



BUSKAID NEWS

2010

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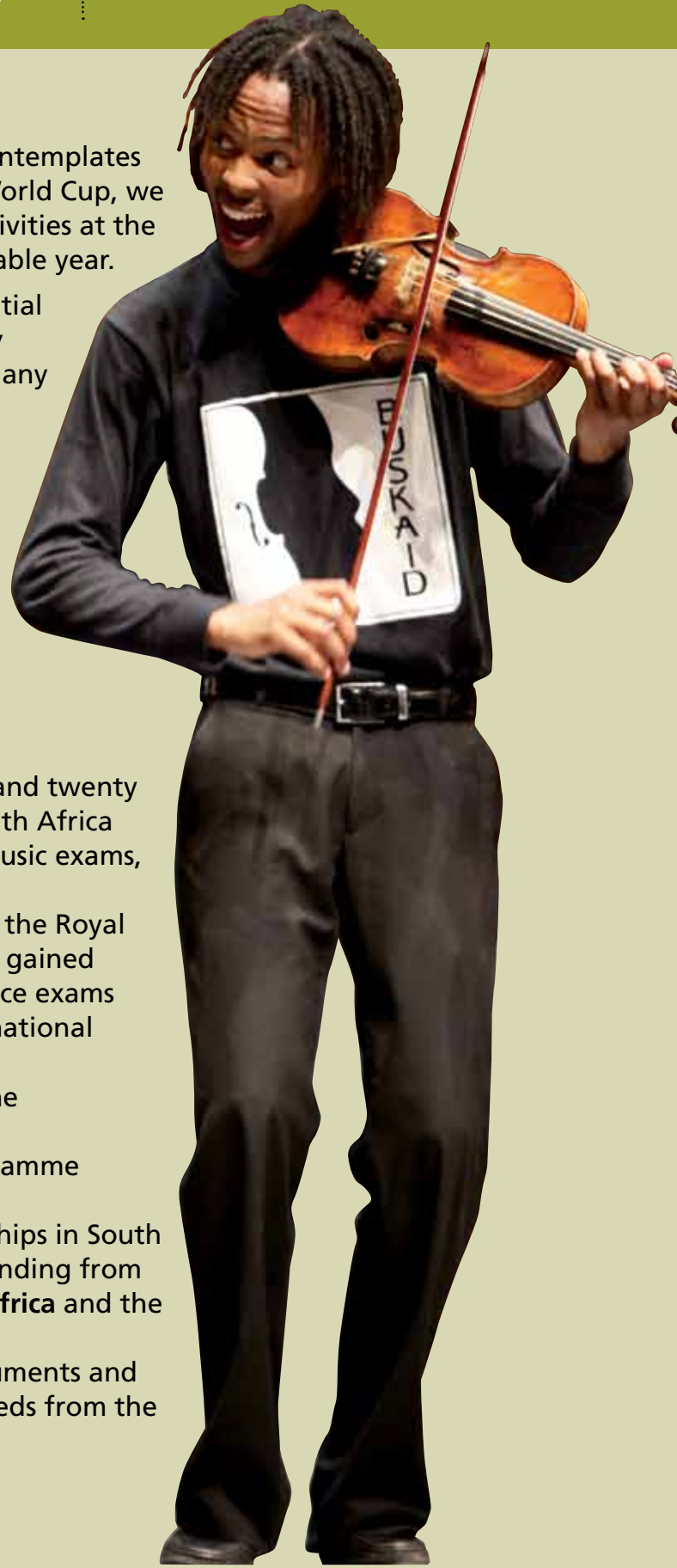
DEAR BUSKAID SUPPORTERS

2010 is nearly over, and whilst South Africa contemplates with pride its many successes in hosting the World Cup, we are reflecting on all our achievements and activities at the Buskaid Music School throughout this memorable year.

Our good fortune in being awarded a substantial grant from the South African **National Lottery Distribution Trust Fund (NLDTF)** has created many positive developments in the Music School.

In 2010 we have

- accepted more beginners into Buskaid, bringing our numbers to around 90
- with the NLDTF grant appointed several salaried staff from within the school
- taken 70 of our students on a music and environmental workshop
- undertaken a major tour abroad
- given five public and community concerts and twenty private and corporate performances in South Africa
- presented ten students for international music exams, all of whom passed - six with distinction
- celebrated the successes of our students at the Royal Academy of Music, London, both of whom gained distinctions in their end-of-year performance exams
- sent two of our violin teachers to an international teaching course in London
- welcomed some distinguished visitors to the Music School
- featured in the BBC's *Songs of Praise* programme filmed in South Africa
- received generous donations and sponsorships in South Africa and the UK, including substantial funding from the **Redefine Income Fund**, **TOTAL South Africa** and the **Oppenheimer Memorial Trust**
- received donations of several quality instruments and bows, notably those purchased with proceeds from the **Mike and Dot Hall Memorial Fund**



SALARIED TEACHING APPOINTMENTS

In 2009 we accepted around 30 new beginners into Buskaid, which, though a positive move, proved to be a challenge for the teachers and for our limited resources. But by the end of 2009 we had received the extremely welcome news that we had been awarded a handsome grant of just under seven million rands (approximately £625,000) from the National Lottery Distribution Trust Fund (NLDTF), to be used over a three-year period, specifically for our teaching programme, concerts and string workshops.

