

- Did you know that, according to the Association of British Orchestras, the Oxford Philomusica is the country's fastest growing professional symphony orchestra?
- Did you know that, on average, around 20% of our regular concert-goers are under 25?
- Did you know that Philomusica, derived from a Greek word, literally means "friends of music"?
- Did you know that the Philomusica logo, with the letters OP and a natural sign attached, represents not only the name of the orchestra but also the musical term opus? The natural sign is a cryptic "h" which, together with the "p", correctly depicts the Latin version of the Greek letter "phi" found in the word Philomusica.

PROFILE *John Georgiadis* Leader

As part of our newsletter, we will be including a different profile in each issue. Our first profile is fittingly of our illustrious leader and virtuoso violinist Mr. John Georgiadis.

Born in Southend-on-Sea, Essex, John began playing the violin at the age of six and later studied at the Royal Academy of Music. Two years as leader of the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra were followed by eleven years as leader of the London Symphony Orchestra, in two periods between 1965 and 1979. As a violinist, John appeared regularly as a concerto soloist and recitalist both in the concert hall and on record. From 1986 he spent four years as leader of the Gabrieli String Quartet, fulfilling a lifelong ambition to explore the marvellous string quartet repertoire.

Holding the UK's top violin job, that of LSO leader, from the age of 26 presented John with the ideal springboard for launching into a conducting career whilst still young, and in the mid 70s he took his first steps as conductor. Recognising the need to acquire a sound conducting technique to stand alongside his already substantial orchestral experience, he undertook eight arduous years of conducting studies with Sergiu Celibidache, the legendary Roumanian conductor and teacher.

His career as a guest conductor has taken him all over the world with many of the great orchestras. A longstanding relationship with his old orchestra, the LSO, has led to concerts and tours at home and abroad as well as many recordings, one of which topped the CD sales charts. The annual New Year's Concerts, with the LSO, London Concert Orchestra and now Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, which he conducts at the Barbican, have now passed their 27th anniversary. His tours abroad have included an exotic trip to Oman where he and the LSO were guests of the Sultan.

He is Music Director and Conductor of the London

Virtuosi Chamber Orchestra, founded in 1972, as a chamber ensemble, and together they have been on many tours around the world.

His interest in young people is reflected in the fact that he was Director of Orchestral Studies at the Royal Academy of Music and also Conductor of the Essex Youth Orchestra for more than a decade. Comfortable with most of the symphonic repertoire - he is an ardent Bruckner fan - he has also made a speciality of Viennese music and is an honorary member of the Johann Strauss Society of Great Britain for whom he is Archives Guardian and acting Librarian.

In a wide-ranging and varied career, he has also served as Music Director of the Bristol Sinfonia and the Bangkok Symphony, as well as worked with many youth orchestras. Between 1994 and 1996, when he was Music Director of the Bangkok Symphony, he used his vast experience to bring this orchestra from a part-time group to a full-size international-standard ensemble. In 1996 the BSO was invited to Phnom Penh at the specific request of King Sihanouk of Cambodia, the first such cultural visit of any two countries of the region. He also has a keen interest in arranging and orchestration, including music by Thai composers while in Bangkok with the BSO. At home in the UK his versions of both rare and well known Viennese music are performed frequently. Outside the music world, John enjoys playing golf and building websites, and relaxing in his house by the sea on the east coast of England. For more information visit John's website at www.johngeorgiadis.com.



Oxford Philomusica at Kypria Festival 2005



Oxford Philomusica conducted by Marios Papadopoulos

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OP on Tour – Cyprus Festival 2005

Building on their successful tour to the acclaimed Athens International Festival in 2004, the Oxford Philomusica returned to the Greek regions, this time journeying to the beautiful island of Cyprus as guest performers at the celebrated Kypria Festival. Here, the Oxford Philomusica gave two outstanding performances, firstly at the newly built Strovolos Municipal Theatre, Nicosia and secondly at the Pattichion Municipal Theatre, Limassol. The varied and contrasting programme included both contemporary and traditional works.

