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The key to Ballanta Academy of Music
& Performing Arts

March / April 2023

Dear readers, the months of March and April have been filled with activities and excitement, but on the flip side there was sad news when we lost Mrs. Rachel Lulu Wright, our dear founding director and first chairperson of the board. She was 94.

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Staff

One more wedding....our dance teacher, Egerton Maitland Esq. took Priscilla for his wife on April 8.



Lovelace Love-Harding, assistant to the Principal, takes over from Dr. Kitty Fadlu-Deen at the end of April 2023.



New Board

The Annual General Meeting was held on 20th March 2023 at the Academy. The following agreed to serve on the board of directors:

- Dr. Julius Spencer (Chair)
- Ing. L.J.Tani Pratt
- Dr. Dunstan Thomas
- Dr. Kitty Fadlu-Deen
- Dr. Williette James
- P.C. Komrabai Peter Penfold
- Ms. Rosaline Iyabode Johnson
- Mr. Mohamed Dainkeh
- Mr. Sheku Mansaray
- Mrs. Velma Allen



Projects

The Academy celebrated a momentous occasion on 8th March, (International Women's Day) when the project 'Remembering our Legends.. they left gifts behind: can we bridge the gap?' was launched at the Logie Wright Auditorium. This project is the brainchild of Jaiah Kemokai, teacher at our Port Loko centre. Its objective is to build and develop a national awareness of our arts legends whose artistic achievements have created significant national and International waves.



The young generation have very little or no knowledge of their lives and works, and the project, funded by an ACP-EU grant, should honour them and ultimately create a new, exciting and lasting respect for the arts.

According to Jaiah, "The vision underpinning this project is to inspire the present generation to aspire for national recognition and find paths to self-reliance and innovation in the Arts by emphasizing the achievements of past musicians, theatre artists, playwrights, composers, poets, and others whose works have not been sufficiently acclaimed nationally. The project also aims to equip the present and future generations with a mindset that will enable them to see the performing and creative arts as viable paths to full and part-time careers. To make this project successful, we intend organizing a series of lectures and workshops, establish an archive of legends online and printing of publications, work in collaboration with diverse groups of artists, schools, tertiary institutions and all stakeholders." For more on this event, see www.premiermedia-sl.com/ballanta-academy-unveils-remembering-our-legends-project

Another project, 'Peace Through Dance!' has won a grant from the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany. Its objective is to provide a selection of music and dance of the different ethnic groups in Sierra Leone for children who live in the surrounding vicinity of the Academy (specifically Kroo Bay) to enjoy and imbibe the music of their cultures. By doing so they will understand, respect, appreciate and perform the cultural songs and dances of some ethnic groups in Sierra Leone. This will enable them to live peacefully with people.



Projects

On 14th April the group (now called the Ballanta African Ballet) performed at the certification ceremony of the AWA workshop for Audio engineering for video and performing arts at the Logie Wright Auditorium.



The Ballanta African Ballet at the AWA workshop certification ceremony



Dr. Kitty Fadlu-Deen received the cheque from Sabine Yang-Schmidt at the German Embassy on 3rd March



Learning/Workshop

AWA Workshop 11th – 14th April 2023

Conducted by Adolphe Yacé from the Ivory Coast and assisted by Fred Snorton from Liberia, this AWA Audio Engineering Workshop aimed at providing the students with the knowledge and skills needed to start and progress as an audio professional in the film, television and dramatic arts industries. Topics covered during the workshop included cinema and TV sound techniques, sound reinforcement in the theater, voice-over recording, sound effects and special effects, audio editing, synchronization, mixing, dubbing and streaming, including types of microphones and microphone placement, mono/poly recording, dual channel recording, sampling rate, compressor/limiter, timecode, sound report etc. Below are scenes from the certificate awarding ceremony on the 14th April.





Learning/Workshop

Course

A course on Music Conducting and Directing took place at the academy, from March to April with sessions conducted by Lovelace Love-Harding, Stephan Flore and Dr. K. Fadlu-Deen.