The NLDTF grant enabled Buskaid to appoint salaried, contracted teachers - all of whom are Buskaid members - from January 2010, which not only stabilised our teaching situation, but also gave our young teachers job security and a far greater sense of their professional worth.

Over the years we have become aware of the fact that career advice given to school leavers in South Africa rarely mentions music as a possible profession. Considering the abundant musical talent in this country, particularly in the townships, it has been a source of great frustration to us that we could not offer financial security to these skilled young people, whose teaching is now of world-class standard. Furthermore, all of them play in the Buskaid Ensemble and are therefore capable performers as well as trained string teachers. (The combination of these two skills is by no means a foregone conclusion!)



Seven Buskaid musicians – Lesego Mokonoto, Cecelia Manyama, Keabetswe Goodman, Simiso Radebe, Gilbert Tsoke, Pule Lekarapa and Katlego Legodi - are currently employed as violin, viola, cello and bass assistant teachers, whilst there are a further dozen youngsters helping as trainees. All the trainees are still at school and welcome the little bit of 'pocket money' they earn whilst being trained to teach.



Throughout 2010 we have accepted some fourteen new beginners into the project, bringing the numbers up to about 90. However, because our modest Music School is full to overflowing and children are often obliged to practise outside, we still had to turn away more prospective pupils than we could accept.

Of the two beginner classes – violin and cello/double bass - there have been very few children who have dropped out, and some are making remarkable progress. The assistant teachers not only regularly lead these classes, but also teach the beginners individually during the week; all of them have discovered the great satisfaction of seeing their pupils improve and develop. They also realise the extent to which teaching others can help them identify some of their own playing problems.

Further NLDTF funding has enabled us to give 'learnerships' to seven students, of whom five are also assistant teachers; these students are effectively serving

apprenticeships and are required to practise four hours daily and attend all Buskaid rehearsals and performances. As they improve they are encouraged to play for local professional orchestras, with the ultimate aim of their becoming fulltime performers.

In addition, two of the learnership students were given the opportunity to combine the study of their instruments with developing another aspect of their creativity in a manner which would complement their playing, whilst adding artistic value to the music school. One, Simiso Radebe, has outstanding abilities as an arranger and improviser, and has this year spearheaded the arrangements of a whole range of new Gospel and Kwela music. This has also served to develop his leadership and organisational skills, which will stand him in good stead when he eventually becomes a fully professional player.

The other student, 18-year-old Tumi Mapholo, (who features in the documentary *Soweto Strings*) was divided in his desire to

study dance and the violin. This year Tumi has developed both talents, with slightly more emphasis on his violin studies. With the support of his teachers at the Dance Factory, he was asked to choreograph dances for some of Buskaid's repertoire. Tumi, who is highly creative, also designed and made costumes for dance sequences in some of the Ensemble's Kwela arrangements.

Lastly, as a further offshoot of the learnership programme we appointed an unemployed single mother of two young children (one of whom we subsequently enrolled in the beginner violin class) as our morning caretaker. Nunu Mthembu lives with her two children in one small outside room in a Diepkloof backyard; this part-time job has given her financial security, whilst her little daughter Lesego is beginning to show some aptitude for the violin.



STRING WORKSHOP AT BOTSHABELO

These workshops have been a valuable part of Buskaid's activities since we started the project in 1997 - and for that matter before Buskaid's inception: I first led a bush workshop in 1994 for the original group of Diepkloof string students whom the Buskaid Trust was supporting. Since then Hanneke van der Merwe (who heads up the Ubungani Wilderness Experience) and I have worked together on a regular basis, combining her expertise in environmental and life-skills studies with our own specialised

string programme, to provide a unique opportunity for township youngsters to experience the tranquillity of the bush environment, whilst learning new skills and receiving intensive music tuition.



For various reasons - mainly financial - we have not offered this workshop to our students for the past three years, but the NLDTF grant for 2010 enabled us to take all but the very youngest to the Botshabelo Historic Nature Reserve in early April for a nine day music/environmental workshop. A record 70 children attended, which created the perfect opportunity to integrate Buskaid's entire membership both musically and socially, focus on some intensive Ensemble rehearsals for a forthcoming BBC TV recording in Soweto in April, and introduce all the students to team-building games, environmental awareness, and new creative skills. Activities included Ndebele beading, a historic treasure hunt and a reptile demonstration. In particular, the younger children who meet together just once a week at the Music School, spent many hours with Hanneke and her officers bonding as a group and forming new friendships.



