

# the stables at 40

## THE STABLES PAYS TRIBUTE TO SIR JOHN DANKWORTH, CBE

Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> February 2010

Dame Cleo Laine, daughter Jacqui, son Alec and granddaughter Emily Dankworth gave the performance of their lives last night at the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary concert at The Stables, Wavendon, Milton Keynes the theatre co-founded by the legendary jazz musicians Sir John Dankworth and his wife Dame Cleo. Despite the heartbreak of knowing that John had passed away earlier that day, his wife of 52 years, Dame Cleo and their family paid him the highest tribute imaginable by singing their hearts out in the place that is and will always be alive with the spirit of Sir John Dankworth CBE.

The all-star concert, compered by Paul O'Grady, featured a glittering line-up of British stars from stage, screen and music including Prunella Scales and Timothy West, Maureen Lipman, Victoria Wood, Laurie Holloway, Rod Argent, Emma Johnson, Lorna Dallas, Jenny Linden, Tim Firth, Dominic Miller, Martin Taylor, Iain Ballamy, Sarah Watts and of course the Dankworth Big Band.

Surrounded by friends and loved ones, Dame Cleo bravely announced John's passing at the end of the concert at The Stables, the theatre home of the Wavendon All Music Plan, a charity founded by Sir John and Dame Cleo in 1969 with the aim of helping people broaden their views about music through performance and musical education. From its early beginnings in an old stable block in Wavendon, on the edge of Milton Keynes and the first public performance on the 6<sup>th</sup> February 1970 the venue has grown

in size and stature and is now internationally renowned and ranked as one of the top 10 music venues in the UK, presenting over 350 concerts each year. The Stables has been host to many world famous artistes, from Vladimir Ashkenazy to Jamie Cullum, and some of today's top professional musicians and singers have benefited from its education projects in the early stages of their careers.

Throughout its 40 year history Sir John provided ongoing support for the music venue and its educational programmes which feature the National Youth Music Camps.

Stephen Clarke, Chairman of WAP paid tribute to the inspiration that Sir John has provided not only to the organisation, but to the many established and emerging artists who worked with him over the years. "John and Cleo had the vision in 1969 to convert the stables at the end of their drive into a performance venue with a diverse programme of musicians and for audiences of all ages. Their continued support and that of their many friends and volunteers has enabled The Stables to become the outstanding venue that it is today. It is a fitting tribute that on the day of Sir John's death that we celebrated on stage the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of The Stables with some of the many artists who have performed with Sir John at The Stables. Sir John's passion for good music will remain the organisation's guiding principle, and the Stables his enduring legacy"

Monica Ferguson, Chief Executive of The Stables went on to add "Sir John's influence on both jazz and the music industry as a whole has been immense and we are deeply saddened by this tragic news. His support over the years was steadfast, and our resolve now is to ensure that The Stables continues to deliver great music experiences for everyone."

[www.stables.org](http://www.stables.org)

ENDS

**PHOTOS From the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Concert can be downloaded from**  
<http://tif.am/UK7577C45755250/cleo>

### **Editors Notes**

- The Stables was founded in 1969 by Sir John Dankworth and Dame Cleo Laine and is owned by the charity, Wavendon Allmusic Plan Ltd.
- The first performance at The Stables took place on 6<sup>th</sup> February 1970 and 2010 marks its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary year during which it will present a number of special performances and direct an international arts festival in central Milton Keynes.
- The 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Gala Concert included Rod Argent, Iain Ballamy, Lorna Dallas, Tim Firth, Laurie Holloway, Emma Johnson, Jenny Linden, Maureen Lipman, Dominic Miller, Paul O'Grady, Prunella Scales, Martin Taylor, Sarah Watts and the National Youth Music Camps Choir, Timothy West and Victoria Wood.
- The concert also featured Dame Cleo Laine, son Alec Dankworth, daughter Jacqui Dankworth and granddaughter Emily Dankworth.
- The Stables presents over 350 concerts per annum of all genres including Rock, Pop, Folk, World, Classical, Soul, Blues, R&B and Jazz. It also delivers over 250 education sessions per annum including schools concerts, family events, masterclasses and the National Youth Music Camps.
- Stephen Clarke is Chairman of the Board of Trustees and Monica Ferguson, Chief Executive of The Stables
- The Stables was recently ranked 6<sup>th</sup> in the UK's top 100 Music Venues by the Performing Rights Society

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