



FACULTY OF
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From the **CHAIR OF THE BOARD**

You will find much in the pages that follow to celebrate, but without wanting to strike an opening sombre tone, I would also like to celebrate the lives and contributions to music of two alumni who died unexpectedly since the last issue of this magazine. In September 2022 the world lost **Paul Sartin (Magdalen College 1991)** who featured in the last issue. In April 2023 Magdalen hosted a memorial service ably organized by **Robin Barry (Magdalen College 1990)**, attended by most of the Magdalen music students from the first half of the 1990s, and featuring a wonderful programme of music sung by a choir of former clerks and musicians.

It was a truly moving way to honour Paul's own love of music. In late December 2022 we also received news of the sad death of **Dr Guy Newbury (Magdalen College 1982)**, composer and tutor in music at Pembroke College, who has been such a constant presence as a teacher of techniques tutorials to students at many different colleges, as well as the *de facto* accompanist-in-chief for years of performance exams in the Music Faculty. He, too, will be much missed.

In pondering these losses, I am struck by the way that personal engagement with music not only has a life-long effect on the individual, but also enables them to nurture and move

those around them, forging and sustaining important relationships. In the pages that follow you can read about new research into how oral transmission affected the evolution of music, the role of musical women in the salons of eighteenth-century Vienna, the patriotic project of the LSO during the First World War, the ongoing projects of the vocal collective SANSARA, as well as all the usual updates from alumni and current students. I hope you enjoy this issue and also gain ongoing nourishment from your love of music in the coming year.

Elizabeth Eva Leach
PROFESSOR OF MUSIC AND
CHAIR OF FACULTY BOARD

Photo © Benedict Johnson British Academy

EDITED BY
Georgia Davies

COVER IMAGE
*Oxford University
Orchestra, conducted by Joe
Davies (St Peters College
2012)*

DESIGNED BY
The Graphic Bomb

*The editor would like to thank
all the students, staff, and
alumni who have contributed
to this magazine,
as well as the University of
Oxford Alumni Office and
Development Office.*

FACULTY *news*



Professor Sarah Hill

Professor Sarah Hill has been named one of the new Fellows elected to the Learned Society of Wales, the national academy for arts and sciences. Their Fellowship brings together experts from across all academic fields and beyond. They use this collective knowledge to promote research, inspire learning, and provide independent policy advice.

From Silence, a 40-part motet composed by Dr Thomas Hyde (St Anne's College 1996), was performed at last summer's fortieth Lichfield Festival. The piece was conducted by Patrick Craig and featured the combined forces of the Carice Singers, Lichfield Cathedral Choir, and other professional musicians.

In April, *Silicon* composed for the BBC Philharmonic by Dr Robert Laidlow was broadcast on BBC Radio 3. The piece is a large-scale work for orchestra using artificial intelligence. Laidlow's work explores the role of advanced technology within the creative process and focusses on the



Dr Robert Laidlow

integration of technologies such as artificial intelligence, augmented reality, and video games into contemporary classical music.

In January a new organ was installed in Magdalen College Chapel. The occasion was celebrated with a special service of Evensong, at which former organ scholars joined donors and guests from Oxford and further afield. The service was sung jointly by the College Choir and the Consort of Voices, who performed music by MacMillan, Leighton, and Parry. The Bishop of Oxford blessed the instrument during the service.

Contrapunctus and the Choir of The Queen's College Oxford, directed by Professor Owen Rees joined forces earlier this month to present the opening evening concert at the AMUZ *Laus Polyphoniae Festival* in Antwerp. The Festival brings the best ensembles from Belgium and abroad to perform polyphonic music according to historical performance practice.

Professor Laura Tunbridge (The Queen's College 1993) was featured in a three-part series on BBC Radio 4 called 'In Time to the Music'. Each episode explored the ways certain songs - 'My Funny Valentine', 'Plaisir d'amour', and 'House of the Rising Sun' - managed to reach out over time, across genres, class, race, and continents.

Oxford University received a £250,000 grant from the Wolfson Foundation to support the redisplay of the Bate Collection of Musical Instruments within Oxford's new Stephen A. Schwarzman Centre for the Humanities. The Centre is currently under construction in the heart of the city and will officially open in 2025, bringing together world-leading teaching and research in the humanities with cutting-edge art, performance, and public engagement.



Professor Laura Tunbridge

CAN YOU CARRY THAT TUNE?

New research shows how oral transmission shapes the evolution of music



Dr Manuel Anglada-Tort is a Departmental Lecturer at the Faculty of Music and leads the Research Group 'Music, Culture, and Cognition' (MCC) at the University of Oxford. He is interested in understanding the psychological and cultural foundations of music and aesthetic behaviour, and the role they play in human societies and cultural evolution. His research covers a variety of topics, including music perception, biological and cognitive foundations of musical behaviour, production and consumption of creative work, popularity dynamics, collective cognition, network science, and cultural evolution

For most of our evolutionary history, oral transmission was the main mechanism by which songs were passed down human generations. Cross-cultural similarities and differences in human song are thought to emerge from this transmission process, but testing how underlying mechanisms contribute to musical structures remains a key challenge.

