



**Dyslexia International – Tools and Technologies ASBL**  
*building learning abilities*

1 rue Defacqz  
B-1000 Brussels, Belgium  
Tel/fax: +32-2 537 70 66

Web site: [www.ditt-online.org](http://www.ditt-online.org)  
E-mail: [admin@ditt-online.org](mailto:admin@ditt-online.org)  
Bank account: 310-158 1288-80

Patron: Her Royal Highness Princess Margaretha of Liechtenstein

## Newsletter

No.25 · Autumn 2006

### Contents

Poetic Portals 2

Features 4

A speech by Dr Lisa Dummer  
Smoch 4

The fruits of lobbying 4

Profile – also a ‘One in Ten’ 5

Dr Duncan Milne 5

What works 6

In production 6

Resource for parents 6

TechDis 6

ABC method 7

Announcements 7

D-I-T-T and UNESCO 7

Berlin conference 8

IDA conference 8

D-I-T-T Art Event 9

Money Matters 9

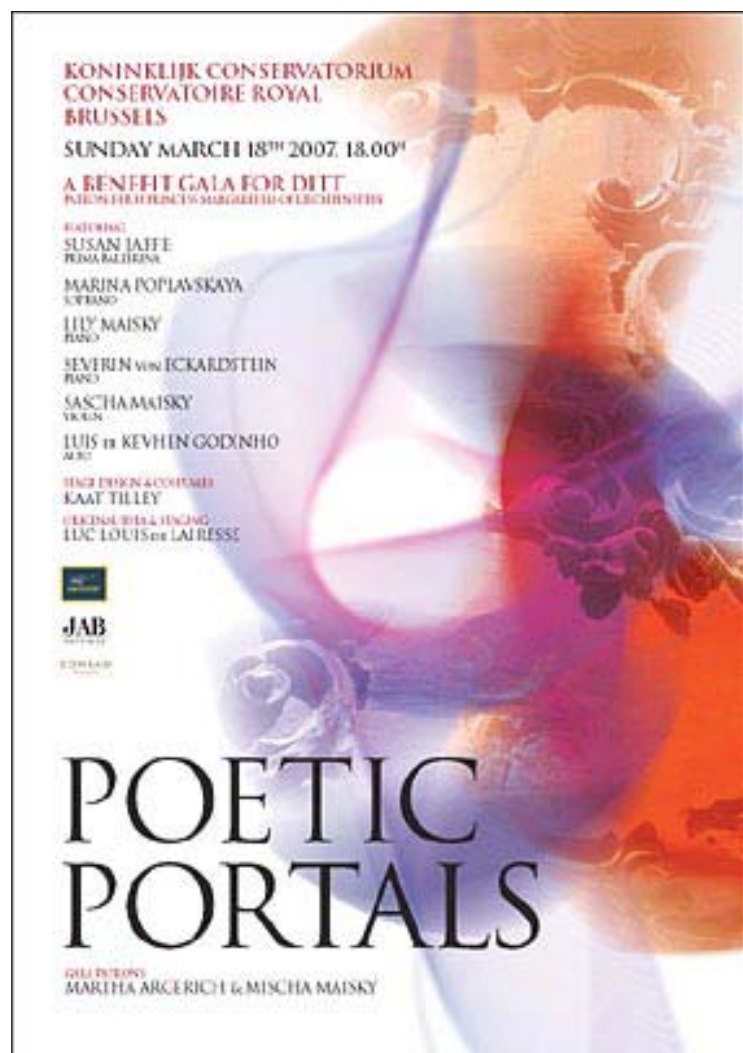
Benefit Gala 2007 9

Marcelle Napier–Margaret Lewis  
Award 9

A wealth of talent 10

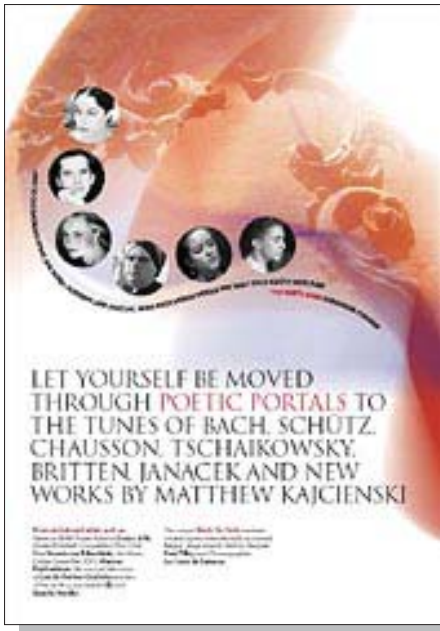
Reflections 11

### D-I-T-T Benefit Gala 2007



Cover of the brochure for the 2007 Benefit Gala, designed by Alexander Sanson.

## Poetic Portals



Looking for a chance to meet brilliant young artists – the rising stars in music, dance and poetry? Looking for a chance to support D·I·T·T's latest projects for helping young people with learning difficulties?

Then come along yourself and tell all your friends not to miss the D·I·T·T Benefit Gala on Sunday 18 March 2007 at the Brussels Conservatoire! Book without delay by following the directions below.

Luc de Laïresse, the choreographer and poet introduced to us by Peter Horemans, has lined up a glittering array of top performers who will be giving their time and talent for this special event.

One of the prize-winning young artists you can hear on the day is Marina Poplavskaya, a soprano who recently thrilled audiences in London and won critical acclaim:

'Her dramatic intensity and vocal power were mesmerising' (*Evening Standard*)

'Mark my words, stardom beckons.' (*Independent*)

'The most exciting soprano voice to have emerged from Russia since Galina Gorchakova 15 years ago.' (*Sunday Times*)

D·I·T·T warmly thanks Luc de Laïresse, the artistic director for this special event, for his tireless energy and enthusiasm in organising the Gala.