We were very fortunate that leading UK double bass player Valerie Botwright, who originally came out to South Africa with John Eliot Gardiner to work with the newly-formed Buskaid Ensemble in 1997, made time in her busy playing schedule to join us at Botshabelo and teach seven of our double bass students. Since our cello and bass teacher Sonja Bass was indisposed for the entire workshop period, Val found herself unexpectedly coaching the junior ensemble, which she did with great enthusiasm. We are extremely grateful to Val for giving up so much of her time to be with us, and to Buskaid UK for funding her airfares. With her, Val brought her daughter Sophie who much enjoyed working with Hanneke and the Ubungani team. Our longstanding



connection with Hanneke, who also accompanies us as chaperone on most of our international tours, has played a significant role in the development of all those children who have had the good fortune to work under her guidance.





Evenings at Botshabelo were often devoted to mass rehearsals of pieces we were to perform later in the year, since this was our only chance to bring almost all our students together. These were certainly noisy occasions, but Simiso Radebe, whose responsibility it was to lead the Kwela sessions, took up the challenge with his customary boundless energy and the results were enjoyed several months later by audiences in Soweto and Johannesburg. On the final night at Botshabelo the Ensemble presented a candle-lit concert in the Mission Church to a very receptive local audience.

TOUR TO SYRIA

In the lead-up to 2010 many South African arts organisations had high hopes that the World Cup would offer them the chance to enhance their profile internationally through increased exposure during the event. For the majority this was not to be, and we accepted with resignation that a small string ensemble was unlikely to be featured at a football match attended by 90 000 fans, even if the stadium, Soccer City, happens to be a stone's throw from the music school! In the event, our involvement emerged from an unexpected quarter.

Earlier in 2010 we had been invited to Damascus by Hanlie Booysen, Political Counsellor at the South African Embassy in

Damascus, to perform at a South African Freedom Day function in Syria in April. Ms Booysen, who is married to the former New Zealand Ambassador to South Africa, Warren Searrell (whose Syrian photographs appear in this newsletter), had previously heard us perform at Government House in Wellington in 2007. Regrettably we had to decline her invitation, but the seeds were sown for a future visit to this fascinating country. When our long-time loyal sponsor **TOTAL South Africa** agreed to underwrite an international tour during the extended June/July vacation, the South African Embassy in Syria responded with delight at the opportunity of arranging a Syrian tour for Buskaid during the World Cup, with the intention of featuring our musicians as cultural ambassadors at this very strategic time.



The eight days we spent in Syria were, as on every international tour, packed with activity and a lot of very hard work. We gave one major public concert in the Damascus Opera House, where we were warmly received with our usual standing ovations. When we walked on stage we were confronted by a positive barrage of TV cameras! This concert was subsequently broadcast on Syrian TV and, we believe, in a number of other Middle Eastern countries.

Our musicians also enjoyed interacting with young Syrian musicians at Massar, a cultural development centre for Syrian youth



in Damascus. After the initial cacophony, there emerged from this interaction some very recognisable Arabic versions of African kwela, together with our own township take on Arabic music – as well as a lot of very excited and happy young people! Later that day we played at Yarmouk camp alongside the Nimreen Children’s Music Ensemble which also plays traditional instruments.



For the Buskaid musicians undoubtedly the most exciting aspect of the tour was their performance prior to a live broadcast of a World Cup match in a Damascus Fan Park the day after we arrived. A further similar event took place on our last evening, this time at an upmarket café in central Damascus. On both occasions Buskaid was received with the sort of response generally bestowed on pop stars! In return for these two performances, our accommodation in Damascus was sponsored by **MTN Syria** (a cellular network operator).

Finally this tour also coincided with a prestigious event hosted by the South African Honorary Consul - held in Aleppo at the Aleppo Club - the main purpose of which was to celebrate South Africa’s success in hosting the World Cup, as well as serving as an introductory event for South African Ambassador Shaun Bynevelde to meet prominent members of the business community. The Buskaid Ensemble was chosen to provide the evening’s entertainment, which culminated in an impromptu lesson in South Africa’s soccer-inspired ‘Diski Dance’ for the delighted guests!



In the short amount of free time left, we managed to absorb a little of the extraordinary history and culture of Syria. We enjoyed wonderful local dishes in two most beautiful traditional restaurants; we walked through the ancient souks of Damascus and Aleppo; we visited the





magnificent Omayyad Mosque containing the tomb of John the Baptist; gazed on the huge waterwheels of Hama, and spent a few hours in the village of Maalula, where Aramaic is still a living language. All our students were captivated by the culture and traditions of Syria and the warmth of its people.

We very much appreciate the meticulous preparations put in place by Hanlie Booysen and the staff at the SA Embassy in Syria, which made this tour run so effortlessly, as well as MTN Syria’s contribution in the form of a well-appointed Damascus hotel.

