

OXFORD FESTIVAL OF THE ARTS



SIGNS, SYMBOLS... & SECRETS | APRIL – JULY 2026



In a season shaped by *Signs, Symbols and Secrets*, the 2026 Oxford Festival of the Arts will lift the veil on the coded messages and concealed meanings of art.

We are grateful to the many colleges who collaborate with us, including at our joint academic conference: *Reading the signs: the meanings of medieval and Renaissance objects, symbols, and tokens*. In a further coup for the Festival, Oxford author Philip Pullman will share his fascination with symbolism and its role in his much-loved mythical worlds.

For a fun-filled take on all things investigatory, our pupils will bring to life *Sherlock Holmes* at the annual Playhouse production.

We shall also enjoy an exhibition by Oxford-based artist James Gemmill, and we will welcome Chinese artist Qu Leilei, whose calligraphic work is rich in symbolism. In music, we look forward to a spellbinding performance of Elgar's *Enigma Variations* by the Oxford Philharmonic Orchestra; an evening with the London Symphony Orchestra, featuring over 120 singers and under the baton of the Festival Director no less, together with their director Mariana Rosas; and a celebration of swing in *Luck Be a Lady*, with the LP Swing Orchestra.

On a personal note, I am particularly excited to sit down with Sarah Cracknell, lead singer of legendary indie band Saint Etienne, to talk about the 'secret' of their success over many decades.

I look forward to seeing you at an event this summer.

Helen Pike
Master, Magdalen College School

**FOUNDER
& LEAD SPONSOR**



**MAGDALEN
COLLEGE SCHOOL**

INDEPENDENT DAY SCHOOL
BOYS 7-18 & SIXTH FORM GIRLS

PATRON

John Leighfield CBE

Festival Patron, supporting young people's access to the arts
OW 1957, Former MCS Chair of Governors

Have you ever caught the sun playing hide and seek with the clouds, or watched the shadows intertwine with the light? Gazed at a glorious spectrum of colour against the chapel walls? (- that radiant interplay of refraction, reflection, or absorption by stained glass that was nowhere to be seen before light crossed its path?) Found yourself listening out for the B-A-C-H motif hidden in a score; or searching for a stonemason's chisel mark; or an artist's signature brush stroke?

Signs, symbols, secrets – we are surrounded by them. Composers write cryptic messages through their black and white dots, artists imbue their painting with symbolism, writers dare us to crack the mystery, poetry allures us, magicians and illusionists conjure up new realities – or are they?

Be it riddles, crosswords, or games; the code-breaking at Bletchley park; the overt (or not) misinformation and disinformation in today's world; the very stones of our wondrous historical city shrouded in mystery, clothe in untold stories – guarding, perhaps, the stories of the past; a secretive smile, or a text laden with meaning; do we have the key to decipher the code?

I hope that you shall all enjoy uncovering mysteries with us this year, be that in The Painted Room – Oxford's hidden gem – or through our celebration of the 400th anniversary of John Dowland (was he also a spy?).

Dr Michelle Castelletti
Director, Oxford Festival of the Arts

Cover design concept: Michelle Castelletti
Calligraphy: James Gemmill
Initial 'S' from Clavigers' Account HCA R 369, 1478-79.
Used by kind permission of Hereford Cathedral Archives
Calligraphy based on lettering in a deed of Elizabeth Bysheth, 1292 x 1296. Private collection, by permission.

With many thanks to artist James Gemmill, and to Jennifer Dubbelton, Librarian, Hereford Cathedral.

© Erica Longfellow



Printed on FSC® carbon balanced certified paper using fully sustainable, vegetable oil based inks, on a low-energy UV printing press.

ENIGMA

Nicola Benedetti, violin
Marios Papadopoulos, conductor
in collaboration with
Oxford Philharmonic Orchestra

Wednesday 15 April | 7.30pm
Sheldonian Theatre

The 'Enigma Variations' – portraits of friends, and a celebration of orchestral brilliance. The work offers glimpses into the soul of an artist who might have been careful not to reveal his secrets, but was never afraid to show his emotions.

When, in a 1905 newspaper interview, the great violinist Fritz Kreisler said he would have loved it if Elgar wrote a violin concerto, Elgar picked up the threads of a concerto he'd begun nearly two decades earlier. The piece he finished five years later is as epic and emotive as it is personal and elusive. A 50-minute masterpiece. Tempestuous, yet gentle. A work of bravura, yet of singing quality. His inscription: *In here is enshrined the soul of...* The violin for the premiere was Elgar's own instrument; and this concerto is 'almost like a personal confession'. [BBC Radio 3, Adrian Jack].

Edward Elgar *Violin Concerto in B minor, Op. 61*
Edward Elgar *Variations on an original theme, Op. 36*

★★★★ *full-throttle, sinuous, subtle, and electric*
– The Guardian on Nicola Benedetti's performance of the Elgar Violin Concerto

£60 – £20 (& concessions) | £5 student tickets

Pre-concert talk at 6.30pm. Free to ticketholders.

Sir Nicholas Kenyon:

Elgar the 'great English progressivist'

Edward Elgar is often thought of as a conservative, but Richard Strauss hailed him as adventurous and forward-looking. Sir Nicholas Kenyon returns to the festival to explore Elgar's pioneering and unforgettable c-20th music.



© Craig Gibson



THE SILVER COLLECTION

in collaboration with St John's College Oxford

Monday 20 April | 2pm & 3pm
St John's College Oxford

Two 1hr-long sessions exploring the silver collections past and present at St John's College Oxford. In 2022-2023, the college commissioned contemporary silversmiths Maria Hanson, Chris Knight and Simone Ten Hoppel to produce works which explore contemporary responses to the historical process of melt and re-use, as well as reflecting on the changing nature of college life. These modern pieces are juxtaposed with items from the college's historical collections, which materially embody aspects of college community over several centuries. Silver is a gorgeous medium not only functionally, but in gradually revealing its meaning through signs, symbols and secrets.

We are envisaging this talk by Professor Hannah Skoda, with a display of silver objects from the collection to be very popular. Please arrive at the Garden Quad Reception Room to be signed in, and ushered to the Library, St John's College Oxford, fifteen minutes before your chosen time-slot.

With many thanks to Professor Hannah Skoda and St John's College Oxford.

Image: Speke tankard © St Johns College Oxford

If We Choose to Look

The PhotoBridge Project

20 – 24 April | all day
Bonn Square

You don't need to travel the world to see it differently. Just walk to Bonn Square. Step into the open air and meet some of the most extraordinary people on the planet. Through stunning documentary photography, The PhotoBridge Project brings you face to face with communities in Kenya, Syria, India, Sri Lanka, Haiti, and the United States. People who, in the face of environmental, political, and social challenges, show what courage, solidarity, and the human spirit can achieve. Their signs, their symbols, their stories. Always here. Always visible – if we choose to look.

Bonn Square is also your gateway into The Sidebar – a dedicated space for people to connect, converse and collaborate, hosting a week of conversation, ideas and art in the New Road Baptist Church at the heart of the square. Step outside, step inside, and let Oxford surprise you.

© Guillaume Binet



The Musical Salon

in collaboration with
the Faculty of Music,
University of Oxford

Wednesday 22 April | 7pm
Holywell Music Room

Students from the Music Faculty of the University of Oxford present a mixed recital of works for the chamber music ensemble – the musical salon. These were, at the time, daring pieces that encoded challenges to the societal norms and cultural practices of its time, and through their pioneering vision signalled the cusp of upcoming change.

Full programme on the website.

Entrance is free
Booking essential



Signs and Secrets

Dowland's Foundry

Sunday 26 April | 4pm
The Church of St Mary
the Virgin, Iffley

2026 marks the 400th anniversary of the death of John Dowland, Elizabethan England's greatest lute-songster and Dowland's Foundry's eponym. World famous in his own lifetime, Dowland enjoyed widespread fame, aided to no little extent by his four books of songs, published over twenty years to spectacular success. This programme is devoted to Dowland's First (1597) and Second (1600) *Books of Songs or Ayres*, and takes, as its point of departure, the Elizabethan court – a murky world indeed of signs and secrets.

Dowland's Foundry

Sam Brown, Lute
Gwen Martin, Soprano
Clemmie Franks, Alto
Daniel Thomson, Tenor
Timothy Dickinson, Bass

£15 | £12 | £5

Full programme on the website.



© Joe Oswald

Luke Fowler

Residency

in collaboration with
St John's College Oxford

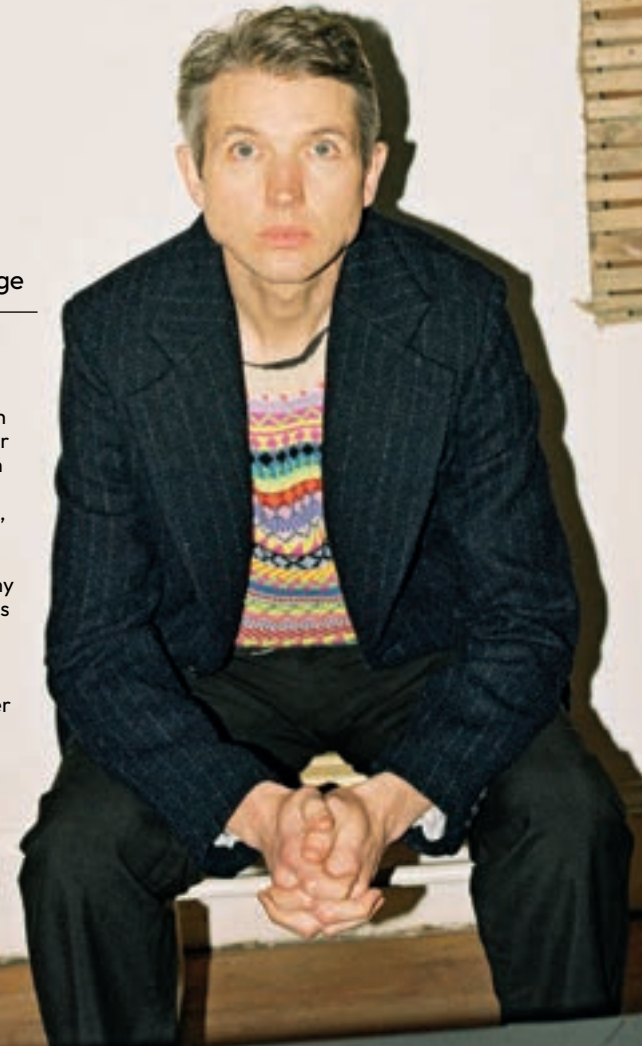
26 April – 20 June
The Kendrew Barn, St John's College

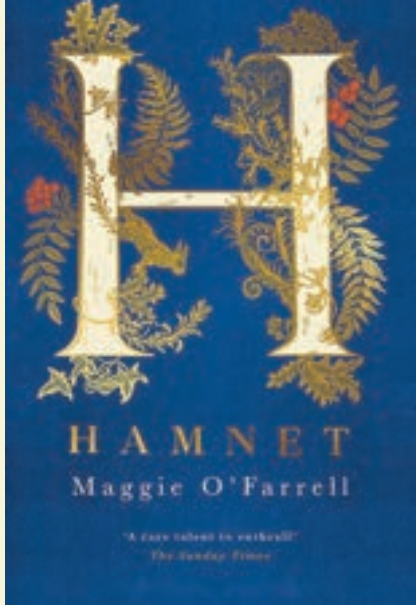
Luke Fowler is an artist, filmmaker, and musician based in Glasgow. His para-documentary films have explored counter-cultural figures including Scottish psychiatrist R. D. Laing, English composer Cornelius Cardew, and Marxist-Historian E. P. Thompson. With an emphasis on communities of people, outward thinkers, and the history of the left, his 16mm films tell the stories of alternative movements in Britain, from psychiatry to photography to music to education. His recent work has focussed on sound, place, and figures who have been ignored or overlooked by history. Fowler was nominated for the Turner Prize and was the inaugural winner of the Jarman Award.

Entrance is free

Dates and times of events during this period will be announced on the website.

© Laura Meek





Secrets of Shipwrecks

Janet Dickinson
in collaboration with the
Oxford Preservation Trust

Tuesday 28 April | 4pm
The Painted Room

Stories of lost ships and their cargoes hold an enduring curiosity, thinking about what was lost and what might even be recovered. Oxygen deprived environments can mean that some items are preserved to a remarkable degree and advances in maritime archaeology have resulted in some spectacular recoveries as well as hope of further discoveries. This talk will focus on a series of historic shipwrecks dating from antiquity to the eighteenth century and what they reveal of the worlds from which they disappeared.

£12 | £10 | £5 (individual talks)
£20 | £16 | £8 (both talks)
(including a glass of wine/non-alcoholic
beverage in the 'interval')

Dr Janet Dickinson is Departmental Lecturer (History) at Oxford University's department for Lifelong Learning and Lecturer at New York University in London. Her research focuses on the Tudors and court history and occasionally on shipwrecks and drowned books. Janet is a convenor of the Tudor & Stuart Seminar at the Institute of Historical Research and a committee member of the Society for Court Studies.

Dr Lynn Robson is Fellow Emerita in English Literature at Regent's Park College, and an Honorary Academic Associate of Oxford Lifelong Learning. Her interests are in the representation of prisons and penitence in early modern prose murder pamphlets, early modern women writers, and Shakespeare. Her current project is on Hilary Mantel's Wolf Hall Trilogy.

The authenticity of grief: attitudes towards life and death in Shakespearian England

Lynn Robson and Janet Dickinson
in collaboration with the
Oxford Preservation Trust

Tuesday 28 April | 2pm
The Painted Room

An experience which connects human stories across time. Experiences of grief and loss are recorded in only the starkest, most simple terms in the historic archives which survive. Maggie O'Farrell's recent novel, *Hamnet*, and the film adaptation directed by Chloe Zhao, enter this emotional space, and fill it with a wrenching portrayal of grief and its impact on a family. Today's conversation, between a literary scholar and a historian, will discuss the ways in which this fictional representation retells the story of the loss of William Shakespeare's only son, and how reinvention and imagination can enhance our understanding of how historical people lived, felt, and remembered those closest to them.

...a feather on the breath of God VOICE

Sunday 10 May | 4pm
St Bartholomew's Chapel, Bartlemas*

German medieval abbess Hildegard of Bingen (1098 - 1179) was a great spiritual leader, theologian, mystic, scientist, and composer, whose influence continues to resonate today. This special programme for Oxford Festival of the Arts celebrates the ancient setting of Bartlemas Chapel in the 900th anniversary of its founding in 1126 by Henry I with a programme of original medieval works by Hildegard, and contemporary music inspired by her.

£15 | £12 | £5

* Please note that there are no facilities on this site.



Post-performance conversation with Dr Anna Beer

Anna Beer's influential *Sounds and Sweet Airs: The Forgotten Women of Classical Music* has led to numerous creative collaborations on radio, TV, film and, most excitingly, the concert platform. This afternoon we shall explore the legacy of Hildegard of Bingen and the rich history of compositions by women.

© Viktoria Kuti

Binsey Whimsy Walk

Sunday 3 May
& Sunday 28 June | 2pm
The Church of St Margaret
of Antioch, Binsey

A gentle walk of about half a mile to the secluded church at Binsey, where the well dedicated to St Margaret remains a symbol of the sanctity of St Frideswide, Oxford's patron saint. Although visited for centuries by pilgrims, it had disappeared until the secret of its location was uncovered by Lewis Carroll's colleague, the Rev. Thomas Prout. This inspiration for Carroll's Treacle Well is just one of Binsey's many literary associations, intertwined with its well-documented factual past.

The walk will begin at (the sign of) The Perch.

£12

The Perch has offered our patrons a free drink with every meal on the day. Walkers will need to retrace their steps, as there is no through route from the church (nor public transport) from Binsey.



Usha dapor Kar: Fragments from my Other Life

in collaboration with St John's College Oxford

11 – 25 May | 11am – 6pm*

The Kendrew Barn, St John's College

Through imagination, magical realism, and sporadic layered memory, Usha Kar presents 'Fragments from my Other Life' – a series of paintings exploring parallels, gains and losses of an international heritage, and the juxtaposition of a life lived and a life imagined, through the eyes of a child.

'Balancing precision with gestural flow, my work creates animistic, mythic spaces where beauty and unease coexist, and where questions of identity, belonging, resilience and justice extend beyond the human world. Darkness becomes a site of solace and strength, and my practice explores charged psychological terrains where presence is implied and absence becomes an emotional force, revealing fragile structures that shape human experience.' Usha dapor Kar

Usha creates paintings and mixed media installations to stimulate reflection and conversation about social and climate justice. She combines precisely painted elements with energetic flow and animism, linking the specific to the spiritual and universal. Now based in Oxford, in parallel with a career in international development, Usha began to develop her art practice in 2017, launching her first major exhibition, *Ferocious Grace*, in 2022.

Entrance is free

*On Thursdays, the exhibition will be open until 8pm; and on Sundays it will close at 5pm.

© Usha Kar

The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari (1920)

Silent Film with live improvised
organ accompaniment

David Bednall, organ

Monday 11 May | 9pm

Magdalen College antechapel

A return to our ever-popular silent film with live improvisation on the grand Eule Organ – with its unique, fantastical and colourful sound-world, with 45 stops over four manuals and pedals – including Physharmonica (free reeds sounds), and a Tuba which requires its own blower, owing to the pressure required to support such a big sound (!), at Magdalen College antechapel.

The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari (1920) is a seminal German Expressionist horror film directed by Robert Wiene – a landmark new gothic film, known for its cinematic devices. It follows Francis, who recounts how the sinister Dr. Caligari uses a somnambulist, Cesare, to commit murders in a town. Famous for its contorted cubist sets, unusual angles, spinning umbrellas masquerading as a fairground, the contrast of shadow and light that aim to express inner states of being, and the 'twist ending', it has been referred to as the first cult film and a precursor for Art film. You will find yourself immersed in an eerie world of betrayal, bloodshed, and irrational authority, as this spine-tingling story unfolds in some of the most haunting images of the cinema, mirroring a distorted, nightmarish reality.

David Bednall is published by Choral Music Publishing, Oxford University Press, Boosey and Hawkes, Faber, and Novello. He is Choral Director of Clifton Cathedral, Musical Director of Bristol Bach Choir, Bristol Chamber Choir and Chew Valley Choral Society, alongside an extensive freelance career. He has improvised on live radio, and performed extensively in the UK and abroad, including at Notre-Dame de Paris – and even was stunt organist on *Dr Who!* His compositions are widely performed, recorded, and broadcast on BBC Radio and Classic FM. David's *St Mark Passion* was commissioned for the BBC Singers in 2025.

£15 | £12 | £5



© Robert Wiene, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons



Bartlemas: Oxford's hidden sanctuary

An exhibition (and talk) by Martin Stott

in collaboration with Oxfordshire Artweeks

16 – 25 May | 12pm – 6pm

Thursday 21 May | 6pm (talk)

St Bartholomew's Chapel, Bartlemas*

Celebrating the links between past and present, this exhibition explores the Bartlemas hamlet and leper hospital on the 900th anniversary of their foundation. A rich mix of place, spirituality, 'edgeland' and contemporary stories that still infuse this unique locality.

Photographer and local historian Martin Stott charts its origins, turbulent history, its focus on the outcasts, dispossessed, and refugees of the times, and the healing, care, refuge, and sanctuary it offered. He traces its impact on east Oxford over 900 years, drawing out the threads of these traditions, re-made and celebrated in the neighbourhood today.

Entrance is free

Booking essential for the talk.

*The exhibition is being held in the atmospheric and rarely open Bartlemas Chapel. Access on foot only, is via a narrow lane off Cowley Road. Chapel 300m up on right hand side. No vehicles, no parking.

Compline by Candlelight Consort of Voices, Magdalen College

Tuesday 19 May | 9pm
Magdalen College Chapel

A special Compline by Candlelight to commemorate the 400th anniversary of the Baroque Italian composer Giovanni Legrenzi (1626 – 1690). A chance to hear Legrenzi's rarely-performed, but exquisite, setting of the Compline service, *Compiete con le Lettanie & Antifone Della B.V. a 5. voci. Op. 7.*

Entrance is free

Reading the signs: the meanings of medieval and Renaissance objects, symbols, and tokens in memory of art historian and Kellogg Fellow, Dr Cathy Oakes

in collaboration with Kellogg College Oxford
and Oxford Lifelong Learning

Friday 29 May | 9.30am – 6.30pm

The Hub, Kellogg College Oxford

'Signs and symbols have been used throughout human history to record deeds, to project identity, and to convey messages over time and place. Their specific forms and meanings depend, however, on the society and culture in which they operate. This interdisciplinary conference offers fresh perspectives on the signs and symbols used by medieval and Renaissance people. [...] At a time in our history when few people could read or write, when most communication was by word of mouth, when heads of state and others in authority had to project their power and influence over long distances, and when people had to trust to their powers of memory and their senses, the use of visual and oral signs, physical gestures, and material tokens was of special importance. Signs and symbols permeated all aspects of life, from religious devotion and liturgical practice to politics, personal relationships, trade and commerce, and the law. Extraordinary weather events were seen as portents; great decisions were guided by the movements of the stars. This day conference will offer ways of seeing the signs and symbols which were ubiquitous in our medieval and early modern past.' Professor Elizabeth Gemmill

Full conference schedule, and booking details on the website.

Image: The Virgin Mary. Wall painting on the East splay of the Annunciation window (north wall) in the Chancel of the Church of St Mary the Virgin, Chalgrove, Oxfordshire. Photo © Michelle Castelletti



May Song in Bartlemas

Sunday 31 May | 4pm
St Bartholomew's Chapel, Bartlemas*

Medieval music, poetry and readings celebrating Oxfordshire in May in the ancient setting of Bartlemas Chapel in its 900th year. Featuring local performers – The Comper Singers, Anna Tolputt (actor), Kate Wakeling (poet) and Giles Lewin (Violin). This is a family event.

£5 (children under 16 enter free)

* Please note that there are no facilities on this site.

MARMADUKE! THE MUSICAL!

A Magdalen College School production

Tuesday 2 June | 10.15am & 1.15pm
Pegasus Theatre

Noah thinks year six is grim. So when he unexpectedly meets madcap inventor, Marmaduke Mouse, he leaps at the chance to become his Sidekick. But in Mouseland, Noah discovers more than just Marmaduke's weird and unpredictable inventions. He also encounters Mouseland's human-hating Mayor. Can Noah persuade Marmaduke to invent a 'Year Six Fixer' before the Mayor bans him from Mouseland forever?

Get ready for shenanigans!

Script by Carol Peaker
Score by Alex Thomas.

*A true musical comedy...
we can be sure that we will
hear more of marvellous
Marmaduke and his
misadventures!* – Dailyinfo

Wonderfully bonkers
– Alex Thomas, composer

Funny and anarchic
– Imogen Foxell, illustrator

Further details
on the website.



Image: Extract from the poster for the original production, premiered at Pegasus Theatre last year.

© illustration kOrky Paul

Anna Lapwood

in collaboration with AEG Presents,
ATG Entertainment & New Theatre Oxford

Wednesday 3 June | 6.30pm
New Theatre Oxford

Hailed as 'the dream ambassador for classical music' by Gramophone, organist Anna Lapwood is touring with her brand-new bespoke organ for the very first time, bringing the instrument into new spaces and theatres across the UK, performing her trademark fusion of film scores and classical repertoire, alongside music by contemporary classical composers.

As the official organist of the Royal Albert Hall, Anna Lapwood MBE has broken down genre boundaries and introduced a huge new audience to the organ. She has reached millions and helped revitalise repertoire for the instrument through the commissioning and performing of new works. She is also an established conductor and broadcaster, and a fierce advocate for the advancement of female voices within her industry.

Anna is a graduate of the University of Oxford, where she was the first female Organ Scholar in Magdalen College's 560-year history.

Further details on the website.

*Imaginative,
open-minded
and a brilliant
musician*
– Gramophone

*...she's a star on
a mission*
– The Sunday Times

*...the world's
most visible
organist*
– New York Times



© Nathan Reinds Avond van de Filmmuziek



James Gemmill. An exhibition.

5 – 14 June
Weekdays 4pm – 7pm
Weekends 11am – 4pm*
The Kendrew Barn, St John's College

I was captivated by James' art as soon as I "discovered" this a few years back. Physically and texturally, his paintings are layer upon layer of material. Metaphorically, there is so much to decipher in this shrouded complex and philosophical creative process. James is a socially-engaged artist, whose work is more often than not imbued with underlying humanitarian thought, whilst allowing the opportunity for personal interpretation.
– Michelle Castelletti

Oxfordshire-based artist James Gemmill has a wide-ranging artistic career, working in film, television, and design, as well as in the more traditional context of gallery artist. His paintings are held in distinctly prestigious collections in different countries. Gemmill's life as a working artist is now a culmination of the knowledge gained through studio painting, film art, design, and being around engineers, clients, and patrons. He has been commissioned large works in the cinematic world. James never knows what he will be creating from one day to the next. The size, medium, and location are always in flux. The possibilities are endless and exciting.

Entrance is free

* Exhibition opening Friday 5 June: 6pm – 8pm.
The paintings in this exhibition will be for sale.

Purcell, The Musical

Saturday 6 June | 7.30pm
Grove Auditorium, Magdalen College


★★★★ The Times
★★★★ Planet Hugill

A concert-play by award-winning writer **Clare Norburn**, directed by BAFTA-nominated director **Nicholas Renton**.

1695. Hailed English Baroque composer Henry Purcell in his final illness. Purcell (**Niall Ashdown**) is experiencing feverish dream-like hallucinations in which the past, the present, and fantasy, collide, and where his songs take on a life of their own. With the shadow of death falling over his tousel bed, his bedroom transforms into a theatre, and Purcell revisits his childhood memories of the Great Fire of London, and his early romance with his wife.

Interwoven into the drama are Purcell's compositions: from bawdy theatre ballads and joyful celebrations of love, to slow airs, a 'mad song', and numbers from his semi-operas.

£22 | £18 | £5
Line-up and more details on the website.



© Robert Pivko

Kira Freije: Unspeak the Chorus

a curator-led tour, in collaboration with Modern Art Oxford

Thursday 11 June | 6pm
Modern Art Oxford

Kira Freije's quietly compelling sculptures are bringing new life to the art world
– British Vogue

For her first major solo exhibition in the UK, Kira Freije (b. 1985, London) has created a new body of work comprising around 20 life-size figures, in various states of action, arranged in small groupings. The groupings suggest narrative fragments, or interior states of mind, and evoke a time and place without specifically referencing a history or geography.

Visitors this evening will walk amongst the figures, sensing the emotionally charged space enhanced through atmospheric lighting design and hand-blown glass lamps created by Freije and lighting design by Matt Daw.

To create her figures, Freije casts her own hands and feet in aluminium, building her metal sculptures from the feet upwards, welding together stainless steel strips like a pencil outline to create their forms. To these, Freije adds faces, or parts of faces, cast from people who are important in her life, as well as fabric and found materials such as brass and copper to complete the materially-rich whole.

Kira Freije is co-commissioned by The Hepworth Wakefield and Modern Art Oxford, in collaboration with the KINDL – Centre for Contemporary Art, Berlin. With generous support from The Foundation Foundation, Emma and Fred Goltz, and The Kira Freije Exhibition Circle.

£10

Installation image of Kira Freije Unspeak the Chorus, The Hepworth Wakefield, November 2025 © Lewis Ronald



Secrets: A Spider's Tapestry

Schola Cantorum of Oxford
Raschèr Saxophone Quartet

Steven Grahl, director

Friday 12 June | 7.30pm

University Church of St Mary the Virgin

J.S. Bach arr. Nystedt
Nico Muhly
Per Nørgård
Cheryl Frances-Hoad
Benjamin Britten
Cheryl Frances-Hoad
Jaakko Mäntyjärvi
J.S. Bach

Immortal Bach
Things unknown
Roads to Ixtlan
Beyond the night sky
Six Metamorphoses after Ovid, Op. 49
A Spider's Tapestry (premiere)
3 Shakespeare Songs
Der Geist hilft (BWV 226)

An evening of intricate weaving, symbolism in the work of Bach, and a variety of moods and sound worlds, taking Cheryl Frances-Hoad's new work, *A Spider's Tapestry* as inspiration, combined with our quest to uncover hidden meaning in this year's festival.

Nico Muhly's *Things Unknown* was also commissioned for Schola Cantorum this year and includes texts by Thomas Traherne, Vera Brittain and others: '...I have found that things unknown have a secret influence on the soul'. With *Roads to Ixtlan*, Nørgård depicts a metaphorical journey to the city of the Mexican sorcerer, Don Genaro, whilst Cheryl Frances-Hoad *A Spider's Tapestry* sets a poem by Miranda Latham-Jackson about Arachne, the skilled young weaver in Greek mythology who was turned into a spider by the goddess Athena.

Schola Cantorum of Oxford has built a reputation as Oxford's premier concert choir, engaging deeply with complex repertoire and commissioning new music.

If there were an Olympic discipline for virtuoso wind playing, the Raschèr Quartet would definitely receive a gold medal. – