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Howard's honour ends year on a high note

31 December 2008

A WORLD-renowned concert pianist and conductor finished the year on a high note after being awarded an OBE for services to classical music.



Howard Shelley

Howard Shelley, of Cholmeley Park, Highgate, said he was looking forward to celebrating his New Year honour with his family before continuing on a jetsetting tour.

The 58-year-old, whose first TV performance was at the age of 10, said: "In a profession like mine where you're constantly chasing after something rather elusive it's nice to think someone out there thinks it's worth honouring. My grandson was thrilled - he looked just a little prouder of me today."

The father-of-two is famous for directing Mozart and Rachmaninov concertos among others from his piano stool.

Coming concerts will see him perform with the London Mozart Players for their 60th anniversary in March and further concerts in Los Angeles and Australia.

Married to fellow pianist Hilary Macnamara, their passion for music has rubbed off on 28-year-old son Alexander who is building fame as a conductor in his own right.

"The music gene is obviously a very strong one," Mr Shelley added. "It's a profession that when I was young parents would not have advised going into but I think that's all changed."

A CHAMPION for education has been honoured with an MBE for services to education after helping to boost a struggling inner-city school.

Jennifer Bell, of Hawthorn Road, Hornsey, was thrilled to be part of the New Year Honours list for her 15 years of work chairing the board of governors at Harrington Hill Primary School in Hackney.

She said: "It's very weird because I don't like an MBE type of person at all because I'm a bit dissident, but this really widens the spectrum and I'm very pleased. This honour is all about education and that is my passion. I really accept this on behalf of all governors."

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She said working with headteacher Kae McSweeney and improving creative arts teaching help the students achieve brilliant exam results.

"For a lot of the children I've worked with in Hackney and Haringey education is really the only way out of poverty and their chance to get the best possible deal."

The community activist, who was instrumental in campaigning for free leisure passes for Haringey's older residents, has also been a member of the PTA at Coleridge Primary School in Hornsey and Hornsey School for Girls.

A BLIND osteopath who pioneered Indian head massage and teaches it globally has been honoured with an MBE for his work with visually impaired Asians.

Narendra Mehta, 61, of Harringay, who has been totally blind since the age of one, is from Mumbai and is known as "the guru" of the British Indian head massage movement.

He has lived in the UK for 30 years and trained here at one of the only physiotherapy schools educating blind people at the time. He went on to set up the charity Association for Blind Asians in 1986. It helps people who do not read brail by recording Asian magazines onto audio cassettes, as well as organising daytrips to Blackpool and other destinations.

He was nominated for the MBE by long time assistant Moses Chundi, 32 who also mentioned the support his wife Kundan offers.

Mr Chundi said: "He was delighted. He has a favourite line that he always says. He never thinks he's blind because he sees the world through his wife's eyes. She is the one who is always 24/7 with him wherever he travels."

A PSYCHOLOGIST who has worked with children and adolescents with mental health issues for 20 years has been recognised in the New Year's Honours list.

Yvonne Millar, who lives in N2, works for NHS Islington as a clinical psychologist in the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service and was awarded an MBE.

A spokeswoman for NHS Islington said: "She has been responsible for building up a highly valued community-based service for local children and their families."

THE actress who starred as a TV gran in comedy The Royle Family has received her own invitation to Buckingham Palace to collect an MBE. Liz Smith, 87, whose real name is Betty, of N2, is best known for her character roles playing dodderly women in sitcoms like The Vicar of Dibley, Emmerdale and Last of the Summer Wine.

She starred in The Royle Family until 2006 when her character Nana died and won a Best Television Comedy Actress award at the British Comedy Awards for the role.

The Bafta winning actress was named in the New Year Honours list for services to drama.

A GAY rights charity worker for Muslim women has been

recognised in the New Years Honours list for services to the Muslim community. Tamsila Tauqir of Stroud Green, who was honoured with an MBE, has tackled one of the most controversial debates - sexuality versus religion. She set up the Safra Project in 2001 to help Muslim lesbians and transgender women overcome prejudice.

Also honoured in the list were Etheline Mavis Richards, of Tottenham, who received an MBE for voluntary service to healthcare and to the community in north London, and Denise Jennifer Wilkinson, of Muswell Hill, who received an MBE for services to the voluntary sector.

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