



Music from Ukraine fills foyer of Phoenix Cinema

By Ruth Anders

The foyer of the Phoenix Cinema was brought to energetic life on the evening of Thursday 20 July by four spirited Ukrainian musicians in national costume, playing saxophone, violin, accordion and percussion, singing and stamping their feet.

The ground floor, stairs and gallery were packed with enthusiastic supporters clapping in time and applauding the impromptu concert, before enjoying Phil Longman's 2017 film *Kyiv Unbroken* and a Q&A with the director afterwards.

A total of 119 tickets were sold for this special evening designed to raise money to be shared between British Ukrainian Aid and East Finchley-based Driving Aid to Ukraine.

As has been previously reported in *The Archer*, local resident Michael Byrne works tirelessly for the non-profit organisation he started over a year ago driving 24 tons of aid related items to Ukraine every month.

Motivating supporters

One of his volunteer colleagues, north London business owner Amanda McGrath, started helping the initiative a year ago, fundraising, coordinating volunteers and generally promoting the project. Amanda told *The Archer*: "My mother was a Polish refugee from Gdansk, so I have a connection with this sort of endeavour." She added: "It costs approximately £2,500 a month to send our aid to Ukraine. The Ukraine war is turning into an over-familiar story, but we urgently need ongoing support to continue our vital help for the people of that war torn country."

Other local support has



Sounds of Ukraine: Filmgoers gather in the Phoenix foyer ahead of the charity screening.

included Martin Primary School's collections and *Archer* contributor Lynn Winton's Dancing for Ukraine events.

Now the Phoenix Cinema has added its own momentum to the cause. To find out more visit drivingaidtoukraine.org

What's On at the Phoenix in September

By Zalan Pall, general manager



Korean and British dramas, live opera, ballet and theatre, a poetry event plus much more await you at the Phoenix Cinema this month.

In *Past Lives*, playing from Thursday 7 September, Nora and Hae Sung, two deeply connected childhood friends, are wrested apart after Nora's family emigrates from South Korea. Two decades later, they are reunited in New York for one fateful week as they confront notions of destiny, love, and the choices that make a life, in this heartrending modern romance.

For the lovers of the live arts on screen, we will have Matthew Bourne's *Swan Lake* on Wednesday 13 September, the Royal Opera House's *Das Rheingold* on Wednesday 20 September and NT Live's production of the West End hit *A Little Life*, starring James Norton, on Thursday 28 September.

We are also screening *Angelheaded Hipster: The Songs of Marc Bolan & T.Rex* on Thursday 14 September and the Pedro Almodovar Spanish

Western short *Strange Way of Life* with a pre-recorded Q&A on Monday 25 September.

The Phoenix is also proud to be hosting a poetry and music event on Saturday 30 September called *Hungarians in London: Fracture, Identity, and Belonging*. It will focus on what it means to be Hungarian in London and how someone can find their identity and a sense of belonging in a metropolis without losing touch with their roots.

Finally, Ken Loach's new film *The Old Oak*, playing from Friday 29 September, is the story of a village in the Northeast of England, where the mine closed, and people feel deserted by the system. How will the locals receive an influx of Syrian refugees and what will be the future for the last remaining pub in the village.

Find our full listings at www.phoenixcinema.co.uk where you can also book seats, or pop into our foyer.

Drive to find food bank drivers

By Lynn Winton

Food Bank Aid, based in the Great North Leisure Park opposite the Hollywood Bowl, is the grassroots charity that commits to source and deliver vital supplies to 20 north London food banks from Harrow to Tottenham, helping to feed more than 16,000 people every week. These food banks are seeing no decrease at all in demand, so Food Bank Aid is on an urgent recruitment drive to find more volunteer drivers.

"We have a fantastic band of volunteers from East Finchley" said founder Naomi Russell, "and now we really need to find more drivers to deliver the donations. We'd welcome anyone willing to use their own car, especially if it's electric, but that's not compulsory, and also volunteers age 30-plus can drive our own van. An ordinary driving licence is all you need." If you would like to know more about being a Food Bank Aid driver pop in and have a chat with manager Marcus Maughan at the leisure park base. Or you can drop them an email to volunteering@foodbankaid.org.uk.

Have a September sort-out for Ukraine

By Lynn Winton

Springcroft Avenue resident Nicola Cousins is playing a crucial role in getting vital humanitarian aid to the devastated people of Ukraine and hopes that she can make it easy for readers to play their part too. She's converted her home into a convenient drop-off point where she sorts, packs and labels donations.

Nicola, a retired teacher, read in *The Archer* about the local initiative, Driving Aid to Ukraine, which was set up by East Finchley resident Michael Byrne. Michael has organised 16 huge, multi-ton trucks, laden with goods to reach Ukraine, with more journeys in the pipeline.

After getting in touch with Michael to volunteer her services, they decided this role was a perfect fit for her. "I had already volunteered with a charity delivering clothes to the Calais 'jungle' so I could get on with this straightaway," explained Nicola.

She says nearly every conceivable item you can imagine is needed, but I asked for a list that readers can use as a general guide. "Clothes, medical products, electrical and technical products, children's clothes, toys, colouring pencils and stationery, hygiene products and dried food. All clothes should be clean, not torn or overly worn and basically ready to wear and all underwear must be new," advised Nicola.

Making contact

If you have any queries on what to drop off, how to arrange



Hub for help: Nicola Cousins co-ordinates donations for the Driving Aid to Ukraine mission. Photo Mike Coles

a collection or drop off time, or wish to enquire about volunteering, Nicola can be contacted by email at nicolacousins0812@gmail.com.

Find out more about how donations reach Ukraine at drivingaidtoukraine.org

Letters

Potholes filled in Dear Editor,

After writing in July to complain about the obstacle course of potholes on The Bishops Avenue near Hampstead Heath (*The Archer*, July 2023), nothing changed for weeks. Then someone came along and filled in some of the worst examples. Only some of the worst holes have been smoothed over and I don't know whether the work was done by Barnet Council or by the construction companies who are working on several sites up there. At least for now, there's a slightly safer path for drivers and cyclists, although many holes still remain. At some point, the whole road is going to have to be resurfaced, at huge cost to the council tax payer.

Michael Howarth, Fortis Green, N2.

Send your correspondence to: news@the-archer.co.uk

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