the quizzes was organised by Martin Bates who played film theme tunes for all the contestants to guess their origin. Round 2 of Pictionary followed, with the subject being television programmes, and the outcome being many embarrassing scary squiggles.

The last game of the evening was the *Alphabet Game*, the outcome of which was much organised chaos as contestants holding letters of the alphabet jostled amongst themselves to spell out the answers to the questions. The evening was a roaring success filled with fun and laughter, thanks to the attendance and kind generosity of the contestants *Julie Larkin*

A Touch of Basil 2011

Whatever your taste in music you would have found something to suit your palette in this Philip Bates Trust Celebration Concert on Saturday 24th Sept 2011. It was the twelfth such event, an annual occasion that judging by the reaction of a well-filled Adrian Boult Hall, gets better by the year. This is no doubt due to the sterling efforts of Martin Bates, who with the help of family and friends, manages to assemble musical turns from genres as broad

verse as JS Bach and Jimmy Hendrix? And more's the pity, you might say! Variety is the spice of life and this A Touch of Basil had it in spades, reflecting the work of The Philip Bates Trust during the last year. The first item was Melissa Underwood's piece of verse *Anything is Possible, if You Think it Worthwhile* spoken by David White, words so appropriate to the tone of the whole evening. Next on was a product of one of the Philip Bates Trust's work done in schools, Millie Langton, winner of Castle Vale's got Talent 2011.



VOX at A Touch Of Basil 2011

as the world-wide-web. How many concerts at the Birmingham Conservatoire feature composers as diShe sang Somewhere over the Rainbow; not only did this Dorothy have a gift but also the mettle, singing it unaccompanied. After this, Chris Davis presented a complete contrast as a solo percussionist, belting out his own composition *Fire Stamp*.

The Heart of England Singers then took to the stage for a major contribution. Under their director Martin Bates they delivered three excerpts from *The Armed Man, A Mass for Peace* from Karl Jenkins, dedicated in 2001 to victims of Kosovo. In *Sanctus* the chanting of the choir captured a degree of menace, aided by the chords of Margaret Croucher on piano, although I did miss the atmospheric orchestration of Jenkins.

The following Agnes Dei was both lyrical and beautiful with the sopranos particularly in fine voice. Cellist Luke Mowbray joined in for the familiar strains of Benedictus; this is one of the most effecting scores of the 21st century, despite possible over-exposure on one popular music station. The Singers showed their versatility of repertoire with Queen's No-one But You, a eulogy to Freddie Mercury, with soloist Amy Farrell.

One major annual prize donated by the Philip Bates Trust is open to aspiring composers and songwriters. Winner of the 2010 competition was Michael Betteridge with his *Poems of Walt Whitman*, an absorbing work. It was scored for the unusual combination of Baritone, Viola, Cello, 2 Clarinets and Percussion, and conducted by the composer. I was most impressed by how Betteridge wove together the contrasting textures of voice and instruments, and by its inherent drama. Interestingly Betteridge described this aspect of the piece as one of paranoia with 'relentless, repetitive figures which never settle'.....'meandering and questioning vocal lines which often are at odds with the ensemble: the vocalist is never content'. Taking the baritone line, Matthew Stone ably conveyed this sense of unrest, delivering such perceptive words from Whitman as the opening Where am I? and the closing And Those Appear that Perplex Me. Betteridge is a young man who hopefully has a future ahead of him on the music scene.

Steve Davis' rendition of *The Carol Singers* by Thomas Sterndale Bennett then brought some light relief with a song to lyrics by Charles Haynes. It concerned a group of mates who ventured out in medieval times to earn a bit of cash as Christmas Waits, but the only copper they got was a uniformed one who put them behind bars.

The second artist to perform his own work came next – Isaac Cartwright on guitar, complete with some highly sophisticated electronic gear that

seemed to be operated by his foot. Although he had entitled the piece Reticent, I found it quite the opposite – communicative and demonstrative. There was, as you might expect, a repetitive aspect but the build-up in intensity was intoxicating.



Singer: Francesca Costigan

The Bates family were responsible for the next item, another premier with Martin as composer and accompanist, wife Susan and daughter Rachel providing the vocals. It had been written in celebration of Rachel's new arrival (*Little Niecy Beth*) the verses composed from three different perspectives of the family – Philip, great-grandma and Rachel.