Here Mohamed Sesay, student with special needs, is being taught at the keyboard by Lovelace Love-Harding using a novel way of sharing music with Mohamed.





Performing

1. Easter Concert

On April 15 at Buxton Memorial Methodist Church the audience enjoyed vocal solos by Rev. Claudius Coker, Raymond Arthur Jones, David S. Koroma, Victor George, Harold Mac-John, Drucil Taylor esq. , Mrs. Bintu Jonah, Dr. Williette James, Rev. Dr. Lady Patricia Koroma, and Dr. Julius Spencer who composed and sang 'Jesus my Saviour' for the occasion. There were organ solos by Christopher James and Alvin Walker and a trumpet solo by Marvin Thompson. Three choral groups contributed interesting items. They were: Music and Music Entertainment, Sierra Harmony Choir, and Ballanta Music Makers. Two duets by Mrs. Jennylene Bunton-Cole and Charlie King Jnr. added flavour to the occasion. Board director and founding director organist Tani Pratt held the event together with his steady organ accompaniments to congregational hymns and a variety of incidental music.



Sierra Harmony Choir



Jennylene Bunton-Cole
& Charlie King Jnr



Marvin Thompson



Dr. Julius Spencer



Dr. Williette James



Ing Tani Pratt



Mrs. Bintu Jonah



Ballanta Music Makers



Rev. Dr. Lady Patricia Koroma



Alvin Walker



Music & Music Entertainment Choir



Performing

2. Groovy Colours performed at the invitation of the Canadian Consul at the consulate in Hill Station, on the occasion of the visit of the Canadian and Australian ambassadors to Sierra Leone.



If you wish to enjoy their music on a regular basis you can catch Groovy Colours on a Saturday night at Sky Bar on Lumley Beach



Watch using the link
<https://youtu.be/DbbOe5-PdsM>



**Five Star Brass Ensemble
performed at the Irish National Day
Reception on 20th March 2023**

*Five Star Brass Ensemble at the Irish
National Day reception*



Visitors

1. On Tuesday 21st March, 2023, the academy received a most welcome visit from Airneán, a group of 4 female musicians from Ireland. They had arrived to perform at the National Day reception of the Irish embassy on 20th March. The embassy kindly arranged for them to visit us at the academy. We invited 3 of our outreach primary schools in the vicinity, to listen to their performance, and the schools in turn performed a cultural dance for them. Our Five Star Brass ensemble was invited to perform the S.L. National Anthem for their reception.



2. Alumnus Anthony Kabba spent Easter in Freetown, and popped in at the end of our Easter Concert.





Donations

We received the following donations, and thank the donors for their kindness:

- £200 from Kwame Kwute on 11th March.
- €500 (for two years) from Mrs. Remmy Mahdi-Wermes through Stephan Flore.
- £50 from John Peters and £50 from Dr. George Tregson-Roberts through Raymond Davies.
- Two recorders from Prof Syl Cheney-Coker.
- £2,000 from Mrs. Aurelia Wright on 24th March 2023 through Ms. Andrina Coker.
- Four return tickets to Beijing, China for the Groovy Colours Band, from the Leone Rock Metal Group
- Two return tickets to Beijing, China, for the Groovy Colours Band from the Embassy of the People's Republic of China



Further donations can be made on our website www.ballantaacademy.org



Congratulations

1 The Academy's premier band, Groovy Colours, won the First Prize in the 2020 Chinese Bridge Global Music International Music Talent Video Competition, which is co-hosted by Center for Language Education and Cooperation (CLEC) and Central Conservatory of Music (CCOM). Congratulations!!!!This is HUGE!!

