

## Advisory Council – New Members

We are delighted to welcome to the Advisory Council two new members – Baroness Deech of Cumnor and Peggotty Graham.

**Baroness Deech** has enjoyed a spectacular career as both an academic lawyer and bioethicist. She served as Principal of St Anne's College, Oxford, from 1991 to 2004, during which time she also chaired the UK Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority, and took up a four year Governorship of the BBC. She was a Rhodes Trustee, and has just retired from the post of Independent Adjudicator for higher Education. She sits as a cross-bencher life peer.

**Peggotty Graham**'s career has been in distance and open learning, mainly at the Open University where she was Dean & Director of Studies and a member of the OU Council. Currently, Peggotty is a consultant in open learning, trustee of the Open College of the Arts, governor of Ludlow College and on the Board of Oxford Arts Weeks. She is a keen photographer, skier, windsurfer, supporter of theatre and music and a learner pianist.

## Friends Evening

Our next Friends' Evening will take place on Friday 16 May at the Haldene Room, Wolfson College, Linton Road, Oxford OX2 6UD and will follow the familiar format of drinks on arrival at 7pm, a musical interlude at 7.45pm, and dinner with wine and coffee at 8.45pm.

The musical interlude on this occasion is very special. As the Philomusica nears its 10th Anniversary it is entirely appropriate that the Founder and Music Director, Marios Papadopoulos, should take this opportunity to talk about his life and work with the Orchestra. Needless to say, his talk will be 'accompanied' from the keyboard!

Tickets for this rare treat 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.

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## New Appointment

To help us achieve the next, exciting stage of our development, we have pleasure in announcing the appointment of Vanessa Davis to the new, full-time position of Development Executive with the Oxford Philomusica.

The purpose of the role is to focus on major donors, trusts and foundations, building and developing our existing network of friends and benefactors. An additional priority will be to develop the significant potential in the corporate sector.

Vanessa has comprehensive revenue and capital fundraising experience, including statutory, trusts, corporate, and individual and major donor development, as well as an in-depth understanding of the voluntary sector and the framework within which it operates.

Vanessa, who lives in Bishops Cleeve, will be working from our London office, but will also work in liaison with the Oxford University Development office in Oxford. She takes up her new appointment on 19th May 2008.

## PLAYER PROFILE

### Tim Watts Oboe



The foundations for Tim Watts' musical career were laid in Liverpool where he sang as a treble in the **Metropolitan Cathedral Choir**. When his voice broke Tim turned to the oboe – which was readily available at school due to the discouraging degree of difficulty frequently encountered by beginners.

In Tim's case the difficulties were surmounted quickly enough for him to have become, by the age of 14, **Merseyside Instrumentalist of the Year** and Principal Oboe of the Youth Orchestra, where he encountered a timpanist-about-to-turn-conductor named Simon Rattle.

After a three year digression to Cambridge, where he studied History and met fellow Philomusica oboist Joe Sanders, Tim resumed his musical studies in earnest, first at the **Royal**

**College of Music** with Sarah Francis, winning the Joy Boughton Oboe Prize, and then at the **National Centre for Orchestral Studies**. His early professional career brought a variety of experience, including work with **Welsh National Opera** and **Opera 80**, where he was Principal Oboe for 10 years, and recitals for **Live Music Now** with his wife, Adrienne Black.

Tim Watts is a founder member of the Oxford Philomusica, having joined at the personal invitation of Marios Papadopoulos following a chance hearing of Tim's playing of a concerto at St. Martin in the Fields. Since 2001 Tim has held the Sub-Principal's position at the **Royal Philharmonic Orchestra**, with whom he tours and records extensively, often playing Principal and discharging such exotic duties as oboe d'amore in Bolero.

He lives in Caversham and balances the relentless demands of a busy freelance life with such relaxing pursuits as dog-walking, gardening and tennis – while keeping a fatherly eye on the careers of cellist daughter Naomi and trumpeter son Peter.

