

NASSAU MUSIC SOCIETY

PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2008-2009

The Nassau Music Society has had a great Season. The music was enjoyed by all and the artists excelled themselves. And to make it even better for the Society, the audience numbers were well above average and those attending the concerts seemed to very much appreciate the performances if the ovations they gave the artists at the end of their performance are a guideline. We must of course remember that in order for the programme to work the Society needs help and the key ingredients in this are the Sponsors and the Committee.

THE SPONSORS AND THE COMMITTEE



We are very fortunate that our Sponsors recognise that we are doing something good for the Community, and have confidence that the Society will provide an interesting, varied and worth while programme. So we again thank, Mr. Dominique Lefevre, Managing Director of SG Hambros Bank and Trust (Bahamas) Limited, our lead Sponsor, Mr. Yves

Lourdin, Pictet Bank & Trust Ltd, Mr. Steve Watson, RoyalStar Assurance Ltd and our newcomer, Mr. Emmanuel Alexiou, ColinaImperial Assurance Ltd as our major Sponsors. We also thank our other Corporate Sponsors, Santander Bank & Trust Ltd, Arner Bank & Trust (BAH) Ltd and Commonwealth Bank and individual Sponsors, Baroness Uschi Von Diergardt, Mr. and Mrs. Peter Graham, Ms. Barbara Thompson, Mrs. Elodie Sandford, Mr. and Mrs. William Hunter, Mr. and Mrs. Alexander Maillis and the many others who also contributed as Sponsoring and Supporting Members. Their continued commitment to the Society makes all of us on the Committee feel very humble and encourages us to continue our efforts to provide a first class programme of music for the enjoyment of our Members and the General Public and a commitment to assist young musicians in the Bahamas. As I have said before, in order to provide a good programme we have to commit a year in advance when booking artists and it is very comforting to know that there is good support for the Society. I, as President, need the support of the Committee to organise and produce the many concerts we have during the Season and without the Committee this would be impossible, many of whom work hard during their spare time to make each



performance enjoyable for the audience. The members of the Committee for the Season were: President and Treasurer, Patrick H. Thomson; Vice President Fund Raising, Terry Factor; Vice-President Public Relations and Communications, Italia Watkins-Jan; Vice-Presidents Scholarship, Christine Gangelhoff; and Father Teodor Bitá; Secretary, Simone Fitzcharles; Committee Members, Christy Lee, Eric Rose, Jan Hardy, Keiran Roker, Linda Thomson, Rosemarie Alexiou, Shavincia Thomas and Valda Feldman. We added three new Members to the Committee this Season – Christy Lee who is a Member of the Music Faculty at COB - Keiran Roker who is a past Scholarship recipient and also teaches at COB – Shavincia Thomas who plays the flute for the BNSO and works at RBC.

Unfortunately Andrya Schulte has moved temporarily to Canada and is no longer an active Member of the Committee. We thank her for her dedication during her time on the Committee.

THE 2008-2009 SEASON CONCERTS

The Season began in November with a piano/vocal duo – Raminta Dombrowski and Rita Preiksaite from Lithuania who delighted the audience with an Evening of Romantic Music by French Composers. Their visit had additional sponsorship from SG Hambros. This performance was followed in January by Roberto Porróni from Italy on classical guitar and our own Christine Gangelhoff on flute who performed a programme entitled “Echoes of the XXth Century” at the Balmoral Club to a large audience and again at St. Paul’s Church Hall. The Society had not presented a guitarist for sometime and the audience appreciated the artists. In February, we featured Alberto Nose, the winner of the 2005 Santander International Piano Competition, with additional sponsorship from the Santander Bank & Trust Ltd who performed a programme of Beethoven, Chopin, Liszt, Brahms and Prokofiev to enthusiastic audiences. March was jazz month at the Balmoral. “Jazz with the Stars” provided by the Steve Koven Trio featuring Steve Koven on the piano accompanied by Adrian D’Aguilar, double bass, and Neil Symonette, drums. Also featured were Simone Fitzcharles who sang two numbers, “Hey Big Spenders” and “Georgia” accompanied by Keiran Roker, saxophone and Lazano Rolle, horn. Before the finale, the Yodephy Dancers, Deborah Gear, Dwayne Lamm and Maydi Bacallero-Williams danced their version of “Take Five”. The delighted audience then had an excellent dinner served by the Balmoral Club staff. The final event of the Season was performed by Polina Leschenko, piano, and Mark Drobinsky, cello, who played a spellbinding programme of Schumann, Brahms and Franck for piano and cello. They made a fitting



end to a Season which saw the average audience numbers climb considerably and saw a significant increase in the awareness of our Programme.

MASTER CLASSES

Now that the Society has an entree to COB through our Committee Members, Christine Gangelhoff and Christy Lee, we have been able to offer more Master Classes to students of Music. Raminta Dombrowski and Rita Preiksaite, Alberto Nose, Polina Leschenko and Mark Drobinsky gave Master Classes to piano, cello and vocal students both from COB, the BNSO, students of Mrs. Kim and others. These were well organised and it was felt that students reaped many benefits from exposure to world class performers. We will continue to do this next Season.



ADMINISTRATIVE AND OTHER MATTERS

ADMINISTRATION

The Administration of the Society is conducted through the Committee which meets about once a month throughout the Season. Committee members have specific functions to perform and once again we single out Italia Watkins who does a first class job in organising the website, www.nassaumusicsociety.org, arranging our advertising in the newspapers and on radio and as well with the assistance of Eric Rose arranging courtesy calls on His Excellency, the Governor General and the Honourable Prime Minister. We also attempted to meet with various Government Ministers but were not successful in arranging this. Our Yamaha piano which still resides at St. Paul's Church Hall thanks to the kindness of Father Bob is in good condition and required very little tuning this year except when Alberto Nose played on it.