VOX – Bishop Walsh School Choir led by Christy del Strother with Michael Baker on piano brought the first half to a close with a couple of arrangements of Grammy Award winners – Kings of Leon (*Use Somebody*) and Bruno Mars (*Just the Way You Are*).

Such is the pull of this charity that the violinist for JS Bach's Partita No 1 in B Minor came from Germany to take part; Jonathan Styles opened the second half. The Tom Walker Trio then played some serious rock. This wasn't the usual type of sound heard in the Adrian Boult Hall, as the beat reverberating around the auditorium testified. I wondered what the once eminent conductor would have made of this combo: Tom Walker Trio (lead guitar/vocals) Carl Sylvester (bass guitar) and Chris Emery (drums). Thankfully devoid of flashing lights, I thought their Hoochie Coochie Man (Willie Dixon) and Little Wing (Jimi Hendrix) were very good and extremely well received by the 400+ audience.

Follow that, they say, well the Millman Family Folk Band certainly did. The guitar chords of Steve Millman offered a stark contrast to the previous act, but the feet around me continued to tap. Led by Katherine Mann on flute/whistle, along with family members Emma, Rob and Andrew, their traditional Irish jigs

and reels made for some very easy listening. Basil's Bunch, a group formed to retain the memory of Philip, then gave us their version of a couple of pop numbers – after only a few hours rehearsal that day.

Three more Trust prizewinners followed. Michael Hogg by virtue of the Philip Bates Performance Prize 2010, Bishop Vesey's Grammar School, played his own arrangement of *Let's Be Happy* by Giora Feidman; there was a crispness to his saxophone playing together with some pleasing phrasing. With music co-ordinator Trevor Evans, the five members of JHELL, a second representative of Castle Vale's Got Talent 2011, sang a popular medley; their happy, lively style was infectious.

Francesca Costigan had taken the Ashleyan Opera Prize 2011 at the Conservatoire and she began with Dvořak's *Song to the Moon* from *Rusalka*. She showed sure technical control, beautiful timbre and a clear understanding of the text, giving a breath-taking performance. I did not think her second number, *Je Veux Vivre* from *Gounod's Romeo et Juliette* suited her quite so well.

The Heart of England Singers returned with a red, white and blue trilogy: Red Sails in the Sunset (Williams) The Bluebird (Stanford) with

Sue Bates and White Cliffs of Dover (Kent). The audience joined the Entire Company to bring the evening to a rousing finale with When I'm Sixty-Four (Lennon-McCartney).

With such an assortment of music and a veritable heap of talents on display we had come full circle with David White's words, *Anything is Possible, if You Think it Worthwhile.* The Philip Bates Trust contribute to many worthwhile causes and this was a very worthwhile evening. *Geoff Read*

Heartlands Hospital Holiday Music

Thanks to a grant from the Philip Bates Trust, the Arts Team at Heartlands Hospital was able to fund a music and art project on the children's unit during the school holidays in 2011.

Children were treated to activity days around the theme of a journey into outer space. Activities included making puppets and masks, playing musical instruments and composing music to accompany dramatic voyages to the planets. A captain's log was kept to record the thoughts of all involved. Chris Morrell, Play Specialist said "The whole musical space experience has been wonderful. The

children and the parents really enjoyed it. Fantastic distraction!" One patient, aged 12, wrote in the captain's log: "It was really fun. I'd like to do it again also I really like the music, the rocket and making the bugs".



Space Music at Heartlands Hospital

Heart of England NHS Trust aims to provide patients with activities which takes their mind off the reason for being in hospital and gives them an opportunity to express themselves and be creative.

Esther Jackson, Project Co-Ordinator

Holiday Music: A Personal Perspective

On the afternoon we visited Heartlands Hospital there were two musicians in attendance, a violinist and a guitarist. The main room was decorated with gauzy material and there were revolving light effects to give a sense of other-worldliness. One young disabled girl was obviously fascinated by the lights. There was a keyboard for the youngsters to experiment on and some percussion instruments. The violinist approached the children in turn and played a melody, encouraging them to interact and use one of the instruments to play alongside her. But one little boy with a head injury just wanted her to sit with him and play soothing music.

The guitarist worked in another area with two older teenage boys, showing them various chords and encouraging them to try these out for themselves on his guitar. They both seemed really interested.



Children collaborating with musicians

One young boy was very excited by everything that was going on in the "space" room and wanted to show us around and point out everything of note, including the art work. We came away feeling humbled by the experience and certain that this project was a resounding success.