We owe a very special debt of gratitude to TOTAL South Africa for its great generosity in sponsoring this unusual tour, and to its MD Jean-Denis Royère, for the keen and genuine interest he takes in Buskaid’s activities. Many of our young musicians have travelled extensively as part of the Buskaid Ensemble: to date a total of eighteen international tours. For them the legacy of this visit was a lasting impression of an exchange which stimulated and opened their minds to aspects of an entirely new



and completely unfamiliar culture, as well as a great deal of pride in the impact and excellence of all their performances in an international arena.

Furthermore, this tour, perhaps even more than previous ones, offered our musicians an opportunity to demonstrate their extraordinary ability to draw people together in a way that is positive and life-affirming, through the power of music. As a new generation of young black South Africans who are benefiting from the country’s break with its difficult past, they delivered yet again a universal message of hope in a divided world.

SWAZILAND

At the end of May we paid a brief visit to Swaziland to participate in the International Bushfire Festival. The coach journey, which should have taken around five hours, in fact took twelve, as owing to a newly implemented system of border controls,



we found ourselves caught in a seven-hour traffic jam at the border. Bushfire takes place in an outdoor venue – an idyllic African version of Glastonbury. Our performance was warmly received by an audience of several hundred; as the day progressed the crowds swelled, until by the evening an audience of some 10,000 rocked to the sounds of soul and pop stars such as Freshly Ground and Lira – an experience which completely obliterated all memories of the previous night’s journey for our youngsters!

PERFORMANCES IN SOUTH AFRICA

This year, the Buskaid Ensemble has given five local public concerts, of which three were community concerts held in Soweto and attended by a richly diverse cross-section of the Soweto and Johannesburg communities. All performance fees for senior members were funded by the NLDTF.

The first community concert was held at the 'Dutch' Church near the music school in Diepkloof and filmed by the BBC for transmission in September 2010 on *Songs of Praise*. As luck would have it, the date chosen - 18 April - coincided with the ash cloud disruptions in Europe and both the music producer and the presenter remained grounded in the UK. Meanwhile those members of the BBC team who had arrived in South Africa well before the airline problems, resourcefully overcame all the obstacles, and the filming went ahead as planned.

Two more community concerts took place later in the year in Soweto; one was held specifically for our pupils' parents and

friends and was one of Buskaid's best – a festive occasion when an entirely classical programme was received in an atmosphere of musical celebration and visible pride in the achievements of Diepkloof's very own talented offspring.

Our main public concert was held a week or so later in Johannesburg's Linder Auditorium, which was virtually sold out. The NLDTF funding had enabled us to advertise the Linder concert extensively, which, combined with a strong PR campaign led by **Total Exposure**, which continues to assist Buskaid on a pro bono basis, resulted in a capacity audience – one of the most rewarding sights for musicians as they walk on stage at the beginning of a concert! 'Added value' to our advertising campaign was contributed by Classic 102.7 and AdReach (street pole ads).

Rather ambitiously we decided to include every member of the project in two pieces, which required some very detailed organisation. A convoy of thirteen kombis (minibuses) would bring the students and





their instruments up to Johannesburg, an undertaking not for the fainthearted! Around midday I arrived at the music school to organise the loading of the kombis and lead the convoy to the concert hall, and was dismayed to find that a well-attended funeral was taking place at the church in whose grounds we are situated. Our only means of making an exit was to join the funeral cortège until it reached the highway!

These efforts were however well rewarded by the audience's response as we all processed into the Linder at the beginning of the concert - and later, after the 90-strong performance of Sheila Nelson's *Italian Waltz* and massed Kwela.

The main programme featured a total of nine soloists from the Ensemble: Simiso Radebe, who brought the house down with his rousing version of *Zigeunerweisen*; Kabelo Monnathebe and Tiisetso Mashishi (both of whom are studying at the Royal Academy of Music) as violin and viola soloists

in a beautifully executed performance of the slow movement of Mozart's *Sinfonia Concertante*; Pule Lekarapa and Bandile Makongoza, the virtuoso double bass soloists in Telemann's quirky gypsy-inspired *Grillen-Symphonie*; and Gilbert Tsoke, who gave a deeply-felt performance of the Fauré *Elégie*. Two Buskaid vocalists, Cecelia Manyama and Mathapelo Matabane were greeted with cheers for their rendition of classic pops and soulful Gospel singing, whilst young Tshogofatso Matabane made her vocal début as soloist in *Sophiatown*.

Choosing a new programme each year is quite a challenge. It is vital to keep the more advanced players stimulated, whilst taking into consideration the limitations of less experienced members. This year our youngest Ensemble member, Khotso Langa, is just eleven years old! In some instances we may have to arrange certain pieces of music, especially if they include wind instrumentation. We are indebted to Michael Pilkington for a number of arrangements he has made especially for us

and which we have performed with great success throughout 2010. This year we have also enjoyed playing some great new 'classic pops' arrangements by Timothy Kraemer.