## Keynotes

The Newsletter of

## Oxford Philomusica

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



April 2008, Issue 8

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## The Creation



Recording of the Creation

Amongst all of Joseph Haydn's vast output, no single work has kept this sometimes surprisingly neglected great composer in the public eye more than **The Creation**. A lesser man might have balked at the prospect of depicting the intricate engineering of the Almighty, but Haydn, perhaps confident in his personal faith, brought to the task his inexhaustible, inimitable blend of confidence and competence. The result was an extraordinary work, blending elements of reverence, drama and even humour into a compelling whole. Not surprisingly, **The Creation** was an instant success and, taking its pivotal place in an Anglo German oratorio tradition from Handel, through Mendelssohn and Elgar to Walton and Tippett, has retained immense popularity to this day.

With these credentials, it is almost inevitable that **The Creation** should be the centrepiece of the Philomusica's planned celebrations of Haydn next year, the bicentenary of his death. In anticipation of that event, the Orchestra is investing heavily in **The Creation**, executing a plan which was conceived some two years ago. Readers may well remember our performance of **The Creation** with **New College Choir** last May. The success of that collaboration extended beyond the rapturous applause of the Sheldonian audience on the night into the hard light of many subsequent days of negotiating, planning and fund-raising. The outcome has fulfilled our highest expectations. Earlier this month, the Orchestra, soloists **Mhairi Lawson, Rufus Müller, David Stout** and **New College Choir**, under the direction of



Oxford Philomusica at Cadogan Hall

**Edward Higginbottom**, spent four days in the recording studio, producing a double CD of **The Creation** which will be released world-wide in October. Before then, the results of the recording sessions will be showcased at London's **Cadogan Hall** on **Thursday 22nd May** in a concert performance conducted by **Marios Papadopoulos**.

It is no exaggeration to observe that this prestigious project represents a watershed moment in the development of the Oxford Philomusica. The recording in collaboration with a world-class choir of Haydn's choral masterpiece in time for the global celebrations of the composer's bicentenary represents a fitting triumph to mark the Orchestra's first decade.

## Opening up the Great Western Front



Mayumi Fujikawa

There may be some amongst even the sophisticated and well-travelled readership of Keynotes who are not intimately familiar with the attractions of Swindon, possibly imagining a shabby industrial relic of the age of steam, still lamenting its long-gone glory days as the engineering hub of **God's Wonderful Railway**. Fortunately, enlightenment is at hand as the Philomusica goes boldly forth to a place where some readers may never have been but to which all are urged to go.

On Sunday, 27th April, the Orchestra makes its debut at the Wyvern Theatre, a newly refurbished arts and entertainment centre whose arguable lack of the Sheldonian's historical ambience is compensated for by its uniformly comfortable seating, its immediately accessible parking and its in-house refreshment facilities. The centrepiece of our first Swindon concert is Bruch's eternally popular **Violin Concerto**, flanked by **The Hebrides Overture** and Beethoven's **Seventh Symphony**. **Mayumi Fujikawa** is the soloist and **Marios Papadopoulos** the conductor.

This concert represents the first step in an important programme of regional development for the Orchestra and your support is unashamedly solicited. Tickets are still available from Wyvern Theatre box office **01793 524 481**, **www.wyverntheatre.org.uk**.

## Fundraising Concert and Dinner 18th July



The Oxford Philomusica's annual fund-raising event at the Houses of Parliament is now established as one of the highlights of the capital's season – both musical and social.

The event offers guests privileged access to no fewer than three historic chambers within the Palace of Westminster. A champagne reception in the Strangers' Dining Room precedes the concert in the Members' Dining Room, both in the House of Commons. The concert takes the form of a performance of Haydn's suitably grand 'Nelson' Mass by distinguished soloists and the Oxford Philomusica Chorus and Orchestra, conducted by Marios Papadopoulos.

Dinner in the splendid setting of the Peers' Dining Room in the House of Lords concludes this glittering evening which is graciously hosted by the Orchestra's long-time supporter, Lord Heseltine.

## Piano Festival Tenth Anniversary 30th July – 5th August



The Tenth Anniversary of the Oxford Philomusica's International Piano Festival and Summer Academy will be celebrated in some style.

This year's festival will be led by the President, **András Schiff**. The accolade 'legendary' is sometimes perhaps too frequently bestowed in these marketing-driven times, but, in this case, anything less would be inadequate. We can confidently expect a pianistic tour de force at the President's Bach and Beethoven recital in Christ Church Cathedral on 5th August but, the following day's masterclass promises to be every bit as illuminating when, as **Marios Papadopoulos** has predicted, 'we will witness an extraordinary mind at work'.

