

SUPPORTING CUBAN MUSIC AND ARTS

MUSIC FUND FOR CUBA

Winter 2010



Long term support to school for visually impaired

In May 2010, the Music Fund for Cuba signed a cooperation agreement with the Abel Santamaría School for blind and visually impaired children in Havana that will strengthen the charity's long-term support for the institution.

Lying on the outskirts of Havana, the school provides specialised care for 145 children; 47 blind children, 8 deaf and blind children and 90 children with a visual impairment aged between 4 and 14 years.

It aims to integrate the children into mainstream schools as soon as the child is ready by means of an outreach project which continues to support children at their high schools. There are 64



teachers, including speech therapists and psychologists, and classroom assistants. Some of the teachers are also visually impaired.

The school, which occupies the site of an old army barracks, has several classrooms and they have just refurbished the nursery. The computer classroom includes specialist computers, Braille printers and specialist software purchased with funds raised by the Music Fund for Cuba's Cycle Cuba Challenge. Sponsorship has also been used to purchase each child a speaking watch and calculator and provide educational and musical equipment in the Art and Music rooms.

The school was named after Abel Santamaría, one of the martyrs of the Cuban revolution who helped lead the attack on Moncada Barracks, Santiago de Cuba, on July 26, 1953. Captured during the attack, Abel was murdered in prison after being brutally tortured: his eyes gauged out by dictator Batista's henchmen. After the revolution, all schools and hospitals for visually impaired children were named Abel Santamaría in his honour.

Every year the Music Fund for Cuba Cycle Cuba Challenge visits the Abel Santamaría school to deliver educational aid to the staff and students. Find out how you can take part below or see www.musicfundforcuba.org.uk.

Cycle Cuba Challenge: The experience of a lifetime

The Cycle Cuba Challenge is a fantastic way to experience Cuba while raising money for the Music Fund at the same time.

Cycle to the salsa beat along an exhilarating 350-kilometre Caribbean-to-Atlantic cycle tour from Sancti Spiritus to Remedios. The route passes through dramatic scenery, lush forests, pristine white sandy beaches and along quiet rural roads, including a day's hike deep in the Escambray Mountains, with the opportunity to experience diverse Cuban culture and landscapes. The Challenge group will visit Che Guevara's evocative mausoleum in Santa Clara and join the May Day Rally in Trinidad, Cuba's best preserved colonial town as well as visiting the Abel Santamaría School for blind and visually impaired children and Miramar theatre.



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Concert hits right notes for Cuba



Omar Puente and John Etheridge performing at Bolivar Hall

MAGICAL PERFORMANCES by three graduates from the Superior Institute of Art in Havana proved a testament to Cuban musical education at a fundraising concert for the Music Fund for Cuba in March.

Ahmed Dickinson Cardenas, guitar, and Eralys Fernandez

Mendez, piano, beautifully recited pieces by Cuban classical composers, and renowned band leader from Raíces Cubanas and jazz violin virtuoso, Omar Puente, raised the roof with his unique original compositions. All three musicians were joined on stage by

UK guitarist John Etheridge for the finale at the sold out concert in London's Bolivar Hall.

The concert was a memorial event for Ken Gill, one of the founder trustees of the Music Fund for Cuba, and was kindly supported by The Ken Gill Memorial Fund.

SANTIAGO BALLET



(right) Candy Costa Aguilera, with a pair of her old shoes, and (above) dancing in the new ones received by Ballet Santiago

CANDY COSTA AGUILERA, dancer, teacher and choreographer for Ballet Santiago holds up a worn-out, threadbare pair of ballet shoes: "this is what the dancers were using before the donation of shoes came from the Music Fund for Cuba" she says, before adding with a smile: "I still dance very well in these in fact, but the new shoes are better...!"

