



Di Klef

The key to Ballanta Academy of Music
& Performing Arts

July & August 2022

Dear readers, welcome to another edition of Di Klef, where we capture the joys of learning, performing and giving in July and August 2022. PLUS – we feature alumnus Franklyn Bonnie Johnson-Williams!! But first, a comment from a reader of the June newsletter, Mrs. Ann Branford, retired teacher from the UN International School, Queens, New York, now residing in the US.

Today, you provided that pleasurable and grounded feeling for me with the marvelous news of the great progress you have made with your pet project. The images of human beings at all ages being educated and immersed in music, song and dance, play acting reminds me of past experiences I have had that brought joy to my heart and hope for human growth and development. To see a cross section of a population living and breathing the culture of their hometown and country reminds me of my experiences back in the 1970s in Trinidad and Tobago.

I know that the USA is the music capital of the world and I live and experience that everyday but to follow the success of musical development and education as presented through the Ballanta newsletter in a town in Sierra Leone has a much greater impact on my sensibilities.

I am so happy that your hard work and time you invested has come to fruition..... That so many professionals have seen the need to engage their people in the acquisition of the musical and performing arts skills through Ballanta has to be a testimony to your outreach in bringing them on board with your thinking and that of Mr. Logie's.

Sincerest congratulations and may you continue to see the Ballanta Academy of the Performing Arts grow from strength to strength.

We love hearing from you!



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IN THIS EDITION

1. Learning
2. Performing
3. Donations
4. Farewell
5. Illustrious Alumni
6. Obituary
7. Miscellaneous
8. Appeal for membership
9. Sponsorship / Partners



Learning

On Saturday 6th August 2022, guitar students and enthusiasts were treated to a master class by Enrique Torres Palma, a guitarist and social worker from Spain. He said, "I started to play the guitar when I was 14 years. At first I played it for fun, to enjoy it with friends, but later I decided to be a professional player, and I started to study conservatory music. I have done the professional studies and now I teach music to children in my country and also some concerts as a guitarist playing with some different singers." We are grateful to Simeon Bangura's Music Heals for arranging this fun session.





Performing

On Wednesday 13th July 2022, students were invited to perform for their family and friends at the Logie Wright Auditorium. Here is a cross section of the performers.





Performing

More fun at the Ballanta Holiday School from 18th July to 5th August 2022. Look how the children found friends as well as musical and dance skills in the short space of 12 days! Pictures here are of the final concert, and if you would like a taste of the action go to the edited version of the concert <https://youtu.be/3FZ9yoOVxRg>





Performing



Groovy Colours performed at the opening of the TVET celebration of World Youth Skills Day





Donations

Received with gratitude, from

- International Insurance Company Le5,000 (new Leones)
- Mrs. Tunde Adjei Le6,000 (new Leones). Mrs. Adjei is the daughter of the late Logie Wright, co-founder and first Principal of the Academy. The donation is specifically allocated thus: Le2,000 for the Annual Logie Wright Scholarship for classical voice/instrumental and theory tuition, Le2,000 for the Annual Logie Wright Scholarship for Sierra Leonean instrumental and classical theory tuition, and Le2,000 for the development of the Academy.



All the best!

Farewell

Prof Bai Shuping and his family, as they return to China. Professor Bai was the Director of the Confucius Institute in the University of Sierra Leone. His wife gave lessons on wind instruments of China to staff and students. We wish them the very best in their next posting.



Prof Bai Shuping and family

Dr. Emmanuel Bishop (right), as he moves to the UK. Dr. Bishop was a founding member of the Ballanta Orchestra, and gave lessons patiently on the violin to enthusiastic beginners. We wish him the very best in the next step in his career.

Dr. Emmanuel Bishop, left, with Musa Ganda, right





Illustrious Alumni

Curious people sometimes ask, “Has the Academy produced any well-known musicians?” The short answer is ‘YES’! So...we will introduce them to you in this and other editions. If you wish to join the alumni association, recently set up by Lovelace Love-Harding please go to <https://chat.whatsapp.com/D5ScAPfPnLKLXgN8ZgOuCb>. We would love to hear from you and urge you to link up with us to strengthen our development.

Introducing alumnus FRANKLYN BONNIE JOHNSON-WILLIAMS (in his own words) Franklyn Johnson-Williams, popularly known as Bonnie - is a composer, multi-instrumentalist and music educator. He started as a student at Ballanta, then a teacher and later on in his career, director of the Ballanta Academy of Music. He always referred to the Ballanta Academy as the incubator where his music career was nurtured. He has come a long way in the field of music from his boyhood days at the Methodist Boys High School to the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama in Scotland, now the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, interspersed with stints in other continents as student, educator, composer and performer.