The concerts opened with a newly composed work, '3 Orchestral Pieces' by Greek national Constantinos Stylianou. This overtly modern work, with its carefully marked dissonances and driving, irregular rhythms, was both gregarious and vivacious in approach. Although very modern and at times perhaps slightly academic, the work was nevertheless thoroughly enjoyable and greatly appreciated by both audiences.

In contrast to the Stylianou, we next heard a wonderful rendition of Liszt's Second Piano Concerto played by the ever-popular French-Cypriot Cyprien Katsaris. This concerto is well known for its compositional wizardry, its magical opening of constantly shifting harmonies, its blazing marches, and its dazzling piano arabesques. Cyprien Katsaris performed with his usual masterly display of finesse and virtuosity, captivating the audience for every second of the performance and prompting acclaimed encores including Schubert's 'Military March' in an entertaining piano duet with Maestro Papadopoulos.

This was followed by the luminous sonorities of Tchaikovsky's Fifth Symphony. This majestic work, with its underlying themes of fate and destiny, is one of the most well known symphonies in today's orchestral repertoire and its sheer magnificence and splendour never cease to enthuse audiences. The performances by the Oxford Philomusica were no exception, with subtle nuances in the wind and strings accompanying the grand, imperial melody in the brass defining the very notion of fate itself. As such it formed a fitting end to the closing concerts of the Kypria Festival and was received with rapturous applause by the typically enthusiastic Cypriot audiences.

OP Opera

This season sees the Oxford Philomusica stretch its wings into the field of opera. On 17th December, the Sheldonian will ring with the words 'Ho jo to ho!!' the first words in Act III of Wagner's 'Die Walküre' from his epic opera 'Der Ring des Nibelungen'. In this concert, audiences will have the rare opportunity to see and hear Brünnhilde try to justify her disobedience in protecting Siegmund from the mighty Wotan, who is about to put her to sleep on the Valkyries' rock, prey to the first man who shall awaken her. For this concert, the Oxford Philomusica will be joined by a host of talented artists including Robert Hayward as Wotan and Elaine McKrill as Brünnhilde. Robert Hayward is an outstandingly accomplished singer, having appeared with the English National Opera, Welsh National Opera, Royal Opera House Covent Garden, Opera North, Scottish Opera, Glyndebourne Festival and Glyndebourne Touring Opera in Britain alone. Further afield, he has appeared with Houston Grand Opera; Minnesota, Cincinnati and San Diego Operas; New Israeli Opera; Stuttgart Opera; and the Bayerische Staatsoper. Most recently, Robert Hayward sung Wotan in English National Opera's new RING production and was described as '... overwhelming in his lyricism' (*The Guardian*). Elaine McKrill as Brünnhilde '... is simply outstanding, conveying wonderful generosity and amplitude' (Katie Barnes – *Wagner News*). Elaine is an accomplished Wagnerian, having won the 2003 Mastersingers Wagner Singers Competition. Her Wagner roles include Brünnhilde in 'Siegfried' for Scottish Opera, Brünnhilde in 'Die Walküre' for Edinburgh Opera Players, Sieglinde for Scottish Opera and English National Opera and Freia for Piggotts Opera. This concert will indeed be a treat for Wagner fans and is surely not one to be missed!