He is a descendant of Gérard de Laïresse (1640-1711), court painter to the Dutch Emperor Willem van Oranje and a contemporary of Rembrandt.

At eighteen, within the first trimester of his dancing career, Luc made a solo debut at the Brussels Royal Opera House. He obtained several scholarships and later his encounter with Rudolph Nureyev opened up the opportunity to study at the Princess Grace's school in Monaco, and to dance at the Paris Opera Ballet. From 1975 he danced professionally with major companies in Europe, teaching and choreographing over 300 ballets world-wide for dance legends such as Natalia Makarova and Susan Jaffe.

Luc raises funds for humanitarian causes through gala events and festivals which he initiates and directs. He founded a tri-lingual dance magazine in Belgium and, on his many travels, he has been invited to be



---

*D·I·T·T Patron, Her Royal Highness Princess Margaretha of Liechtenstein, writes:*

... I am delighted to be associated with this important Gala Event.

Virtuoso pianist Severin von Eckardstein, Queen Elizabeth Competition First Prize Winner, with other brilliant young artists in opera, music and dance including Covent Garden soprano Marina Poplavskaya, winner of the Maria Callas Grand Prix, have most graciously accepted to donate their time and talent.

'Poetic Portals' is a new concept devised by international choreographer Luc Louis de Lairesse and realised with fashion designer Kaat Tilley. I hope I can count on your support and that you too can be part of an evening of exceptional talent that will also directly assist a vulnerable sector of society.

a guest speaker. In this capacity he was invited by Sir Yehudi Menuhin in 1998, who spoke of him as 'a true poet'.

Luc writes:

Dear D·I·T·T Friends and Supporters,

D·I·T·T's major Gala Event will take place on 18 March 2007 under the patronage of D·I·T·T Patron, Her Royal Highness Princess Margaretha of Liechtenstein. Her Majesty Queen Fabiola has also been invited to attend.

Please contact us as soon as possible to make sure that D·I·T·T Friends and Supporters are first in line for bookings.

