

The Joanna Leach Foundation

www.joannaleachfoundation.org.uk



Christmas 2012

What an eventful three months since our last newsletter! Bernard d'Ascoli played a wonderful recital of largely French repertoire at The Minster, Axminster in November.



"A superb evening, the quality of his playing was quite lovely."

"Exquisite, such sensitivity and so expressive!"

"A wonderful player. His technique and musicality serves the music; putting the composer first, it is Debussy played by Bernard d'Ascoli, not d'Ascoli plays Debussy!"

"A quite extraordinary, very moving evening and very very special."

"I found myself needing to close my eyes to listen with no distractions, sharing his world of darkness. Because of his lack of vision, sound and touch are his world."

"For me the encore was really the highlight (Debussy's *Minstrels*). It was very free and liberated."

Trevor Bolshaw's review is on our website

HONITON Antiques Festival



We participated in the Honiton Antiques Festival Week by organising three lunch-time events. Following a superb organ recital by Douglas Hollick, Jo's Stodart 1823 square piano was successfully transported and after an overnight St. Paul's to acclimatise to the humidity, the piano was tuned, then played delightfully by Andrew Carter. He and Jilly Spencer

encapsulated Fanny Burney's Windsor years in words and music. In the final concert, Andrew played the Stodart again and also the Kenneth Tickell organ accompanying his wife Lynn, an international oboe player, in a programme of period music.

THE "TIFFIN" WEEKEND

Liz writes: "Who would have thought, thirty years ago, that two small boys singing as Choristers in Exeter Cathedral Choir could lead to something as awe-inspiring as the concerts we enjoyed at Tiffin School? (My eldest son, Peter, was a contemporary of Simon Toyne, Tiffin's Music Director and Assistant Head. This contact from thirty years ago formed the initial basis for the Foundation's link with Tiffin.)"



Conductor, Simon Toyne & soloist, Andreas Boyde
A wonderful rapport

The concerts were sponsored by the Foundation and we hired in a Steinway D for the occasion. Andreas was in fantastic form as the soloist in Weber's *Konzertstück* and Beethoven's *Choral Fantasia*, with the massed

ranks of Tiffin's Oratorio Choir and members of the Brandenburg Sinfonia. The culmination of these two concerts was Brahms' German Requiem, a massive work performed superbly by the stunning 250 singers and the Sinfonia.

Simon Toyne: "...I'm so glad that you could be there and witness quite what an impact Andreas's playing has had upon so many people. That experience is one that will live in the memory of all who were present - and it's very rare to say that about an occasion which effects singers, orchestral musicians and audience alike!

It seems to me that this is exactly the kind of cause that the Foundation was set up to promote, whereby a leading professional can work with students and amateurs and can create a more superior and more meaningful artistic creation than if it were (merely) on a professional concert platform.

We look forward to continuing our partnership with Andreas over the next two terms - I've a feeling this might become more permanent...
All the best, *Simon*.

Mike and I were privileged to sit in for some of the pre-concert rehearsals on both days and were thrilled to observe the rapport between conductor, orchestra, soloist and the choir, in both rehearsal and performances. In fact, we came away with the distinct impression that Andreas, the School's Artist in Residence for this academic year, is much more than that. Whenever he appeared at the piano, during rehearsals, a deafening cheer and loud applause came from the ranks of the singers, who have clearly adopted him as an integral part of the school's music making!

There were too many intensely emotional and uplifting moments during the concerts for me to single any one out. I wasn't familiar with the Weber, *Konzertstück* but after two rehearsals and two concerts, I am getting to know and love it. It was an excellent vehicle for Andreas to demonstrate his total focus, musicianship



and wonderful technique which is breath-taking. Much of the *Choral Fantasy* is familiar as the themes reappear in the 9th Symphony, but the interaction between all the musicians was wonderful to behold, and I am sure that even the youngest members of the choir, who will only have been part of it since September, will have life enhancing and lifetime memories to cherish

Having come from a choral background, I was thrilled by the *Requiem*, a huge work to sing. The Oratorio Choir were absolutely in touch for the whole performance, very demanding in terms of vocal requirements and concentration. They had obviously been well-trained in "keeping the eye on the conductor" and one was left appreciating a really professional performance, almost forgetting that the venue was the School Sports' Hall and that this was a school concert.

In fact, this was so for the whole weekend. What a privilege to have been present and to have had a small but practical involvement in the proceedings. And even more important, how wonderful to have been able to bring a knowledge and an awareness of Joanna, all she stood for and achieved, to around 900 concert goers and another 300 performers, and also how the Foundation seeks to commemorate her life. Certainly one of our main objectives has been

fulfilled, that of enabling professional and amateur musicians to work together to the highest standards, and in so doing, to experience a life enhancing and collaborative fulfilment and satisfaction gained through music."

Mike: "For me the Tiffin concerts were very special - the London Concert in Jo's memory, that I had promised her many London based friends, we would have. Jo had so enjoyed the *Beethoven Choral Fantasy* when we heard Andreas play it with the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra.

"A particularly poignant moment for me came just after we had joined the rehearsal, towards the climax of the *Choral Fantasy*, when the whole choir rose as one and sang en masse with the piano and orchestra - seemingly at *ffff*... - culminating in the words:-

Accept then, you beautiful souls,
Joyously the gift of high art.
When love and strength are united,
God's grace is bestowed upon Man.

The impact of this massive 'wall of sound' was incredible to experience. Andreas played from his heart for his dear friend, and the music carried us beyond this world toward heavenly realms of consciousness, where Jo's presence and inspiration will forever be found."

Read Andrew Lancaster's Review on the Website.



With your support, we are making things happen!

"The Joanna Leach Hall"

**The Beehive
Community Centre**

£5,088 to go!

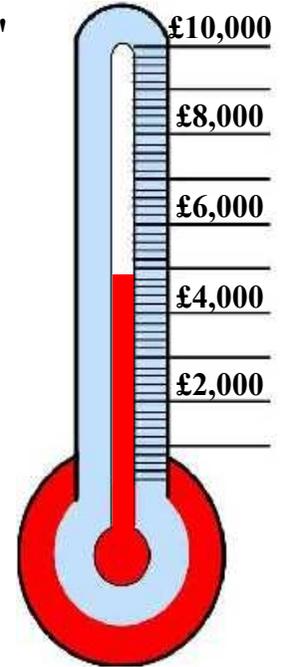
The exciting news is that tenders are in, the contract for the build is about to be issued.

Building starts in February and is on a 42 week contract with penalties for delays.

Liz and I have been invited to join the group on behalf of TJLF, to work on the fitting detail. Obviously we are wanting appropriate staging, lighting and built-in cable runs for recording and playback purposes. It will also be used regularly as a cinema.

If you wish to make a contribution please attach a note 'for the Joanna Leach Hall Fund'. Thank you.

Charity No.XT31998 - Gift Aid boosts contributions by 25%



Post Script:

Mike and Liz were married very quietly in Tiverton on 12th July this year.

