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The key to Ballanta Academy of Music
& Performing Arts

November / December 2022

Dear Readers

As 2022 draws to its inevitable end, we thank God for the work that we have accomplished through His divine guidance and support. We continue to serve, even though our subvention was not paid all year, and grants were not forthcoming in the declining economic climate. We are grateful to our individual and corporate donors and sponsors for rallying to our aid. Without your donations, we would be in a very difficult situation indeed.

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Staff

Cupid has been busy at the academy! We have had three members of staff tying the knot. Right, Mr. & Mrs. Michael Kamara. Below left: Mr. and Mrs. Christopher James. Below right: Mr. & Mrs. Musa Sam-Ganda



Congratulations to them all! We wish them happiness and success in their married life!

Congratulations also to the head of our Dance department, Egerton Maitland Esq, recently called to the Bar.





Learning

We are excited to have our first accordion student, Mr. Lansana Roberts, Hon. Consul for South Africa. He's new to music, has a passion for it, and chose to take up the accordion! Indeed, he may well be our next Salia Koroma! Here he is, with his teacher, Lovelace Love-Harding. If you have always wanted to take up playing an instrument, or prefer to sing or dance in your mature years, please don't hesitate to contact us! Like Mr. Roberts, you will be amazed at what you can achieve!!



Another first!...We started an indigenous dance group from the Kroo Bay Community! With teacher Abdul Bunduka of the Sabanoh Dancers, these young men and women, including very young ones, have been attending class on a Saturday morning. They are youth who have not had the opportunity to engage in learning traditional dances. You should see the enthusiasm with which they're learning their moves.. Very heartwarming! What better way to build peace and unity as these youth learn to appreciate dances from ethnic groups which they do not belong to. They will soon be performing for the public regularly in the new auditorium. Look out for their dates!!





Learning

We continue to serve....our latest school is the Shalomville School in Goderich. Here, Senior Teacher Leslie Cummings-Wray encourages his pupils at their Christmas concert.



A message from one of the schools in the community that we serve.... Their lessons have been made possible by the scholarship from Voices of Sierra Leone Choir (UK).



We from the St. Joseph's Primary School can't thank God enough for such an opportunity given to us through Ballanta Music Academy 9 months ago. As a teacher I am honored to be part of such blessings to be taught by one of the best music educators in my country. A pupil called Ethel Johnson says, "I am blessed as a Liberian who was a street hawker brought into Sierra Leone by my aunt to be so blessed in realizing my dreams of being in an academy doing what I love best which are singing and dancing. I am always happy and free when singing and dancing. A big thanks to aunty Kitty and my teacher". We all thank the staff for helping us utilize their gifts and talents by helping us identify ours and use them well. Another child Bacillia from class 6 says, "I love playing musical instruments. When I sing I am happy I am learning to play different musical instruments. It's fun and the teachers give us fun so we aren't scared when learning". Thanks to all the sponsors nationally and internationally. You are building lives for a better tomorrow for us. God bless you all. We are proud that our school has a scholarship student studying music at the academy plus us the added 20 more of us. We are blessed.
(Teacher Mrs. Fatima Alpha).



Performing



Insai d nature corner is the brand name for the series of performances by staff member David S. Koroma, aka Double King. He creates new music with gumbe rhythms. He thrilled a packed audience at his first performance at the Logie Wright Auditorium on Nov 4, 2022. Look out for the next performance on 17th Feb 2022 at Regent. You can follow him on....

<https://youtube.com/@doubleking7087>

The Ambassador of the Republic of Korea through the new Hon. Consul for Korea, included the Academy in its week-long celebrations of 60 years' convivial relationship with the Republic of Sierra Leone. At City Hall, on 1st December our new group Ballanta Afro-Acoustic thrilled exhibition-viewers and invited guests to their new African sound at the Cultural Performance event.





Performing

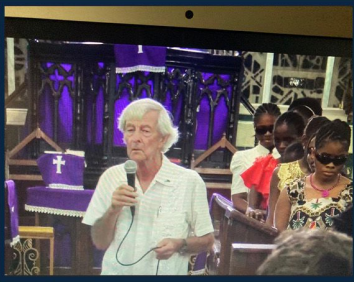


One of our major sponsors, the Ma Dengn Association, invited their cultural ambassadors, the young Ballanta pupils from neighbouring Municipal community schools sponsored by them, to perform at the most successful Ma Dengn Beach Festival at the Radisson Blu on 17th December.



Our Christmas Concert was very special, because it was graced by the presence of our distinguished guest of honour, PC Komrabai Peter Penfold, former British High Commissioner. The current British High Commissioner, Lisa Chesney was also present, as were other dignitaries and guests. The whole concert is captured in this video with the link

https://youtu.be/WocH-jHCd_w



It is our usual practice to provide seasonal music at places where it's requested. Groovy Colours (below) played at Vista Bank at their Lumley and Charlotte Street offices bringing good cheer to its customers.