Other highlights from this year's Festival include **John Lill's** characteristically fiery recital of Beethoven, Chopin, Schumann and Prokofiev at the Town Hall on 31st July and a delightful programme of Piano Trios by Haydn, Beethoven and Mendelssohn at Holywell Music Room on 1st August.

This year sees two orchestral concerts. At the first of these, at the Town Hall on 2nd August, **Vladimir Viardo** joins the Oxford Philomusica in Rachmaninoff's formidable Third Piano Concerto. On 4th August, at Merton College Chapel, we are delighted to welcome back **Joanna MacGregor**, whose heroic performance of Messiaen's *Vingt Regards* at last year's Festival will be long remembered. On this occasion Ms MacGregor, who has been appropriately described as the 'most wide-ranging and innovative' of musicians, will direct the Philomusica from the keyboard in an intriguing programme which ranges from Bach through Piazzolla to James Macmillan.

We are enormously grateful to **Blackwell** for sponsoring once again this year's Festival.

Full details of the 2008 Piano Festival can be found at [www.oxfordphil.com](http://www.oxfordphil.com).

## Community

The Oxford Philomusica continues to play an active part in taking music out into the community, particularly to parts of the city and the county which do not normally have access to music.

As an example, we have just completed an extraordinary project in the Mulberry Bush School in Standlake with whom we have an ongoing association. This is a therapeutic school providing an integrated programme of residential care, psychotherapy and education for severely psychologically damaged children from all over the UK, aged 5 to 12.

Magdala Opera Trust, a unique community-based musical organisation providing opportunities for adults and young people to discover their creative ability through the power of opera, working with musicians from the Oxford Philomusica, led the project.

Pupils from two further schools, the Standlake C of E Primary School, and the Oxford Community School, a comprehensive school located in a socially deprived area of East Oxford, joined the pupils of the Mulberry Bush School in this remarkable collaboration.

All participants developed their singing skills through a series of workshops, and worked together to produce their own, amazing one and a half hour long version of 'The Magic Flute' just before Easter. Carers at the Mulberry Bush were amazed at how the attention span of their pupils had been developed as the project progressed.

Pupils attending the Art Room, a pioneering charity based in Oxford aimed at 7-15 year olds who are experiencing difficulties at school, made the scenery for the performance.

Youth Music and the Oxford Philomusica funded the project jointly, and our thanks for this in particular go to Sheila Oliver who continues to support the community and education activities of the Oxford Philomusica so generously.

Thanks also to OP musicians Beth Reed (violin), Lorraine Schulman (clarinet), Frank Nolan (flute), Paul Mayes (trumpet) and Tim Smart (trombone) for their contributions to this very challenging and rewarding venture.

## A Drama out of a Crisis

It cannot be a matter of mere chance that the former distinguished music critic of the Oxford Times, Hugh Vickers, was able to gather enough material to fill a book entitled *Great Operatic Disasters* but, so far, has come up with no sequels along the lines of *Chamber Music Catastrophes* or *Lost Lieder*. There is clearly something intrinsically perilous about assembling the complex components which go to make up an operatic production. So, the loss of the title role singer some 48 hours before our recent concert performance of **Don Giovanni** might have been accepted as one of those little glitches which come with the territory – had this misfortune not coincided with the loss of Leporello. At this point the Philomusica team might have felt that dark forces were emanating from the as yet unplayed score.

In the event, both roles were filled with aplomb by native Italian speaking Pietro Toscano and Luca Gallo. With the attentive guidance of Maestro Papadopoulos, who had thoughtfully committed the score to memory, they joined, seamlessly, an already strong cast which benefited from an outstanding Donna Elvira and Donna Anna, sung by Simona Bertini and Ann Liebeck respectively. This was a compelling performance, reminiscent in its dramatic intensity of last year's equally successful *Fidelio*, in which the crucial character-reinforcing role of the orchestra was fulfilled to justifiable acclaim by a tireless Philomusica.

## Six Weeks Last Spring

As any sizeable – but environmentally sensitive – fish will tell you, being the biggest in the pond brings both power and responsibility. As the dominant force in the musical life of Oxford, the Philomusica is the first resource for many of the region's music lovers and, although we naturally do not think of our loyal following as 'pond-life', we do recognise a responsibility to address a broad range of repertoire interests.