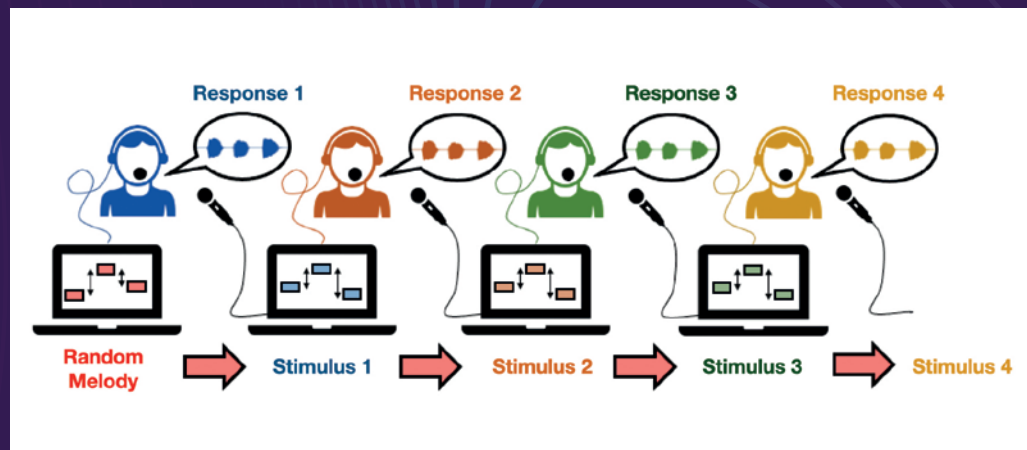
In this study, published this year in *Current Biology*, we developed a novel method to study how oral transmission

shapes the evolution of musical structures. This method is similar to the popular game known in the United States as 'telephone', in which sung melodies are passed from one singer to the next (Figure 1). This method is fully automated and works efficiently over the internet, allowing us to study oral transmission in unprecedented detail. We quantified the evolution of 3,424 melodies orally transmitted across 1,797 participants in the USA and India.

FIGURE 1

Online cultural transmission experiments with singing

Participants hear a sequence of tones generated by a computer and reproduce it by singing back. Vocal reproductions are synthesized online and played to the next participant as the input melody. This process is repeated with many parallel transmission chains at the same time, each corresponding to a melody evolving over ten generations.



We found that oral transmission has profound effects on music evolution, shaping initially random sounds into more structured systems (Figure 2). Over time, participants introduced systematic errors in their

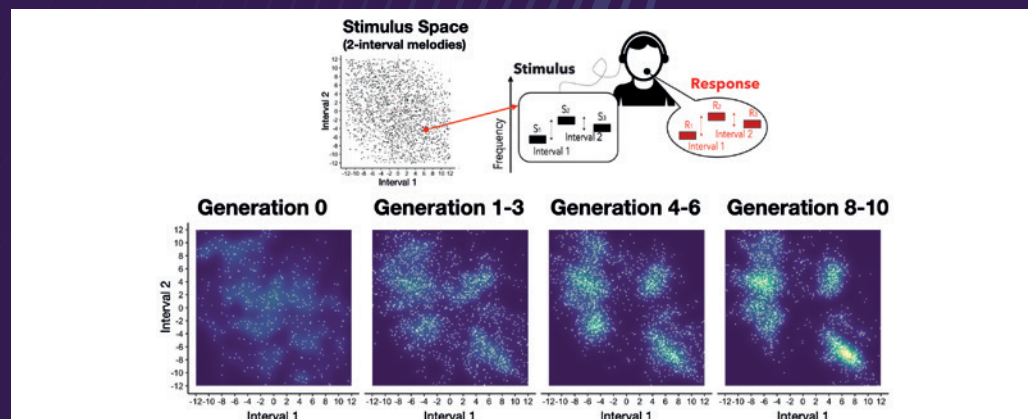
efforts to replicate the melodies that they heard, giving rise to melodic structures that were eventually easier to learn and transmit. For example, melodies were biased toward scales with a small number

of notes, small pitch intervals (less than a perfect fifth), and arch-shaped melodic contours. These melodic features can be seen as adaptations that arise from the bottleneck imposed by oral transmission.

FIGURE 2

Oral transmission effects on short melodies

Melodies composed of two melodic intervals can be defined along two dimensions, one for each interval in the melody (the dots represent the melodies). At the start of the experiment (Generation 0), we sampled 600 melodies randomly from this space. Oral transmission shaped initially random melodies into more structured and simplified systems over time. By the end of the experiment (Generation 8-10), melodies were concentrated in fewer locations, displaying a rich structure that is consistent with Western discrete scale systems.



But what factors increase the fitness of melodies for oral transmission? In several follow-up experiments, we found that the emergence of these structures is caused by limitations in our capacity to process and produce music. For example, musical elements that are difficult to sing such as large pitch intervals or to remember such as unfamiliar melodies, are consistently less likely to survive the transmission

process. Thus, despite the infinite patterns in which music could be combined, our results show that in practice, biological and cognitive mechanisms systematically constrain the vast space of evolutionary possibilities. It is possible that similar mechanisms shaped the evolution of musical systems by early humans perceiving and creating music.

Overall, these results provide the first quantitative characterization of the rich collection of biases that oral transmission imposes on music evolution, giving us a new understanding of how human song structures emerge via cultural transmission. These results could have implications for the study of other behaviours resulting from cultural transmission, such as birdsong or human language.