I would like to encourage all Friends of D·I·T·T to sell a table of ten at a fund-raising price of €200 per person that includes:

- a champagne reception
- priority seating at the performance
- the post-gala black-tie dinner with the stars at the Conrad Hotel (just a short distance from the D·I·T·T office).

If you cannot attend the dinner, why not choose another fund-raising combination, also for €200 per person, and attend an intimate lunch on Friday 16 March at the exotic restaurant Shanti (68 Av. Adolphe Buyl, 1050 Brussels), hosted by alto Luis de Kevhen Godinho and cellist Kay Lipman, with artists in attendance including the great Covent Garden soprano Marina Poplavskaya and the American Ballet Theatre prima ballerina Susan Jaffe.

If this is beyond your budget, seats on a second balcony level will be available to Friends of D·I·T·T who book before 15 December at €60. Payments must be made in advance to the D·I·T·T account: 310-158 1288-80, marked: 'D·I·T·T Youth'.

For further information and sponsoring possibilities, please e-mail Luc at [admin@ditt-online.org](mailto:admin@ditt-online.org) or [luc@ditt-online.org](mailto:luc@ditt-online.org), or telephone/fax the D·I·T·T office on 02-537 7066.

---

## Features

### **A speech by Dr Lisa Dummer Smoch**

Dr Lisa Dummer-Smoch, the well-known German expert in the field of dyslexia and learning disabilities, is an Honorary Board Member of D·I·T·T. She has written many authoritative books on dyslexia, and her material for remedial teaching is used in all German-speaking countries. With her knowledge and special sympathy for the disadvantaged child she has influenced and followed literacy discussions in Germany for more than 30 years.

Most of her work to date has addressed conditions in the German school system. She welcomes the fact that UNESCO, in taking soundings for the UN Literacy Decade, will be focusing on dyslexia for the first time.

At the 15th Congress of the German Dyslexia Association (BVL) at Berlin, Dr Dummer-Smoch spoke about the need to make a distinction between developmental dyslexia and other conditions that can lead to illiteracy. The term 'LRS' or 'Lese-Rechtschreib-Schwäche' is used in German schools for any reading and writing weaknesses, while 'Legasthenie' is a synonym for dyslexia or, more precisely, developmental dyslexia. Dr Dummer-Smoch concluded her speech by stressing the importance of ensuring that dyslexic learners study at the true level of their intellectual ability. 'The most urgent problem is to allow these students to learn according to the level of their gifts,' she said.

### **The fruits of lobbying**

Can it be true that, after 15 or more years, serious attention is being given to what dyslexia is and how it can be addressed in Europe?

'Neurodys' is an European Union funded dyslexia research project on the topic of 'Dyslexia genes and neurobiological pathways.' Groups from 10 European countries will investigate the biological basis of dyslexia. For further details see <http://www.neurodys.com/> and [www.admin.ox.ac.uk/po/news/2005-06/sep/25.shtml](http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/po/news/2005-06/sep/25.shtml).

The project has received over €3m from the European Commission and will assess nearly 4,000 children, linking 15 research groups and clinics in 10 different countries.

---

This major new European study will focus on the possible biological causes of dyslexia. It will be led by two researchers from the Wellcome Trust Centre for Human Genetics at Oxford University, and 'is expected to put Europe at the forefront of dyslexia research within three years'.

Oxford University will play an important role: Professor Tony Monaco and Professor Lon Cardon will head up the genetic side of the study, and Professor John Stein of the department of physiology – also chair of the D·I·T·T Scientific Advisory Committee – will study the reading difficulties experienced in children affected.

Professor Monaco said: 'This European study is the largest of its kind and should yield significant new insights into the genetics and biology of dyslexia, with potential benefits in diagnosis and treatment.'

## Profile – also a 'One in Ten'



### **Dr Duncan Milne**

'Dyslexic learners in today's world have a lot more opportunity for overcoming their disability through the use of new technology,' says Dr Duncan Milne.

