Mitsuko Uchida
Elizabeth Burgess at the Wigmore
Schola Cantorum at 50
Alumni news
Events
Welcome to the Faculty of Music alumni newsletter. At the end of this first decade of the new millennium, the Faculty faces exciting and challenging times. Consistently rated as the best university music department in the UK (it was top of the Times, Guardian and Independent league tables in 2010) the Faculty is a powerhouse of teaching, creative activity, and research (it headed the ‘power rankings’ for the 2008 Research Assessment Exercise).

Over the past two years, six new academic postholders have joined the Faculty, with teaching and research interests in composition, medieval song, ethnomusicology, music and landscape, the psychology of music, and the sociology and anthropology of music – significantly expanding the range and diversity of the Faculty’s intellectual and creative reach. And thanks to some specially targeted money, the Faculty has carried out much-needed renovations of its teaching, practise and rehearsal spaces, just now being completed. The interior of the practice block at the back of the Faculty’s building is unrecognisable, both visually and – most importantly – acoustically, and we have acquired an invaluable and much-needed new ensemble room.

There are much bigger building plans afoot for the future, however, with the University working on a very substantial programme of building for its humanities faculties on the site of the old Radcliffe Infirmary – and Music wants to be part of that exciting new development. This is a big project to be tackling at a time when universities are facing financial pressures, but we’re determined to ensure that we have the buildings and resources to match our musical and intellectual ambitions.

This newsletter is just one of the ways in which we want to stay in touch with you, our alumni: we hope you enjoy reading about what members of the Faculty – newer and older – have been doing, and would love to hear from you, or see you at one of our many events. Please do keep in touch!

Best wishes,

Eric Clarke
Heather Professor of Music
Current postholders at the Faculty

Dr SUZANNE ASPDEN
M, MA (Oxon); U Chicago
University Lecturer; Fellow and Tutor in Music, New College; Lecturer at Lincoln College
Research interests in early 20th-century music and Baroque performance practice.

Professor GEORGINA BORN
BA (Lancs); PhD (Bristol)
Professor of Music and Anthropology
Research interests in music and culture, music and mediation, social and cultural theory, ethnography, music in the late 20th and 21st centuries, modernity and the avant-garde cultural production and cultural institutions, public service broadcasting, cultural and media policy, television, and production, and the application of ecological psychology of music, particularly anthropological theory to music perception; analysis of pop music; theory and composition; and in Baroque performance practice.

Professor ERIC CLARKE
BA, MA, PhD (Oxon)
Professor of Musicology; Student Tutor in Music, Christ Church
Research interests in 20th- and 21st-century music, especially 21st-century music, especially Birtwistle, Stravinsky and Biber, and in Baroque performance practice.

Dr MARTYN HARRY
BA (Cantab), MA, PhD (City)
University Lecturer; Fellow and Tutor in Music, Lady Margaret Hall
Research interests in music of the 15th to 17th centuries, particularly in Spain, Portugal and England.

Dr ELIZABETH EVA LEACH
BA (Yeshiva), PhD (Columbia)
Diplôme supérieur (Brussels), Hon AM (Brussels)
Professor of Music and Anthropology
Research interests in music of the Middle East and Europe, social and cultural theory.

Professor ROBERT SAKTIN
BA, MA, PhD (Bristol)
University Lecturer; Fellow and Tutor in Music, Worcester College
Research interests in ethnomusicology and anthropology of music, the Middle East, and the relationship between tradition and contemporary compositional thought and practice.

Dr DANIEL GRIMLEY
BA (Lancs), MA, MA (Oxon), PhD
University Lecturer; Fellow and Tutor in Music, Merton College; Lecturer at Brasenose College
Research interests in songs, counterpoint, and singing with a particular focus on medieval secular lyrics in French. Other interests include music and philosophy, ideas of musical meaning, music analysis (especially of pre-tonal repertoires), music and gender, and music in literature.

Dr LAURENCE DREYFUS
BA (Vanderbilt), PhD (Columbia)
Diplôme supérieur (Brussels), Hon RAM, FIMA
Professor of Music; Fellow and Tutor in Music, Magdalen College
Musicologist and viol player. Research interests in 18th- and 19th-century music, especially J. J. Bach and Wagner, English consort music, theories of analysis, and performance studies.

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Professor EDWARD HIGGINBOTTOM
BA (Cantab), MA, DPhil (Oxon), BMus (Cantab), FRCO
University Lecturer, Fellow and Tutor in Music, New College
Research interests in 18th- and 19th-century European music and culture (especially opera and the symphony), modernism, critical theory and music in mass-entertainment film.

Professor EDE HIGGINBOTTOM
BA (Cantab), MA, DPhil (Oxon), BMus (Cantab), FRCO
University Lecturer, Fellow and Tutor in Music, New College
Research interests in 18th- and 19th-century European music and culture (especially opera and the symphony), modernism, critical theory and music in mass-entertainment film.

Dr DANIEL HYDE
BA, MA (Cantab), FRCO
Informateur Choristarum, Organist, Student and Tutor in Music, Christ Church
Conductor, with research interests in early 20th-century music.

Dr SUE ASHDEN
M, MA (Oxon); U Chicago
University Lecturer; Fellow and Tutor in Music, New College; Lecturer at Lincoln College
Research interests in 18th-century opera, nationalism, and identity politics.

Professor PETER FRANKLIN
BA (Lancs); MA, DPhil (Oxon)
Professor of Music; Fellow and Tutor, St Catherine's College
Research interests in late 19th- and early 20th-century European music and culture (especially opera and the symphony), in modernism, critical theory and music in mass-entertainment film.

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Even as an organ scholar, Martin had a fascination for other cultures. His research focuses on Turkish music, but he got into it in a rather roundabout way: he recalls that, having always been curious about the Islamic world, in his gap year as organ scholar at St Michael’s, Tenbury, he finally decided to buy a teach-yourself-Arabic book. But when he cycled into town he found the bookshop had run out: ‘they offered me a teach-yourself-Turkish book instead, commenting “isn’t that the same”!’ Not wanting to go home empty-handed after his long cycle ride, he bought it.

He recalls reading the book on the three-day train ride to Turkey in 1981, on his way to a humanitarian youth camp: ‘You could get there cheaply by rail, and it was a cheap place to live, so I kept going back.’

