

- Did you know that Alexander Shelley is the son of the world famous pianist Howard Shelley?
- Oxford Philomusica has launched its own OP recording label. More soon ...
- Log on and check out our new-look web pages for the Oxford Philomusica's International Piano Festival!

Fundraising Event

MONDAY 26 JUNE 2006 7.30PM, The Great Hall, Christ Church, Oxford

A rare opportunity to hear the Oxford Philomusica and to dine in the stunning setting of The Great Hall of Christ Church, familiar to any fans of the Harry Potter films. The concert will be preceded by a champagne reception and followed by a sitting dinner.

Sponsored by Sir Victor and Lady Blank

If you would like to attend this event, please call the Oxford Philomusica on 0870 60 60 804 for more details or email events@oxfordphil.com



The Great Hall, Christ Church, Oxford

PLAYER PROFILE

Thomas Martin Principal Double Bass

One of the world's best-known bassists, Thomas Martin studied in America under Harold Roberts, Oscar Zimmerman, and Roger Scott. He has held front desk positions with the Buffalo Philharmonic and Israel Philharmonic Orchestras and Principal positions with L'Orchestre Symphonique de Montreal, The Academy of St Martin-in-the-Fields, the English Chamber Orchestra, London Symphony Orchestra. Since 2000 he has been Principal double bass with the Oxford Philomusica.

In recent years, he has been pursuing an ever-increasing interest in solo playing appearing in recitals and concertos with orchestras around the globe. He has made a number of television and broadcast appearances presenting a wide variety of repertoire ranging from the Baroque to the 20th century and has played and recorded most of the chamber music for his instrument.

He has recently completed a series of recordings of the music of Giovanni Bottesini, the great 19th century virtuoso, which have met with great critical acclaim. His recordings in the Bottesini series with Anthony Halstead were awarded 'Gramophone Magazine Record of the Year' and his recording with The English Chamber Orchestra was chosen as the 'Sunday Times Record of the Year'.

As a teacher, he is Senior Professor of Double Bass at London's Guildhall School of Music and Drama, a position he has held for many years, and is in constant demand to give master classes internationally. His students can be found all over the world. He is responsible for a large number of editions of music for double bass notably for Theodore Presser and International Music



Company in the US and G Billaudot in France. Often asked to serve on International Competition juries, recent appearances have been in Moscow, Geneva, Cremona and Bucharest. This September will see him in Munich.

Tom is also well known and educated as a Luthier and is often seen playing his own double bass (one of the over one hundred basses he has made to date).

HEADLINES

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Verdi Requiem

With over 37 concerts and recitals packed into the year, you would think that it would be almost impossible to squeeze in any more. Well, with 'almost' being the operative word, we managed to find time to put on a performance of Verdi's Requiem to a packed Sheldonian Theatre on Thursday 12th January. This concert, by special request was especially performed in memory of the late Dr Oliver Impey, curator of Japanese Art at the Ashmolean Museum. The concert saw the Oxford Philomusica join forces once again with the renowned Philharmonia Chorus. The relationship between the orchestra and the chorus has been very fruitful indeed having collaborated several times in the past with more to come in the future. The soloists for the evening certainly provided exquisite entertainment. Soprano, Miriam Murphy was perhaps the highlight of the evening with a display of tremendous power and such grace – her exposed B flat towards the end (a whole audience waits for that!) was expertly sung. Though one should not overlook the presence of the world famous Mezzo-Soprano, Rosalind Plowright, a last minute replacement for the young Karen Cargill who was taken ill on the very morning of the concert. Plowright never fails to delight, giving a performance filled with passion and elegance. The gentlemen Wynne Evans and Michael George complemented the ladies perfectly, their sonorous voices resonating around the Sheldonian Theatre. The orchestra itself more than lived up to expectations, from the whispered opening, through the enormous power of the 'Dies Irae' ('Day of Anger') to the hushed ending. With a Verdi Requiem characterised by its majestically measured tempi (almost 90mins in length), the audience were certainly rewarded for braving the cold January weather! An evening that will certainly not be forgotten for a long time yet.