Duncan has developed software programs and games that help dyslexic children learn to read. These products have sold well, and there is clearly a strong demand for new ICT tools. 'I would like to make a comparison between classrooms that use ICT and those that don't in order to show its benefits for children with special needs,' he says.

At D·I·T·T's Annual Open Forum this year at the European Parliament, Duncan spoke about 'Teaching the brain to read'. His interest in the subject stems from his own childhood experiences; he was diagnosed as having 'special learning needs' as a young boy growing up in his native New Zealand.

Although dyslexia wasn't commonly understood in the 1980s – Duncan is 31 – attempts have been made in recent years to raise awareness. Early detection, however, gave him the confidence to realise that he wasn't stupid, and his evident enthusiasm for his chosen subject has helped him overcome his difficulties. 'When I started my

---

*From the many compliments received by D·I·T·T on the Open Forum:*

'If all speakers spoke as clearly and directly as these two – a lot more communicating would go on.'

'Both speakers were extremely capable and interesting. They had the ability to make complex material clear and easily understood. I learned so much!'

studies, my reading speed was extremely slow, but after reading a thousand articles I became a lot faster,' he says.

Duncan is pleased to be able to lend his expertise to D·I·T·T in an advisory role: 'It's absolutely brilliant that there's a voice for dyslexia at an international level,' he says. 'Doing something internationally, like D·I·T·T does, is great for raising awareness.'

According to Duncan, awareness-raising is essential because dyslexia is genetically inherited; greater awareness of the condition will allow parents to prepare their children. The word processor has helped Duncan overcome his difficulties with writing, and while he needs to work hard on organisation, he views his dyslexia as 'a difference rather than a disability'.

Duncan is currently based in London and wants to continue his research into the neurological basis of reading and dyslexia. He would also like to produce more ICT tools and remains a firm friend of D·I·T·T.

## What works

### In production

Dr Chris Singleton and Dr Duncan Milne were highly complimented for their clear, illustrated presentations on assessment, assistance and teaching the brain to read at D·I·T·T's Annual Open Forum 2006. The film will shortly be available from [www.ditt-online.org](http://www.ditt-online.org).

### Resource for parents

See <http://www.dyslexia-parent.com/>

### TechDis

A website ([www.techdis.ac.uk/](http://www.techdis.ac.uk/)) that aims to be the leading educational advisory service, working across the UK, in the fields of accessibility and inclusion. TechDis enhances provision for disabled students and staff in higher, further and specialist education, and in adult and community learning, through the use of technology. The service is funded by the Joint Information Systems Committee.

---

## ABC method

Dyseurope has published a new method for dealing with dyslexia and language impairments. The ABC method was developed in Holland by Dr de Haan, specialist in psycholinguistics. Following the success of this method in Holland, Dyseurope is now developing this method to bring a different and durable solution for people dealing with dyslexia and language weaknesses.

The ABC method was designed for parents to be able to help their child at home while allowing the child to pursue normal schooling. For between 12 and 15 minutes a day parents work on a short chapter with their child. Progress is noticeable from the sixth week and will show in spelling and writing as well as in reading. The method has been found to be successful with people of all ages.

Book I *Lire est d'argent Ecrire est d'or* is available for €67 (plus €6 for postal charges).

Book II *Rose* is available for €95 (plus €8 for postal charges)

Both are sold exclusively on the website:  
[www.dyseurope.com](http://www.dyseurope.com)

Founded by Marlène Merlivat in 1999 at the start of her work on the English, French and German versions of the Dutch ABC method, Dyseurope aims to develop the method in the UK and Germany.

## Announcements

### D·I·T·T and UNESCO

On 17 October, at the 175th UNESCO General Assembly, a formal decision on D·I·T·T's official status was made. D·I·T·T has been granted 'operational relations' with UNESCO. What is involved? Find out more in our next (Winter) Newsletter.