He is a strong advocate of indigenous music to bring Sierra Leonean folk songs to the forefront.



Bonnie has arranged popular folk songs of Sierra Leone for different ensembles and the two most popular are “Faya Faya” by Ebenezer Calendar and “Oya to Ma Ta Ti Bakala,” a Temne folk song.

Bonnie’s passion for music has afforded him the opportunity to travel the world. He was a member of the group from Ballanta that performed at ISME in Malaysia, 2006. He has participated in festivals along the West African coastline, performed with orchestras in the Netherlands and provided live music entertainment in the Middle East (Egypt, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates), where he also taught music to both local and international students for over seven years.



Illustrious Alumni

His principle is simple - “Anyone can play a musical instrument,” and to this end, he published a beginner’s book on learning how to play the piano - “It’s Time to Play Piano.”

Bonnie now resides in the United States and has worked in the education sector in the Baltimore-Washington Metropolitan area. Through his own Maryland-based enterprise, Bonniejazz Music, he provides music education consultation for private schools, consultation for church music, offers private music instruction for students of all ages, live music entertainment for different venues, as well as composing and arranging music for churches and schools. He has also served as director of music ministries in various church denominations. Bonniejazz Music is also a household name in the DC Metropolitan Area for live music entertainment for various senior living facilities (Retirement Communities, Independent Living, Assisted Living, Memory Care Units, Senior Centers and Nursing Homes).

More about Bonnie can be found on his website - www.bonnie-jazz.com
His recent YouTube appearances can be enjoyed on https://youtu.be/t_PPFSjAI80 and <https://youtu.be/kcqlleaIM2VY>



DEATHS, MEMORIALS

DEATHS

ed away suddenly at peace
Island, SC on Wednesday,
24, 2010. Saturday, at the age
years. Beloved husband and
ad of Avenue March 27th.
years. Proud father of
offey (Greg), David and

DEATHS

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Obituary

We are sad to announce the passing of Dr. Lesley Mountford, one of our staunch supporters. She knew about us through Mr. Raymond Davies (Baker Tilly), who has sent this obituary announcement.



Some of Lesley's donations



We are very sad to announce the untimely passing of Dr. Lesley Mountford on the 1st June 2022. She died of leukemia while in hospital receiving treatment. Lesley hails from Stoke-on-Trent in Northern England where she worked for many years as a General Practitioner and then in more recent years as a highly regarded Public Health Professional with special interest in inner cities and health inequalities, overseeing Community Health for poverty stricken people. Lesley was the former director of Public Health and Adult Social Care for Stoke-on-Trent City Council; former Director of Public Health and Medical Director for City and Hackney Primary Care Trust after moving to London. She developed a connection with the Ballanta Academy when she visited Sierra Leone in 2018 and 2019 with a mutual friend Ishmael Mansaray and I invited them both as my guests to the Bintumani Concerts. Having musical connections herself she was eager to see how she can support Ballanta Academy and when I told her the Academy was about to set up a young orchestral group she garnered a number of musical instruments from family and friends which she shipped to Freetown for the Academy. Needless to say she had a very philanthropic nature and she will be sadly missed by many. May her soul Rest in Perfect Peace.

Raymond Davies, July 2022.



Miscellaneous

GREETINGS from Cindy Xue (right)

For a short time in 2020, during her term with the Freetown City Council, friendlyCindy gave a lot of inspiration to staff and students, as she displayed her jazz violin skills playing with Groovy Colours at the International Music Evening. She sent greetings from Taiwan, and a picture with two members of the Taipei Civic Symphony Orchestra. We wish her well and hope that she can find time to pay us another visit in the not-too-distant-future.



We will be welcoming the team of 22 from Wells Cathedral School who will be with us from 14th - 24th October, 2022. They will be visiting schools to perform, and of course, be part of our series of concerts at that time, including our Thanksgiving Service as part of our 27th anniversary celebrations on Sunday 23rd October 2022 at 9.30 a.m. so please **SAVE THE DATE**. Their fundraising is joyously going on, and if you wish to support that, please go to <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/sierraleone2022>



Appeal For Membership

We continue our appeal for our readers and friends to apply for membership of the Academy. It entails an annual contribution of Le200 (new Leones) and will enable the Academy to fulfill its plans to grow. It will also give you prior notice of events. Simply print and fill out the form and send it to the office at 27 Liverpool Street. Thank you.



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 British Council
- 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
- NP
- Ma Dengn
- Print Point
- Bintumani Hotel
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- Awoko
- Premier Media
- Africell
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- Sierra Fishing Company