"This season sees the Oxford Philomusica stretch its wings into the field of opera"

Season Opener

The opening concert of the 2005/2006 season on Saturday 29th October was a resounding success. This concert featured a celebration of English music with works by two of the most famous English composers, William Walton and Edward Elgar. Wielding the baton for the evening was the veteran conductor Vernon Handley, a much admired favourite amongst British audiences. To begin, Thomas Bowes, soloist for the evening, presented Walton's scintillating Violin Concerto, a work that he almost makes his own. This comes as no surprise having spent three weeks with Lady Walton at her home on the Mediterranean resort of Ischia gaining an insight into the life of the composer. The result was 'an extraordinary fusion of the player and the music, in which Bowes seemed to engage totally with the composer's emotions and intentions' (Nicola Lisle – *Oxford Times*). The second half was equally stunning with the orchestra performing perhaps one of the most loved works of all time: Elgar's beautiful Enigma Variations. As always, 'the

University Residency Programme



As the professional Orchestra in Residence at the University of Oxford, the Oxford Philomusica endeavours to provide students of the university with high-quality teaching with some of the best players in their fields. This year the OP is offering a host of masterclasses and workshops based at the Faculty of Music free of charge. This academic term, events included woodwind and dedicated flute masterclasses by John Orford and Tony Robb respectively, whilst Kate Comberti led a group of students in an Opus workshop which explored the various uses of music in the wider community. Furthermore, Marios Papadopoulos tutored students in the unique art of 'Directing from the Keyboard' with a small orchestra at hand. The Oxford Philomusica's Music Director worked with students specifically on movements from a selected Mozart piano concerto and aided them in undertaking the roles of the soloist and conductor. The New Year will bring a number of wonderful opportunities for students including a workshop on the popular subject of Alexander Technique, a conducting masterclass with Alan Hazeldine from the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, a double bass masterclass with the virtuoso Tom Martin and piano masterclasses with Marios Papadopoulos and the world-renowned Melvyn Tan. Finally, the Oxford Philomusica itself will be present to give students the rare opportunity of hearing their works played by a fully professional orchestra. At the end of the session, one work will be selected to be given its world première by the Oxford Philomusica at the Sheldonian Theatre on 16th June 2006. The University Residency programme, in collaboration with the Faculty of Music, provides valuable performance education for the benefit of the entire university student community. The highly successful 'orchestral apprenticeship' scheme, now in its sixth year, will once again provide invaluable professional orchestral experience for four selected students. Philomusica musicians will also offer training to individual students enrolled on the Faculty's Orchestral Studies course. All in all, the University Residency programme is a key asset which assists the Faculty of Music with its educational programme and provides all students in the university with a multitude of opportunities otherwise not available in Oxford.

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players performed with that impenetrable bond that comes from working together on a regular basis, and their account of the piece was infused with poise, charm and warmth. Handley held all together with customary authority, while renowned broadcaster Humphrey Burton entertained with his informative introductions for each piece' (Nicola Lisle – *Oxford Times*). All in all, the concert was a wonderfully enjoyable evening of music which bodes well for the highly anticipated Mainly Mozart Festival in 2006.



In 2006 the musical world celebrates Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, born 250 years ago and described, definitively, by the New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians as 'the most universal composer in the history of modern music'. Indeed, Mozart's musical Midas touch turned to gold every known musical form – masses, symphonies, opera, concerti and chamber music. But perhaps more importantly, successive generations of music lovers have sensed, intuitively, that more than any other composer Mozart merged mastery of form with expression of emotion. It is our mission, in this **Mainly Mozart Festival**, to take our audiences on a musical journey to explore and experience that uniquely satisfying quality to the full.

To heighten the listener's sense of discovery of evolving genius we have made the core of our homage to Mozart three comprehensive and coherent series of concerts featuring the piano, the instrument with which he enjoyed a lifelong love affair. In the piano concertos we display the very best of Mozart – at his most forward looking and innovative – and, in our selection from his vast output of chamber music, we focus on his technical mastery and musical understanding of both the piano and the violin.