Sue Bates

National Children's Orchestra Members

Two young musicians who had gained places with the National Children's Orchestra made applications to the Philip Bates Trust this year. They were Brendan Connellan, 8, trumpet



Sarah Brienza

and Sarah Brienza, 13, clarinet. Both these young musicians have reached a standard in their playing far in advance of what is normally expected for their age and our financial support has helped them attend the courses held by the orchestra during school holidays.

The National Children's Orchestra of Great Britain provides young people with a world-class foundation for orchestral performance and musicianship. They bring together hundreds of 7-13 year olds from across the country and offer them a life-changing experience – meeting like-minded young people and being guided by top professional musicians.

As well as creating a safe, stimulating environment in which to explore and enhance their skills and passions, their friendly residential courses also help to broaden the social development of young musicians. The NCO is in fact not just one national orchestra but five - the main orchestra, under and 11 orchestras and a training orchestra. Its mission is identify, nurture and showcase musical excellence in children through orchestral training and to be the leading training ground professional musicians. for

Established in 1978, the NCO has gone from strength to strength, building up an international reputation and performing in a wide variety of concert venues, from the Royal Albert Hall in London to the Forbidden City Concert Hall in Beijing, and recently played for the Queen in Westminster Hall during the Diamond Jubilee celebrations.

Droitwich clarinettist Sarah Brienza was one of the youngsters chosen to play for the Queen, members of the Royal family and 700 guests on June 5th 2012. Before the event Sarah said she felt very excited. "It will be the biggest experience of my life so far and a memory I will never forget"

Sue Bates

Ashleyan Opera Prize 2012

On the evening of the 17th April 2012 I headed into Birmingham to attend the Ashleyan Opera Prize held at The Birmingham Conservatoire. The adjudicator, Jeremy White, had come for the occasion from London where he had been performing at Covent Garden.

There was a good attendance and the audiencewasattentive and supportive. Firstly Kirsten Barker, soprano, produced a well-prepared, confident performance and she looked fabulous. She was accurate but perhaps could have provided more contrasts in dynamics and in her portrayal of character, especially in view of a varied programme from Mozart to Gounod and Britten.

This was followed by Urszula Bock, whose mezzo-soprano voice was rich in tone. She passionately communicated the gritty darkness and humour of the character in her performance of Walton's I was a Constant, Faithful Wife from The Bear and also sang Amour! Viens Aider ma Faiblesse from Samson and Delilah by Saint-Saëns.

Chung-Chi Lin, tenor, was the only male voice in the final of the opera prize this year. He performed *Si ritrova io giuro* from La Cenerentola

by Rossini and Ya Lyublyu Vas from Eugene Onegin by Tchaikowsky. His performance was sound and enthusiastic but he never quite seemed to relax into it and unfortunately this affected how it came across.

Yu Ning, soprano, had again prepared her performances well and there were some very delicate and sensitive moments in them but she seemed nervous and a little uncomfortable which affected how she sang at times as well as it being a slight distraction from the audience's point of view. Caro Nome from Rigoletto and The Bell Song from Lakme were her chosen arias.

Sophie Pullen was a focused and self-aware performer with a high quality performance which put her in the top two in the final reckoning. The steady pace that she chose to take in Berlioz's Me Voilà Seule Comme Autrefois demonstrated confidence and a personalisation of the work. It was most enjoyable. She captivated you with her absolute focus on the performance.

The final competitor was Rachel Bowden and it was a performance to make you sit up and take note. Her use of voice was matched by a convincing and witty portrayal of the characters and I certainly could not look away, it was totally gripping. In addition, her choice of repertoire





Ashleyan Opera Prize contenders: Urszula Bock, Kirsten Barker, Sophie Pullen and Rachel Bowden

was very unusual and well suited to her and she clearly loved creating her performance. She performed *Adieu Notre Petite Table* from Manon by Massenet and *Adelaide's Aria* from The Enchanted Pig by Dove.

When I spoke to Rachel at the end it made sense when she explained that she had been singing with Birmingham Opera, as they often work on productions of lesser known and adventurous operatic works. After the competition, Jeremy White went through the performances and gave constructive criticism to all competitors based upon his experience as an opera singer and from his professional point of view. This was very interesting and if used could be extremely helpful for the future vocal development of the competitors. It was a thoroughly enjoyable evening with many super performances and a very worthy winner, who seemed extremely pleased with the outcome.