If this sounds rather prosaic, Martin explains that his interest in Turkey is also more complex. Initially, he was plagued by a feeling that going to Turkey was a compromise, a half-way house, not the “real” Muslim world. ‘Is this it? Is this the mystic East?’ Now it’s precisely that betwixt and betweenness that’s most interesting to me. The book that came out in October 2010, The Republic of Love: Cultural Intimacy in Turkish Popular Music, demonstrates that interest, bringing together work he has been doing over the past ten years on music, popular culture, and politics. He describes it as ‘an attempt to write a cultural history of Turkey in the 20th century through its music’. Surprisingly, perhaps, it’s not something that’s been done before. Martin describes a kind of cultural embarrassment in Turkey in writing about the kind of popular music he deals with—towering, Frank Sinatra-style cultural figures, who nonetheless are neither traditional classical artists nor edgy contemporary rappers, and so have been neglected by Turkish scholars.

Martin himself can hardly be described as ‘betwixt and between’ any more, something he rather regrets, as the people he used to ‘just hang out with’ as a student have become powerful, so he too is more of an establishment figure in Turkey—the ‘Oxford don’—which, he says, ‘goes against the grain’.

As for his return to Oxford, Martin is delighted to have the chance to introduce students to music which was barely on the radar in his day, when he had to follow his BA in Music with a DPhil in Anthropology in order to cover the kinds of things that interested him. While he values the interdisciplinarity that experience brought—the sense of not having things handed to him on a plate—it’s good, too, that ethnomusicology is now firmly part of the Music curriculum. He explains that it ‘teaches students something about the rest of the world—part of the process of learning to think otherwise’, which is what University is all about. I think it makes them better musicians. It made me a better musician.’

Martin Stokes’ book The Republic of Love: Cultural Intimacy in Turkish Popular Music was published by the University of Chicago Press in October 2010.
One of the most exciting new courses on the undergraduate syllabus is Opera and Music Theatre. Those students who sign up for it find themselves on an intensive journey of operatic creativity, composing and performing a work of their own devising to an audience of schoolchildren. It’s the brainchild of the Faculty’s most recent appointment, composer Martyn Harry, and the story of the course’s genesis is almost worthy of an opera in itself.

The idea grew from a commission in 2000 to work with a children’s theatre company in Durham on a production for 4- and 5-year-olds involving freely bags. Martyn describes it as the most fantastic way to compose, in that he was simply given a freely bag (a bag containing a number of different fabrics) and told to base each piece of music on a different feel. A mime-type theatre work emerged, called ‘Eye threes’.

After this experience, he worked on a number of pieces of children’s theatre with the same director for Theatr Hullabaloo, until in 2002 the company commissioned him to compose an opera. When he realised that the north-east actors and music types he was writing for weren’t up to singing the opera he wanted to write, he decided instead that the students at Durham University, where he was composer in residence, would be ideal. He explains: ‘Durham then invented a course around it, and before I knew what was happening I was lecturing on Wagner and Brecht and all sorts of things I never expected to do. It became a real success, and a great creative opportunity for me – a kind of creative diary.’

It was a natural decision to recreate the course here: ‘Oxford has unique opportunities: a depth of singing and instrumental talent and a theatrical tradition to build on.’ In addition, Martyn found an exciting new partner in Garsington Opera, which has enabled him to take the project to a new level. In 2009-10 Garsington helped to broker contact with primary schools, with the result that twelve second-year students (comprising six composers and six singers) performed the piece Passing the Remote: A Space Fantasy to local schoolchildren in 9th week of Trinity term, after intensive rehearsals in 7th and 8th weeks.

This year, a group of eighteen performers and composers completed a more lavish production, The Golden Fish, with director Karen Gillingham, animator Susi Zumpe, and designer Bernie Roberts of Garsington Opera. Words and music were composed by the students, with the creative input of children from West Oxford Community Primary School. Children from seven local schools attended the performances at The Auditorium, St John’s College, and scenes from the opera were shown on BBC1’s local evening news programmes.

We might wonder how the Opera Project fits with Martyn Harry the composer. ‘Amazingly’, he says, ‘I’ve developed a reputation for writing children’s operas.’ In 2010 he wrote what he calls ‘my first truly professional children’s opera’, My Mother Told Me Not To Stare, which is in some senses a legacy of Theatre Hullabaloo. ‘My mother has toured nationally, and will in future be performed at international children’s festivals. So without having planned this it has become one of the most important things I do.’

But in any case, music theatre has been an integral part of his music since studying with Mauricio Kagel in Cologne. Pieces such as Signal Failure (a dangerous title for a piece – it has to go well) and Fantasy Unbuttoned synthesise elements of concert music and music theatre.

Martyn’s interest in writing music theatre – particularly for young people – has also been more unusual origins. In 1993 he became Executive Producer, New Music for Sony Classical – ‘gamekeeper turned poacher’, he suggests. His search for new music for Sony became an important influence.

‘I did discover music I didn’t know before – music I respected – and getting to know it meant I internalised it. . . . Eventually Sony started to record former pop musicians such as Karl Jenkins and I left the company.’ But it helped me to codify something that I believed anyway: that I wanted to communicate broadly, to intelligent, curious, non-specialist listeners. My music now has been influenced by that thought; my pieces vary but they all have that idea of communication in common.’

That idea of variety is certainly present in his current work. His next project is a commission from His Majesty’s Sagbutts and Cornets for a series of pieces inspired by mid 17th-century music for broken consort. The two first pieces, ‘Hospees Parlaymint’ and ‘Custums Xcise’, were premiered in Spain this January, and the whole cycle (entitled ‘My Majesty’s Pleasure’) will be recorded for CD by the group at Easter 2012.
To those who don’t know it, the Bate Collection of Musical Instruments may seem like just another of Oxford’s many museums. But venture inside, and you’ll find yourself a world away from the dusty, look-but-don’t-touch traditions of locked display cabinets and reverential observation. The Bate is probably the only significant assemblage of musical instruments in the country in which the majority of the collection can be played. This is no small thing, given the age and historical significance of many of the instruments: for instance, the Bate has just acquired the Shudi-Broadwood harpsichord that it is believed Haydn played when he came to Oxford to receive his doctorate.