During 2010 the Chamber Ensemble has performed at some twenty corporate and



Early Childhood Development Awards © Blue Media

private functions - from World Cup cocktail evenings, Awards events, a film launch, weddings and an engagement party, to a reception in honour of the President of Gabon. The full Ensemble also played for the double launch of Children of Africa and Soweto Strings, held at UBS and hosted by Ivor Ichikowitz. Proceeds from sales during the evening of limited-edition framed prints from Children of Africa were subsequently given to Buskaid.

In September the renowned Welsh composer Karl Jenkins paid a return visit to



Johannesburg to conduct two performances of his *Stabat Mater* with a local choir and professional orchestra. A number of Buskaid musicians were invited by the

Sara Gon Agency to participate in these performances. Fourteen current members and one ex-member - Samson Diamond, who was deputy leader of the orchestra – were scattered throughout the string section: in fact our players comprised nearly 25% of the entire orchestra! They were all enthralled by the experience of performing under the baton of the composer of this evocative music, surrounded by the awe-inspiring sounds of a one hundred-strong choir.

ASSOCIATED BOARD OF THE ROYAL SCHOOLS OF MUSIC EXAMINATIONS

Although we do not routinely enter our students for exams, we like to give those who wish to undertake a performance exam the opportunity to do so. We may also encourage a student to play an exam if we feel that it will offer an appropriate incentive. At the end of 2009, three violin students were entered for ABRSM exams, one for Grade 7 and two for Dip ABRSM, a highly demanding recital assessment. Our Grade 7 student passed with distinction, whilst Simiso Radebe was awarded his Diploma with Distinction – a magnificent achievement. Early in 2010 Cecelia Manyama was also awarded her Diploma after she successfully repeated the sight-reading aspect of this exam – a further excellent success.

In October 2010 ten students sat performance exams from Grade 4 to Grade 8. Of these, six gained distinctions, two were awarded merits and two, high passes. Three violinists gained distinctions in Grade 7 whilst Pule Lekarapa passed Grade 8 on the double bass after only six years of study. As is now a Buskaid tradition, these exams were preceded by a recital given by the candidates in the music school for a supportive audience from Soweto and Johannesburg.

Once again we wholeheartedly thank our Chair of Trustees, pianist Jill Richards,



who makes a vital contribution to the success of these exams by donating a great deal of time in her very busy international performing schedule to play for our candidates. We have also been most fortunate that **SAMRO** and the NLDTF have supported these exams through their funding of entry fees and associated external teaching fees.

STUDENT NEWS

Kabelo Monnathebe and Tiisetso Mashishi have recently commenced their second year at the Royal Academy of Music (RAM) in London after a challenging but successful first year when they both gained distinctions in their performance exams. They returned to South Africa in late June and were warmly welcomed back into the Buskaid fold, where they immediately threw themselves into playing with the Ensemble and teaching. 2010 has been a particularly difficult year for Tiisetso as his mother Freda, who was a very pro-active parent Trustee, passed away unexpectedly in April whilst he

was in London. Tiisetso had also recently lost his father Daniel, who was Buskaid's driver for many years.

Simiso Radebe, a highly talented violinist, whose charismatic stage presence captivates



audiences wherever we play, successfully auditioned for the RAM in December 2009. For various reasons however we all agreed that Simiso should spend a further year at Buskaid before embarking on the four-year RAM degree course. This has enabled us to gather vital funding to support him and we acknowledge with great gratitude the generosity of numbers of BBC *Songs of Praise* viewers who donated some £6000 towards his studies. The Oppenheimer Memorial Trust has also pledged support for Simiso, who will re-audition for the RAM this December. Donations in support of Simiso's studies are still most welcome!

Samson Diamond, Buskaid's first student to study abroad, who many of you will recall

gained a Master of Music Performance degree in the UK, is now back in South Africa enjoying a busy year fulfilling engagements as the 2010 Standard Bank Young Artist Award winner for Music.

Cecelia Manyama and Keabetswe Goodman, both excellent violinists, are also fine, dedicated teachers. At the beginning of 2010 we offered them the chance to participate in a *Stringwise* course in London, led by Sheila Nelson. *Stringwise* generously sponsored the two girls' course fees and Deborah Young kindly offered them hospitality. They were acknowledged by the course teachers and their fellow participants for their excellent teaching skills, and returned to Soweto full of enthusiasm and fresh ideas.



In the last newsletter we told you about Bafana Mthembu's battle with a drug habit and our efforts to support his rehab through the generosity of my musician friends and their friends in the UK. Although we'd like to restrict our newsletters to good news only, the reality is that within a community of young people such as ours there are inevitably many very difficult stories. We have struggled to keep Bafana out of trouble this year, with mixed results. Until there is a massive cleanup of the many township suppliers of these substances it will be an uphill fight for young people such as Bafana to stay clean. There is a world of difference between the bright young man who emerged from rehab last year with positive hopes for his future, and the drug-

addicted person he has recently become. However, when I last spoke to him to seek his permission for this update, he was very lucid, and agreed unreservedly: he had been clean for two weeks and was desperate to get his life together again. Bafana now recognises more than ever before that, whilst we are still there for him, he has reached the point where only he can direct his own destiny.

