

OP Trust and Advisory Council: New Appointments

In recent weeks the Orchestra's Trust and Advisory Council have benefited from new appointments and we are delighted to welcome **John Baker** and **Keith Clark** as new members of the Oxford Philomusica Trust, and **Sir Jeremy Greenstock** to the Advisory Council.

John Baker combines a spectacularly successful career in the global energy field with a profound commitment to music. A former Chairman of **English National Opera**, he is presently Chairman of both **Maersk** and **CDC Globeleq** while also retaining the Chairmanship of the **Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music**

Since graduating from Oxford **Keith Clark** has enjoyed a high-flying career in corporate law, including a spell as **Chairman of Clifford Chance**, the pioneering multijurisdictional law firm. He is currently **Managing Director and International General Counsel** of the global financial services firm, **Morgan Stanley**, with special interests and responsibilities in Europe and Asia. Outside the law, his interests include an enthusiasm for modern art and jazz.

Sir Jeremy Greenstock served in the British Diplomatic Service under successive administrations from 1969 to 2004, becoming **Political Director of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office** from 1996-1998. He subsequently became first, Britain's **Permanent Representative at the United Nations** and then the UK's **Special Representative for Iraq**. Sir Jeremy is currently Director of the **Ditchley Foundation**, one of the world's leading political, economic and social think-tanks, based at Eynsham.

We are saddened to record the death of former Advisory Council member, **Sir Gareth Roberts**. Sir Gareth was not only a distinguished and visionary physicist but also a gifted university administrator whose governmental advisory work has had a crucially beneficial impact on university funding. We will greatly miss his guidance and support.

PLAYER PROFILE *Tristan Fry* *Timpanist*

'The double-double-double beat of the thund'ring drum' wrote Sir John Dryden in one of his more inspired moments of musical imagery for Handel's Ode on St. Cecilia's Day. Could the celebrated poet and librettist have had a prophetic vision of the Philomusica's flamboyant timpanist hard at work in the sometimes near alarming intimacy of the Sheldonian?

If Tristan Fry brings a welcome sense of theatre to even the most seemingly prosaic tonic and dominant drumming of the classical repertoire the reason can soon be found from even the most cursory glance at the life of this remarkable musician.

Born into a musical family, his father being a professional percussionist and his mother a pianist, Tristan took up both instruments as a boy and continued to study them when he entered the Royal Academy of Music. He joined the London Symphony Orchestra in 1963, encountering a wide repertoire including not only the usual classical repertoire, but also having the opportunity to work with such artists from the popular and jazz end of the music spectrum as Danny Kaye, Duke Ellington and The Beatles. For a time session work dominated his diary which became littered with such names as John Dankworth, Frank Sinatra, Elton John and David Essex. Tristan's crossover tendencies peaked in the late 70's

when he joined John Williams' legendary progressive rock group Sky. During his time with Sky persistent rumours of illicit trumpet-playing circulated but no formal charges were ever brought!

Even at his busiest times with Sky Tristan never felt any conflict in principle with his classical music interests, being happy to work with the Academy of St. Martin in the Fields one day and on the soundtrack of the latest James Bond film the next. An ecstatic review of Stravinsky's notoriously difficult wedding cantata Les Noces observed that 'the particular glory of this recording is the propulsive and precisely coloured playing of the Tristan Fry Percussion Ensemble.'

He also found time to fit in work for Children's Television. In 'Countdown To The Festival' he travelled the British Isles, talking to young Scottish fiddlers, a Manchester steel band, Irish pipers, a Welsh choir and a brass band from Southampton, recalling as he says 'that strong compulsion as a young musician to gain stimulating musical experiences'.

Tristan Fry is a consummate artist who lends the Oxford Philomusica an exceptional star quality which we can only acknowledge with admiration, affection and gratitude.

Keynotes

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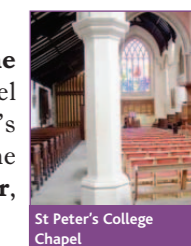
Readers will surely excuse this hint of hyperbole in the description of the Season's remaining Oxford concerts when they are reminded of the programmes. How many provincial – or even metropolitan orchestras can offer such a sequence of richly varied masterworks?



Craig Ogden

Our first post-Easter concert, on 27th April, features two colourful orchestral showpieces recounting tales of dicing- with-death sang-froid – the steady hand of **William Tell** and the inexhaustible inventiveness of the beguiling **Sheherazade**. In Rimsky-Korsakov's electrifying score every member of the Oxford Philomusica will have the chance to shine, but none more so than our distinguished leader, **John Georgiadis** – charged with the task of characterizing the sultry temptress herself. Between these episodes of high adventure we are invited to take a relatively relaxing stroll around the gardens of Aranjuez as depicted in Rodrigo's famous **Guitar Concerto** in which the soloist will be one of the most gifted guitarist of the younger generation, **Craig Ogden**.

Saturday 12th May brings the second of the season's two major oratorios, **The Creation**. Haydn's wonderful setting of a text originally intended for Handel and, indeed, inspired by Haydn's English encounters with the older master's works, was an instant and enduring success. For this performance the Orchestra will be joined by three first rate soloists and **New College Choir**, conducted by its distinguished director, **Edward Higginbottom**.



