



Music Fund for Cuba Update

Supporting Cuban music and arts

Music Fund For Cuba
Registered Charity
No. 1096283

Winter 2004/5

Cuban National Ballet School Says "Gracias" !



In 2004 the Music Fund received a donation of hundreds of pairs of children's ballet shoes from the Royal Ballet, Covent Garden in London. This was the second consignment of ballet shoes donated. The shoes were delivered to the Cuban National Ballet School in Havana in December 2004. Dra. Ramona de Saa Bello, (seen far right) director of the school, expressed her warmest thanks for the donation. The National Ballet School has existed in some form since 1931. Illuminaries such as Alicia Alonso studied ballet there and later became central to the forging of the

unique internationally recognised Cuban ballet teaching method. When the National School of Arts was established in 1962 to give free access to arts education, the National Ballet School became an important arm of it. It now has over 300 fulltime students (from age 13) and over 4000 children aged 7-14 (42% male) taught in after-school classes. Carlos Acosta, principal guest dancer at the Royal Ballet in London, trained there from a young age in the 1980s. Violins and strings donated by musicians of the Royal Opera House were also delivered to the Havana Music School.

*Message to
all our supporters:*

We would like to thank all our supporters who have donated money or musical instruments and equipment, who have given their valuable time and energies to the benefit of the Music Fund for Cuba.

To date we have been able to send over £30,000 worth of valuable equipment to our partner organisation CNEArt for use in Cuban schools. The next shipment of £10,000 worth of goods is currently being assembled and will be sent to Cuba in spring 2005.

Thank you for helping us to safeguard the bright future of Cuban music and arts.

Yours,
Rob Miller
Director,
Music Fund for Cuba

How can your
donation help?

£10 could help to buy sets of replacement strings for guitars, cellos, and violins and give young musicians the ability to continue their studies.

£20 could buy 4 pairs of ballet shoes for students in dance schools who would otherwise have to go without.

£50 could help to provide a set of instruments for a primary school music class, giving every child an opportunity to participate.

Amicus Foundation donate £5000 to the Music Fund for Cuba



From left: Robert Gomez, Amicus Foundation; Tania Dominguez Gonzalez, Cuban Embassy; Derek Simpson, Amicus Gen. Secretary

In June, Tania Dominguez Rosas, Cultural and Scientific Counsellor for the Cuban Embassy in Britain was invited to attend the trade union AMICUS conference in Scarborough where she received a wonderful donation of £5000 for the Music Fund for Cuba. Tania thanked AMICUS General Secretary, Derek Simpson, and all AMICUS members who had helped make the donation possible. She spoke of the work of CNEart who oversee the development of music and culture within Cuba's education service. She explained about the

difficulties of obtaining much needed equipment and instruments due to the illegal US blockade.

At a packed evening concert, delegates were entertained by local dancers, musicians and the Cuban trio, *Cubania*.

The Amicus Foundation, the charitable fund set up by the trade union, produced hundreds of information leaflets about the work of the Music Fund to distribute to delegates.

Robert Gomez, Chief Executive of the Amicus Foundation explained:

"We are pleased to support the Music Fund for Cuba which is working hard to help the Cuban people overcome the effects of the blockade".



"Some of the students said they feel they owe a debt to music education in Cuba as without it they would not have learnt all they have from their teacher Omar, a product of Cuban music education."

In May, students at the Leeds College of Music, studying under Cuban maestro, Omar Puente, were inspired to put together their own latin music night to raise money for the Music Fund for Cuba. They had already formed two big bands playing latin music under the direction of Omar, so decided to give a special performance. When seeking support they found enthusiasm – the local HiFi Club gave

the venue for free, Havana Club rum donated rum for cocktails, TUMI records donated CDs for raffle prizes and another local venue Viva Cuba gave a voucher for a night out as the top prize. The local Love Music Hate Racism campaign gave encouragement as the event came just prior to local elections troubled by racism. The night was great fun for all and raised over £600 for the Mu-

sic Fund. For many of the students it was the first such event they had been involved in and organised, down to distributing the flyers, and said they enjoyed it so much they have plans for more such projects. Some of the students said they feel they owe a debt to music education in Cuba as without it they would not have learnt all they have from their teacher Omar, a product of Cuban music education.

Carlos Acosta at the House of Commons



Ken Gill, Music Fund trustee, with Carlos Acosta at the House of Commons reception.

At a packed reception at the House of Commons hosted by the All Party Parliamentary Group on Cuba in conjunction with Cuba Solidarity Campaign, in July, Carlos Acosta committed himself to do all he could to support the work of the Music Fund for Cuba and gave his sincere appreciation to the charity's efforts to date.

