



Birmingham Royal Ballet Principal Dancer, Ambra Vallo, is seen pictured with some of the pointe shoes donated by the Company to the Music Fund for Cuba in 2007, to be shipped to Cuban ballet schools.

In 2006 the Royal Ballet at the Royal Opera House in Covent Garden gave the Music Fund for Cuba hundreds of pairs of nearly new pointe shoes and flat shoes for children and young men and women to deliver to the Cuban Ballet School.

SPECIAL THANKS go to: Amicus Eastern Region and Durham Miners for their donations of £500 each.

Also thanks to Joan Crookes and the Northern Lights Choir who participated in the choirs festival in Santiago de Cuba and were inspired to give over £500 to the Music Fund for Cuba.

Special thanks go to the tearoom staff at the Eastwood Garden Centre in Gloucestershire who donated their tips to the Music Fund.

Thanks to the Backroom Band, including Thabo and Shanta Miller, who hosted a New Year's Eve Ceilidh in Priddy, Somerset and gave the £1200 proceeds to the Music Fund.



continued from front page
The CNEArt team estimate that the restoration project will take about two years to complete.

The dream

CNEArt and the National School of Arts dream of all the schools of dance, theatre, circus and music being able to stage productions there, and having a proper rehearsal space. The theatre will also play a very important role in the local community – providing a much-needed cultural centre for all ages, but especially for children and young people. The schools of arts will be able to run projects in the local community.

Says Mayle Benitez, CNEArt: "For us it is a dream to have this theatre working again. If the Music Fund can help us do this it will be simply a dream come true."

Project Teatro Miramar



Music Fund buys music equipment for Cuban students – thanks to everyone!

In 2005 the Music Fund for Cuba gave US\$15,000 to acquire musical accessories for the wind sections in music schools – it was enough to buy reeds for all the intermediate students in Havana for over 6 months. CNEArt told us: "Tuition is totally free for our students and it is the duty of each Conservatory, Music School or Academy, to provide the instruments and the necessary means for the musical education of the students. A reed only lasts 15 to 20 days, especially in our humid climate and each student needs 19 reeds per year... We very much appreciate your kind donation. ¡Una vez mas, Gracias a todos!"

Buena Vista label invests in Cuba's musical future

World Circuit Records, the label behind the Buena Vista Social Club phenomenon celebrated their 20th anniversary in 2006 by donating an amazing £10,000 to the Music Fund for Cuba.

Nick Gold of World Circuit told us: "There are many aspects that make Cuban music so special to me. There is an extraordinary variety and depth to Cuban music and the musicians I have worked with have a deep wisdom and understanding as well as love of their music and its history.

I have been extremely impressed by the technical level of musicianship and also the desire to innovate and not to stand still. There is a very high regard for ensemble playing and a great deal of support amongst the musicians and they are always ready to listen and experiment. They have a high regard for their peers and the heroes of the past and a deep pride in their country's music, which they value above all others. The music has it all: wonderful melodies, a matchless rhythm, great musicianship, intelligence, as well as a great sense of humour.

I was really impressed with the project to renovate the Teatro Miramar and hope that one day we will see the theatre fully operational again. It is an honour to be able to contribute in some way to this."

What a fantastic boost for the Music Fund...



New text for music teachers

The Music Fund has arranged the publication of an education text in Spanish for music teachers in Cuba. Written by the Cuban music academic Alina Ponsada, the book is an introductory course in the methodology of music education for teachers of children at primary school level. A very big thanks go to Chambers publishers in London for publishing thousands of these books which have now been distributed to teachers all over the island.



A farewell to Kirsty

Kirsty MacColl's love of Cuba, its people and music inspired the founding of the Music Fund for Cuba, set up in 2001 in her memory.

In May of last year, Kirsty's mother Jean wrote a letter to the Fund to say that close friends and family had travelled to Cuba to scatter Kirsty's ashes off the coast of Havana. She said,

"This was a place where she found great musical inspiration and enjoyed the warmth and friendliness of fellow musicians and the Cuban people."

Cuban violinist and friend Omar Puente accompanied the simple ceremony with a piece especially composed for Kirsty. Jean said she had come to understand Kirsty's passion for the island.

In memory of Joe Scurfield

Over £3,000 in donations have flooded in to the Music Fund from friends, family and fans of Joe Scurfield, who sadly died in June 2005. Joe was a musician and a life-long socialist, trade unionist and activist. He was the creative genius behind the Old Rope String Band, which took its music on tour across the UK and Europe for nearly 20 years.

Joe was based in Newcastle upon Tyne and tributes to him along with more information about the band can be found at:

www.oldropestringband.co.uk/tributes/obituary

Photo: Trevor Steed

