

- ♫ 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!

Fund-raising Event

FRIDAY 1 DECEMBER 2006 Houses of Parliament, London

President's Concert and Dinner

The Oxford Philomusica's fund-raising concert and dinner at the Palace of Westminster is now a firmly established annual event. This one takes place on 1 December 2006 with a concert in the House of Commons followed by dinner in the House of Lords. The hosts on this occasion are Andrew Smith MP and the Orchestra's President and Chancellor of The University of Oxford, Lord Patten, in the House of Commons and Lords respectively.

If you would like to join us for this prestigious event, please call **0870 60 60 804** for more informa



PLAYER PROFILE

Yu Yasuraoka Co-leader Violin player

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 Montréal, the Academy of St Martin - in - the - Fields, the English Chamber Orchestra and the 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 has met with great critical acclaim. Recordings 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 masterclasses 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).

The Newsletter of

The Oxford Philomusica

The Professional Orchestra in Residence at The University of Oxford

Autumn 2006, Issue 3

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New Season Announced

'No rest for the wicked' as the old saying has it. Not that there's that much wicked at the Philomusica, but there's not that much rest either. Hard on the heels of a highly successful Piano Festival comes the launch of a new season which we are convinced will appeal not only to our Friends but also to our constantly growing following amongst the general concert-going public.

The 2006/07 Season marks both the closing stages of the Orchestra's uniquely comprehensive Mainly Mozart Festival – gratifyingly achieving press acclaim and enthusiastic audience support – and the opening of a new chapter of exciting musical adventures. Apart from enjoying the final phases of Melyn Tan's Piano Sonata cycle and Mayumi Fujikawa's survey of the Violin Sonatas, we can only look on in admiration as Music Director Marios Papadopoulos makes seemingly light work of directing from the keyboard the remaining 12 Piano Concertos within the space of little more than three weeks. This remarkable enterprise ends in appropriately valedictory fashion, marking Mozart's death on 5th December with performances of the autumnal Clarinet Concerto and the ever enigmatic Requiem.

In the meantime, the boldly conceived Schumann Symphony cycle, directed by the gifted young conductor, Alexander Shelley, will have been completed, and the Orchestra will have made its Cadogan Hall debut on 14th October in an all Beethoven programme. This London concert, which features Marios in his dual capacities as conductor and virtuoso pianist, is deliberately designed to display the Philomusica's special strengths. We hope that our Friends will turn out in force to support what may well be a pivotal moment in the Orchestra's history.

A pre-Christmas performance of Handel's Messiah on 16th December brings the first of the season's two major oratorios, the second being 'The Creation', Haydn's masterly setting of a text originally intended for Handel. It will be performed on 12th May when the Orchestra will be joined by the prestigious New College Choir, conducted by its distinguished director, Edward Higginbottom.

Haydn is also the catalyst for the first of our new musical adventures. On 27th January, under guest conductor John Lubbock the Orchestra plays Prokofiev's sparkling 'Classical' Symphony – a self-confessed tribute to the spirit of Haydn as perfectly encapsulated in his final 'London' Symphony. Neatly complementing the symphonies are Tchaikovsky's elegant but virtuosic Variations on a Rococo Theme, featuring Guy Johnson as solo cellist.

A busy February includes three special events which demonstrate both the Philomusica's versatility and its commitment to the wider Oxford community. After the Ball, in all its Viennese finery on 10th February, is over, the scene shifts from the Town Hall to the MINI Info Centre at the BMW Group Plant for a charity Night at the Movies in aid of the Oxford Children's Hospital. We hope that as many of our Friends as possible will help some of Oxford's neediest children while reliving favourite memories from such spectacular soundtracks as Star Wars, Lord of the Rings and Love Story. A different kind of love story will be retold ten days later when the remarkable Blackbird Leys Community Choir, TV stars of 'The Singing Estate', join the Orchestra in music from Bernstein's West Side Story.

A little later in the year the Philomusica has the chance to shine in two concerts of favourite orchestral showpieces. On 8th March, in his Symphonie Fantastique, we will experience Berlioz's nightmarish but colourful depiction of unrequited love, preceded by the only marginally more restrained romanticism of Rachmaninov's Second Piano Concerto, and, on 28th April, we can confidently expect to fall under the spell of Sheherazade.

Saving perhaps the very best till last, on 15th June we end our 2006/7 Season on a triumphant note with Beethoven's uplifting drama of love and heroism, Fidelio.

We hope that you will find much to enjoy in this new season and look forward to welcoming you to many concerts.

Cadogan Hall Debut

On 14th October, the orchestra will make its debut performance at Cadogan Hall, London where Papadopoulos will again demonstrate his dual capacity as pianist and conductor in a programme which features Beethoven's First Piano Concerto and Third Symphony. The concert in association with 'Graphamone: The Classical Music Magazine' will be introduced by the celebrated Classic FM and Radio 3 announcer, Natalie Wheen. Cadogan Hall is London's newest concert venue and is renowned for its acclaimed acoustic and outstanding architecture. Be sure to support your orchestra, book your tickets now on 020 7730 4500.