High art calls for high artistry and in **Marios Papadopoulos** and guest artists **Melvyn Tan**, **Mayumi Fujikawa** and **Michael Roll** we have assembled four musicians who are Mozartians to their fingertips. For the **2006 Mainly Mozart Festival** the Oxford Philomusica's Music Director will be embarking upon his third cycle of Mozart's **Piano Concertos**. Directing from the keyboard in the authentic manner, **Marios Papadopoulos** will present all 21 piano concertos in seven concerts, a number of which will feature newly commissioned cadenzas by students at the University of Oxford's Faculty of Music. **Melvyn Tan**, who has 'so successfully married authentic performance tradition to contemporary tastes', will play the 18 **Piano Sonatas** over four concerts. **Mayumi Fujikawa** and **Michael Roll**, described as 'the benchmark classical partnership', will perform the 17 **Sonatas for Violin and Piano** in a further 4-part series.

It is perhaps in opera that Mozart's genius found its most completely satisfying medium. The centrepiece of the Festival is a concert performance of **The Magic Flute** – arguably the composer's most profound and complex work in the genre – which features the first use in modern times of the original libretto. Elsewhere in the Festival we sample Mozart's symphonies – most notably the last three in a single concert which promises to be one of the orchestral highlights of the musical year. The **Mainly Mozart Festival** ends on 5th December – the exact anniversary of Mozart's death – with what will inevitably be an emotionally charged performance of the **Requiem**.

In between times we will have taken account of two other anniversaries. The 150th anniversary of Schumann's death is observed by a cycle of the **Four Symphonies** conducted by **Alexander Shelley**, and **John Lill's** performance of the **Piano Concerto**. Schumann's lieder legacy, together with music by his chanson-writing heirs, is explored in a celebrity recital to be given by **Anna Stéphanie** and **Roger Vignoles**. The centenary of Shostakovich's birth is marked by a complete cycle of his **Preludes and Fugues** played by **Marios Papadopoulos** who will also conduct the famous **Fifth Symphony**.

Finally, we are very conscious of the importance of matching the venue to the music. Oxford is uniquely fortunate in having Sir Christopher Wren's Sheldonian Theatre which, although predating his birth by nearly a century, might have been built with Mozart in mind. Its galleried intimacy guarantees every member of the audience a sense of close communication with the performers and we are presenting all but one of the festival's orchestral and choral concerts in this magnificent setting. For our recital programmes, we are able to enjoy both the crystal clear acoustics of two of Oxford's state of the art concert venues, the Jacqueline du Pré Music Building and the O'Reilly Theatre, and the historic ambience of the Holywell Music Room.

The Oxford Philomusica **Mainly Mozart Festival 2006** would not have been possible without the generous support of the **Zvi & Ofra Meitar Family Fund** to whom we are greatly indebted.

New Oxford Office

The Oxford Philomusica finally has a true home in Oxford with the opening of their new office at Templeton College. This new office space has been graciously provided by Templeton College. Templeton College is first and foremost a modern postgraduate college within the University of Oxford, dedicated to management studies, and strongly connected with international business. The college is surrounded by 37 acres of lawned and wooded grounds, landscaped by the late Alan Mitchell (1922-95). Whereas the Oxford Philomusica still retains its London office, the opening of the new Oxford office sees the Oxford Philomusica establishing a permanent presence in its home city and strengthening its ties with the university and indeed its status as Professional Orchestra in Residence at the University of Oxford.



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"birth of musical genius
Wolfgang Amadeus"



Melvyn Tan

New Appointment

The Oxford Philomusica is pleased to announce the appointment of Rhydian Griffiths as the new Operations Administrator. This is a newly created post with responsibilities for event co-ordination/arrangement, programme planning, dealings with external contacts and the development of special projects and tours. Rhydian will be located at the newly opened Oxford office and will be looking after OP affairs in Oxford. Rhydian is a former member of the University of Oxford, having recently graduated with a B.A. Honours degree in Music. Before joining the Oxford Philomusica, he held the position of Manager and Chairman of the Oxford University Orchestra as well as director of several other amateur organisations including the Turl Street Arts Festival. A keen trumpet player, Rhydian also freelances professionally both in Britain and abroad.