FIND OUT MORE

Learn more about Manuel's publications and research at www.manuelangladatort.com



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A trip to India indeed me in centh ntury enna

*Judith Valerie Engel
(Christ Church 2020)
[end bold] is a third-
year DPhil candidate in
Musicology and a concert
pianist. She is the recipient
of the Stone-Mallabar
scholarship in association
with Christ Church.
Her research focusses
on Marianna Martines
and her keyboard music,
situated in the gendered,
socio-political context of
eighteenth-century Vienna.*

We are transported back into the eighteenth century. Vienna is a hub for artists and musicians, among them are all the big men we have grown up knowing, but also surprisingly many women. One of them is Marianna Martines, an outstandingly gifted musician. She lives with two of her siblings in the city centre of the Habsburg capital. Despite the notorious ‘marriage politics’ of the emperors, all three of them remained unmarried. This liberation from expectations and duties placed specifically upon married women was perhaps a double-edged sword, though, as it necessitated even stricter adherence to upper-class codes of conduct. As her life unfolds before us, we are granted a fascinating glimpse into how Martines navigates these boundaries - performing her music while ‘wearing the hat’ of a *salonnière* and *dilettante*, collecting accolades without transgressing.

This journey back through time was connected to an actual journey - to India. During the break between Hilary and Trinity term, I had the joy of being invited to give two lecture-recitals and a guest lecture in Mumbai and Pune. The Poona Music Society and the lecture-recitals, in the National Centre

for the Performing Arts (NCPA) Mumbai, allowed me to explore women’s roles and their agency in musical salons of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Europe. From Marianna Martines (the subject of my DPhil dissertation), Josepha von Auernhammer, and Clara Schumann, to some of their male colleagues who were deeply influenced by the *salonnières* in their life, like Chopin and Liszt, these lecture-recitals afforded a glimpse into the gendered music business of the past. As a kind of ‘double agent’ on stage, I was then able to draw connections to present-day practices, especially pertaining to working conditions that are still severely askew.

‘From Marianna Martines (the subject of my DPhil dissertation), Josepha von Auernhammer, and Clara Schumann, [...] these lecture-recitals afforded a glimpse into the gendered music business of the past.’

Giving these lecture-recitals in India was particularly meaningful. The audiences of the NCPA, the Poona Music Society, as well as the Loft Forum Pune, where I gave a guest lecture at the end of the tour, which primarily focussed just on Martines, were a diverse mix of people. Many of them, of course, were regular attendees of Western classical concerts, yet several, as I learned in conversations with the audience after my performances, had never been to this kind of concert before. In a way, it allowed me to present this slightly unusual musical programme outside of the androcentric norm most European audiences have come to expect.

FIND OUT MORE

Learn more about Judith Valerie’s research at www.music.ox.ac.uk/people/judith-valerie-engel

SYMPHONIC BENEFICENCE

*The London Symphony Orchestra's charity
concerts during the First World War*



Dr Percy Leung is an associate member of the Faculty of Music. He studied at St Andrews, Cambridge, and Durham Universities, and wrote his PhD on the Berlin Philharmonic and London Symphony Orchestras during the First World War. A cultural historian by trade, Percy teaches for both the Faculties of Music and History at Oxford and is also a researcher for Southbank Sinfonia

The London Symphony Orchestra (LSO) is a household name in contemporary musical life, and it established itself as one of the foremost musical institutions in London and Britain since the early twentieth century, with its impact and popularity being felt across the globe ever since. In 1914, upon learning that Britain was to enter the First World War to defend Belgian neutrality and preserve a European balance of power, the Orchestra's board and players were keen to play a role in supporting their country and allies. Among their activities was a series of prominent charity concerts.

The first performances took place in December 1914, when the orchestra raised funds for The Daily Telegraph Belgian Fund by giving the premiere of Edward Elgar's newly completed work *Carillon*.



Brochure for the Festival of British Music

This was as an orchestral backdrop to the recitation of the poem with the same title by Belgian refugee Émile Cammaerts, a work that aimed to celebrate the resistance of 'Gallant Little Belgium' to the German invasion. Against a background of Belgian atrocity stories, Elgar's composition directly used the outrage caused by Belgium's suffering to justify Britain's participation in the war. When the LSO premiered this piece, it aroused a sense of righteousness among the audience that amid the hatred and confusion of a war, Britain would still

salute the brotherhood of humankind and preserve freedom and democracy, the very values upon which their country was built.

The Orchestra's charitable credentials were once again demonstrated in May 1916, when it participated in a large-scale, five day event known as 'Festival Gerontius', which featured Elgar's *The Dream of Gerontius* and his *The Spirit of England*, a musical setting of Laurence Binyon's *To Women and For the Fallen*. Through its performances, the LSO memorialised what had been lost, recognised the British spirit of sacrifice,

provided mental consolation to the country that had lost young men who fought for a righteous cause, defended the national honour, and consoled the British soul at a time of national grief. This festival raised £2,708 for the British Red Cross Society and the Order of St. John of Jerusalem in England, and captured the attention of King George V, Queen Mary, and Queen Alexandra.

Apart from the two occasions above, the LSO also took part in three other series of charity concerts, namely the Festival of British Music in 1915, the 'Tribute to

the Genius of William Shakespeare' concert held on the tercentenary of the playwright's death in May 1916 and a 'Patriotic Orchestral Concert' on Empire Day. At the time, some quarters of British society deemed classical music as 'merely decorative, mostly foreign, and deeply suspicious'. Nevertheless, by staging many charity concerts, the LSO helped to change this perception and actively rallied to the national cause, demonstrating that serious art music could also play a part in supporting Britain's war efforts.

QUEEN'S HALL, LANGHAM PLACE, W.
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EMPIRE DAY
WEDNESDAY, MAY 24th, 1916, at 3

Mr. I. A. de ORELLANA'S

Patriotic

Orchestral Concert

OF

BRITISH NATIONAL MELODIES

The Melodies of the Peoples who have made the British Empire.

LONDON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Principal Violin:
Mr. W. H. REED.