Rachel Bates



The Philip Bates Prize 2011: Tom Coult and Pete Yelding Come Out on Top

We live in a competitive world, and for good or ill the arts industry is not exempt from the scramble for success. With futures depending on their outcome, results of contests such as the Turner Prize (for art) can be controversial.

The classical music field has numerous vocal and instrumental competitions – the Cardiff Singer of the World and the BBC Young Musician of the Year to name but two renowned events; both have seen the victors go on to greater things. However, competitions for aspiring composers are rather rare. This is why the Philip Bates Prize awarded for composition is such a welcome annual occasion.

The proceedings were introduced by Michael Wolters, a composer and member of the research staff at Birmingham Conservatoire, focusing on structural and performative approaches. First up of the seven entrants was Tom Coult with Seven Face Pictures, a setting of Caroline Bird's Facial and dedicated to the young Yorkshire poet.

Although only 22, Coult already has an impressive list of compositions to his name, many with intriguing titles as his extensive personal web site at www.tomcoult.com dis-

plays. Bird has a vivid imagination with lines such as 'Would your lips spout watercress if I kept them in a damp shed?' and Coult's music was equally inspired. Three members of his Opera Viscera group were employed, a soprano supported by flute and cello. The two instruments produced some weird and wonderful sounds, although I thought his creation might have been even more effective with the additional texture of a third instrument.

Four songs followed, written by Andrew Hopper for fellow student Phillippa Cairns. Based upon the fascinating verse of Philip Larkin, Home is so Sad, As Bad as a Mile, Send no Money and Water had been taken from his collection The Whitsun Weddings. Soprano Cairns coped admirably with Hopper's challenging line, and I liked the way the composer varied his use of the four instrumentalists (viola, cello, alto sax and clarinet) with some delightful ensemble writing.

Ben Graves was next with He Bids His Beloved Be At Peace, a setting of a poem of the same name by W B Yeats, with words that comment on the ephemerality of love and life. There was an instant and dramatic impact from the opening bars. Graves seemed to get it just right with a roll-





Tom Coult and Pete Yelding

ing piano, staccato violin and pizzicato cello, precise yet exciting music benefiting under the control of conductor Dan Watson. As soprano Roma Loukes entered to delicate tremolo, she painted an evocative picture of the 'long manes' of Yeats' 'shadowy horses'. With contrasting dynamics and some poignant cello lines, Graves maintained a tension to the last, the final chords and silence affectively held by Watson.

Reviled Did I Live, Said I, As Evil I Did Believe was memorable for the vocal Fach (voice type) of tenor Craig Jackson who gave a superbrendition of it. But the evening was a competition for composers, not singers, and whilst Luke Iveson had written his own perceptive libretto of a tormented mind that 'woke his own mother, the last ever sleeper' and a haunting vocal line,

I was less impressed by his use of three cellos as accompaniment. Also the use of props by Jackson to open and close his piece were I thought over-elaborated and having created a situation, this was not sustained.

Fifth on the bill was Gavin Dale performing his own A Letter is Not Enough (Come Home). Another contestant who had written his own verse, it concerned the effects on a woman coming home to find a letter telling her that her loved one had been killed in the war.

Composed to a designated format as part of his 'A' level project, there was more than a touch of Elton John in both Dale's style and presentation. But since it was very well done, it mattered little. The solo flute also added to the general mood of Dale's message. I liked it enormously!

The time it took to set up the instruments and players for the contribution of Pete Yelding signalled that the Conservatoire Recital Hall was in for something different. With a combo comprising composer on vocals and electric guitar, plus backing from amplified viola, sax, piano, clarinet and full drum kit, it was. Studying composition at the Conservatoire Yelding (get him on Facebook) gave a 'three song set' – apparently a common phenomenon at shady open-mic nights according to the programme notes.

He promised a juxtaposition of his aesthetic preferences: 'On the one hand I like delicate sounds and sensitive subject matter, but on the other I like rough sounds and crude subject matter'. His lyrics for *Silhouettes Smiling, An Interlude About Tissue* (no prizes for guessing what the tissue was for?) and *10 Years of Fire* did in turn deliver sensitivity, vulgarity and anger. Ten out of ten for originality and appeal to the predominantly young audience present, but did his music deliver the delicacy promised in the first two numbers?