The Bate is still acquiring instruments, but the Collection takes its name and its hands-on approach from the organologist, author, television producer, collector, and philanthropist, Philip Bate. Bate himself was apparently forbidden to play music in the house by his father when he was a child, but—as with so many other musicians through history—that seems only to have fuelled his interest: he saved pocket money in order to buy clarinets and flutes from junk shops and market stalls, and by the 1960s had accumulated over three hundred instruments. Concerned that in the event of his death the chronological significance of the collection would be lost, Bate presented his instruments to Oxford University, suggesting that they could be used as a teaching resource.

Of course, such a resource needs careful management, and a succession of curators has overseen the maintenance and growth of the Collection. From 1995 until her untimely death in July 2007, Hélène Thérèse La Rue, Fellow of St Cross College and University Lecturer in Ethnomusicology and Organology, filled that role. Hélène...
had a longstanding association with Oxford (from her undergraduate days reading Music, 1970-74), and that coupled with her professional interest in organology, which began with her doctorate on English popular musical instruments, made her the ideal person for the job. She is still sorely missed, and has not yet been replaced.

In keeping with the spirit of the Collection, Hélène’s interest was also practical: her friend and fellow Faculty member, Dr Susan Wollenberg, recalls that ‘Among the instruments she played herself were the Northumbrian smallpipes: she helped to form a group of enthusiasts, and her Oxford Pipers regularly hosted courses for novice and expert pipers alike. As a result of her efforts, the best place to learn to play the Northumbrian pipes outside Northumberland has been said to be Oxford.’

Hélène’s interest in the smallpipes perhaps signals the eclecticism of the Collection: when asked about recent acquisitions, the Bate Collection Manager, Andy Lamb, mentions not only the Shudi-Broadwood harpsichord, but also a 1980s hurdy-gurdy that is copied from one featured in Hieronymus Bosch’s famously bizarre triptych, The Garden of Earthly Delights. Indeed, the hurdy-gurdy has inspired the Bate’s current exhibition, titled after Bosch’s work, for which the museum attempted to create replicas of the instruments in the painting of hell. The exhibition has attracted the interest of Noordbrabants Museum in s’Hertogenbosch who want to borrow it for their forthcoming Bosch exhibition. Ironically, given the Bate’s status as a playing museum, Lamb hopes the Dutch won’t actually want to hear the instruments: ‘I have tried to coax a few harmonious notes out of the wind instruments, but the racket that comes out of them is horrible.’
In 2009 Dame Mitsuko Uchida came to Oxford to receive an honorary doctorate, testimony to her extraordinary career and international renown as one of the world’s leading pianists. The award was especially fitting because of Dame Mitsuko’s commitment to the development of young musicians (given focus through her work for the Borletti-Buitoni Trust), a commitment she demonstrated at the time by agreeing to give a masterclass for postgraduate pianists. She evidently enjoyed the experience (with students Nathan Williamson, Anyssa Neumann, Ceri Owen and Barbara Richardson-Bryson) enough to indicate that she’d be happy to come back. ‘Oxford University was so kind to give me an honorary DMus’, she said, ‘and so I thought that I should do something in return for the University. I realised that the Music Faculty needed money, so what better thing to do than to give a recital for them.’

Dame Mitsuko agreed to launch the Faculty of Music’s fundraising campaign for a new home by giving a spellbinding recital to a packed Sheldonian Theatre on 11 January 2011, featuring Beethoven’s Sonata no. 27 in E minor, Op. 90; Schumann’s Davidsbündlertänze, Op. 6; Chopin’s Prelude in C-sharp minor, Op. 45, and Sonata no. 3 in B minor, Op. 58.
At Dame Mitsuko’s request, the proceeds from the concert were donated to the Faculty, and have already been allocated to equip the newly refurbished practice rooms with pianos for use by music students. The event also served to launch the Faculty’s major fundraising campaign, aimed at endowing teaching posts and graduate bursaries, the purchase and renewal of instruments and equipment and — most ambitiously — the move to purpose-built premises on the University’s Radcliffe Observatory Quarter.

Eric Clarke commented: ‘We are extremely grateful to Dame Mitsuko for showing her support for the Faculty of Music by giving this recital. The breadth, scope and quality of music scholarship, composition and performance at Oxford is unrivalled and Dame Mitsuko’s recital will help raise funds for the Faculty’s continuing work to ensure that Oxford’s world-leading reputation for research and teaching in music continues far into the future.’

The concert was preceded by a reception in the Divinity School, attended by many friends of the Music Faculty, at which the Chancellor, Lord Patten, spoke of the achievements and high reputation of the Faculty. After the recital, Dame Mitsuko stayed on for dinner in the Divinity School with an array of special guests, including the Chancellor. She crowned a wonderful evening with a brief speech that hinted at further recitals in support of the Faculty’s ambitions. We hope that Dame Mitsuko’s generosity will inspire others to support the Faculty’s plans to take a leap forward in the 21st century, with a custom-designed building that will encompass the latest technologies for recording and composition, proper practising and performing spaces, and the varied and flexible teaching spaces that a dynamic Music Faculty needs.”
It seems no-one was more surprised at the outcome of the 2009 Wigmore Hall International Song Competition than the winners themselves. Accompanist Elizabeth Burgess explains that, as two of the youngest participants in the competition, she and baritone Marcus Farnsworth ‘were delighted when we got through to the semi-finals, but when we got through to the finals we both felt a bit sick’. Libby modestly suggests the ‘inspiring’ surroundings of the Hall itself contributed to their success, but the win was undoubtedly richly deserved for these recent Royal Academy of Music graduates. Of course, Libby was already accustomed to responding well under pressure: her three years as Christ Church organ scholar (2002-2005), alongside numerous other performing engagements during her years at Oxford, saw to that.