The reception was held dur-

ing the run of the fabulous show '*Tocororo, A Cuban Tale*', at Sadlers Wells theatre in London. Acosta, star of the Royal Ballet, developed the show based on his own story, fusing contemporary and Afro-Cuban dance and music styles with classical ballet, and rehearsed a company of dancers in Cuba to bring the show to Britain. Carlos said "events such as these

remind us all why we see culture as so important. It reminds us of our roots and our determination to help further develop young cultural talent".

Ian Gibson MP, Chair of the APPG said: "The fact that Cuba is awash with musicians and dancers of the highest quality is a testament to the importance placed on education in the country".

Dr Aleida Guevara at charity screening of 'The Motorcycle Diaries'

In October, 200 people filled the Everyman Cinema in Hampstead, London for a charity screening of 'The Motorcycle Diaries', followed by a Q&A session with Dr Aleida Guevara visiting from Cuba. Since Dr Guevara had edited the diaries for publication everyone was keen to find out more from the ultimate authority.

With the opening question "How did the diaries come to you?" Dr Guevara smiled and warmed to her task: her mother had given her the diaries and notes, telling her that they were the work of a

young revolutionary. As Dr Guevara began editing she found herself growing more embarrassed by some parts of the diaries, but after a while almost falling in love with the voice and thoughts of the writer. Only later did she find out the young man was her father. "Was the film accurate?" Mostly. Her father, of course, was much more handsome than the actor Gael Garcia, and there was indeed a swim across the Amazon, but it was not at night rather in the afternoon. "At what point did Che become a revolu-

tionary?" Not during the period of the diaries, but later, in Mexico.

Dr Guevara signed copies of the book and the evening continued with mojitos, words from MFFC trustees, Jean MacColl and Ken Gill, and 'Nueva Trova' songs from Cuban legend Gerardo Alfonso, joined by Aleida for his anthems *Sabanas Blancas* (about Havana) and *Son Los Sueños Todavía*, hymn to the memory of Che Guevara. The evening raised over £1000 for the Music Fund with special thanks to sponsors Simons Muirhead & Burton.



Above: Dr Aleida Guevara
Below: Gerardo Alfonso



Teenage group 'Polysonics' make charity CD

The 'Polysonics' are a barber-shop group set up in 2002 as a group to sing in the inter-house music competition at Lancing College, West Sussex. It is student-run and is currently made up of 10 boys from the school, aged 14-18, all from the same house (Teme House). The group made a CD just before Christmas in 2003 in order to raise money for various charities and have made over

£1200 profit so far from it. Some money is being kept in reserve with the intention of making another CD for charity. The rest, 70%, is being divided up between five charities as chosen by the members of the group. One member chose Music Fund for Cuba.

The group has participated in many other events, including singing in Prep schools in the area and, last summer, singing

in a joint concert with The Din & Tonics of Harvard University, USA, a world-renowned group.

So far over £75 has been donated to the Music Fund for Cuba.

For more information about the group or the CD please contact the group at e-mail: timmy_robson2002@lancing.org.uk

If you are a student or young person, a budding musician or performing artist or just passionate about Cuban music & arts, and you have an interesting idea for supporting the Music Fund for Cuba we want to hear from you!

Remembering Kirsty MacColl

This summer the biography of singer Kirsty MacColl, who was killed tragically in December 2000 at the age of 41, was published. The Music Fund was set up in her memory shortly afterwards. The author of 'The One and Only Kirsty MacColl', Karen O'Brien, is donating part of her proceeds from the book to the Music Fund for Cuba.



CNEArt Agreement

In July 2004 Music Fund for Cuba signed a Memorandum of Understanding with CNEArt (Centro Nacional de Escuelas de Arte), which set out the terms for a three year working relationship to provide much needed instruments and materials for Music and performing arts schools in Cuba and funding specific projects.



Patricia Meehan (left) for MFFC and Maylé Benítez Ortega (right), director of International Relations at CNEArt in Havana.

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Charity Director: R.Miller

Supporting Cuban music and arts



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, on telephone 020 7263 6452 or by e-mail to: info@musicfundforcuba.org.uk
Your support today could make a world of difference to young Cuban musicians and artists.

Yes, I'd like to make a donation to the Music Fund for Cuba

Name:
Address:

Postcode:
Email:

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.*

Signed:

Date:

Cheque enclosed (payable to Music Fund for Cuba)

Please debit my credit/debit card

Card number:

Start date:

Expiry date:

Switch cards only: Issue No.

Valid from

*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):

Address:

Account Number:

Sort Code:

Name & address of bank:

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)
_____ until further notice.

Signature

Please complete the appropriate section and return this form to:

Music Fund for Cuba, c/o CSC, The Red Rose Club, 129 Seven Sisters Road, London, N7 7QG

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