As a result, the six members will be invited to China to attend the International Summer Camp/Institute of Chinese Music Culture co-hosted by CLEC & CCOM. Due to the epidemic in 2020 all events were on hold, but this year, the event will eventually take place. They will be attending "Embracing Future with Music: 9th International Summer Institute of Chinese Music Culture" in Beijing and another city in China from 1 to 10 July 2023. The event will invite the winners of 2020 International Music Talent Video Competition to hold opening and closing tconcerts, short courses on Chinese instruments, Chinese cultural learning, field trips and other activities. In this way all participants shall share each other's outstanding musical talents and create a stage for converging world music.



*Groovy Colours are off to China!! From left to right:
Michael B.Kamara, Musa Sam Ganda, David Koroma,
JoseyIn Kobba, Christopher James & Leslie Cummings-Wray*

2 On Feb 28th 2023, Mrs. Hazel Chandler, founder and CEO of WayOut Arts, our strong partner, received the MBE from King Charles III. Congratulations, Hazel! Thank you for your devotion and inspiration for a generation of young people who are now film makers, musicians, producers, artists, composers, poets etc. They have learned valuable skills and are now in the job market, contributing to the human capital development of Sierra Leone, thanks to you!





New @ the Logie Wright Auditorium

The academy was the venue for Film Nights on 22 and 23rd April, where the Logie Wright Auditorium housed Sierra Leone's world renowned poet Syl Cheney-Coker and film maker Chivas DeVinck both of whom graciously conducted a Q & A session after the screening of Chivas's film 'The Poets' on the first night and 'The World of Youssou N'dour' on the second night . The audience contributed some insightful remarks and made the evening doubly interesting. Two short films by our partners, WayOut Arts complemented the main films, and revealed how active our young filmmakers are, producing documentaries of high quality. All their films had important messages.



Prof Syl Cheney-Coker obliging with an autograph



Syl Cheney-Coker and Chivas DeVinck

We have also shown the musical 'Chitty Chitty Bang Bang' at the auditorium to three sets of school children from our outreach programme.

At the auditorium in April the Choreo Dance Challenge designed by our dance teacher Egerton Maitland esq threw out an invitation to audition for a dance festival in May. The invitation was joyfully received and several enthusiastic youngsters showed their skills and talents. The festival promises to unearth and showcase our future dance kings and queens. Thanks to United Bank of Africa (UBA) and ORANGE for their sponsorship of this exciting event.





Obituary

Tribute to Mrs. Lulu Wright by Ing. L.J.Tani Pratt, 3 April 2024



Today is the vigil of someone who taught my wife, one among myriads of young girls, playing, as so many of them have attested, a significant role in moulding their characters and instilling in them high values of integrity, discipline, comportment, and professionalism. She subsequently became a close friend of our family. I am making this tribute on behalf of the Board of Directors and members of The Ballanta Academy of Music and the Performing Arts.

The idea of establishing a local musical institution named after Nicholas G. J. Ballanta was born after a workshop held in Freetown in November 1994 during which his work was discussed. A group was formed in February 1995, numbering 14 people which set itself the task of working towards the establishment of such an institution. The Academy of Music was officially launched on October 25, 1995. Mrs Lulu Wright was one of the founding members and was the first Chairperson of the Board of Directors of the Academy, serving in that position for the first ten years in the life of the Academy.

Of the fourteen founders, three have resigned as they are no longer in Sierra Leone, two who are still in Sierra Leone resigned, seven have died and Kitty Fadlu-Deen and I are the only ones left. It is a sign that our generation is now waiting in the departure lounge for that last and inevitable journey.

I first met Lulu when her husband Logie Wright, who was then the Director of the Freetown Choral Group asked me as a schoolboy to be their accompanist in their Easter performance of Olivet to Calvary in 1958. Lulu was then a member of the Choral Group. I was struck by this elegant lady with a truly remarkable and beautiful contralto voice who had a remarkable range. The quality of her lower range was outstanding. Her rendition of "He shall Feed his Flock" from Handel's Messiah and "O Rest in the Lord" from Mendelsohn's Elijah are etched in my memory, so much so that I asked her to sing "O Rest in the Lord" at my mother's funeral".

