

## Trustee and Advisory Council News

We are delighted to report the knighthood, recently conferred on John Baker, who became an Oxford Philomusica Trustee earlier this year. Sir John has combined a highly successful commercial career – including the Chairmanships of National Power, The Maersk Company and Globeleq – with a lifelong appreciation and knowledge of music and musical institutions, as demonstrated by his former Chairmanship of English National Opera and his Chairmanship of the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music. Predictably, this exceptional background is already proving invaluable to the development of the Orchestra.

We welcome to the OP Advisory Council Oliver Zipse. Mr. Zipse's sixteen year career with BMW took a significant step at the beginning of the year when he was appointed Managing Director of the BMW Mini plant at Cowley. As *Keynotes* readers will be aware, the Orchestra has already established links with BMW, presenting A Night at the Movies at the plant last February in aid of the Oxford Children's Hospital Campaign, and Mr. Zipse's appointment is sure to strengthen those links. We look forward to our 2008 St. Valentine's concert at the BMW Group Plant Oxford.

## Heartstrings and Wedding Bells

Orchestral romances may not be new but they're always newsworthy! At the risk of revealing tabloid tendencies, *Keynotes* is pleased to announce in this 'exclusive' that Cupid's bow has been busy amongst the OP's string section. Violinists Lorna Geller, who studied at Oxford and took part in the Orchestra's Apprenticeship Scheme with such distinction that she is now a regular player, and Declan Daly met on the Philomusica's trip to Cyprus in 2005. They are now engaged and are planning their wedding for next year.

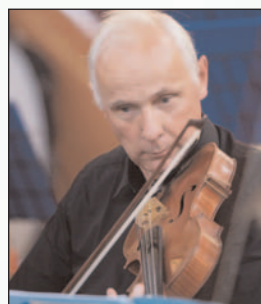
## Friends Evening

The next in our regular series of Friends Evenings takes place on Friday 2nd November at The Haldane Room, Wolfson College. This year's event will begin a little earlier, with drinks served on arrival at 7pm. The recital will begin at 7.45pm and dinner will be served at 8.45pm. We hope that Friends will find these adjustments congenial. The musical entertainment will be provided by the Orchestra's Principal Clarinet, David Rix.

Tickets at £30 are available on 01844 208739 or at elaine@eschurch.freeserve.co.uk from the Friends Co-ordinator, Elaine Schurch, who will be pleased to provide further information about this forthcoming event in particular and the activities of the Friends in general.

## PLAYER PROFILE

### Gunnar Westrup Viola



Gunnar Westrup has been a stalwart member of the Philomusica's viola section since 2000 when a surprise phone call from Marios Papadopoulos recruited him to the Orchestra for an experimental visit to The Anvil in Basingstoke. This initial approach may have been prompted by the relative proximity of Basingstoke to Poole, where Gunnar has made his home since 1968.

Gunnar's road to Poole stretches back to his birth place in Newcastle upon Tyne, and was subsequently to wend its way steadily southwards as his father, the distinguished musical academic, Sir Jack Westrup, took up professorial appointments successively in Birmingham and Oxford. This last position has an obvious personal significance for Gunnar, making regular work in his old home town with the first orchestra to hold a residency at his father's old University a special source of satisfaction and pleasure.

Gunnar's own musical education did not take place in the donish shadows of Oxford but in far away Kent, first at the

Cathedral Choir School and then King's School, Canterbury. Three years of study at the Royal College of Music with Frederic Grinke led to a spell in the Bristol based BBC Training Orchestra before becoming a founder-member of the Bournemouth Sinfonietta in 1968. The pioneering spirit of this brave venture, its sense of collective musical purpose amongst like-minded friends and colleagues, together with the undeniable attractions of life on the Dorset coast, persuaded Gunnar to remain with the Sinfonietta until its lamented disbandment in 1999. These were exciting times, bringing a variety of work – whether recording neglected British music with Norma del Mar, making South Bank appearances with soloists of the calibre of Emil Gilels, touring with Glyndebourne, or ground-breaking visits to picturesque West Country towns and villages – which more than compensated for any loss of Metropolitan glamour.

Now acclimatised to the world of the free-lance player – with all its uncertainties and fragmentations – Gunnar divides his time between orchestral work and the Intermezzo Quartet. His regular presence in the Philomusica, coming from the background of an unbroken thirty-year immersion in a single coherent musical enterprise, adds a valuable dimension of experience which is in ever-diminishing supply.