Some might say that gaining the organ scholar’s place was a feat in itself, and something that marked Libby out, as the first female organ scholar at one of Oxford’s choral foundations. But Libby is quick to play down that status: although she realised her groundbreaking role, she nonetheless feels she succeeded as an organ scholar because she was simply ‘one of the guys’ socially. Being ‘one of the guys’ came with pressures of its own: ‘I realised early on that being an organ scholar meant I would have either no social life or no sleep, so I really did not sleep a lot. I wanted to have my cake and eat it. Most of my work was done between the hours of midnight and 4am.’ The demands of Oxford’s daily grind were as much of a challenge as any requirement to perform under pressure: ‘I remember getting to the end of the first term and being absolutely exhausted, and counting up the weeks and seeing it was 16-and-a-half weeks, with an 8-week academic term in the middle.’

But the organ scholar’s position was undoubtedly Libby’s dream. She characterises herself as a girl as the ‘envious older sister of a Christ Church chorister’, who came over to Oxford from Sussex almost every week between the ages of eleven and sixteen...

The organ scholar’s position was undoubtedly Libby’s dream: she characterises herself as the ‘envious older sister of a Christ Church chorister’, who came over to Oxford from Sussex almost every week between the ages of eleven and sixteen...
The choir was formed in 1960 as The Collegium Musicum Oxoniense by Hungarian exile László Heltay, but soon changed its name, and has long been known in Oxford simply as ‘Schola’. Its Acting Chairman, Timothy Hands, describes Schola as in many ways a product of the ’60s, a youthful organisation questioning convention: as a mixed-voice chamber choir, Schola offered Oxford’s talented female singers a much-needed opportunity to explore the kind of challenging repertoire previously the domain of the all-male choral foundations. Dame Emma Kirkby’s participation in the May Day concert demonstrated most clearly the significance of Schola’s distinctive role in Oxford’s choral scene (Dame Emma was a member of Schola from 1967 to 1971), but so too did the quality of the singing from the 200-strong choir, made up of a full spectrum of past and present members. The other soloists were also largely drawn from the ranks of the choir, established professionals Rebecca Outram and Christine Rice rubbing shoulders with names to watch for the future: Lucy Page, Catherine Pope and Roya Ziai.

The programme of Bach and Handel favourites, including Bach’s Magnificat and Handel’s Dixit Dominus, played to Schola’s traditional strengths (albeit with rather larger forces than one might normally wish for with such music!), and was admirably supported by the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment. The inclusion of a new commission by James McMillan, ‘Bring us, O Lord God’ in commemoration of former member Lydia Corfe Press, recalled Schola’s equally long-standing emphasis on innovation.

2010 was a busy year for the choir, with the release of a disc of choral works by the contemporary Finnish composer, Einojuhani Rautavaara, under conductor James Burton in January, and a tour of the UK. Indeed, if 2010 was anything to go by, Schola is going from strength to strength: no doubt its members (or the younger ones amongst them) will be looking forward to its 75th and 100th anniversaries!
‘You need some perspective on being in the Oxford bubble’ says Daisy Fancourt, finalist at Christ Church, and who wouldn’t agree with her? Daisy’s way of gaining that perspective in 2009-10 was to volunteer for Singing Medicine, an initiative new to Oxford, which takes young musicians into the John Radcliffe hospital to sing for and with children on the wards there.

Singing Medicine was pioneered in Birmingham by members of the choir Ex Cathedra. It was so successful there that they decided to export the programme, and picked Oxford and the Faculty’s music students as ideal recruits. Daisy and about thirty other students turned up to the introductory session they ran in the Faculty one afternoon in Trinity Term 2009, and while the level of commitment required meant that many didn’t feel they could sign up, about fifteen students did join the programme. They embarked on a series of five all-day training sessions in Birmingham, and then took on a rota at the John Radcliffe hospital, with four students at a time spending 9.30am-4.00pm on Fridays during term in the hospital. Daisy says that they generally each spent four full Fridays a term in the hospital – quite a commitment on top of a busy academic schedule.

Daisy is quick to point out that what they offered was not ‘music therapy’, as they were not trained in that field. Instead, they would invite the children, individually or in groups, to play games centred on singing. Choosing from amongst the extensive repertoire of songs learned on their training – and their own equally extensive repertoire – the students would create games appropriate to the age group, always also being mindful of the children’s medical conditions. While for babies they would simply sing a lullaby, for five or six year olds they might pick a song about a green frog (and encourage the kids to stick their tongues out with the frog), or a song about Mr Clickey, a man who does silly things (like washing his car with orange juice), encouraging the children to suggest silly things to add, and to sing along with the catchy chorus. With seventeen and eighteen year olds, on the other hand, games would focus on rhythmic concentration. The games’ physical element would be adapted according to the capabilities of the children.

Of course, adaptability and the ability to pull together a list of appropriate songs at speed for different kids is vital. Often the children would want not just to sing and play along, but to teach the songs they knew to the students, requiring quick thinking to create a new game around a new song. While it is usual to spend 30 minutes with each individual or group, Daisy says one session she did lasted a full hour, the little boy not wanting to let them go until he had taught them all the songs he knew. In such cases, keeping a detailed record of their sessions was vital, as it allowed them to maintain continuity the next time they saw the child.

The 2009-10 Singing Medicine programme was a great success for all concerned. Even initially sceptical clinical staff could see the positive effect on children’s wellbeing, recognising the calming effect of participatory singing.

Students described the various ways in which it affected them and the children:

I didn’t know quite what to expect from Singing Medicine: I didn’t know how I would react to seeing children in so much pain and distress. When I arrived at the hospital I felt lost and out of place, and probably just about as nervous as I’ve ever been. But my worries about ill children disappeared when I was confronted with real children. The fact that they were ill didn’t matter. On one ward, a boy whose teacher had warned us he would not want to sing begged us not to leave. It really felt like we were doing something which made a big difference, even just for a short time.

Rachel Watson

Singing gives the children something of their own to control in a hospital environment where things are mostly done to them: simple aspects of Singing Medicine such as allowing children to request ‘my favourite song’ or to see others take up ‘my suggestion’ for an action or facial expression gave them a real sense of a level of control over their own environment. The singing
carries across the ward, and, particularly in the oncology ward, even children who initially appeared uninterested often began to peer around the door.

Jenny Tamplin

Joining Singing Medicine was the best step I have taken in life so far; I have found something that I could do every day for the rest of my life.