D·I·T·T intends to work in close collaboration with colleagues and contributors and to spread awareness of the fact that, in varying degrees, between 4% and 10% of the population have difficulty acquiring literacy skills without adapted teaching. There is still a place for raising awareness at all levels, ministerial, academic, in the classroom and locally – about the mismatch between



D-I-T-T volunteer Simon Fenaux, who is working on the site putting in the country-by-country information on 193 UNESCO member states.

traditional teaching skills and the learning styles of dyslexic learners, whose brains function differently.

Already, in collaboration with colleagues sharing similar aims, D-I-T-T features at the UNESCO Literacy Portal where dyslexia and its implications are mentioned for the first time, with an e-team of international consultants.

In addition, an e-directory of provision for dyslexic learners world-wide is being developed by volunteers at D-I-T-T and will hopefully go up on [www.ditt-online.org](http://www.ditt-online.org) by the end of November.

### **Berlin conference**

Board member Gudrun Dziallas with Rolf Dziallas will represent D-I-T-T in Germany at the world's largest international conference on technology-supported learning and training: Online Educa Berlin 2006 – November 29–December 1.

This conference is the key networking venue for strategists and practitioners from all over the world. Last year over 1900 participants from 75 countries attended the Berlin event: high-level decision makers from education, business and government – the three key areas driving e-learning adoption and innovation. The conference is accompanied by an exhibition where Simon Fenaux's new PowerPoint presentation *Tintin helps dyslexic learners* will be rolling on the D-I-T-T stand – see [www.ditt-online.org](http://www.ditt-online.org).

### **IDA conference**

Also representing D-I-T-T, Ron Baker, founder and board member of D-I-T-T, will attend the 57th Annual IDA–International Dyslexia Association Conference 'Racing to Literacy' on 8–11 November 2006 in Indianapolis, Indiana, USA.

'There will be 200 sessions with more than 400 speakers of international renown focusing on the latest advances in dyslexia, related language difficulties and related fields. Individual sessions are geared towards educators and educational administrators, educational diagnosticians and therapists, parents, speech and language pathologists and, of course, individuals with dyslexia and their families.'

---

## **D·I·T·T Art Event**

To be held at the European Parliament in June 2007 under the aegis of Member of the European Parliament Robert Evans, thanks to the efficiency of a member of Friends of D·I·T·T, Sarah Whittall.

## **Money Matters**

### **Benefit Gala 2007**

D·I·T·T hopes that the Gala will have the enthusiastic backing it deserves as a truly outstanding event, and will raise thousands of euros to go towards projects that Intel and other major sponsors have also been invited to support, in particular:

- a follow-up film to the D·I·T·T pilot on technologies for dyslexic learners course
- an international conference on sharing good practice in teaching and learning with dyslexic learners.

The financial breakdown of the costing of these two projects is available through the D·I·T·T office.

### **Marcelle Napier–Margaret Lewis Award**

The Marcelle Napier–Margaret Lewis Award will go this year to Dr Vincent Goetry – see [www.ulb.ac.be/rech/inventaire/chercheurs/6/CH7406.html](http://www.ulb.ac.be/rech/inventaire/chercheurs/6/CH7406.html). Vincent, whose PhD is in the acquisition of reading in a second language, came to D·I·T·T as a young volunteer researcher last year. His teaching and the regular support he gives at the office continue to be highly valued.

Vincent, who speaks French and English, will use the award to be trained as a teacher of dyslexic learners on the Dyslexia Action post-graduate distance-learning programme. He will then be in a position to analyse the pros and cons between francophone and anglophone educational approaches to dealing with dyslexia.



Dr Vincent Goetry

---

## A wealth of talent

D·I·T·T thanks all its volunteers, who are at the heart of the organisation's progress and success, for their efforts in getting the work done.

Simon's superior artistic and technical abilities shone in his creation of PowerPoint presentations (see p.8).

Thanks go to Alic Merlivat for his top technological skills, artistic talents, managerial abilities and great interpersonal skills.