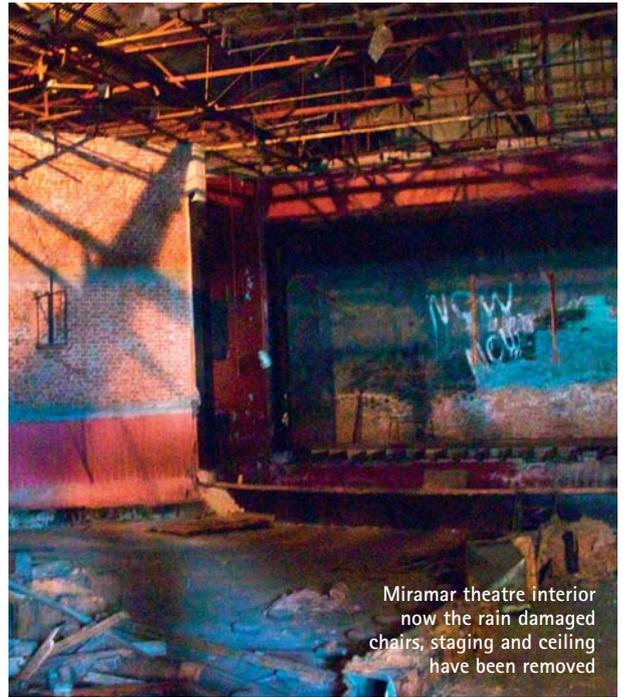
Ballet Santiago is a professional ballet company based just outside Santiago de Cuba. The company consists of around 35 dancers at any one time, at varying levels in their professional development. The Company has undertaken a number of tours abroad, but was severely hampered in its development by lack of adequate costumes and

clothing, in particular good quality ballet shoes. In a unique collaboration with the UK's Royal Ballet and others the Music Fund for Cuba sent 11 boxes of ballet shoes and dance equipment to the company in 2009. This was one of five consignments of ballet equipment sent by the Music Fund to various schools across Cuba.

Giselys Campos Gonzalez, a 22 year old dancer who has been with Ballet Santiago for four years explains that before the Music Fund donation of shoes, the company only had a small amount of poor quality shoes, and dancers often had to wait to even get a pair that they could use. "Good quality ballet shoes are essential" she says, "and make it much easier to dance and to fulfil our potential as dancers".



Building for the future



Miramar theatre interior now the rain damaged chairs, staging and ceiling have been removed

RESTORATION WORK on the Miramar Theatre Project is continuing although building works had to be postponed last year due to the effects of the two hurricanes which devastated Cuba in September 2008. Cuba was forced to divert all construction work to emergency rebuilding projects for more than 400,000 homes damaged by the hurricanes.

However, in the last year major works have taken place to repair and waterproof the roof and the entire auditorium has been stripped of the old chairs, staging, weather damaged walls, fixtures and fittings.

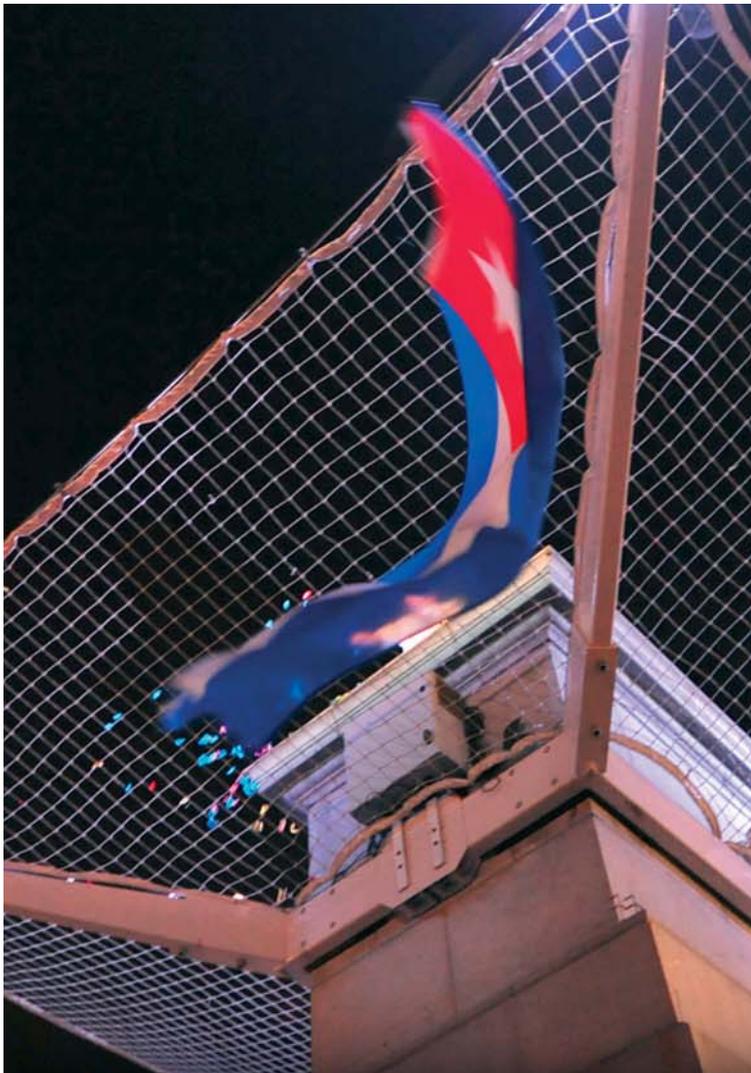
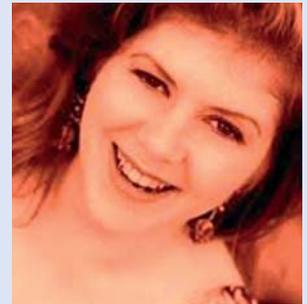
A formal agreement was signed between the Music Fund for Cuba and the ministries of Culture and Economic Investment in December 2009 setting out the schedules for the project's completion. The theatre is one of the few capital building projects financed by foreign money taking place in the arts in Cuba.