Charlotte Moss

The Singing Medicine pilot project in Oxford was partially funded by Sing Up, so Daisy’s participation is particularly fitting as her father, Howard Goodall, has been the National Ambassador for Sing Up. Indeed, it was Howard, former Christ Church undergraduate himself (1976-1979), who suggested that Oxford music students would make great Singing Medicine tutors. His own undergraduate connections seem to have helped: a link to the John Radcliffe Hospital was provided by Oxford contemporary Rowan Atkinson – with whom Howard spent most of his social time in the Comedy Revue – who was working with the hospital on the Mr Bean ward.

Singing Medicine’s approach is very much in line with Howard’s own views on music education. While Oxford taught him ‘invaluable practical skills for life as a professional composer’, he feels that the course’s intense focus upon Western Classical music made him overly dependent on the ‘dots on the page’, with skills such as improvisation and playing by ear only developing later. Howard sees Singing Medicine’s improvisatory emphasis as an antidote to score-bound tradition, capitalising on children’s natural ability to learn by ear; indeed, he comments, ‘the miraculous thing is how quickly they learn’. Howard is delighted that Singing Medicine has been so well received in Oxford: ‘No one expected such a fantastic take-up, or for students to embrace and go for it so enthusiastically.’ He hopes that the Oxford example will lead other universities and hospitals to forge similar connections.

Unfortunately, despite the universal success of Singing Medicine and the enthusiasm of all concerned for its continuation, the funding for Sing Up has come to an end, and with it the financial support needed for the training that would allow Singing Medicine to continue in Oxford. The Faculty, recognising the importance of the project, would like to seek other ways of funding its continuation. Howard and Daisy certainly both see it as of as much benefit to the students as to the children: students share their talent, privileged education and a musical world the kids might not otherwise have access to, but also learn a great deal in the process. And as Daisy points out, volunteering is a fitting response to the ‘massive privilege’ of being at Oxford.

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RADCLIFFE
Chamber Music Residency Competition

The Faculty of Music launches a new Chamber Music residency with support from the Radcliffe Trust

Faculty of Music String Quartet
2011-12

The Faculty of Music, with the support of the Radcliffe Trust, inaugurates a Faculty Chamber Music Residency programme to start in the academic year 2011-12. The programme is designed to promote the practice and interpretation of chamber music by encouraging an established ensemble to come to Oxford for three week-long residencies over the tenure of two years. During the residency the ensemble will perform repertoire, offer coaching, and collaborate with staff and students in workshops, as well as offer public performances in Oxford’s Holywell Music Room.

The residency programme aims to attract ensembles who wish to develop and deepen their approach to works from the standard repertoire as well as newly composed music, and who have an interest in interacting creatively with the Faculty of Music’s own performers, composers, and musicologists with interests in chamber music.

The award of the Residency will follow the submission of applications and a competition for shortlisted ensembles to be held on Tuesday 1 November 2011.

The Competition is open to:

String quartets formed no more than five years ago and whose membership has been intact for the last two years.

Deadline for applications is 1st September 2011

String quartets interested in applying, please e-mail the Faculty Events Office on events@music.ox.ac.uk.

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JAMES TURNBULL (Christ Church, 2002-2005) has a recording of contemporary oboe music — Fierce Tears — coming out this November, which he says owes its inception to his nomination by the Faculty for a Harriet Cohen Memorial Trust prize. His audition for the prize in 2007 led to an award to start work on his first disc, and Fierce Tears is the result. James notes that ‘There is a great deal of wonderful contemporary British repertoire for oboe that remains unrecorded, and I wanted to create a recital disc to showcase these exceptional compositions’. Indeed, he has been working actively with a number of composers, including Michael Berkeley, John Woolrich, and Tansy Davies, to create the disc, which also features world premiere recordings of pieces by James Macmillan and Colin Matthews. The other artists on the recording, which comes out with Quartz, are fellow Harriet Cohen prize winner, harpist Claire Jones, and the pianist Huw Watkins. James hopes to further explore his commitment to contemporary music through a number of commissioning projects he is undertaking this year as part of his developing career as a soloist and ensemble performer.

HELEN WATSON (Exeter, 1988-1991) returned to Oxford in January 2011 as Director of Planning and Resource Allocation for the University. On graduating from Oxford Helen worked for Peters Edition Ltd, the Society for the Promotion of New Music, and Sonic Arts Network for three years, before moving into University administration. Helen completed an MA in Higher Education at the Institute of Education in 2001. She has worked in various capacities for the University of London, Imperial College, and City University, London, and most recently as Director of Planning at City. As an undergraduate determined to forge a career in the music world, Helen would never have anticipated returning to work in Oxford’s administration. She is delighted, however, to be coming back to the University and looking forward to the challenges the role will bring.

EMMA BLOXHAM (Lady Margaret Hall, 1990-1993) has been a Producer at BBC Radio 3 since 2000. In that time she has worked across most of the station output, from the live drivetime programmes to Proms and opera, via features, documentaries and recording sessions with the BBC’s starry roster of New Generation Artists. Earlier this year she spearheaded Radio 3’s coverage of the Schumann bicentenary, which included a documentary about the composer’s late music presented by cellist Steven Isserlis, and a whole day of celebrations from around Europe. Emma has recently managed The Genius of Mozart, a 12-day celebration that kicked off on New Year’s Day and broadcast every note the composer wrote.