Just how seriously we take this responsibility was demonstrated in the first six weeks of the current Spring Season which saw a kaleidoscope of programming from chamber music to opera. Very few orchestras would dare to open a season with the '**Trout**' Quintet. But it is a tribute to the programming vision of the Music Director and the soloistic capability of the Orchestra's principal string players that, back in January, this polished performance of one of Schubert's most dangerously familiar chamber works seemed a perfectly natural prelude to his '**Great**' C major Symphony. With a similarly bold gesture, the Orchestra continued its policy of presenting concert performances of opera, playing to the innate theatrical qualities of the Sheldonian and exploiting the intimacy of the setting, to present in 'close-up' the intense music drama which is Mozart's **Don Giovanni**.

In between these signature events, the Philomusica found space to present the world premiere of Deborah Pritchard's '**Seven Pieces for Orchestra**' in tandem with some uncompromisingly symphonic Tchaikovsky, our **Fifth Annual Grand Viennese Ball**, and an extraordinary evening of musical cinema. This last took the form of a screening of Chaplin's legendary **Modern Times** at the BMW Group Plant Oxford with live orchestral accompaniment synchronised by that veteran conductor of countless 'Filmharmonics', Carl Davis, who reportedly revelled in the virtuosic responsiveness of his most newly discovered orchestra.

While we can readily share in Maestro Davis' admiration of the performance prowess of the Philomusica's players, we can also take some small satisfaction insofar as this period of free-ranging versatility has consistently attracted near capacity audiences, an encouraging result for this latest phase of the Orchestra's 'pond management programme'.

## A week with Elisabeth Reed Operations Co-ordinator



**Monday** – Morning spent researching music festivals on the internet and compiling a list of suitable ones to approach with our new Haydn season programme. The work of copying and pasting into a spreadsheet is slow, however, reading about the festivals is fascinating. Cambridge is celebrating 2009 with the twinned themes of music and evolution as 2009 is the 200th anniversary of Darwin's birth. Perhaps the University Museum's dodo could make an appearance in one of our family concerts. Meeting with John King to discuss over lunch the promotional letter to accompany the publicity we will send out later this month. We have to stand out from the crowd with a stunning, well worded letter.

**Tuesday** – I arrive early at Headington School for my teaching day and finish in the early afternoon. I rush home to check emails and deal with correspondence until my teaching starts later in the afternoon. This is also the month that I must get leaflets prepared for our Young Artists' Platform and Apprenticeship Scheme. Fortunately, Larisa has agreed to help me. I am relieved - she is brilliant at desktop publishing!

**Wednesday** – Today I travel to Standlake to participate in the Mulberry Bush project that is being directed by Magdala, a small opera company based in Nottingham. Oxford Philomusica is providing musicians to support the project. This is the third day and tomorrow's performance of the Magic Flute is the final day. The children have written the words to the music interludes to the opera, and we improvise and embellish the character of their songs as well as accompanying the singers.

**Thursday** – Much excitement in the gym as the children appear in their costumes. One little boy crawls under the stage and has to be coaxed out. This afternoon's performance is our first run-through! Never mind! I trust Tim and Michelle who have an amazing rapport with the children. As the lights are lowered I feel nearly as thrilled as the children. It's quite a journey we have taken together and who knows how it will go. They throw themselves into it with exuberance. It is hugely funny and we are all amazed by the singing from the professionals down to the smallest child.

**Friday** – I get a phone call from Isla Mundell-Perkins, the leader of the Alma String Quartet, the group chosen by audition to play in the Young Artists' Platform recital before the OP concert on the 9th of May. All is well – the quartet is receiving regular coaching and will soon be rehearsing the Mozart Clarinet Quintet. I take stands and equipment from the Mulberry Bush project back to the Sheldonian Theatre later in the day and meet the custodian to confirm arrangements for the Young Artists' Platform recital.

**Saturday** – Concert Day! No admin work today. After teaching in the morning, I am off to the Sheldonian for our rehearsal and concert with Raphael Wallfisch playing the Dvorak Cello Concerto and Holst's 'The Planets'.