The final contribution was a joint effort. Josh Herring had originally composed *Steady Hands* as a song with banjo accompaniment. This was then modified to include the pre-recorded electronic sounds of

Richard Stenton. In this later version it further embraced a second vocal, piano, clarinet and viola, a combination that had been thoughtfully put together. I thought there was an impelling nature to the repetitive wordless refrain from the soprano that began the piece and while Herring only used five lines they were highly effective with a magical final couplet: "He draws a question mark next to his open mouth. Straight lines are all that come out of his open heart."

Before the results were announced, a group fittingly played a short piece by Philip Bates in whose name the Trust was formed. Who won the three prizes that were on offer? Trustees Martin and Susan Bates decided the first one, going for Tom Coult. The second judge was contemporary music composer Laurence Crane who opted for Pete Yelding as his winner. The audience also voted for Yelding - no surprise there in view of his reception. For what it's worth, my vote in the interval ballot went to Ben Graves, simply because his music generated an atmosphere in keeping with the lines of Yeats.

The Philip Bates Prize grows. Come along, ladies. Let's have something from you next year!

Geoff Read

Puppet Animation in Brighton

From time to time the Philip Bates Trust supports arts projects other than those involving music, and a puppet animation project in Brighton particularly ticked all the right boxes. One of the advantages of this project to us was that a great impact was achieved at minimal cost. Brighton



Puppets in the making

University student Lucinda Abel organised and led the project, which involved a group of Year 9 school pupils making puppets and telling local stories through animation and film. Celebrating Brighton's unique and diverse seafront culture and applying the Olympic value of excellence to the process and craftsmanship of creating puppets, they explored and shared a new perspective on our sense of place in the world in 2012.

The final film and puppets were on display as part of the Brighton Fringe Festival and Youth Arts Festival in May 2012 for a large number of people to enjoy. Treasurer's Report.

This year has been another profitable one for the trust. The Trust has supported various applications for funding, we meet twice a year at St Peter Church, Tile Cross, Birmingham, to discuss applications that have been received.

In February we received 10 applications from all over England, even though in the guidelines for applying to the trust it is stated that we particularly welcome applications from individuals and organisations within the West Midlands or from organisations undertaking activities in the West Midlands.

The successful applicants were Sarah Brienza, aged 13, towards music courses for the clarinet in Droitwich, Worcestershire; Brendan Connellan, aged 8, Ardingly, West Sussex, towards music fees to support his career and aspiration to become a professional horn player; and Lucinda Abel, aged 20, Brighton, to support the community arts project in an exhibition celebrating local stories from Brighton's popular seafront with puppets to music.

In July we received 14 applications some of which were obviously a round robin and not applicable to our mission statement so they were not considered. The successful ap-

Sue Bates

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plicants were: Performances Birmingham, THSH, The Town Hall and The Symphony Hall for support towards the Jazz Summer School, a project aiming to develop the musical ability of 50 young people from Birmingham; MF Community Music, Birmingham, this is charity run by Georgina Farrow and Clare Murphy to provide music workshops for people isolated in hospital, both on paediatric and adult wards; and Putting Carers First, our contribution will be used to enable young carers to attend an African Drumming workshop in Stoke-on-Trent. We all must not forget that many carers are extremely young, some only aged 5.

I would like to thank you all for

your continued support to the trust, as without it we couldn't continue these good works in memory of Philip. *Karen Moulton*

A New Addition

Congratulations to Julie and Kieran Larkin on the birth of their son, Jack who was born on 20^h November 2011 at Heartlands Hospital, weighing in at 6 lb 15 oz.



Just for Fun: Music Word Search

ALLEGRO PITCH RSGWOZL ΚI KLML ALTO **QUAVER** BAND REST ZDAP QNBBY QGUI BGEBN BASS SONATA BASSOON **SOPRANO** XYRHF **CADENZA** STAVE Ι Ι **CELLO** SYMPHONY JOSR RCOXQE R Z MCHOIR TAMBOURINE O R Т CHORD TEMPO Z S U Z G N P M N K H O O CLARINET **TENOR** CONDUCTOR TONE TUMVOR J S **CYMBAL TREBLE** UCCNU DRUM TRIANGLE CAIGNTELI OENOSON **GUITAR** TROMBONE KEY TRUMPET RRYME NNCADENZAW LARGO TUNE EGIVIG A N UMICROPHONE VIOLA BVMENETOTR UMPE T C EMINIM WALTZ JMRQINUTO OCTAVE XYLOPHONE F T T D U L M O D A L T O T F P L E C I **ORCHESTRA** ZITHER SCYMBALSP KJF DQBL QHR