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We would like to announce that the Oxford Philomusica will be relocating to Cambridge as of 1st of April (!)

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Alexander Shelley to Conduct



Alexander Shelley

Marios Papadopoulos is no longer conductor of the Oxford Philomusica...surely not I hear you cry! Well, you'd be right; the Maestro is of course still our esteemed conductor, only he has giving up wielding baton for an evening or two to the young Alexander Shelley, winner of the eighth Leeds Conductors' Competition. Shelley will conduct the complete cycle of Four Schumann Symphonies in two concerts; the first in April and the second in October. This young artist is perfectly poised to direct such a programme given his capacity as founder of the Schumann Camerata in Dusseldorf in 2001. He has now conducted this young chamber orchestra in over 80 concerts both in Germany and abroad including a high-profile tour of 11 Russian cities culminating in the Great Hall of the Moscow Conservatoire in 2004. With the Camerata this season he is presenting '440Hz', a series of concerts involving prominent German television and stage personalities, in a major initiative to attract young adults to the concert hall. This twenty-six year old British conductor is rapidly establishing himself as one of the most creative musical talents of his generation.



Sole sponsors of the Festival
Zvi & Ofra Meitar Family Fund

'The enterprising Oxford Philomusica's impressive Mozart Series' is how Richard Morrison described our Mainly Mozart Festival in *The Times*. The year's festivities are now in full swing and don't look to quieten down any time soon! It was always going to be a risk, self-promoting three almost identical concerts, featuring piano concertos alone. However, the Oxford audience defied all known logic and flocked in their droves to the first phase of Maestro Papadopoulos' 'ambitious series' (*Daily Telegraph*) of the complete piano concerti. So far, the success of the festival has surpassed all expectations with impressive advance box office sales, and a packed Sheldonian Theatre for each concert. Looming ahead of us is Mayumi Fujikawa playing those Viennese masterpieces that are Mozart's Violin Sonatas. In the meantime, we recently saw the beginning of Melvyn Tan's piano sonata series ... or rather the lucky ones who managed to secure tickets did. Future concerts are selling fast and are in limited supply. Those of you who wish to catch this eminent musician in concert would do well to book early or risk missing the boat. The Mainly Mozart Festival looks to be one of if not the biggest festival in the UK, which is somewhat surprising given the magnitude and popularity of Mozart generally. Smaller celebrations are taking place across the country although nothing that rivals the 'rich feast of Mozart' as heralded by the Oxford Times. Put this down to a stroke of luck, or perhaps down to careful planning and execution of the festival by the Philomusica management team. Still, it is the Oxford audiences that will inevitably benefit from the carousel of concerts this year and indeed the remainder of the classical music loving world that will be left wanting. Putting aside my professional role for a moment, musically speaking, I know which city I would want to be in this year...



Mayumi Fujikawa

'the success of the festival
has surpassed all
expectations'

Winston Churchill Memorial Concert Blenheim Palace



Following a splendid performance at Ditchley Park by the orchestra and soloist for the evening Alexander Sitkovetsky, the Oxford Philomusica were invited by Lady Henrietta Spencer-Churchill to perform at the annual Winston Churchill Memorial Concert at Blenheim Palace on 4th March 2006. Blenheim Palace was the birth place of Sir Winston Churchill and is currently home to the 11th Duke of Marlborough. This high profile engagement was a fund raising event in aid of a variety of local charities in the Oxfordshire region. Each year a distinguished celebrity speaker is invited to give a speech on a theme relating to Churchill. Previous speakers have included such eminent names as former American President Bill Clinton, Former British Prime Minister Baroness Margaret Thatcher and former French President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing. The guest speaker for this year's event was former leader of the Conservative party the Rt Hon Michael Howard QC MP. The orchestra presented an enjoyable evening of light classics, performing Albinoni's Adagio for Strings and Mozart's 'Eine kleine Nachtmusik'. A second half of popular modern day numbers included Enio Morriconi's 'Gabriel's Oboe' the main theme from the 1986 film 'The Mission', 'Moonriver' by Henri Mancini from the 1961 classic 'Breakfast at Tiffany's' and Jazz Pizzicato by Leroy Anderson.