VISITORS TO BUSKAID



In early February we greatly enjoyed a visit from the British actor and comedian Lenny Henry who was on a musical tour of South Africa, recorded by the BBC and subsequently broadcast in instalments on Radio 4. Lenny Henry's infectious humour, mingled with his genuine astonishment at encountering a classical string project in the midst of an African township, made for a highly entertaining morning.

Later in the same month another celebrity, cellist Julian Lloyd-Webber paid us a quick visit. All Buskaid's cellists, including the beginners were there to meet Julian, play alongside him and be inspired by his all-too-brief performance. As leader of the UK's new music programme *In Harmony*, which uses music education to promote community development in deprived areas in England,



Julian was especially interested to learn more about Buskaid's social impact on the local and wider communities.

The renowned French violinist Philippe Graffin has worked with Buskaid students on a number of occasions and also taught Samson Diamond during his post-graduate year. In May we welcomed him back for an informal session with our learnership students. Simiso especially appreciated his help with Sarasate's *Zigeunerweisen* which he was studying for performances later in the year.



In August we welcomed People to People, an American organisation which sends specialist delegations to visit NGOs for interaction and exchange of ideas. This visit of 30 delegates, all Music Education

specialists in the USA, was made in collaboration with Spirit of Africa. All the delegates thoroughly enjoyed their time at the school as much as we enjoyed hosting them.

OTHER NEWS

This year I was invited by two very different organisations to give illustrated talks about Buskaid. The first, the Highveld Forum, an esteemed women's organisation in Johannesburg, originally encountered Buskaid in 1996 when I briefly addressed them about my experiences in Soweto. Fourteen years later many of the same Highveld members watched video footage of Buskaid events which had taken place in the intervening years and were most impressed and moved by our numerous achievements.

Paris was the venue for this year's prestigious International Artist Managers' Association (IAMA) conference – an annual gathering of international delegates representing artist managements from over 30 countries – at which I had been invited to speak as a panel member. The conference dates however coincided with Eyjafjallajokull's unpredictable antics and until the day before the conference started I was still stranded in Johannesburg. After a few abortive journeys to the airport, I was suddenly and inexplicably allowed to board an extra flight to London and so



was able to make Paris just in time. Fellow panel members were Pamela Rosenberg, the Managing Director of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Clare Lovett, Programme Director of Spitalfields Music and Graham Sheffield, the Artistic Director of the Barbican Centre who chaired the discussion, the subject of which, *Music and Social Engagement in our Societies*, provoked lively and informed debate. Atholl Swainson-Harrison, IAMA's Chief Executive subsequently commented *"Having Rosemary involved in the conference session was a point of great interest and I recall Graham Sheffield, then artistic director of the Barbican Centre, remarking on the tremendous achievements of the project. People in the music world in Europe are awash with the buzz of El Sistema from Venezuela but what is being achieved in Soweto is every bit as significant and inspiring. This is not only my assessment but that of those who were there and most certainly those on the international committee."*

On a very different note, I have been intrigued to follow the story of Naomi Campbell, Charles Taylor and the so-called 'blood diamonds', which has made headlines this year. The Buskaid Ensemble, a mere eight months old at the time, provided the entertainment during supper that evening. A very different Diamond – namely Samson, who was then twelve years old – was presented to President Mandela, and grainy video footage which I took shows the assembled celebrity guests applauding Buskaid, whilst 'Madiba' dances to Samson's fiddling.



SPONSORSHIP AND FUNDRAISING

Whilst the NLDTF grant to Buskaid has brought us financial stability and development opportunities, we still need to continue raising money for other aspects of our activities. The NLDTF gives us generous amounts towards specific projects, but there remains a large shortfall to meet in the areas of core funding, tertiary study and international tours. We are extremely grateful to a number of companies and trusts who have helped us in this regard.



Gilbert Tsoke

We have been most fortunate to receive sponsorship from the **Redefine Income Fund** over the past two years and we are indebted to Redefine for a third substantial and extremely generous sponsorship for 2010/11 towards core needs not covered by the NLDTF. We should also like to acknowledge the continuing support of **The Doshi Group of Companies**.

TOTAL South Africa, which many of you already know has been a steady and loyal supporter of Buskaid since 1997, most recently sponsored our tour to Syria; whilst the **Oppenheimer Memorial Trust** awarded Buskaid a further large donation to cover the living costs of our two students studying at the **Royal Academy of Music** in London. Following Kabelo and Tiisetso's excellent first year results, the Academy has most generously renewed their fee scholarships for the year 2010/11, for which we are extremely grateful.