## Keynotes

The Newsletter of

## Oxford Philomusica

Oxford's Professional Symphony Orchestra  
in Residence at the University of Oxford



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## Philomusica wins Business Award



David Haenlein, Director of Oxford Philomusica, and Derek Holmes, Editor of The Oxford Times

On the same evening that the Oxford Philomusica was enjoying a spectacular triumph at the Sheldonian with Fidelio, across the city in Sandford on Thames the Orchestra was enjoying another very different but equally important success.

OP Trustee and Director David Haenlein writes: 'Earlier this year, the Oxford Philomusica entered the Oxfordshire Business Awards 2007 programme and won the Charity and Community Award category, sponsored by the Oxford Times.'

The award recognises the work of the OP as a whole and as a community resource. This includes not only being a leading professional symphony orchestra, but also the place the OP has built in our local community, covering the Residency programme at the University of Oxford, the International Piano Festival, the work we do in schools, hospitals and community centres, the new collaborative programme we are establishing with the County Council and the County Music Service, our work with the Blackbird Leys Choir, and lastly the pioneering collaborations we are involved in with other principal professional music organisations in Oxford such as the Music Education Group and the Oxford Music Network.

Our thanks go to everyone involved in helping us to achieve this recognition, and in particular to Mrs Sheila Oliver whose generous sponsorship of our community work enables us to carry out so much of this valuable work.'

## New Season – An Awfully Big Adventure?

Some eyebrows were raised when it was decided to introduce the 2007/08 Season as 'our most adventurous and daring to date'. But, how many orchestras would be adventurous enough to take their audiences on trip from Blackbird Leys to Broadway via Bruckner with a daring diversion around The Planets thrown in for good measure?

We begin with a salute to Elgar in his 150th Anniversary year – not the Elgar still too often shamelessly and inaccurately portrayed as a crusty musical imperialist – but the sophisticated and sensitive musician hailed by the famous German conductor, Hans Richter, as 'the greatest modern composer'. Our concert on October 18th demonstrates just why Richter could make this astonishing pronouncement. The whole range of Elgar's musical genius is on display, beginning with his Cockaigne Overture, a vivid depiction of turn-of-the-century London – both its pageantry and pathos. At the centre of the concert is the Cello Concerto, perhaps Elgar's best-loved work, one with adoptive local associations, and quite unapologetic in its late romanticism. The soloist will be one of the Concerto's leading contemporary interpreters, Colin Carr. The concert ends with the finely crafted Enigma Variations, the work with which Elgar persuaded not only Hans Richter but also the whole of the Western musical world that England was no longer 'the land without music'.

By one of those accidents of programming design, our next concert, on 17th November, is a celebration of that very Germanic hegemony which Elgar so convincingly challenged. Schubert's 'Unfinished' Symphony and Bruckner's Fourth 'Romantic' Symphony are separated by some fifty years, a statistical indication of the unbroken dominance of Austro-German music and musicians in general and the importance of the city of Vienna in particular, which can be traced back a further fifty years to the time of Mozart and Haydn. The Philomusica's distinguished leader, John Georgiadis, is a long-time committed exponent of this quintessentially romantic repertoire, and, for this concert, he will be forsaking his bow for the baton to lead the Orchestra through what promises to be an epic musical journey.

A totally different experience is promised on 14th December. With the approach of Christmas we attempt to recapture with the aid of a sequence of magically theatrical ballet scores something of the innocent excitement of childhood. Our Night at the Ballet is, in truth, as much A Matinee at the Pantomime, as a colourful cavalcade of characters from fantasy and fairy-tale – Mother Goose, Cinderella and The Sleeping Beauty are brought to life by Ravel, Prokofiev and Tchaikovsky.

Before that, we will have had an all too rare opportunity to be reminded of the pianistic provenance of the Oxford Philomusica's Music Director, Marios Papadopoulos. His solo recital at the Sheldonian on 8th December balances two contrasting sonatas by Beethoven with Liszt's only – but monumental – essay in the medium.

The New Year will bring fresh delights – a Symphonic Schubertiade, Tchaikovsky's 'Pathétique', The Planets, Don Giovanni, and much more. In the meantime make sure not to miss any of the memorable musical occasions scheduled for the Autumn!



Participants at the 2006 Piano Festival

## 2007 Piano Festival

Now in its ninth year, the Oxford Philomusica International Piano Festival and Summer Academy is firmly established as a highlight of the international musical calendar. This year's roster of performing artists and tutors included such distinguished figures as Joanna MacGregor, Ian Fountain, Abbey Simon, the Cropper/Welsh/Roscoe Piano Trio and Michael Roll.