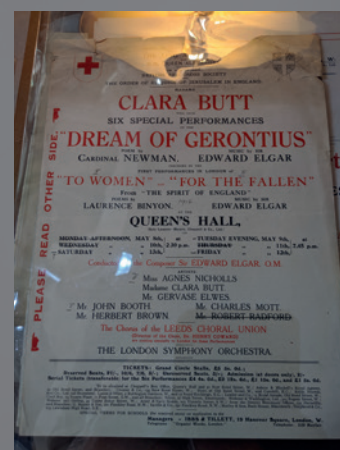
Conductor:
Mr. I. A. de ORELLANA.

PRICES—Stalls and Grand Circle (reserved) 5/-, 4/- & 3/-. Balcony (unreserved) 2/-. Area (unreserved) 1/-

Entertainment Tax:—3d. on each 5/-, 4/- & 3/- Ticket; 2d. on each 2/- or 1/- Ticket.

Tickets may be obtained at the Box Office, QUEEN'S HALL and at Messrs. CHAPPELL'S, New Bond Street, W.

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Poster from 'Festival Gerontius'

FIND OUT MORE
Learn more about Percy's research at www.qmul.ac.uk/history/people/teaching-associates/profiles/dr-percy-leung.html

Alumni NEWS



Anna
Appleby

In October last year, the BBC Philharmonic performed the world premiere of *Drought*, a new one-act opera by composer **Anna Appleby** (St Hilda's College 2011) and poet Niall Campbell. This metaphysical tale of retribution and remorse revolves around two characters, on what appears to be a single day in a single room on a drought-stricken farm, and the rising tensions between them.

Creation, composed by **Jacques Cohen** (Hertford College 1988) was premiered in London in March. The work is a setting for orchestra, alto soloist, mixed choir and children's voices of biblical texts interspersed with modern verse that concern Mankind's threat to himself and the planet.

Alice Farnham (St Hugh's College 1989) has published the book *In Good Hands: The Making of a Modern Conductor*



which sets out to explore what it means to be a conductor in modern times.

Bernard Hughes (St Catherine's College 1992) has released a new album of his complete piano works, performed by **Matthew Mills** (Christ Church 1995). *Bagatelles* covers over 25 years of music, featuring a range of styles and moods, dating back to the composer's student years at Oxford to the present day.

Musica Britannica have published a volume of the complete keyboard works of Benjamin Cosyn, edited by alumnus **Orhan Memed** (Magdalen College 1987). Benjamin Cosyn was the subject of Orhan's DPhil thesis at Oxford, which was completed in 1991 and published in the Garland series 'Outstanding Dissertations in music from British Universities' in 1993.

Roger Nichols (Worcester College 1959) has published *From Berlioz to Boulez*, a collection of 55 articles exploring French repertoire of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. He begins with Berlioz's



Chloe Rooke

Symphonie Fantastique and ends with his obituary of Pierre Boulez and looks at twenty significant composers on his journey through this turbulent and fertile period.

Faculty of Music alumna **Chloe Rooke** (St Catherine's College 2015) recently conducted the BBC Concert Orchestra at Saffron Hall with soloists Emma Johnson and Sarah Redgwick in a concert of Viennese New Year music.

In March the English Symphony Orchestra premiered *Scenes from the Epic of Gilgamesh*, composed by **Robert Saxton** (Worcester College 1975), at the Sheldonian Theatre. Taking inspiration from the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, the

oldest written literary text in Near Eastern/Western cultural history and itself said to be an influence on the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.

In June, the London Pro Arte Choir premiered a new arrangement of *ALL THE WORLD'S A STAGE* by composer alumnus **David Stoll** (Worcester College 1967) at St Michael's Church in London, a setting of the text from *AS YOU LIKE IT*. Stoll has also published in the last year two novels, *A DREAM OF LOCKDOWN* and *THE GHOST AT CRONE*.

SEND US YOUR NEWS

We always like to hear from our alumni. If you would like to be featured in a future issue, please email oxfordmusician@music.ox.ac.uk

Alumni

PROFILES

SEND US YOUR NEWS

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**GABY
ADKINS**

(Lady Margaret Hall 2001)

Having graduated from Oxford in 2004 and deciding that my thirst and appetite for learning had been truly ignited, I sought a new challenge and began a marathon-like journey at medical school. I later graduated with the King's College London School of Medicine Gold Medal in 2013 and a first class degree in an intercalated BSc in Pharmacology. I began a training post in Anaesthetics in South East London in 2015, where I am currently working as a registrar. Indeed, exams only finished a year ago when I gained my FRCA. Anaesthetics has brought with it many exciting opportunities, including a role on the committee of the World Anaesthesia Society, supporting anaesthesia in resource-poor settings. I have many fond memories of my time at Oxford and feel that it fuelled my passion for writing and critical appraisal. I also enjoy research; for example, I have recently written a review article on the potential role of cardiac chloride channels and transporters as novel therapeutic targets. My other interests include teaching, whilst, in my free time, appreciating a varied range of music has been an immense source of joy that I found particularly helpful whilst working on intensive care units during the COVID-19 pandemic.

...continues overleaf



FREDDIE CROWLEY

(Merton College 2015)

While studying Music at Merton College, I spent most of my time singing - as a choral scholar at Merton, in the jazz a cappella group the Oxford Gargoyles, and on stage in various musical theatre productions. The wide-ranging musical opportunities at Oxford were a hugely valuable springboard for the varied musical career I'm now pursuing.

