

Arts event part of £1.8m plan to open school building up to the community

Stars back 'Hall for All' night

by FRANKIE LISTER-FELL
and DAN CARRIER

ARTISTS filled Acland Burghley school last Thursday for a star-studded range of performances from pupils and famous faces alike.

The evening raised money for the Tufnell Park's school "Hall For All" campaign, which will transform their Grade II-listed Brutalist hall and make it accessible for the local community to use.

Actors, including those who starred in *Top Boy* and *Outnumbered*, performed students' work, and pupil bands played hit songs and read poetry. The evening was compered by comedian Joe Bor, Sky kids presenter Jeriah Kibusi and pupil Charlotte Wilson.

Claire Skinner, who played Sue Brockman in *Outnumbered*, said having access to the arts was very important when she was young.

Ms Skinner said: "It was the way I expressed myself. I was the most painfully shy child and the drama studio was where I kind of found my voice and began to flourish a little bit."

She said the evening at Acland Burghley was "amazing" and the pupils were a "talented bunch".

Actor and writer of ITV series *Plebs* Tom Basden



Actor Tracy-Ann Oberman

said: "When you compare [art] to something like sports, and there's this assumption that everyone obviously needs to have access to sport and be able to kind of engage in physical exercise and do this – I think the arts should be treated the same way."

Adam James, who recently starred in *Mr Bates vs the Post Office*, added: "Having been part of a small show that illuminated the plight of the sub-postmasters, for example, the effect that drama can have on the wider public and on the wider consciousness and

politically, is a great exemplar of why we should encourage everybody to be interested in the arts in every which way."

Actor Tracy-Ann Oberman said she was backing the campaign because the arts was still too exclusive. She said: "When I was growing up it always felt that if your parents weren't in the arts you might as well say you wanted to be an astronaut."

"My kids don't come to this school, but every other child I know came to this school. So the fact that I've wanted to come here to support it just



goes to show how big a beating heart and how important this school is to the community."

The second half of the night featured a wonderful set from Sam Amidon, fresh from his North American tour.

Songwriter Sacha Skarbek entertained with anecdotes from his collaborations with celebrated singers, including leading the audience in a rendition of *You're Beautiful* and was joined on stage for a performance of Adele's *Cold Shoulder* with student Nancy Farrant. Guitarist Riley Silver

joined drummer Seth Parker on stage. The Year 11 Acland Burghley students entertained with a rock and roll set during the interval, while Riley had also appeared earlier, performing in a duet with his music teacher, Athanasios Sachazidis.

Riley said: "The teaching here at Acland Burghley is brilliant. You feel really nurtured."

Seth added that the school encouraged them to find a place for the arts at the heart of their education.

He said: "We always feel what we do is respected and space is made for this. The hall is an amazing place for us to be able to use."

The event launched a big fundraising appeal push to raise around

£1.8million to bring the hall up to modern standards.

The National Lottery Heritage Fund has already promised substantial funds with around £300,000 still to be found from community supporters by the autumn.

● You can donate at <https://hallforall.org/donor-packages/>



The 'Hall for All' evening at Acland Burghley, which included musicians performing in pupil bands – inset above: Riley Silver

EarthDay Green thinking at festival

by SHEREEN LAWRENCE

SPARKS of change came from the minds of Camden youngsters as the EarthDay festival saw a united force of environmental movers and shakers shape the future for the school's programme at Serendipity House.

The recent four-day festival hosted a celebration in a bid to address climate change, featuring 23 exhibitors with schools and businesses. The event saw 150,000 attendees informed by 100 sustainable businesses, 120 keynote speakers and enriched by live music, artists and children's workshops focused on upcycling and plastic alternatives.

Valeria Pensabene, 49, a community manager at Camden Clean Air received fantastic feedback about the event. She said: "We don't want to spread doom and gloom about the climate crisis at the same time. We want to raise awareness and make



sure that people know the situation is serious."

Valeria believes organising a children's day was the right approach "because children are the next generation of

game-changers". She added: "I'm all about taking the next generation with us and I'm already bringing up a group of eco-conscious citizens for the 21st century."

The Hampstead native's two children attend schools in the Camden area and she is preparing for the Eco-Champion Awards, due to take place later in the year.



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