FINANCIAL

Brief highlights of the financial report show an estimated loss on the concerts of \$43,000 which is offset by sponsors contributions of \$77,000. The cost of bringing artists to the Bahamas, paying their fees and expenses while they are in the Bahamas increases every year and although our losses are high the ticket prices charged are kept to a minimum to encourage people to come to the concerts. It is fair to say that the finances of the Society are in good shape and this of course gives us the ability to plan ahead with our programme knowing that we can finance future years losses as concerts almost never make money. It is important that the Society is able to plan in advance in order to book artists at least a year



ahead. Almost all good performers have their calendar organised for at least a year in advance and we usually want them at a date of our choice. The Society placed \$30,000 of its funds into the Nassau Music Society Foundation administered by the Lyford Cay Foundation and as a result of the economic conditions prevailing over the last half of 2008, this investment has been reduced to approximately \$22,000. We are waiting for the audited results and have been advised to leave the funds where they are pending a recovery in the financial markets. (Please note the further details under Scholarship.) The Society has over \$80,000 in the Bank including \$50,000 on deposit although there are still some expenses for the Season that has just finished to be settled. We anticipate going into the coming Season in a strong financial position.

SCHOLARSHIP

For various reasons, although we identified and awarded a scholarship last Summer, the recipient was unable to raise the additional funds required to cover the fees and costs of going to his College of choice. We therefore did not dip into our funds with the Lyford Cay Foundation but as explained above the economic crisis did. The Committee and particularly the Scholarship Sub-committee chaired by Christine Gangelhoff have been considering our scholarship options going forward. They are working on details on how to give scholarships to entry level candidates in the Music Faculty at the College of the Bahamas where we can perhaps help more students for the same amount of money. This year we have made donations to the College of the Bahamas to allow them to purchase a portable electric piano to allow them to transport the piano easily to other schools for



educational purposes, and to the Bel Canto Singers to defray their travel expenses while representing the Bahamas in the US.

CORPORATE AND LEGAL MATTERS

For the past few years, the Society has concentrated on providing good Programmes for our Members and the Public, raising sufficient funds to be able to organise the Programmes and for our Scholarship Programme. Some other matters have been left to organise themselves which of course does not happen. We are now in the process of regularising the Society's corporate and legal status in matters such as obtaining a Business Licence, updating the Corporate records, changing the Registered Office. Our Committee Member, Simone Fitzcharles, has been instrumental in spear heading this project. We have also been lax about holding Annual General Meetings, however this year we are on schedule.

PUBLICITY AND COMMUNICATION

This year we paid two courtesy calls on His Excellency, the Governor General along with two of our artists who presented him with cds and also a courtesy call on the Honourable Hubert Ingraham, the Prime Minister who also received a cd. We thank them for taking the time to host us. Our website, thanks to the dedication of Italia Watkins, is in great shape and even exhibits characters who talk to those who take the time to view the offerings. The present and past programmes are displayed, details of the Music Society, our membership form is available and a form to contact us with any comments and make reservations. The Nassau Guardian has kindly supported us this Season and given us good coverage on our concerts. Eric Rose and the members of the Bahamas Information Service have also taken many photographs of our concerts and other activities. We of course use other avenues of advertising, the Tribune, the Punch and Island FM where Eddy and Chrissie entertain us before each concert. We thank them.

LOOKING FORWARD TO THE FUTURE

GOALS FOR THE FUTURE

The Nassau Music Society has come a long way since the start of this century and we feel has been going from strength to strength. However the Society is beginning to reach a plateau and we need to effect some changes to advance into the next phase. Over the



summer we are going to prepare a Business Plan to work out in what direction the Society should be heading. This will not affect our Music Programme but will effect the administration and scholarship for example. We would like to employ a part time administrator who would deal with the day to

day operations of the Society, organise the administration of the concerts and other secretarial work. The Society would also like to become more involved in the educational system and be able to promote classical music in the school system, organise Master Classes and concerts for school children.

THE 2009-2010 SEASON

The 2009-2010 Season is already in place as it has to be if we are to book good artists and prepare the Season Programme for printing in October. It commences in November with a return of the Albek Duo Fiona and Ambra Albek giving us a programme of piano and violin. This is followed in January by a programme of piano music by Colleen Lee, from China and then in February, Peter Seymour and the Project Group from the US who will perform a varied programme of music from Chamber Music to Jazz. The Howard Fishman Quartet from the US at the beginning of March will play a programme of light music and we will finish with a woodwind Quartet from the Scottish Chamber Orchestra in late March. Already for the 2010-2011 Season we have a firm booking for Jue Wang, the 2008 winner of the Santander International Piano Competition, in October and bookings for Quartetto Gelato, a Canadian Quartet, and John O'Connor, a pianist from Ireland in 2011.

Once again we would like to thank our Members for supporting us and remind them that their Membership is good until the end of 2009. We appreciate their support and also the support of those that attend our concerts. We would also like to acknowledge again the generous support of our Sponsors who allow me to write such a glowing report. We also mention in particular Father Robert Lefebvre and Antoinice of St Paul's, Denis Donaldson of St Andrews, James Moir & Co and Derry Ferguson, Arthur D Hanna & Co for dealing with ticket sales and PS Advertising and Krizia who design our Programme and posters and all those who advertised in our Programme. We thank you all and look forward to a great Season starting in November.