There are few people who understand Messiaen better than PETER HILL (Christ Church, 1966-69). Peter is an academic and a pianist, and Emeritus Professor of Music at Sheffield University (where he taught from 1976 until retirement last year). As a scholar and performer he works mainly on contemporary and twentieth-century repertoires; he has recorded the solo and four-hand piano music of Stravinsky, the works of Schoenberg, Berg and Webern, and a number of discs of music by contemporary composers, including Nigel Osborne (St Edmund Hall, 1966-70). He has been publishing on Messiaen since the 1990s, when he brought out The Messiaen Companion (1995). In 2001, Peter and his co-researcher Nigel Simeone were the first scholars permitted access to the private Messiaen archive in Paris. Their biography of Messiaen was published in 2005, has been translated for publication in France and Germany, and in 2008 was awarded the Dumesnil Prize for musicology by the French Académie des Beaux-Arts. A further joint-authored book, Olivier Messiaen: Oiseaux exotiques, was published in 2007, and includes a detailed investigation of the composer’s musical sketches. Peter celebrated Messiaen’s centenary in 2008 with recitals throughout the world, including at the Messiaen Festival in the French Alps. His complete recording of Messiaen’s solo piano works, made with the composer’s help and encouragement, was described as one of the most important recording projects of recent years by the New York Times. Future publications include a study of Messiaen’s piano cycle, the Catalogue d’oiseaux. In a new venture, Peter is returning to his first love, the music of Bach, and is currently recording Bach’s Well-Tempered Clavier for Delphian, with Book 2 being released (ahead of Book 1) in spring.
LEANNE ROBERTS  
(St Hilda’s, 1992-1995)  
is currently Chaplain of Hertford College, Oxford. After graduating she worked as Review Group Coordinator for the Cochrane Schizophrenia Group, based in Oxford, then trained for the priesthood at Westcott House in Cambridge, while reading for a BA in theology at Emmanuel College. Ordained in London in 2002, she served a curacy in Hampton. In 2005 Leanne returned to Oxford as Chaplain of Hertford. Her background as a music student has been an ideal accompaniment to theological training, providing the knowledge and skills necessary to oversee the musical as well as spiritual, life of a college chapel.

ROBIN BARRY  
(Magdalen, 1990–1993)  
considers himself fortunate to have been able to work in the music industry ever since graduation. In 1994 he spent 10 months as a trainee record producer for Meridian Records in Mottingham, South East London, and then from 1995 began a career in music publishing at Oxford University Press. Over nine years with the Press he worked his way up from Editorial Assistant to Music Editor, helping to create many publications that remain bestsellers, and rubbing shoulders with composers such as Alan Bullard, Bob Chilcott, Gabriel Jackson, John Rutter, and Howard Skempton. A move to the Publishing Company of ABRSM (The Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music) in 2004 saw Robin focussing on developing new publications, recordings and other educational support materials. Since 2007, when he took up the role of Editorial Director, Robin has managed a team of six editors, creating all the published materials that accompany the full range of ABRSM music exams as well as many other music-education products. A number of these, for example the Barry-Coope edition of Beethoven’s 35 Piano Sonatas, and the ABRSM Songbooks, and ‘Joining the Dots’ series, have received industry awards for excellence. 2011 will include, among other things, repertoire recordings featuring several world-class violinists, including Alexandra Wood and the 2002 BBC Young Musician of the Year, and current undergraduate (LMH), Jennifer Pike.

This year, not one but both of the sought-after Musical Directorship places on the Royal Academy’s Musical Theatre course have gone to Oxford alumni. Having left the life of an organ scholar behind him, PETER WILSON (Jesus, 2006-09) spent his first year after university acting as Musical Director for fringe shows in London, including NewsRevue (the world’s longest-running comedy show) and a new work with students at the Royal Academy of Music, before winning one of the two Conductors’ places. TOM BRADY (Lady Margaret Hall, 2007-10), who was awarded the other place, had been Musical Director for various shows during his time at Oxford, including West Side Story at the Oxford Playhouse. He had also been Musical Director with the Nice People Theatre Company in Philadelphia for their production of Have a Nice Life in the New York Fringe festival in August 2010. Peter and Tom now work closely with the Academy’s choral director, Stephen Hill, and with the conductors of shows such as Sister Act, Wicked, and Les Miserables. They also accompany, arrange and orchestrate for all of the Musical Theatre department’s major concerts and showcases, including a recent performance for Stephen Sondheim on the occasion of his receiving an honorary doctorate. Peter says they’re now ‘joined at the hip’, so we’ll look forward to seeing some innovative double acts in the future.

…STAY IN TOUCH, BE INVOLVED.

Let us know what you’ve been up to since graduating from the Faculty. Send your photos and stories to oxfordmusician@music.ox.ac.uk and you could be featured in the next magazine!
Student profiles

Abigail Ballantyne
4th-year D.Phil. student at Exeter College, and winner of the Faculty's Halstead Scholarship in 2009-10.

What's your doctorate on and what stage are you at?
It’s difficult to encapsulate, but broadly speaking I’m looking at why music theory was written in early seventeenth-century Italy, and specifically why Adriano Banchieri’s music treatises exemplify the trend that began in the late sixteenth century of increasing production of didactic handbooks. I’m hoping to complete by Christmas!

What made you want to do a doctorate in the first place, and why did you choose this topic?
I wanted to continue studying: I liked the variety of being a research student and didn’t like the idea of working in an office! I chose the topic because I’m really interested in the transition between ‘Renaissance’ and ‘Baroque’ and how music theory relates to practice.

What did you do with the Halstead Scholarship money?
I went on several trips to Italy totalling about five weeks to do research in Italian archives (Bologna, Venice, Milan, Siena, Rome), and to the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris. I also bought some microfilms.

How has having the award advanced your doctoral studies?
It really helped to be able to look at original sources and obtain copies of treatises that a short research trip wouldn’t have given me time to read – and there was the serendipitous enjoyment of coming across other secondary literature in the local bookshop! And it’s given me the opportunity to get a sense of the place, which has informed my studies.

What do you hope to do once you’ve finished?
I would like to stay in academia and teach in higher education.

Catherine Cochrane
3rd year at Exeter College and one of the Conway Fund Scholarship holders.

What’s your instrument, and why did you take it up?
I have played the flute for ten years now: it was the instrument that really stood out for me when I looked at the options that were offered on moving to middle school. From there I joined the county and regional youth orchestras, and can remember playing Mendelssohn’s Hebridean overture at least 4 times...

What did you do with the Conway Fund money?
I attended the William Bennett summer school near Reading, Berkshire for 10 days in the summer of 2010.

How has having the award advanced your studies?
Aside from the many wonderful people I met and the artistic richness generated by various collaborations, William Bennett showed a model of understanding music that it was imperative to get to know in order to further and shed light on your own musical understanding. His passion rekindled in everybody the initial enthusiasm that set us all on the musical path in the first place, myself no exception. I now also have many more practice exercises and methods to help further my technique, and have made many contacts useful for my future. One particular area my eyes were opened to was the crucial importance of posture and the way the subconscious mind can interfere with playing when this was controlled in a certain way, my technique improved immediately.