Tshegofatso Matabane

We are very touched by the generosity of viewers who responded to international broadcasts of *Soweto Strings* and to the BBC's *Songs of Praise*, by sending donations to Buskaid, in the latter case specifically to support Simiso's tertiary study in the UK.

Last year we reported on our successful selection for the UK's **Big Give Million Match** fundraiser. By the end of December

2009 we had raised in excess of £24 000, a percentage of which was matching funding from the **Reed Foundation**. Our initial target was £10 000! We warmly thank all of you who contributed so generously and we also acknowledge the efforts of our part-time UK administrator Cathy Boyes who was largely responsible for such a magnificent outcome. A considerable portion of the Big Give funding came from the **OVSH Trust**, which has sent us a further substantial donation in 2010.

In June we received unexpected good news from Jenny Hardie, of a most generous family legacy from her husband Richard's aunt, Mary Adkins, a music lover with an enduring interest in young people. Both Richard and Jenny Hardie have supported Buskaid in the past, and chose our charity to be a beneficiary of this legacy. In fact this donation was a lifeline for us at that particular moment and was transferred almost immediately from the UK to South Africa.

We acknowledge with great admiration our USA Trustee James Halliday, who has just completed his sixth marathon for Buskaid, raising his largest sponsorship so far; whilst fellow USA Trustee Brenda Shick was the very first person to donate money to Simiso Radebe's tertiary study fund.

THE MIKE AND DOT HALL MEMORIAL FUND

Mike and Dot Hall were highly respected and greatly loved members of Manchester's Hallé Orchestra until their untimely deaths in an avalanche whilst they were holidaying in the Pyrenees in 2008. Both musicians were very committed to music education and had seen our documentary *Soweto Strings*; members of the Hallé, having decided to set up a fund in their memory, chose Buskaid as the beneficiary. There were several Buskaid connections with the Hallé: Samson Diamond was part of its Professional

Experience Scheme, later winning the Charles Hallé Award, whilst the orchestra's leader, my longstanding friend Paul Barritt has visited South Africa to work with Buskaid students.



In February 2010 I was fortunately able to attend the Hallé's fundraising concert, a programme of 20th century music conducted by Sir Mark Elder. Especially poignant for us all was the orchestra's most moving performance of the Samuel Barber *Adagio for Strings*.

Simon Turner, who with Sue Voysey put in enormous amounts of time and energy into making this fund successful beyond everyone's dreams, writes as follows: *"After a very successful concertwe have raised nearly £20,000. Our target was to raise around £10,000 to send a really good fiddle to be used by one of the outstanding students at the Soweto Strings Project in Diepkloof. ...*

Just after Easter members of the orchestra went, with Paul Barritt, to the violin shop owned by Paul Ayres, one of Mike's dearest friends and climbing partners; their friendship was such there was nowhere else we would have even considered... Paul Barritt heroically waded through all the violins in the price range over the course of three hours whilst we all sat at his feet in wonder! We quickly reached a shortlist of six which he then played again until we all

agreed on a shortlist of three. To help us choose the one, we then asked Paul Ayres for the prices and had the most enormous shock – all the violins were around £6,000... which means the fund has been able to buy three so that three students can benefit...

On top of this, we have purchased three cases and three bows to go with the violins, and one wooden music stand which will bear a plaque to the memory of the Hallé's other great and recent loss, John Adams, who was principal viola for many years.

We were astonished at what we achieved that morning, but more was to come. Paul Ayres' contribution to the fund was to give us a 10% discount. With that, we will also be able to send over a cello to South Africa..."



First choice was given to Kabelo Monnathebe, a highly talented musician who over the years has shown consistent dedication to the violin; in September, with the help of Paul Barritt (centre, above) and Richard Deakin (his teacher at the Academy), he chose a new violin made by David Slight, Paul Ayres' assistant. Kabelo is greatly enjoying the experience of playing this beautiful instrument, knowing that,

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as a new violin, its sound will continue to develop. It will remain on loan to him for as long as he maintains his connections with Buskaid.

We have over the years received many fine instruments from supporters all over the world. However in some cases these instruments are quite fragile and may not withstand the demands of a professional playing career. We are enormously grateful to Sue Voysey, Simon Turner, members of the Hallé orchestra and all the generous donors who have honoured the memory of Mike and Dot Hall to the lasting benefit of our students.

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Once again we are most fortunate in the support we have received from our Trustees in the UK, the USA and South Africa. The UK Trustees, chaired by Andrey Kidell, meet regularly to discuss fundraising strategies, in particular to support our tertiary students, but also to assist core needs in Soweto, which has been a lifeline at various difficult times. We also acknowledge the invaluable contributions of Tony Graham and **Grahams**

Hi-Fi which continues to receive donated instruments on our behalf and ship them safely across to South Africa.