Her contribution to the establishment and growth of the Academy was immense. Her experience in teaching and in administration (she was Head of the Department of French at Fourah Bay College) helped shape the way she handled her chairpersonship of the Board. She was firm, was a woman of indomitable will and determination who was relentless when she wanted something. She did all of this with that deprecating smile which was designed to disarm you.



Obituary

Initially, the Academy concentrated its effort purely on music; consequently, the aims of the Academy were summarized as:

- To teach music to a high professional standard and provide activities for teachers and learners of music to enjoy the art of music
- To research and share information on the musical heritage of Sierra Leone

In an article in the booklet 'Shine like de mornin' star' published by the Academy in 1996, Professor Eldred Jones stated that "Ballanta's achievement was the application of his intellect to his ever-widening environment to produce the original work that was his gift to the world as a whole."

Ballanta's inspiring and uplifting musical plays and operas combining elements from both African and European music and his writings, constitute the Ballanta Collection which he gave to the late Logie Wright.

It is in this respect that I must mention another of Lulu's contributions to the musical heritage of Sierra Leone. Lulu established the Logie Wright Memorial Trust which has been established with the objective of protecting the Ballanta Collection. She has worked assiduously to ensure the safety of this priceless collection. My fervent wish is that Lynette carries on the work of her mother in this respect and that the Collection is made available for research and the development of the musical heritage of Sierra Leone.

In the words of the prayer for Holy rest we say:

O Lord, support us all day long, until the shadows lengthen, and the evening comes, and the busy world lies hushed, and the fever of life is over, and our work is done. Then in thy mercy, grant us a safe lodging, and a holy rest, and peace at the last.

Our beloved Lulu is at peace.

On behalf of the Board, I extend my deepest condolences to Lynette, Denis, other members of the family and to her wider family. Our prayers and thoughts are with you.



At the opening of the book of condolence, Mrs. Lynette Adjei



Ms. Andrina Coker, board director



Ing. L.Tani Pratt, board director



Performing at the opening of the book of condolence, Ibrahim S. Bangura



Performing at the opening of the book of condolence, David S. Koroma



Wreath from BAMP



Obituary

The academy lost another patron who cared a lot about the academy. He was Prof. Kosonike Koso-Thomas, engineer, poet, artist, musician and philanthropist, who passed on 14th March 2023 aged 91. The board of directors, staff and students extend their deepest sympathies to his wife Dr. Olayinka Koso-Thomas, his family and the entire staff at Techsult. May his gentle soul rest in perfect peace.





Miscellaneous

Attention Film Makers!!



FILM NIGHT

WAYout Arts, in partnership with Ballanta Music Academy, will be running a regular Film event of short, **Sierra Leonean films** at 27 Liverpool Street, Logie Wright Auditorium

Short means anything from **one minute to 20 minutes** and in any genre
Drama Music Documentary Animation arts films

Submit your films either online by sending a link to info@wayoutarts.org or drop it off at the WAYout studio- or call +23279541668

FINAL DATE FOR SUBMISSION: 5th JULY 2023
SCREENING 14TH JULY 2023 Time: 7:30pm



Sponsorship / Partners

The Ballanta Academy of Music and the Performing Arts has the goodwill and sponsorship of

Our Partners

- The Freetown City Council
- The Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education
- The Ministry of Technical and Higher Education
- The Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany
- Mercury International Charitable Foundation
- The Embassy of the People's Republic of China
- Wells Cathedral School (UK)
- Choithram's
- Transnational Co. Ltd
- Orange
- United Bank of Africa (UBA)
- NP
- Ma Dengn
- Print Point
- Bintumani Hotel
- Union Trust Bank
- Vista Bank
- Baker Tilly
- Awoko
- Premier Media
- Africell
- C & K Consultancy
- Sierra Fishing Company
- Salone Jamboree
- Leone Rock Metal Group