St Peter's College Chapel



New College Choir

Later in the month comes a reminder of the Oxford Philomusica's uniquely close association with Oxford University when we visit St. Peter's College Chapel on 26th May to present Haydn in his symphonic mode. Contrasting symphonies – '**La Passione**' from the so-called *Sturm und Drang* years and the '**Surprise**' from the first astonishing London season of 1791 – frame two equally surprising concertos. The Orchestra's virtuoso principal Double Bass, **Thomas Martin**, takes a starring role in the **Gran Duo Concertante for Violin and**

Double Bass by the 'Paganini of the double bass', Bottesini, and gives the world premiere of Bruno Bower's **Double Bass Concerto**.

Concert performances of opera are now annual features in the Oxford Philomusica's calendar and Friday 15th June sees our presentation of Beethoven's only venture in the medium. **Fidelio** is an uplifting drama of love and heroism. It is also a compact work in every sense, with a running time of just two hours, a small cast, and economical staging. Its emotional intensity makes it exceptionally well-suited to a concert performance within the concentrating ambience of the Sheldonian, which is, after all, a theatre, and few events this year are calculated to impart a greater feel-good factor.

Don't miss these memorable occasions.

2007 Piano Festival



Participants at the 2006 Piano Festival

Between 22nd and 29th July we will be assembling some of the world's most sought-after teachers and performers to once again, in the words of the New York Times, 'turn piano lessons into performance art'.

The recital programme opens on 23rd July with **Joanna MacGregor's** interpretation of Messiaen's monumental *Vingt regards sur l'enfant Jésus*, appropriately at Christ Church Cathedral. On Tuesday 24th, at the Jacqueline du Pré Music Building, **Peter Cropper, Moray Welsh** and **Martin Roscoe**, play piano trios by Haydn, Beethoven and Schumann. **Ian Fountain** performs Sibelius' rarely heard *Sonatina in E*, and sonatas by Schubert and Brahms on 25th July at Holywell Music Room where, next day, Schumann's famous *Fantasia* and Chopin's massive *B minor Sonata* are the highlights of veteran virtuoso **Abbey Simon's** daunting recital. On Friday 27th July, at the Sheldonian Theatre, **Michael Roll** joins the Oxford Philomusica to perform Beethoven's *Third Piano Concerto*, and, on Friday 28th, the student participants present their own recital at the Jacqueline du Pré Music Building.

A parallel programme of masterclasses, which also provide an exceptional opportunity for music lovers to observe great teachers at work, will be given by a formidable team of tutors, including **Niel Immelman, Veda Zuponic, Kathryn Stott, Claude Frank, Renna Kellaway**, and **Vanessa Lataarche**. **Bryce Morrison** takes a somewhat different slant on the art of piano playing as he addresses *A Question of Music Criticism*, while **Professor Malcolm Troup's** brings new insight into Villa-Lobos' 'transcendental work' *Rudepoema*.

We hope that as many as possible of our Friends will attend the 2007 Oxford Philomusica International Piano Festival which has been made possible with the renewed sponsorship of Blackwell.



Fund-raising Fireworks al Fresco

Although the 2007 indoor season comes to a triumphant conclusion with *Fidelio* on 15th June, this year we are able to offer an outdoor bonus concert. Thanks to the generosity of OP Advisory Council member Michael Peagram, the Orchestra is holding a fund-raising evening at Bletchingdon Park on Friday 29th June. Dr. Peagram's magnificent Palladian residence was designed by James Lewis in 1782 for Arthur Annesley, the Earl of Anglesey. Its eighteenth century elegance provides the perfect and near-contemporary back drop for what promises to be a particularly splendid performance of Handel's celebrated **Music for the Royal Fireworks**, complete with synchronized firework display.

This unforgettable evening of great music, fine food and wine, and spectacular fireworks begins with a champagne reception. This will precede a short concert, appropriately featuring English baroque music by Henry Purcell and more Handel – selections from **The Water Music** – to be followed by a buffet dinner, and, finally the Fireworks Music. Patrons will be pleased to know that, in the highly unlikely event of inclement weather (this is, after all, the high point of the English summer!), marquee seating for all will be available.



Bletchingdon Park

We hope that you will support this joyous occasion, which is a fund-raising event in aid of the Oxford Philomusica Trust. Numbers are strictly limited to 200 guests and tickets are available by telephone on 0870 60 60 804 or by email from events@oxfordphil.com. In keeping with the festive nature of the event, Black Tie is requested.

Blackbird Leys Choir's Sheldonian Debut



The Blackbird Leys Choir with Oxford Philomusica in Sheldonian Theatre

Readers may recall *The Singing Estate*, the TV 'docudrama' promoted by Fivearts Cities, an Arts Council and Channel 5 collaboration, chronicling the journey of a 'no-previous-experience-needed' choir from Blackbird Leys estate to the Royal Albert Hall. Now, as part of its commitment to the wider Oxford community, the Oxford Philomusica has undertaken an on-going mentoring role for the group, to be known as the Blackbird Leys Choir.

