

MICHAEL MORPURGO
RODDY DOYLE
PATRICIA McCORMICK
THERESA BRESLIN
DAVID ALMOND
URSULA DUBOSARSKY
MALORIE BLACKMAN
SARAH MUSSI
JAMILA GAVIN
EOIN COLFER
MARGARET MAHY
IBTISAM BARAKAT
MEJA MWANGI
RITA WILLIAMS-GARCIA

FREE?
STORIES CELEBRATING
HUMAN RIGHTS

'By recognising excellence in human rights journalism we recognise the invaluable work of the journalists who bring us these stories and the editors who commission them. By exposing injustice, there are helping to defend human rights around the world.'

Kate Allen, Director, Amnesty International

COMING UP...

IN CREATIVE ACTIVISM

- Amnesty's Annual Media Awards 2009, which recognise excellence in human rights journalism, on 2nd June at the British Film Institute (BFI) in London.
- *Freedom*, Amnesty's landmark collection of short stories by 37 of the world's top writers of fiction, is launched at Edinburgh Festival in August. Contributors include Paulo Coelho, Yann Martel, AL Kennedy, Ali Smith, Amit Chaudhuri, Marina Lewycka, Walter Mosley and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, with a foreword by Archbishop Desmond Tutu.
- Amnesty events at the 2009 Edinburgh Festival in August celebrate freedom of expression, including the annual lecture, asking festival-goers to take action for human rights - and Stand up for Freedom, our sellout comedy show.

IN FILM

Iranian summer

This summer Amnesty's Human Rights Action Centre hosts a season of compelling

films about women's lives by Iranian film makers. As well as exposing the all-pervasive discrimination facing Iranian women, the film series is intended to encourage audiences to take action to support women's rights defenders in Iran.

The season starts on 24 June with Cyrus Nowrasteh's harrowing *The Stoning of Soraya M.* When Soraya refuses her husband a divorce, he enlists the support of community leaders to engineer her death. A discussion with the film makers will follow the screening.

Subsequent films include Jafar Panahi's *Offside* (winner of the Silver Bear at the Berlin Film Festival, 2006) and *The Circle* (winner of the Golden Lion, Venice, 2000); Marjane Satrapi's *Persepolis* (winner of the Jury Prize, Cannes, 2007); and Marziyeh Meshkini's *The Day I Became a Woman* (winner of the UNESCO award, Venice, 2000).

Details of screenings: www.amnesty.org.uk/events

OVER TO YOU

Take action to free Binayak Sen

Binayak Sen is an Indian doctor who was arrested in Chhattisgarh state in May 2007 after he exposed human rights abuses committed by local authorities.

Amnesty International believes he is being held on politically motivated charges and is calling for his immediate release.

To take action visit www.amnesty.org.uk/binayak-sen or www.amnesty.org.uk/join

WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK ALL OF OUR ARTS FUND MEMBERS FOR THEIR SUPPORT

Nicolas Cage
Caroline Chignell
David Furnish
Terry Gilliam
Betty Jackson
Linda James
Sir Elton John
Terry Jones
Martha Lane Fox
Annie Lennox
Raffy Manoukian
Martin McDonagh
Philip Noyce
Richard O'Brien

For more information on becoming an Arts Fund member email arts@amnesty.org.uk or call 020 7033 1658.

Amnesty International UK Section Charitable Trust
Charity registered in England and Wales No 1051681
Charity registered in Scotland No SC039534
Email arts@amnesty.org.uk

SPRING 2009

AMNESTY ARTS FUND UPDATE



Amnesty International
Human Rights Action Centre
17-25 New Inn Yard
London EC2A 3EA
T (020) 7033 1500
www.amnesty.org.uk



‘Arts and artists have a unique power to bring people together and inspire positive action.’ Annie Lennox

THE POWER OF ART

As its first founding member, I was delighted to launch the Amnesty Arts Fund on 25 September 2008. Arts and artists have a unique power to bring people together and inspire positive action. The Amnesty Arts Fund recognises that power and uses it to call for change.