The opening recital – Joanna MacGregor's reading of Messiaen's *Vingt Regards sur L'enfant Jésus* – took place on a Monday evening in a flood-threatened Oxford, conferring on Christ Church Cathedral something of the watery Venetian atmosphere of St. Mark's. Undeterred by these inauspicious circumstances, a large audience sat, transfixed, for just over two hours, before giving Ms. MacGregor, fittingly, a standing ovation. A fascinating insight into the early evolution of the Piano Trio, from Haydn through Beethoven to Schumann, was offered by the combined talents of Martin Roscoe, Peter Cropper and Moray Welsh in their Jacqueline du Pré Music Building recital, which also provided a welcome opportunity to hear the piano in a chamber ensemble context. Ian Fountain's mid-week recital at the Holywell Music Room included not only authoritative readings of Schubert and Brahms but also a rare opportunity to hear Sibelius' inexplicably neglected Sonatina in E major. The loss (through injury) of veteran virtuoso Abbey Simon's eagerly anticipated tour de force of Schumann and Chopin was offset by the appearance at little more than twenty-four hour's notice of Anthony Hewitt who delighted his Holywell Music Room audience with a sparkling recital devoted to Preludes by Bach, Debussy and Chopin.

The Festival's traditional Friday night concerto slot at the Sheldonian Theatre was devoted this year to Beethoven's great, ground-breaking Third Piano Concerto, authoritatively performed by Michael Roll, with the Oxford Philomusica, conducted by Marios Papadopoulos. As the Oxford Times observed, 'this was a fine a display of technical assurance and musical eloquence as you could hope to find'. The Ninth International Piano Festival was presented with the generous sponsorship of Blackwell and the Tenth Festival will take place in early August 2008.

## Fireworks Fiesta



Bletchington Park

Back in the Spring we were confidently predicting a fine evening for the Orchestra's Fund-raising Fireworks Concert on 29th June. With the security of hindsight we can now claim that our certainty in our choice of date never wavered – notwithstanding the onslaught of one of the most dismal summers in living memory. Indeed, the menace of the weather persisted up to the very afternoon of the concert, prompting an executive decision to relocate both artists and audience under canvas. In the event, the rain passed off, and any lingering reminders did little to dampen the enthusiasm of the audience who crowded into the marquee to hear the Orchestra's performance of festive baroque music by Handel and Purcell, before adjourning for a splendid buffet supper interval. The second half opened with a guest appearance by the soprano Elena Ferrari, whose impassioned delivery of two arias from Handel's

operas *Rinaldo* and *Alcina*, threatened to steal the show. However, nothing could ultimately reduce the impact of Handel's Music for the Royal Fireworks, conducted by Marios Papadopoulos in miraculous synchronization with a truly awe-inspiring aerial firework display. The setting for this festive occasion was the magnificent Palladian house and beautiful grounds of the Bletchington Park Estate, home of OP Advisory Council Member Michael Peagram. We are enormously grateful to Dr. Peagram for his generous sponsorship of this event.



## 'Something lies beyond the scene'

Even close followers of the Orchestra's high profile public concert seasons may be unaware of a whole genre of Philomusica activity taking place off the public stage of the Sheldonian. One such event occurred on 6th July this year in the slightly improbable setting of Weston, a bijou village nestling in the border country between Oxfordshire and Northamptonshire, when a private, but none-the-less glittering, performance of *Façade* was given to a select audience, drawn largely from the most senior figures in the Oxford University Press.



Weston Hall

The concert was given in the intimate setting of Weston's tiny Baptist Chapel. Six principal players from the Philomusica, directed by Marios Papadopoulos, made light work of the virtuosic demands of Sir William Walton's brilliant and brittle score, while the notoriously elusive poems of Edith Sitwell were delivered with disbelief-suspending conviction by Pippa Longworth and William Sitwell. William, as might be expected of Dame Edith's great nephew, brought a special insight into the strange doings of Mariner Man, Black Mrs Behemoth and Sir Beelzebub – to mention but three of the eccentric cast of characters depicted.

The evening was rounded off by a supper in the appropriate setting of Weston Hall – a former country seat of the Sitwells, where Walton stayed on occasion and began to compose *Belshazzar's Feast*. The current occupier – and generous hostess for the evening – Susanna Sitwell, successfully prevailed upon the Orchestra's seemingly tireless Music Director to provide the guests with a musical liqueur in the shape of three exquisitely played pieces of Chopin.