Alongside my work as a freelance singer, performing with choirs including The Sixteen and London Voices, I also run my own professional vocal ensemble, Corvus Consort, founded just after my graduation. Having released our first commercial CD *Revoiced* on Chandos Records in 2022, Corvus has been described as 'one of the most innovative and adventurous vocal ensembles presently performing' (Tortoise Media).

In 2021, I founded the Whiddon Autumn Festival - an annual festival of vocal and chamber music set in the picturesque Devon countryside, where I grew up. The festival now brings a week of world-class classical music to five Dartmoor villages every September, also providing musical opportunities for 200 local primary school children.

As a passionate advocate of musical education for children, I also work on the Learning & Engagement teams for both The Sixteen and the National Youth Choirs of Great Britain, delivering singing workshops to children all over the UK.



Tatty Theo © Dan Bridge

TATTY THEO

(The Queen's College 1991)

I've always loved Baroque music and spend most of my time - musically and historically at least - in the eighteenth century and Handel's 'world'; Oxford (with its Handelian connections) and The Queen's College couldn't have been a better place to spend my undergraduate years. Front Quad even has links to Handel, a statue of his beloved patron Queen Caroline of Ansbach in the cupola, and the year 1759 ironically marks both Handel and the quad's completion - he died on 14 April that year.

As the only Baroque cellist in Oxford, I spent a lot of time playing in various chapels for services and concerts and tailoring my topics as much as possible to the Baroque period. It was at Oxford that I got bitten by the organising 'bug', devising programmes, setting up concerts, and finding like-minded players to perform in them. The seeds of my award-winning ensemble the Brook Street Band were sown there, early concerts after postgraduate studies at the Royal College of Music entirely featuring musical friends from Oxford. The ensemble has evolved and grown in its 25+ years, with highlights including its own biennial festival *love: Handel*, fusing chamber music, talks and education projects. I also enjoy programming for other festivals and venues too; the 'Handeliades' for Handel & Hendrix in London are currently a real highlight.

The Brook Street Band's discography includes numerous recordings of Bach and Handel's music, and I was delighted to return to Queen's for a concert and CD project of Handel's *Dixit Dominus* with their renowned choir. The Band recently added to its CD catalogue with the *Dragon of Wantley*, composed not by Handel, but by his bassoonist J F Lampe, and dripping with satirical references to Handel's world. I first encountered the piece during third year lectures with Harry Diack Johnstone, and as our recording has just won the coveted BBC Music Magazine Opera Award, it feels like a timely reminder of my studies at Oxford.



CECILIA STINTON

(Oriental College 2009)

In many ways, the course of my career was mapped during my Music BA. I was introduced to opera through the excellent course by **Professor Suzanne Aspden** (Wolfson College 1994), I observed the alchemy of opera production through playing as a violinist in student opera orchestras, and I discovered what was to become an intense fascination - the messy multimedia situation of the early twentieth century - in Professor Jonathan Cross's gripping courses on Viennese Modernism and Stravinsky.

After my degree, I worked at the Ashmolean Museum programming live performance, completed an Oxford Art History MSt, and then embarked upon an AHRC-funded PhD in UCL's Art History department, where I graduated with the thesis 'Opera as Multimedia: The Experiments of Wassily Kandinsky, Natalia Goncharova and Kurt Schwitters, 1908-1924' in 2021, supervised by Professor Frederic J. Schwartz.

During my doctorate, I moonlighted in opera, working as an assistant director at Opera Holland Park, Garsington Opera, the Royal Opera House, and the English National Opera. I founded my opera company, Spectra Ensemble, which produces early twentieth-century opera and which, in 2022, performed Ethel Smyth's *The Boatswain's Mate* in London before a UK tour. Following my directorial debut with *Carmen* in 2022, I opened *Rigoletto* in May 2023 at Opera Holland Park.



GREGORY ROSE

(Magdalen College 1967)

I was lucky to be able to study with two former pupils of Schoenberg, Hans Jelinek (Vienna) and Egon Wellesz (Oxford), which helped launch me into a choral/orchestral conducting career spanning all the way from early music to new works.

Much of my initial conducting emerged from setting up an amplified vocal ensemble, 'Singcircle', which appeared at the Proms and at music festivals throughout Europe. I also set up a professional orchestra, Jupiter Orchestra, alongside the Jupiter Singers. I conducted several large choral societies during this time, working with composers such as Cage, Stockhausen, Reich, Birtwistle and Lachenmann.

I was initially drawn to the London scene, which remained my artistic base until moving back to Oxford recently. To become a successful freelance musician, I learned early on that the only way was to work relentlessly doing my own publicity and networking.

These networking opportunities led to many conducting projects outside of the UK, in post-Soviet states (the Baltic states, Russia, the Czech Republic, among others) as well as in many Western European countries, including France, Holland, Finland, Denmark, and Sweden.

As a composer, I have had many choral performances, and a few orchestral ones, and have had several published pieces, eventually culminating in my becoming a 'house composer' with Verlag Neue Musik, Berlin in 2020, some 50 years after graduating from Magdalen.



Choral music that matters:

SANSARA'S MISSION

*to give voice
to powerful
human stories.*



Tom Herring (Merton College 2013) is a conductor and singer based in London. Artistic Director of SANSARA, Tom develops the group's projects, programmes and collaborations. He sings regularly with Tenebrae and the Monteverdi Choir and is an alumnus of the Netherlands Chamber Choir's innovative NXT scheme and a mentor for Young People in the Arts.

Following the existential threat to so many arts organisations during the pandemic, the emerging cultural environment presents a fresh set of challenges. With further cuts to public funding and individual giving on the decline, largely due to the cost-of-living crisis (see Charities Aid Foundation UK Giving Report 2023), the future at a glance - looks dark for the arts. In this context, the current sense of being somehow 'back to normal' will not last.