New Board Member - Sir Malcolm Bates

The Oxford Philomusica would like to extend a warm welcome to Sir Malcolm Bates who has recently joined the orchestra's board of trustees. We are very fortunate and indeed honoured that Sir Malcolm has agreed to join us at the Oxford Philomusica and are certain that his knowledge and vast experience will be invaluable to the

orchestra's continued development. Sir Malcolm Bates was formerly special advisor to the Paymaster General of HM Treasury 1997-1999; Chairman of Business in the Arts 1996-1999, Chairman of London Transport 1999-2003, and Governor and deputy Chairman of the University of Westminster 1995-2002.

Piano Festival Board

The Oxford Philomusica International Piano Festival has recently created its own advisory board of eminent individuals to support and advise its ever expanding activities. Members of the board include Sue Ashtiany, Lady Garland, Sir Tim Lankester and The Rt Hon Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne, MEP.

North American Reunion

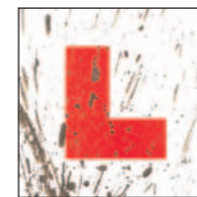


The Oxford Philomusica along with the Faculty of Music were recently asked to represent music in Oxford at the Oxford University North American Reunion which took place in New York at the end of March. Both Dr Marios Papadopoulos and Dr Owen Rees attended the conference representing their individual organisations and their unique relationship and roles in promulgating music making in Oxford.

As part of the conference, the Oxford Philomusica was asked to put together and present a short DVD in collaboration with the Faculty of Music portraying the various guises of music in the university. Several masterclasses and workshops from the University Residency Programme as well as a number of concerts were filmed and used as part of a joint presentation to the delegates at the conference. The Oxford Philomusica was deeply honoured when asked to showcase their work with the University of Oxford at such a high profile occasion.

Driving Test

Over the last several months, our designer and administrator Larisa Blackwood has regularly been seen leaving the office in an unknown vehicle. It perhaps comes as no surprise that Larisa was in fact undertaking driving lessons.



'Horror on the Hill'

After months of careful practice, (including several untimely stalls on Harrow on the Hill so I'm told), Larisa finally took the test and passed on the first occasion. As such, we would like to take this opportunity to publicly congratulate Larisa on her recent success. It is rumoured that Larisa will shortly be applying for a company car. The Oxford Philomusica had no comment to make on the rumours.

MY LIFE a week with: Rhydian Griffiths



Monday 20th February – Starting the week with some manual labour work. Following the Viennese Ball, equipment needs to be transported back to the Sheldonian Theatre; including many instances of dropping things on toes... no job is too menial! Late morning, drive to Banbury for a meeting with the OP Fund Raising Committee then back to the office to be inundated with emails regarding all upcoming events.

Tuesday 21st – Briefly head into the office to answer any urgent correspondence before heading home to write a transcription of Pomp and Circumstance for Strings and Organ to be played at Blenheim Palace by the Oxford Philomusica. Finally, the music degree comes in handy...

Wednesday 22nd – Will have to don warm clothing and walking boots before visiting Bletchington Park with the directors and an external promoter to survey the possibility of putting on an outdoor concert in the future – watch this space. Back to the office for a short time before attending an OP Advisory Council Meeting at 6.30.

Thursday 23rd – Begin work writing newsletter, rather an ironic thought, before sorting out issues surrounding filming for a DVD to be presented at the Oxford University North American Reunion. Meeting in the afternoon to discuss the development of a touring proposal for the Arts Council before moving on to draw up a skeleton structured plan, identifying the key objectives.

Friday 24th – Investigate hire of appropriate staging for upcoming Magic Flute concert. Begin drawing up a touring proposal for submission to Arts Council England. Meeting in late afternoon with organist from Blenheim Palace to go through Pomp and Circumstance transcription written earlier in the week.

Weekend – Drive to Cardiff to rehearse with National Symphonic Brass Wales for a concert to be given at the opening of the new Welsh Assembly Building on 1st March. Need to confirm identity to security officials and promise not to be rude to the Queen at the opening ceremony ...