## Christ Church



The Great Hall, Christ Church

Those readers who attended last year's special fundraising occasion at Christ Church will be delighted to know that we are again offering guests the opportunity to enjoy a private concert by the Orchestra and to dine in the splendour of The Great Hall at Christ Church. We thank Sir Victor and Lady Blank for their generous sponsorship of this special event.

This year's event takes place on Saturday 15th December and will be hosted by the Chancellor of the University of Oxford, and Honorary President of Oxford Philomusica, Lord Patten of Barnes CH. The evening begins at 7pm with a champagne reception followed by a concert at 7.30pm featuring excerpts from Handel's 'Messiah'. A seated three course dinner with fine wines will be served at 8.45pm.

Tickets for this unique occasion are £120. All funds raised will support the work of the Oxford Philomusica. If you would like to support this event please call Oxford Philomusica on 0870 60 60 804 or e mail events@oxfordphil.com for further details.

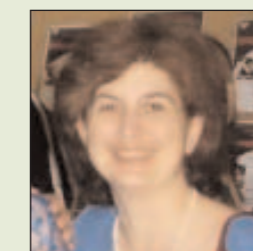
## A Spectacular Fidelio

'Spectacular indeed'. So concluded the Oxford Times' review of last June's concert performance of Beethoven's only opera, *Fidelio*. Jeanine Alton's review is particularly gratifying – as much for its perception as its unequivocal enthusiasm. In venturing into the field of opera-in-concert in a city which is not particularly ill-served by fully staged productions from nationally recognised companies, the Philomusica had staked much on the intrinsic strength of the music – and its interpretation – to overcome the absence of the conventional theatrical trappings. The gamble paid off as Ms Alton was kind enough to observe: 'Spectacular was the word, despite the total lack of aids to dramatic effect...'



For many of the large and enthusiastic audience, amongst whose number was the Chairman of the Royal Opera, the Sheldonian had clearly become a theatre of the mind, an effect made possible partly by the closely focussed – even claustrophobic – nature of the opera itself, and partly by the physical intimacy of the Sheldonian which permits the audience a closer empathy and deeper emotional involvement with the characters than in a more conventional operatic setting. Of course, these characteristics increase the artistic responsibilities to be born by the artists, but, in this instance, no one could deny that these were carried off by the cast, chorus, orchestra and conductor. While it is normally invidious to single out an individual performance, in this case it would be a dereliction of duty to not record that the greatest plaudits went deservedly to Lisa Houben whose charismatic portrayal of the hero(ine) Leonora, will be long remembered. This evening of unalloyed triumph, which was made possible by the generous sponsorship of Sir Robert and Lady Horton, bodes well for our forthcoming presentation of Mozart's *Don Giovanni* next March.

## A week with Anthi Papadopoulos Director



**Monday** – Early start with the school run. In the office by 9am. Start with sorting out mail, emails received during the weekend, sorting out invoices, sending cheques to the bank and paying bills. Final proofreading for Friday's concert programme (Larisa happy now), and give the caterer the final number of guests for Friday's post concert reception. Organise publicity material for next month's Sheldonian concert.

**Tuesday** – Final meeting to sort out all the details for next week's soirée. Gone through the RSVP's twice so far. Have we forgotten anyone?????

Check dates for forthcoming brochure with venues and artists. All is well. David wants to send the agenda out for our forthcoming board meeting. Any items to include?

**Wednesday** – Today the Piano Festival needs attention. Decide on local advertising, book the space and agree the prices. Reply to participants (some want to change their repertoire for the classes- for the last time they promise!!!!) and send information to observers. In one afternoon I have been in touch by email with people in 4 continents attending our Festival.

**Thursday** – Recent donations received by our Trust qualify for Gift Aid. Prepare application. Touching base with caterers, box office and stage assistants for tomorrow's Sheldonian concert. Also I'd better check that our soloist for tomorrow evening's concert has arrived safely at the hotel in Oxford. Early evening a Piano Festival advisory council meeting. Home by 8pm.

**Friday** – Sheldonian concert this evening. Long day ahead (but exciting!). Leave the office at noon and get to the Sheldonian by 2pm. That's when the team comes round to set up. Get in touch with the Playhouse to arrange the tickets for the evening, last minute arrangements with the Sheldonian, stewards and stage manager. Lesley our Concerts Manager is happy. No players had an emergency today and Marios pleased with the rehearsal. Great concert!! Warm response from the audience. Post concert reception ran smoothly. Back at home just after midnight. Tired and very proud!

**Saturday** – Some teaching on Saturday morning (not sure whether this is my day or evening job!!!), shopping and having some time with the family. Need to recharge the batteries.