I founded SANSARA as a student at Merton with the aim of bringing ambitious and enthusiastic young singers, composers, and aspiring conductors together in a peer-led creative environment to explore music we loved and find new repertoire to share with audiences. Almost ten years later, our vision has evolved as we seek to find a new purpose for choral music. Our mission - and challenge - is to make choral music that matters, giving voice to powerful human stories.

**'A LOVELY
SPACE TO GIVE
CREDENCE TO
GRIEF WHERE
ALL WERE
ACCEPTED AND
RESPECTED.'**

*Rite to Grieve workshop
participant*

In 2021, we developed Rite to Grieve, a co-creative project combining ensemble singing with peer-to-peer bereavement support with the aim of creating safe spaces for the shared expression of loss, following a time when in-person gatherings had been prohibited. The project also involved commissioning a new piece - *My North* - by Rebecca Dale which we performed at a commemorative event at the National Covid Memorial Wall in March 2022.

Following the full-scale invasion of Ukraine by Russian forces in February 2022, we commissioned Ukrainian composer Natalia Tsupryk to write a new piece for Ukrainian Independence Day. Following its release online, we encouraged choirs to perform the piece and, where possible, invite and involve local refugees in their music-making. *A Quiet Night - Tyhoi Nochi* has since been performed around the world, bringing people together in expressions of solidarity and defiance.

The experience of navigating the pandemic planted seeds of innovation in classical music organisations and we explored new ways of engaging with communities and connecting people when society was forced apart. It is this work such as this that needs to take root and be nourished if the UK is to have a thriving, sustainable arts sector now and in the future.



FIND OUT MORE

Discover more projects and concerts by
SANSARA at www.sansarachoir.com

Student NEWS

In Trinity term the French ensemble *Le Concert de l'Hostel Dieu* performed alongside students from the newly formed period ensemble the **Bate Collective** in a lunchtime concert of works by Christoph Graupner and Jean-Philippe Rameau.

Following his research into music of the Holocaust, DPhil Music student **Leo Geyer** (St Catherine's College 2019) was filmed as part of the Sky Arts documentary 'Hitler's Jazz Band', shedding light on this bizarre propaganda vehicle. Despite the ban on jazz throughout the Third Reich, the Nazis created Germany's premier swing band.

Students in the Somerville Music Society have founded the **Alternative Canon Project**, an initiative committed to diversifying the musical canon in Oxford. The project strongly encourages diverse concert programming and is growing a library of works by composers and artists

from a diverse range of backgrounds. In May **Alice Knight** (St Anne's College 2021) conducted the world premiere of the cantata *The Song of Love* by Ethel Smyth at Christ Church Cathedral. The cantata was copied and edited by **Angie Wyatt** (Somerville College 2021).

In July, Music students collaborated for the first time with the **Oxford Festival of the Arts** to perform music by Bach, Piazzolla, and Ravel at the Holywell Music Room.

Oxford University Brass Band made music society history by winning the national university band contest **UniBrass 2023** in Warwick earlier this year. This was the first time that the group had won the competition.

In May, St Catherine's College awarded the annual **Henfrey Prize for Composition** to **Electra Perivolaris** (Magdalen College 2022). This prestigious award is open to students and



recent graduates from the University of Oxford. This year's final featured world-class performers from the **Tangram Collective**, including Catz alumnus **Daniel Shao** (St Catherine's College 2013), who performed four new works by Oxford composers.

Shortwave Collective, an international feminist artist group who work with creative uses of radio, hosted a **DIY radio making and urban listening workshop** in April with Oxford Music

and Fine Art students. With this new tool to access the electromagnetic spectrum, the students composed new sound works, and both the radios and the compositions were exhibited at **Modern Art Oxford** in May.

In February, the **Los Angeles Philharmonic New Music Group** performed the world premiere of *No oyes ladrar a los perros* for sinfonietta and organ, a work by DPhil music student **Erika Vega** (St John's College 2018).





Student Profile: **SAMINA JALIL**

Sami Jalil is a first-year Music student at St Catherine's College. They are from Manchester and write their own music and articles for student papers. Sami holds positions as a Deputy Editor of The Oxford Student and Opinions Editor of OPUS.

As a brown and queer musician, I have felt out of place my entire life: 'from birth, you have to be on someone else's terms' (Kofi Agawu). During the application process, my friends and family told me that I had no place at Oxford, and that a music degree is a waste of time. Yet having almost finished my first year, I cannot imagine

myself studying anywhere else, and I am so grateful for the opportunities I would have otherwise struggled to find. Though music is slowly becoming more accessible, there is still a long way to go before it becomes something that anyone can pursue, and I hope to improve this during my time here.

I grew up in Manchester with a poor family. I received piano lessons for free at the age of 13, and my progress was stunted by the simple lack of a piano to practice on. It was a privilege for a school to offer GCSE and A-Level Music, so while many journeys around me ended, I got the chance to keep fighting. My grades got me into a state sixth form that could afford

to fund my musical exams and theory lessons, and without this, there was little chance I would make it to where I am today.

The opportunities available to me at Oxford reinforce my love of music. My college tutors have been incredibly supportive in helping me pursue my interests, particularly during my struggles with depression. The main lesson I have learnt during my time here is 'ask and you shall receive'. Nothing is handed to you until you seek it out, but once you do, there are many rich avenues of music study to explore. I have grown so much as a person in just a year - I take conducting lessons, research fields that I never knew existed, perform

musicals written by my peers, showcase my own music, and have the opportunity to start my own ensemble.