Special mention must be made of our July team – Carmen Chan and Jason Down of Highsted Grammar School in Kent. They devised an ingenious game to assist young dyslexic learners overcome their learning difficulties – a cross between Trivial Pursuit and Monopoly.



Carmen, Jason and, right, the learning game they created



Kasia, Allison and Alexia researched dyslexia provision round the world for the UNESCO e-directory project.

Ildiko assisted with research and proof-reading *Dyslexia and the Right To Read*.

(see [www.ditt-online.org/Archives/Unesco-report.pdf](http://www.ditt-online.org/Archives/Unesco-report.pdf))

Right: Kasia (seated), Allison and Alexia

Below: Ildiko



---

## Reflections

'Who dares to teach must never cease to learn.'

*John Cotton Dana*

### **The effects of school failure on a child's personality**

Mila Adam, teacher at an elementary school with special classes in the Czech Republic, and the designer of educational software writes:

In the first place, children can be traumatised if they believe that by failing at school they are disappointing their parents. Every child, boy or girl, needs acceptance if he or she is to develop innate potential.

Failure negates a child's self-confidence and learning difficulties are aggravated – the more so if the child has a successful sibling who succeeds at school effortlessly. The child with learning difficulties appears lazy and less intelligent, and is likely to respond in one of two ways – either by adapting to the situation and covering up feelings of inferiority, or by becoming defensive.

It is not uncommon for children with learning disorders to suffer from stress, anorexia, sleep defects, headache and tics.

But whatever their situation may be, it is important that those of us around them ensure that they have a secure and successful environment.

This is the reason why I personally continue to put my energy into the development of learning tools. Analysing the child's errors, I can almost always recommend a suitable learning tool. The tools have 3 – 4 levels and are created according to specific learning principles in Czech. In my opinion, it would be helpful if all these best learning tools from the world over were accessible from one place – one centre or one database.

[The D·I·T·T ToSuccess.org website attempts to do this by assembling a list of recommended software and other resources selected by dyslexic learners and their mentors – see [www.ToSuccess.org](http://www.ToSuccess.org).]

And please don't forget – a smile can ease up the most stressful situations!

---

## Shining Examples?

If you need a little encouragement, here is a world-class line-up of school failures: Charles Dickens, Mark Twain and Maxim Gorky never made it as far as a secondary school. Many scientific greats also dropped out of school as early as possible, including rail pioneer George Stevenson, inventor Thomas Edison and the early pilots, the Wright brothers. Stars of the stage and screen, Noel Coward, Charlie Chaplin and Frank Sinatra avoided secondary school completely, and David Niven was expelled from school at the age of 10. And if you think great leaders need great qualifications, think of US Presidents Washington, Lincoln and Truman, who never went near a college.

## Time...Less

Yesterday's taste melted away in a yearning for more till came the

Next day and yesterday's taste was no longer living in wanting it more till came

The day after in a dream of needs that had settled for more

Days to come making their bed in habits of youthful forgetfulness as in

Yesterday's charms dangling from your ears in clip-on delight of amber and gold adoring

Today's translucent, gauzy pale dress you toy with as your teasing embrace brings back

Yesterday's kiss and the breeze from your speechless libretto exposing

Tomorrow's spark in affectionate smiles impatiently awake between the sheets of

Yesterday's silks sown from oracle's thread, by ancient hands on the slopes of Mount Parnassus to a

Future... as ageless as the piercing look from your eyes through my soul's wings and...

All sensory truth that consumes a past we don't claim, to the gentle winds of time we've enjoyed, in the simplicity of the uncountable timelessness of that very moment that never wanted more.

from *Spiralling Reality* (2005) by Luc Louis de Lairese, artistic director, D·I·T·T Gala 2007.

See more – hear more –  
be touched by beauty and  
talent at the D·I·T·T Gala on  
18 March 2007.

We hope to have the pleasure  
of your company for your  
personal delight and for the  
benefit of D·I·T·T.

*Judith Sanson, Executive Director*