International Piano Festival



Participants at the 2004 Piano Festival

We are pleased to announce that the Oxford Philomusica Eighth International Piano Festival which took place during 23rd- 30th July was a resounding success. This year's festival was generously sponsored by Blackwell Publishing Ltd. The festival exceeded all expectations by welcoming more talented students than ever before from all over the world. This year's faculty consisted of some of the most famous pianists and pedagogues of all time including Gary Graffman, President of the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia and Vladimir Krainev, Professor of Piano at the Moscow Central Academy of Music, Russia. As well as general piano masterclasses, this year's festival included several specialist master classes. Included were masterclasses for the young and amateur pianist, a pedagogy class for the droves of piano teachers in attendance and a 'directing from the keyboard' class exploring the fundamentals of fulfilling the roles of soloist and conductor. Planning has already begun on next year's festival.

Christ Church Fundraiser

At the beginning of the summer the Oxford Philomusica held a special fundraiser concert and dinner in the Great Hall of Christ Church College, Oxford. This concert was the first ever to feature a symphony orchestra in the Great Hall in the history of Christ Church College. The concert featured an evening of opera classics with arias from such classics as La Traviata, Rigoletto, Don Giovanni and Le Nozze de Figaro'. It is with great pleasure that we can report that the orchestra raised in excess of £20,000 for its Trust which will greatly aid in continuing its work both in the concert hall and in the community.



The Great Hall, Christ Church, Oxford

Recording Label

The orchestra's recording label is now firmly established with 6 CDs released under its banner. Current releases include four CDs of Beethoven Piano Sonatas and Shostakovich's 24 Preludes and Fugues performed by Marios Papadopoulos. The orchestra hopes to begin recording performances for release shortly along with another six CDs featuring the remainder of the Beethoven Piano Sonatas.



Blackbird Leys Choir Project

Earlier on this year, millions of viewers tuned into Channel 5 to catch the Singing Estate, a documentary-drama series featuring the training of a brand new choir formed from the residents of the Blackbird Leys Estate. The series filmed the training of the choir from a group of untrained individuals to a cohesive ensemble performing at the Albert Hall, London. With the cameras gone and the series put to bed, the Oxford Philomusica and its Chorus Master Andrew Stewart have stepped in and devised a schedule of rehearsals, masterclasses and workshops to ensure the continued survival of the choir. These will culminate with a performance of Bernstein's West Side Story Suites at the Sheldonian Theatre on 24th February 2007 with the Oxford Philomusica. This initiative is being undertaken in association with Arts Council England, Five Art Cities and Oxford Contemporary Music. The orchestra hopes that the project will ensure the future of the choir.

the Singing Estate

Blenheim Palace Return



Blenheim Palace

The Oxford Philomusica is delighted to announce that it will once again be presenting the Sir Winston Churchill Memorial Concert in the magnificent Long Library of Blenheim Palace to be held on 28th April 2007.

Friends Evening

On Friday 20th October, the Oxford Philomusica will host a friends evening including a two course dinner with wine and coffee. Entertainment will be provided in the form of a musical interlude with Tom Martin – Principal Double Bass of the Oxford Philomusica. This evening, exclusively for friends of the orchestra will provide an opportunity for friends to get to know each other over a meal and a drink, and to listen to, and learn a little about the Double Bass. For more information contact the Oxford Philomusica Office.

MY LIFE a week with: Lesley Wynne



Monday – A much needed lie-in after a late return from a gig the night before is abruptly ended by the postman ringing the doorbell at 7am. Spend the morning doing my paperwork (how does it build up so quickly?) before leaving to rehearse for 'Simon Boccanegra' a Verdi Opera I'm performing next month.

Tuesday – Go to the OP office and spend a few minutes catching up on the news with Anthi and Larisa before starting work. I'm in the fortunate position of being able to choose the hours I work for the OP, as long as I get everything done, otherwise it would be impossible to combine my OP job with being a free-lance Viola player. Spend time ordering music for future concerts and organising the menu for a fund-raising event. (Sometimes I wonder why I spent 5 years at Music College!)

Wednesday – Spend most of the day at home but am able to receive and respond to OP emails thanks to the wonders of modern technology. Am trying to book 5 Horn players for one of the autumn concerts but unfortunately all Horn players seem to be working that day. Leave home at 5pm to play for a group of eye surgeons with my String Quartet at The Ritz.

Thursday – Another day at the OP office. Takes several hours to do costings for possible concert programmes. All our concerts have to be costed as, like all UK orchestras, we are on a tight budget. Marios had only originally employed me on a casual basis as a Viola player for two OP concerts in Cyprus on recommendation. On returning to the UK I was pleasantly surprised to receive a phone call asking me if I would fix the orchestra. Six years later I'm still doing the job as well as performing with the orchestra.

Friday – No luck with finding Horn players. The OP has regular players who commit to as many of our concerts as possible and I also have lists of 'deputies' from all the OP Principal players for the busy days. I like to book all the OP concerts early but still have emergencies (like the Piccolo player being carted off to hospital with a ruptured appendix on the morning of a concert) that are impossible to predict. In the evening I deputise in Phantom of the Opera in the West End. The brass section play particularly loudly and I'm aware of my ears ringing on the way home. Occupational hazard!

Weekend – Passes in a blur of Quartet dates and opera rehearsals. Musicians don't get weekends off! Make a few more calls but still don't have a complete Horn section. Maybe next week....