I am one of only a few brown people studying music here, and I am not scared to acknowledge this. I had to work harder to get here, but now I stand on equal ground with people who are a lot more privileged. I love studying music, and I take every opportunity to learn more. Nothing should stop anyone from pursuing their passion, and I hope one day this comes true in practice.

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update



Evelyn (Evie) Brenkley is the 2023-24 President of the Oxford University Music Society and enjoys playing in various ensembles as an oboist and singing in the Keble College Chapel Choir. In her spare time, Evie is a first year Music student at Hertford College.

FIND OUT MORE
Keep up to date
with OUMS at
www.oums.co.uk

Wheeling a contrabassoon from the Faculty of Music to the Sheldonian Theatre was not exactly what I imagined I would be doing when I was elected President of the Oxford University Music Society - but to be fair, nobody said it would be glamorous. I am utterly thrilled to be heading up the OUMS committee in this, our 152nd year; pandemic restrictions are beginning to feel like a distant memory, and music-making is properly getting back on its feet.

We have had some stellar concerts this year, culminating in the most financially successful Trinity term in a long time. Welcoming alumnus **Joe Davies** (St Peter's College 2012) back as part of OUO's Young Conductors Scheme was particularly lovely. OPUS (the online society publication), the website, and our weekly newsletter have returned, plus

society social events are back for the first time since 2017. We have also begun discussions with the Alternative Canon Project (set up at Somerville College) and other awesome organisations promoting diversity and equality about how best we can support their work. After a period of hibernation, OUCHorus are back and beginning preparations for Symphony No. 2 in C minor by Gustav Mahler with OUPhil. The society's support of future journalists (with OPUS at the heart of music journalism in Oxford), composers (we run two annual composition competitions), and conductors (across our ensembles, there are nine OUMS Conductor posts) continues. We are particularly proud that as of October 2023, alongside affiliations with other music societies in Oxford to link up funk, folk, and opera, we

will officially offer a non-auditioning ensemble for every instrumentalist and vocalist. If you want to be involved with music at Oxford, you will be welcomed with open arms - no strings attached.

OUMS has so much potential, and being at the helm of such a wide-reaching society at this time is a huge honour - I have had to pinch myself on many an occasion. It has been proved to me time and again that musicians are simply a fantastic crowd to fall in with, and I am particularly grateful for the utterly infectious positivity which comes with every meeting, pub trip, and rehearsal. We have already achieved so much, and though it hasn't necessarily all been smooth sailing (that infamous Wednesday afternoon contrabassoon moving will stick with me!), I am very, very excited for the future of OUMS.



**ABOUT THE OXFORD
PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA**

Since 1998, the Oxford Philharmonic has brought inspirational performances to Oxford and beyond. The Orchestra prides itself on creating unique musical experiences, underpinned by the uncompromising standards of its founder and music director Marios Papadopoulos, and works regularly with some of the world's greatest classical artists.

The Oxford Philharmonic celebrated its twentieth anniversary as Orchestra in Residence at the University of Oxford with a concert at the Sheldonian Theatre on 17 November, after another fruitful year hosting a variety of projects.

Masterclasses were led by Maxim Vengerov (violin), Andrew Marriner (clarinet), Alban Gerhardt (cello), Radek Baborák (horn), and Marios Papadopoulos (piano and conducting). The

Orchestra's solo flautist Tony Robb also held a chamber music workshop for wind instruments. The classes garnered brilliant feedback from participants and audiences alike.

'It was such a privilege to be able to stand up in front of a professional orchestra - hearing the feedback from Marios and the musicians was so useful.'

Alice Knight (St Anne's College 2021), conducting participant

Oxford Philharmonic Orchestra: Residency programme 2022-23



Eight student composers took part in the 2023 composers' workshop. Each had their composition performed by the Orchestra, conducted by **Dr John Traill** (New College 2001), and analysed afterwards. Two students **Marcello Palazzo** (New College 2021) and **Henry Le Feber Robertson** (Lady Margaret Hall 2020) - were selected to have their work premiered next season, while 2022's chosen composers received premieres before capacity Sheldonian audiences: *The Withdrawal* by **Jieun Lee**

(St Hugh's College 2020) and *Poppy Song* by **Kevin Zheng** (St Anne's College 2020).

The Orchestral Apprenticeship and side-by-side schemes continued to thrive this year. Outstanding young instrumentalists performed alongside the Orchestra, took part in sectional rehearsals, and were coached by OPO's professional players.

'Playing alongside professional payers is an amazing opportunity,

and the OPO players are incredibly welcoming and enjoyable to work with.'

Hannah McFarlane
(Christ Church 2020), cello

Students on the Young Artist Platform performed a short recital before a concert at the Sheldonian Theatre. This year's performances were by duo **Betty Zhaoyi Yan** (Regent's Park College 2021) and **Jennifer** (St Hilda's College 2021), and by **Kevin Zhang** (Worcester College 2019).

It has been a fantastic year, and the Oxford Philharmonic looks forward to enriching student life into the future.

FIND OUT MORE

Keep up to date with news from the Oxford Philharmonic at www.oxfordphil.com





OXFORD OPERA SOCIETY PERFORMS

Le nozze di Figaro



*Beth Fitzpatrick (or Fitz) is an Irish conductor and mezzo-soprano in their final year studying Music at St Peter's College, Oxford. Their recent sold-out production of Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro* took place at the beginning of May, at both St Peter's College Chapel, Oxford, and the Sheldonian Theatre.*

Suggesting a fully staged student production of Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro* was doubtless going to raise eyebrows. However, following the Oxford Opera Society's Scenes Gala in February 2022, as co-musical director, I was invigorated by the people I met who demonstrated (almost) the same amount of passion and love for this genre as me. It gave me the confidence to suggest such a mad idea. As a cherry on top, I ended up both conducting and directing this production - I had nothing better to do in my final year of an Oxford undergraduate degree.