Look out for the latest updates and donate to the Miramar restoration project at www.musicfundforcuba.co.uk

Memorial for Kirsty

2010 marks the tenth anniversary of the tragic death of Kirsty MacColl in whose memory the Music Fund for Cuba was established. Since then the charity has supplied ballet shoes, reeds, instruments, and text books to young musicians and dancers throughout the country, all in Kirsty's name.

In December 2009 the trustees of the Music Fund for Cuba, including Jean MacColl, Kirsty's mother, agreed to establish a permanent memorial to Kirsty at the Miramar Theatre when it reopens.



Fourth plinth promotion

ALAN FITTER spent an hour on Trafalgar Square's fourth plinth in September 2009 to promote the Music Fund for Cuba.

Alan's plinth promotion was part of sculptor Anthony Gormley's 100 day One and the Other installation which saw a different person make the space their own for an hour, 24 hours a day, for 100 days in 2009.

Around 200 visitors listened to a live Cuban band playing below while supporters waved Cuban flags and handed out leaflets.

Reflecting on his experience, Alan said: "I think we made a bit of a splash in the square and hopefully my hour up there would have helped spread the word."



Cubania perform in front of the fourth plinth

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Here's my gift of:
[] £10 [] £20 [] £50 [] £ [] Other amount
[] Please tick here if you would like the Music Fund for Cuba to reclaim the tax that you have paid on this and any future donations you may make.*

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*In order for The Music Fund for Cuba to reclaim the tax you have paid on your donation(s) you must have paid income or capital gains tax (in the UK) equal to the tax that will be claimed (currently 28p for every £1 you give).

Standing Order form

(Please return to Music Fund for Cuba - not your Bank)

Name of Account Holder(s) []
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[] Postcode

Account Number [] [] [] [] [] [] [] []
Sort Code [] [] [] [] [] []

To: Manager (Name & address of bank)
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Address []
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Pay Music Fund for Cuba
Co-operative Bank, 1 Islington High Street, London N1 9TR,
Sort code: 08-92-50 Account Number: 50015566

£ [] every month / year
Starting on (date) [D] [D] [M] [M] [Y] [Y] until further notice.

Signed []

The Music Fund for Cuba was first established in memory of singer Kirsty MacColl in January 2001. Kirsty, who was killed in an accident in December 2000, had been hugely inspired by Cuban music and culture and campaigned against the injustice of the blockade.

Her mother Jean MacColl and friends approached Cuba Solidarity Campaign to set up the Fund. The Fund became a fully registered charity in February 2003.

Cuba is well known for its rich cultural traditions. Its music and performing arts are enjoyed by people around the world, but this heritage and the future artistic development are threatened by a lack of basic tools and materials. Violin strings, paper for music scores, ballet shoes, paints and other small but essential items are all in short supply. The main reason for these shortages is the continuing economic blockade of the island by the United States.

The aims of the Music Fund for Cuba are:

To advance the education of the public, in particular children and young people, by the supply of musical equipment and materials to students, music schools and performing artists within Cuba.

If you are interested in helping the Music Fund or have ideas for fundraising projects in your local community please do not hesitate to contact director, Rob Miller.

Your support today could make a world of difference to young Cuban musicians and artists.

Music Fund for Cuba
c/o Unite Woodberry,
218 Green Lanes,
London, N4 2HB, UK
Phone: 020 8800 0155 Fax: 020 800 9844
Email: info@musicfundforcuba.org.uk
Website: www.musicfundforcuba.org.uk

Trustees: J.Fitzsimmons, M.Chambers, N.Gold, J.MacColl, M.Seifert,
Charity Director: R.Miller

Supporting Cuban music and arts

Music Fund For Cuba

Registered Charity No. 1096283

Please complete the appropriate section and return this form to: Music Fund for Cuba c/o Unite Woodberry, 218 Green Lanes, London, N4 2HB, UK



Alternatively, you can donate online at our website: www.musicfundforcuba.org.uk