Last year we welcomed Nicola Danby to our South African Board of Trustees. Nicola's presence at our Trustee meetings was extremely valuable and it was a great sadness when in the middle of the year she and her husband moved to the Congo to fulfil a three-year contract. We have greatly missed her informed input at our EXCOs, which Jill Richards, Sonja Bass and I hold on a monthly basis. When their schedules permit, we are joined at these meetings by Jabulile Zondo and Nomvula Nzimande. All our Trustees are busy people and all give of their time generously: we appreciate their patience and generosity. I would also like to add a note of thanks to Pierre du Toit whose many photographs taken in the Music School appear in this letter.

In the busy Buskaid office, Anne Bull works tirelessly as our administrator, assisted by Lesego Mokonoto and David Malakalaka, the father of one of our beginners.

Teachers are the lifeblood of Buskaid, and we greatly appreciate the dedication of our part-time teachers Nanette Andersen (Alexander Technique) and Michael Watt (aural and piano). The commitment of all our young assistant teachers has enabled Buskaid to continue expanding, whilst the sterling contributions of Sonja Bass, Buskaid's cello and bass teacher (who, despite a very busy performing career, also maintains our bows and instruments) are vital to our current welfare and future development.

And finally, with Compliments of the Festive Season from all of us – teachers, trustees, office staff, parents and students – we warmly acknowledge and thank you all for your continuing interest and loyal support.

Rosemary Nalden

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Buskaid – www.buskaid.org.za

Total Exposure - <http://www.totalexposure.co.za/>

Mark Kidel – www.calliopemedia.co.uk

Jill Richards – www.jillrichards.com

Aubrey Kurlansky – <http://www.aubreykurlansky.co.uk>

Ubungani – www.ubungani.org

Pierre du Toit – <http://www.mylensandi.com/>



A programme of virtuosity and pure joy

*Concert: The Buskaid Soweto String Ensemble (Linder)
 Director: Rosemary Nalden
 Programme: Telemann, Rameau, Mozart, Bizet, Sarasate, Fauré, African Kweela and others*

REVIEWED BY PAUL BOECKKOOI



Young violin virtuoso Tisetso Mashishi. (PHOTOGRAPH BY PIERRE DU TOIT)

LAST SATURDAY was no doubt the happiest Buskaid experience local audiences ever had. Music is serious, but it shouldn't necessarily be like that all the time. There was, during the long but eventful evening, also a highly developed spiritual element to be found in the music making which balanced it all out.

The concert was opened with Telemann's "Grillensymphonie". That German "Grillen" is not easy translatable in English, but it means something like moody or cross-grained. Telemann's fascinating impulsiveness led him into directions other Baroque composers wouldn't dare taking. This is one of those works.

In Buskaid and Rosemary Nalden's performance of it in which two double basses are the star soloists in a kind of concerto grosso set up, we could hear echoes from the composer's Polish and gypsy influences in

this ludicrous but delicious knees-up piece that is the "Grillensymphonie". Boisterous energy and earthy commitment. The two chaps on double basses were riveting, with the orchestral sound striking a perfect balance between clarity and weight.

Rameau's Suite from "Les Fêtes d'Hébé" reflects quite a different Baroque mirror to our inner ear. It's French, after all. Elegance abounds and it is also notable for its incredible detail. One was impressed by the way Nalden held the musical fabric together with such a fine sense of tempo and pacing. The delicately wrought string figurations astounded, like for instance the way she brought out Rameau's characteristic feminine endings.

Senior Buskaid members Kabela Monnathebe (violin) and Tisetso Mashishi (viola), were the soloists in the Andante from Mozart's Sinfonia Concertante in E flat. This was a wonderful intimate, tender and balmy rendering of a slow movement which always inspires in the hands of experienced chamber players, like Kabela and Tisetso. This also had none of the ear-teasing agony with the octave passages which many lesser soloists inflict on this work.

The evening's greatest sensation was Simiso Radebe's rendering of Sarasate's virtuoso showstopper, the "Zigeunerweisen". With his pure and reasonably big tone (he can't afford a top-class instrument as yet), virtually immaculately clear delivery and his refusal to over-indulge, Simiso is already on the way to become an almost ideal performer of this type of repertory. The palpable sense of excitement was carried along in the applause after the performance.

Gilbert Tsoko was the cello soloist in a beautifully reflective handling of Fauré's Elegy - sensitive and full of deep resonances which were also felt in the orchestra's response to Michael Pilkinton's strings only arrangement of the original score.

More introvert calmness of heavenly dimensions was experienced in the Adagietto from Bizet's L'Arlesienne Suite No 1. The slow tempo turned this into moments of deepest emotion. One understands now why Mahler had this in mind when composing the similarly named movement of his Fifth Symphony.

The rest of Buskaid's programme was all but calm, but, again ravishing.

Photography:
 Pierre du Toit
 Warren Searrell
 Anonymous (Damascus Opera House)
 Rosemary Nalden
 pictureNET Africa



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