Our production, set in the 1990s, exposes Count Almaviva, here a nepotistic film producer, lusting after Susanna, the fresh face on screen and fiancée of Figaro, his personal security guard. The Countess is a once-shining film star, Bartolo is an overly obsessive film

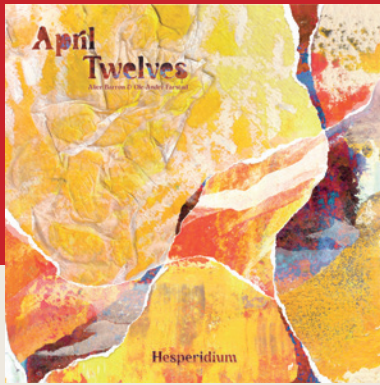
director, and Marcellina is an ancient actress who should have retired a decade ago, but still manages to buy her way in.

It almost feels unnecessary to force a decade on this production: I could have offered that brief analysis and suggested any time between 1960 and 2023. The initial inspiration of this production was the destruction of Harvey Weinstein in the context of the #MeToo movement, which swept the world and continues to grow in relevance, especially following his guilty verdict. Avoiding a twenty-first century production allows us to shine a light on the unspoken fact that Weinstein was far from the first movie tycoon to take advantage of those he thought as 'less than' - and will not be the last. The horrifying notion that many more people than the victims and the victimisers are aware of

the abuse pervades our production. with the desire to 'avoid scandal' taking priority over the wellbeing of the victims of this physical and sexual abuse.

While an important topic, we do not forget that this is an opera full of joy and love. The 'Day of Madness' (an alternative title for the original Beaumarchais play) can only end happily thanks to the unwavering love Figaro and Susanna have for one another, as well as the Count and Countess (although he keeps it under wraps). Whether you agree the Countess should forgive her husband or not, you cannot deny the strength of her love for him. Love is both the reason and solution for the conflicts within this story - what better subject for the greatest opera ever written?

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Leah Broad © Monika Tomiczek



In April, Dr Alice Barron (Somerville College 2014) released *Hesperidium*, her debut album with April Twelves. Alice and Ole André Farstad create original music for prepared sarods, violins, viola, slide guitar, and electronics. Born out of a series of improvisations, this project explores the colours, textures, and resonances from encounters with Indian classical instruments. Both the Hindustani slide guitar and Karnatic violin have an intercultural story after traveling to India from Hawaii and Europe, respectively.

Dr Leah Broad (Christ Church 2010) published her first book *Quartet: How Four Women Changed the Musical World*. The work is a radical feminist history

of four ‘trailblazing’ women composers: Ethel Smyth (b.1858), Rebecca Clarke (b.1886), Dorothy Howell (b.1898), and Doreen Carwithen (b.1922). Leah’s group biography resurrects these forgotten voices, recounting lives of rebellion, heartbreak, and ambition, and celebrating their musical masterpieces.

Professor Martyn Harry has composed new works for Le Concert de L’Hostel Dieu’s new CD, *50-50*, on the Aparthé label. The concept behind the album was to create a kind of musical ‘meeting’ between seventeenth-century and contemporary music on the one hand and, on the other, French and English composers. While Martyn was commissioned to respond to specific pieces

of music by Lully and Charpentier, the French composer, David Chalmin, was similarly commissioned to respond to works by Henry Purcell.

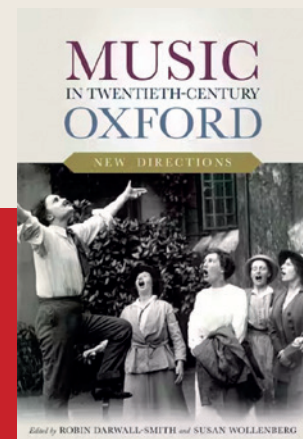
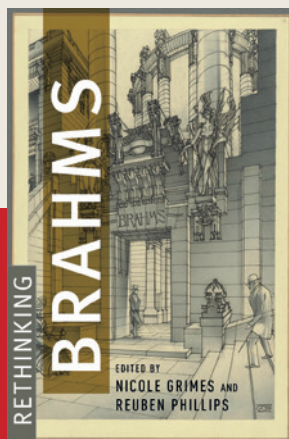
Rethinking Brahms, edited by Nicole Grimes and Dr Reuben Phillips (Magdalen College 2007) was published in December last year. The volume brings together the latest research in Brahms studies from musicologists, performer-scholars, and music analysts active in the UK, US, and Germany.

The Faculty’s Director of Musical Performance and Performance Studies Rosalind Ventris has released her debut solo album *SOLA: Music for viola by women composers* on Delphian Records. The album features a selection

of music for unaccompanied viola composed between 1930 (Imogen Holst’s impressive *Suite for Viola*) and the present day (a 2020 lockdown miniature by Thea Musgrave).

Co-editors Professor Susan Wollenberg (Lady Margaret Hall 1966) and Dr Robin Darwall-Smith, Archivist of Jesus and University Colleges and College historian of All Souls, published *Music in Twentieth-Century Oxford*, the first book-length study of musical education and culture in twentieth-century Oxford.

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KEEP IN TOUCH



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Faculty of Music

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