What do you hope to do once you’ve finished?
I hope very much to make a career as a musician, but first I will continue my studies and allow my musicianship to develop further.

The Conway Fund scholarships are intended to cover specific costs incurred by students (up to £600) for special performance tuition fees, registration in advanced courses or masterclasses, travel expenses or any other costs directly related to the study and research of musical performance.
Music at Oxford University has a long and distinguished history as being internationally renowned for the excellence of its academic research, as it is for its performers and composers. But in the current environment of unprecedented change we face many challenges. In order to continue to offer a musical and intellectual experience second to none, and to produce some of this country’s most outstanding musicians, funding is urgently needed for studentships and lectureships, for performance opportunities, and to realise a vision for new, purpose-built premises in the University’s Radcliffe Observatory Quarter, which will set Music at the heart of Oxford’s community and provide performance, practice, composition and research facilities to benefit future generations.

We would like to ask you to consider making a gift so that our aspirations can become a reality. You could help to fund artist residencies, concerts and masterclasses, performance tuition, instrument purchase, or scholarships at undergraduate and postgraduate level, as well as securing the future of academic posts with endowments.

It is only by working together that we can realise these ambitions so that Music at Oxford University can continue to enrich the cultural and intellectual life of the local community and the nation.

To make a gift please visit www.giving.ox.ac.uk/music

Thank you! Your gift is much appreciated.

If you wish to discuss your giving options, please contact the Humanities Development team on 01865 611 540

Support Music

Giving...

The funding needs for the Faculty cover a spectrum of requirements and amounts. The following list is by no means exhaustive but indicates some of the ways both small and larger sums can make a real difference.

- New Music Faculty building on the Radcliffe Observatory Quarter: £25,000,000
- Endowing the position of Heather Professor of Music: £3,000,000
- Endowing a University Lectureship in Music: £2,500,000
- Permanently endowed Graduate Scholarship in Music: £800,000
- 3-year Graduate Scholarship: £100,000
- Endowment for Choral Foundation Choristerships (each): £200,000
- New practice pianos (each): £6,000
- Set of tubular bells for orchestra: £4,000
- Concert sponsorship: £500 – £3,000

The Holywell Music Room

The oldest purpose-built concert hall in Europe, the Holywell Music Room opened its doors to the public for the first time in 1748. The venue hosts a variety of events throughout the year, from workshops to masterclasses and concerts, featuring musicians from around the globe.

The venue is under shared management between the Faculty of Music and Wadham College, owner of the Holywell Music Room.

Various concert promoters use the venue in addition to the Faculty of Music and we are pleased to introduce a new offer for Faculty of Music Alumni – 25% off the standard hire rate.

To organise your event contact Michelle Anthony at the Faculty of Music and mention this magazine when booking:
01865 276133
michelle.anthony@music.ox.ac.uk

For information on hiring the Holywell Music Room visit www.music.ox.ac.uk/facilities/Holywell-music-room

Fundraising
Colleges and academics
recordings, books and broadcasts

2010


July: The world première of Robert Santano’s new opera for radio, The Wandering Jew, was broadcast on BBC Radio 3 on 9th July. Commissioned by the BBC, the opera is a modernist take on the tale of the Wandering Jew, the shoe-mender condemned by Jesus to wander the earth until the Second Coming after he refused to help Jesus on his way to his crucifixion. The libretto is by the composer.

Summer: New College Choir set up its own record label, Novum. The first CD on the new label, a recording of Monteverdi’s Vespro della beata vergine (NCR1382), was released to coincide with the 400th anniversary of its publication in Venice in September 1610. The recording displays the musical energy associated with New College Choir, coloured by the very special sound of its trebles alongside outstanding tenor and bass voices. Also released in 2010 was a recording of J.S. Bach’s Motets (NCR1381). Their next release on this label is the Mozart Requiem (May 2011).

Daniel Hyde, Informator Choristarum at Magdalen College, made his third appearance at the BBC Proms on 4th August in the late-night Prom from the Royal Albert Hall, London.

August: Daniel Hyde, Informator Choristarum at Magdalen College, made his third appearance at the BBC Proms on 4th August in the late-night Prom from the Royal Albert Hall, London. He performed J.S. Bach’s Canonic Variations on ‘Von Himmel Hoch’ for organ solo, BWV 769.

November: The latest book by Dr Martin Stokes (St John’s College), entitled The Republic of Love: Cultural Intimacy in Turkish Popular Music, was published by Chicago University Press.

November: Professor Laurence Dreyfus (Magdalen College), entitled Wagner and the Erotic Impulse, was published by Harvard University Press.

November: Jonathan Williams, Director of College Music at St Hilda’s College, returned to the Abbey Road Studios in London to record the orchestral soundtrack for the Playstation 3 videogame Killzone 3. Jonathan has been Orchestral Director of Nimrod Productions, the UK’s most successful videogame music company since 2001; his work can be heard on internationally best-selling titles with combined sales of over 50 million copies. For Killzone 3 he orchestrated 35 minutes of music and conducted the 12 hours of sessions with the choir and 70-strong Nimrod Studio Orchestra. In May 2010, Jonathan was part of the team which was awarded the inaugural Ivor Novello Award for videogame soundtracks for the score of Killzone 2.

December: A new organ work by Dr Thomas Hyde (Lecturer at Worcester College) received its première on 19th December as part of a BBC Singers concert at St Paul’s, Knightsbridge. Improvisation on ‘Puer Natus’ was performed by Stephen Farr, Director of Music at St Paul’s, Knightsbridge, and at Worcester College. The concert was broadcast live on BBC Radio 3 and throughout Europe as part of the European Broadcasting Union’s annual relay of Christmas music from across the world.
January: The Bate Collection of Musical Instruments at the Faculty of Music was the star turn in the BBC’s hit daytime TV show, *Flog It!* The programme, broadcast on January 4th, took a trip down St Aldate’s to explore the Bate. The Manager, Andy Lamb, introduced viewers to the collection, including recorders, glass flutes, a serpent used at the Battle of Waterloo, and a recently acquired harpsichord played (it is thought) by Joseph Haydn when he came to Oxford to receive his honorary DMus in the late 18th century. In encouraging the show’s presenter to play the serpent, Andy counselled the blowing of a raspberry to produce the best sound.

January: As a culmination to Radio 3’s series *The Genius of Mozart*, the Choir of New College gave a live broadcast of the Mozart/Sussmayr Requiem in its liturgical context, with the European Union Baroque Orchestra, under the direction of Prof Edward Higginbottom.

January: Jonathan Williams orchestrated and conducted the orchestral soundtrack for the BBC’s documentary *Filthy Cities*, recording the BBC Concert Orchestra at Angel Studios in London.

February: The latest book by Dr Daniel Grimley, a study of the work of Danish composer Carl Nielsen, was published by Boydell and Brewer.

February: Dr Owen Rees was the guest speaker on BBC Radio 3’s *Early Music Show* broadcast of February 27th.

March: Dr Daniel Grimley was in conversation with Tom Service about the music of Carl Nielsen on BBC Radio 3’s flagship music magazine programme *Music Matters*, broadcast on March 5th.

March: Arnold Schoenberg by Dr Bojan Bujic, Emeritus Fellow of Magdalen College, is a biography of one of the key personalities of 20th-century music. Published by Phaidon.

Faculty alumni releases

Rory McCleery, DPhil candidate in Musicology, The Queen’s College

The Marian Consort, a young professional early music vocal group founded and directed by Rory McCleery, has just released its debut disc with Delphian Records, *O Virgo benedicta - Music of Marian devotion from Spain’s Century of Gold*. The disc explores music from late sixteenth – and early seventeenth – century Spain, celebrating the rich compositional fruits of the Siglo de Oro’s intensely competitive musical culture. The works are all dedicated to the Virgin Mary.

Anyssa Neumann, MSt in Musicology 2009, St Hilda’s College

In 2009 Anyssa Neumann released her debut album, *Bach, Beethoven, Messiaen, Prokofiev*, reflecting a world of flickering shadows and dazzling light.

Jonathan Williams, Director of College Music at St Hilda’s College, returned to the Abbey Road Studios in London to record the orchestral soundtrack for the Playstation 3 videogame *Killzone 3.*
Notable events at the Faculty throughout 2010 and 2011

2010
3-4 February: Oxford Alumni, Peter Hill, presented a concert at the Holywell Music Room, along with a lecture and a masterclass, as part of the New Music Forum 2010.
1 March: The Faculty welcomed the renowned Pakistani composer and vocalist, Isa Rouki, for a recital of classical Middle Eastern music.
8 March: The Contemporary British Jazz Group Centre Line gave a workshop in jazz and improvisation to members of the Faculty and wider University community. The evening concert followed.
1 May: Stefan Dohr, Principal Horn of the Berliner Philharmoniker, gave a public masterclass on chamber music at the Holywell Music Room. This event was in aid of the UNICEF Haiti Earthquake Appeal.
10 June: The Conway Recital 2010 – five students, all recipients of the Joan Conway Scholarship Fund, hosted a varied concert of music at the Holywell Music Room.
21-26 June: Second-year music students, under the guidance of Dr Martyn Harry, composed and performed a new opera for primary school audiences – Passing the Remote: A Space Fantasy.
21 October: Leverhulme Trust Composer-in-Residence, Dr Trevor Wishart, premiered new electroacoustic works in a concert at the Jacqueline Du Pré Music Building.
15/16 November: Sir Peter Maxwell Davies enjoyed a two-day visit to the Faculty. A concert, featuring Sir Peter’s work Aizs Duriniens (a Hymn), as well as new works by Faculty students, was preceded by a ‘Composer Speaks’ session. Sir Peter also convened a Composition Workshop and gave a lecture at the Oxford Union.
Masterclasses and workshops also took place with musicians Anthony Robb, Mark Messegger, John Traid, Teresa Cahil, Marinos Papadopoulos, Gary Carpenter, Robert Saxton, Jeffrey Warlock, The Allegri String Quartet & Oxford Philomusica.

2011
11 January: Dame Mitsuko Uchida gave a piano recital in aid of the Faculty of Music Fundraising Campaign at the Sheldonian Theatre.
17-19 January: Students of the second-year Opera and Music Theatre course composed and performed a new opera for children in collaboration with Gaytonton Opera, all under the keen guidance of Dr Martyn Harry. The Golden Fish was performed at St John’s College.
1 February: Visiting Musician at Oriel College, baroque violist Rachel Podger, was joined by viola player Jane Rogers for a concert at the Holywell Music Room.
19 February: Menaka P.P. Bora, Academic Visitor at the University of Oxford, gave a presentation of Indian Classical Dance & Music.
25 February: The Heath Quartet workshoped six new compositions by Faculty students at the Jacqueline Du Pré Music Building.
11 March: The Bate Collection of Music Instruments hosted a 40th Anniversary Concert, in aid of the Hélène La Rue Scholarship Fund.
12 March: The Bate Collection of Music Instruments hosted a 40th Anniversary Concert, in aid of the Hélène La Rue Scholarship Fund.
15 March: A ‘scratch’ performance of a classical work and various folk songs. An ability to read music is not essential, but would be helpful. An instructive, but fun session for all.

Alumni weekend 2011
The Faculty of Music is pleased to be participating in this year’s University Alumni Weekend, taking place on 16th – 18th September 2011.
We are offering two events as part of the weekend:
Choral Workshop
Friday 16 September, 4pm – 5.30pm Holywell Music Room or Faculty of Music (location TBC)
This friendly and informal choral workshop is suitable for anyone who enjoys singing! Led by current second-year undergraduate Theo Lester (St Peter’s), the workshop will comprise a ‘scratch’ performance of a classical work and various folk songs. An ability to read music is not essential, but would be helpful. An instructive, but fun session for all.

Keeping in touch
There are many ways in which you can keep in touch with us…

Email
It’s always lovely to hear your news and updates, email: oxfordmusician@music.ox.ac.uk

Facebook
Share pictures, stories and keep up-to date with all events. Join our Facebook page: Music Faculty Events, University of Oxford

Write us a letter
Let’s not forget the lost art of handwriting; please write to Alcuin Magazine, Faculty of Music, St Aldates, Oxford, OX1 1DB

Via phone
It is, after all, ‘good to talk’: 01865 276133