Here is young 9 year old Dericka Atere-Roberts, a scholarship student sponsored by Prof. Ibrahim Abdullah performing at the concert





Donations

As mentioned before, our school would not be able to survive without kind donations. We are grateful to the following for theirs:

- Le 5,000 from Hon. Mrs. Nabeela Tunis
- Le 5,000 from Mrs. Basita Michael
- Le 3,000 from Aureol Insurance Co. Ltd
- Le 3,000 from Pee Cee & Sons
- Le 10,000 from Prof Kosonike Koso-Thomas
- Four descant recorders, a tambourine and a harmonica from Cecil Williams (US)
- Decoder and DSTV subscription from Dr. Adonis Abboud



Visits

Former board director, and member of Ballanta Music Makers, Mrs. Rodmire Larsen (nee Taylor-Smith) popped in from Norway to chat! She's still singing and enjoying it immensely.





Illustrious Alumni



Raymond Okeke Macauley, in his own words.....

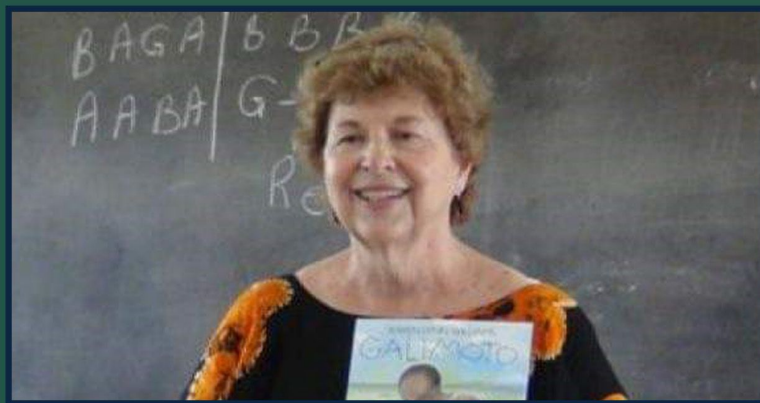
Ballanta has been the backbone of my musical journey. Gave me everything necessary to play and teach piano at a professional level. I am eternally grateful! I am thankful for the opportunity and the exposure I had at a young age. Dr. Kitty Fadlu-Deen and Aunty Luba Johnson took me under their wings, developed, nurtured and gave me the opportunity to study music overseas! I can go on and on with countless opportunities I was privileged to have at this great Academy but most of all was the family bond I shared with fellow musicians learning from them and their support. Ballanta has raised many talented musicians who have made tremendous contributions to Sierra Leone.

I currently reside in the US teaching piano as an adjunct faculty at the University of Texas, Arlington and at the Dallas Academy of Music. I occasionally have opportunities to give concerts. I've recently embarked on producing and recording gospel music.

<https://distrokid.com/videos/watch/F1b4QmrU6s8>



Obituary



If you were looking for teaching material for primary school in the academy library, you would most probably see many books with Judy Figi's name on them, even cassette tapes. Judy (see picture above) was a music teacher from the US who had once been a Peace Corps volunteer in Sierra Leone in 1964. She donated some of her books and tapes to the academy, having learned about the academy through her colleague PC volunteer Peter Andersen, who used to teach violin at the academy. Sadly, Judy Lamm Figi, age 80, died on Thursday, December 1, 2022 at SSM Health St. Mary's Hospital in Madison. She was a Board Member of the Friends of Sierra Leone organization where she received the Friends of Sierra Leone Personal Service Award. In addition, the National Organization of Sierra Leoneans in North America awarded Judy a Service to Sierra Leone Award. Apart from being an active member of instrumental ensembles, she taught music in several schools in the US and also in Sierra Leone.

Judy met her husband Dave, also a Peace Corps Volunteer in Sierra Leone in 1965. They were married four years later, and returned to Sierra Leone in 2004. She continued her interest in Sierra Leone by participating in the Rocky Mountain Chapter of Operation Classroom in-service of teachers and school construction projects in Makeni. They have three children and three grandchildren.

We offer our deep condolences to her husband Dave and the family. May she rest in peace.



Miscellaneous

BALLANTA

Monthly Concert
Date: Friday 2
Time: 4:00
Place: Ballanta
Entrance: ...

A date to keep in your diary...International Music Evening, Feb 25th at the Bintumani Hotel, Aberdeen.

BALLANTA ACADEMY OF MUSIC & PERFORMING ARTS

Season's Greetings

The Board of Directors, staff and students of the Ballanta Academy of Music and Performing Arts wish you peace, joy and good health for Christmas and New Year 2023.

Merry Christmas

...And Happy New Year 2023

Follow us

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