

A Glimpse of Cassirer's Time
Beatrice Gallin, Student 1979-81, Foundation Board Member

Already in 1907, Max Cassirer – the father of Edith Geheeb-Cassirer – held benefits for the group home Charlottenburger in the restaurant of the Zoological Gardens in Berlin . The Ecole d'Humanité Foundation reactivated the tradition on February 4, 2018 in Zunfthaus zur Waag in Zürich where a benefit concert was held.

Samuel Zünd, as benefactor, made this possible. With his humorous and whimsical song revue "Ach Luise" focused on Berlin in the 1920's, he charmed us back into the ambiance of events held by Max Cassirer. He was accompanied by two virtuoso musicians, pianist Edward Rushton and violinist Nina Ulli.

Samuel, what motivated you to hold a benefit concert for the Ecole d'Humanité?

My son C. has finally found a place at the Ecole on the Hasliberg where he is happy, feels deeply understood and supported. A long, difficult phase for him has come to a close. When I visited or attended Ecole events, I could feel the spirit of this unique place. It was to express our gratitude. It was important to me – and I speak here for the whole family – to be able to give something back to the people who make this place on the Hasliberg possible.

What is special about "Ach, Luise"? What are the particular musical challenges, and what inspires you with this type of performance?

Along with my classical concerts, I have always had a flair for light, upscale musical entertainment. It was particularly the music of the 1920's that impressed me, especially with their free-spirited, and (as yet) unconstrained literary lyrics. This was a time that unfortunately came to an abrupt and - as history has shown - dramatic end. This artistic freedom has to be fought for again and again!

The event was completely in the spirit of Ecole: students along with school leaders freely and naturally stood to introduce themselves and talked about what makes Ecole so wonderful; some staff quietly accompanied a student, who'd been injured slightly while setting up the screen, to the doctor's; and an Ecole Bus that showed the signs of a long journey. And then: a musical delight!

An event can only become tradition when another event takes place. And another. And yet another, until it becomes a matter of course to meet once a year for a benefit concert for the Ecole d'Humanité, and be musically astounded once again.

In conversation, Samuel Zünd spontaneously said he is ready to help make this a reality, and that next year another benefit concert can take place. Many thanks!

A big thank you goes to 92 people who made this benefit concert a success. We received donations to the tune of CHF 30, 000. We thank Sepp Wimmer from the Zunfthaus zur Waag for hosting us. We also thank Andreas Schenk and Ilg Druck for the wonderful invitations sent.