The first major collaboration between Choir and Orchestra took place on 24th February at the Sheldonian. The programme, including excerpts from *West Side Story* and the world premiere of Orlando Gough's *Blackbird* was uncompromisingly demanding. However, benefitting from the expert preparation of OP Choirmaster, Andrew Stewart, the Choir made light work of the rhythmic complexities and deceptive harmonies of the Bernstein and met the challenges of OG's with equal aplomb.

The enthusiasm of the capacity audience was reflected by Arts Council Chairman, Sir Christopher Frayling, who felt moved to write to Marios Papadopoulos thanking him for 'an extraordinary event, a very special achievement, a memorable concert'.

Fiddling for Friends

The next Friends Evening takes place on Friday 4th May at The Haldane Room, Wolfson College. Following the popular format of previous occasions the evening will comprise drinks on arrival at 7.30, a musical interlude at 8pm, and a two course dinner with wine and coffee at 9pm.



John Georgiadis

The musical entertainment will be provided by the Orchestra's illustrious leader, **John Georgiadis**, who will play Bach's **Second Partita in D minor for Solo Violin** (including the famous Chaconne), as well as talking about his life as an international violinist and conductor.

We are glad to say that this event is now sold out. In order to avoid future disappointment readers are urged to contact our Friends Co-ordinator, Elaine Schurch on 01844 208739 or at elaine@eschurch.freeserve.co.uk who will be pleased to provide the latest information about Friends' activities.

Serenading the Great and Good

Attendance at the monthly Ditchley Park Conferences is by invitation only and the number of luminaries who meet to discuss such weighty issues of world-wide concern as *The future of the United Nations, Space: enlarging the benefits for Earth and Is Europe investing enough in Latin America?* is limited to forty. So, at least in this context, the phrase 'a small but select audience', much beloved by concert reviewers in search of a euphemism for 'dismal attendance', is for once an accurate and apposite description of the listeners at the three chamber music concerts which the Philomusica will be presenting at Ditchley this year.



Sir Jeremy Greenstock

In his former capacity as the UK's Ambassador to the United Nations, Ditchleys' Director and recently appointed OP Advisory Council Member Sir Jeremy Greenstock, has first hand experience of the stresses and strains endured by those engaged in the arduous process of defusing potentially explosive global tensions. We are therefore delighted – and not a little flattered – that Sir Jeremy has recruited the Soloists of the Oxford Philomusica – a chamber ensemble of Principal OP players – to provide.

Who knows where it will all lead? Perhaps if the benefits are appreciated enough we too will be posted to the UN!

A week with David Haenlein Trustee/Director



Monday – First thing is finalise the week's schedule. Would like to have one day a week at the London office and two at the Oxford office but with so many off-site meetings now it's not possible – have to fit in schools, hospitals, press, local Marketing Network and Music Education Groups, professional advisers, as well as all the various OP group and musicians meetings...not to mention the velvet-gloved 'suggestions' of our Music Director! Afternoon meet with the County Music Service to develop our new County Council collaboration – fortunately we have Beth Reed, one of our musicians to help with this.

Tuesday – Today we have an Oxford Music Education group meeting at St Hilda's – my turn to chair which is a relief from writing minutes. While at the College, meet with the JdP people to plan for our OP Dementia group project scheduled for next Spring. After that, liaise with our musicians and the Clive Project. Then all we need is money! I do have some ideas of where we might get funding for this.

Wednesday – First meeting of the new Blackbird Leys Choir committee – We'll have to take a lead at first but we'll devolve as much of the non-artistic management to the choir members of the committee as possible. Which reminds me – must check venue, accompanist and conductor are booked for tomorrow's rehearsal – and must chase down scores for the Child of Our Time we're doing for the Festival Hall reopening in June. The BBL website needs updating with last month's Christ Church Cathedral anti-slavery concert. Remember to ring our friend Chris Gray at the Oxford Times to make sure he has this Friday's Sheldonian concert covered.

Thursday – Need to make sure we've finalised everything for our annual statutory returns – we usually do everything really early but this year we changed our accountants and this has delayed things. Fortunately we still have good time to get all our audited reports, Companies House and Charity Commission returns in before the June deadline. This afternoon have interviews with applicants who are interested in working part-time in our Templeton office. Must also remember to check that all notifications have been circulated for the pending Trustee, Advisory Council, and Finance and General Purposes Committee meetings – have I circulated all those riveting minutes?

Friday – Concert day today – looks like a pretty full house. In the morning I'm at Pegasus School, Blackbird Leys to agree the next phase of our work there – we'll be doing a 'Singing Week' in July. Then the Nuffield Orthopaedic – Kate Comberti and Tony Robb ran a wonderful pilot project there and they want us to come back and do a long-term project. In the afternoon I have a meeting at the Mulberry Bush School in Standlake – they're very keen to involve us in the amazing work they do there for emotionally disturbed children. Last thing, contact Arts Council to explore support for a touring programme, perhaps with BBL Choir.