At the launch event we saw that power in action – schoolgirl Rachel Rowan Olive told us how she was inspired to create an art installation using mirrors to express how she would feel if she were a prisoner of conscience with no access to writing materials. Ko Aung, a Burmese human rights activist who witnessed and suffered military brutality during peaceful protests, told us the importance of adding our voices to calls for justice and equality, and of Amnesty’s power in telling stories of inhumanity to the world.

Thank you to those of you who have already become members of the Amnesty Arts Fund. You are part of a movement of creative activism that shares the truth about human rights violations and brings the stories of everyday heroes to life.

If you haven’t yet joined the Fund, we need your support, your voice, your creativity. Please contact Amnesty and offer your help.

ANNIE LENNOX

‘There are too many neighbours in every nook and corner of the world who are “not born free”. Not until they will be free to read this book and to lead their own lives without restraint shall we be able to celebrate its publication without reserve or any sense of guilt.’

Artist Hong Sung Dam, who illustrated Article 14 of *We Are All Born Free*



Peter Kennard

© Jenny Matthews

LITERATURE

Thirty world famous illustrators contributed to Amnesty's *We Are All Born Free*, a beautiful children's guide to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights launched in time for Christmas 2008. Each artist interpreted one article of the UDHR, creating a compendium of entrancing styles and subjects. This book (Frances Lincoln Children's Books) has captured the imagination of its audiences all over the world, selling over 250,000 copies to date and has been translated into 32 languages. Recently it was named an Outstanding International Book by the United States Board on Books for Young People. Already into reprint, a paperback edition is due out in 2010.

Alongside the book, exhibition prints of the illustrations were produced to show at venues around the country. By the end of 2008, these exhibitions had reached over 260,000 people. The new Manchester Children's Hospital asked for the exhibition to go on permanent show and estimate that 675,000 adults and children will see it every year. A set went on show in Israel and attracted more than 10,000 people, and requests are coming in from other countries too.

A short animated film, *Everybody*, starring Julian Rhind Tutt, inspired by the illustrated book, was shown in cinemas ahead of *High School Musical 3* and appeared on the website of the *Guardian*, *Waterstones*, and the Commission for Equality and Human Rights.

Free? – a book for young adults – is the second of Amnesty's three outstanding works of literature with a UDHR theme (Walker Books), this time interpreting and exploring articles of the UDHR through short stories. Promoted as the *Guardian* pick at the Hay Festival in May, it has stories from David Almond (of recent *Skellig* fame), Michael Morpurgo, Roddy Doyle, Patricia McCormick, Theresa Breslin, Ursula Dubosarsky, Malorie Blackman, Margaret Mahy, Eion Colfer, Sarah Mussi, Jamila Gavin, Ibtisam Barakat, Meja Mwangi and Rita Williams-Garcia. We'll be launching *Free?* at the 2009 Edinburgh Festival alongside our Freedom of Expression Awards and Annual Amnesty Lecture.

FASHION

Amnesty's human rights messages reached new audiences and gained press coverage in less likely places, thanks to our 2008 fashion projects. Designer Betty Jackson produced a beautiful scarf using our barbed wire motif available for both men and women. The scarf went on sale through Betty Jackson's own store and retailer Matches, raising over £5,000 for our work and generating media interest from a wide range of fashion magazines including *Grazia* and *Vogue* where it featured in the 'best buys'.

ARTS

Artist Peter Kennard and documentary photographer Jenny Matthews created a spectacular art installation to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The work, *Declaration*, was unveiled at an Amnesty Arts Fund event on 9 December 2008, in time for international Human Rights Day. A series of floor-to-ceiling newsprint banners printed with articles from the UDHR, it filled the exhibition foyer of the Human Rights Action Centre in London. Tearing through the words were photographic portraits of faces of people from all over the world struggling for their human rights. The artists wanted the work to physically involve visitors as they threaded their way through the hangings. 'We have made the banners intentionally fragile and fugitive. Working on newsprint, capturing the immediacy of a daily newspaper, we want the Declaration to be current news.' Over 550 people saw the exhibition in the course of two weeks, and it will be going out more widely on request.



James Corden and Matt Horne

'The Protect The Human playwriting award is not about lecturing but about sowing seeds for powerful theatre that grapples with necessary issues; it reminds people that there are things we need to think about and talk about now as much as 60 years ago.'

The Guardian

COMEDY

On 4 October, a host of comedy stars lined up for the latest Secret Policeman's Ball night of comedy and music at the Royal Albert Hall. The 2006 relaunch of the Secret Policeman's Ball brand – iconically created back in the 1970s by John Cleese, Peter Cook and other giants of comedy – has re-established it with the UK public as premiere comedy historically linked to Amnesty International.

Star performances included James Corden and Matt Horne from *Gavin and Stacey*, Alan Carr, Frank Skinner, Tim Minchin, Russell Howard, Ed Byrne, Sean Lock, Mitchell Webb and a host of others, with music by Razorlight. Shappi Khorsandi led the campaign call for support for the Iranian women's petition for equality, while Germaine Greer and Eddie Izzard reminded the audience what human rights and Amnesty are all about.

Almost 5,000 people packed the Royal Albert Hall, and three million more watched it broadcast live in cinemas throughout the UK, in Canada and Australia, and next day on Channel 4 TV. A further five million people downloaded the podcasts produced around the show. Online site traffic to amnesty.org.uk increased by 33 per cent in the month of the Ball and visitors to our blogs platform increased by 50 per cent as a result of people searching for 'Secret Policeman's Ball'.

The buzz has enabled Amnesty to secure a deal to re-launch the entire Balls back catalogue in the UK – including the release of the 2008 show – on DVD, audio and digital, including ringtones, podcasts etc – with an October release date for a DVD boxed set, 2008 show and 'Best of the Balls'. Radio 2's hour-long *Human Rights Now!* documentary (broadcast on Human Rights Day, 10 December 2008) focussed on the special relationship between Amnesty and the creative industries. It included behind-the-scenes interviews from the 2008 Ball along with reminiscences from artists involved in past collaborations with Amnesty. We are currently discussing a new documentary and other opportunities to celebrate 30 years of the Secret Policeman's Ball in 2009.

The cover-mount was supported by extensive radio and online advertising and included messaging encouraging people to join Amnesty.

The SPB back catalogue has also been re-issued in a new box set in the USA and we will run special theatrical screenings to promote the Ball in New York and Los Angeles in the summer and autumn.

PLAYWRITING

Oxford-based playwright and teacher Julian Armistead won the Protect the Human playwriting competition, run by Amnesty with iceandfire.

The play, *After the Accident*, was one of 125 entries and was chosen after three shortlisted finalists were performed at the Soho Theatre, London. It stood out for the judges as a beautifully written, intimate exploration of the impact of a child's death on its parents and how human rights percolate to the most basic and personal levels of human experience. Runners-up were *There's Loads of Them in Burnley, Thais*, by Anna Clarkson and *Lullaby* by Dominic Legget.

Julian won £3,000 and his play received readings at Birmingham Rep, Theatre Royal Plymouth and West Yorkshire Playhouse on 10 December 2008. It has now been commissioned by BBC Bristol as a one-hour radio drama.

The Protect the Human competition called for dynamic and imaginative scripts that make relevant the impact of human rights issues on everyday lives. Playwrights from across Europe, the USA and Africa responded with topics including the impact of domestic violence, sexual abuse in orphanages and the human cost of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster. The quality and breadth of the material meant a difficult task for the judges - Chiwetel Ejiofor (actor), Dan Jones (Amnesty International), Sonja Linden and Sara Masters (iceandfire), and Esther Richardson (Soho Theatre).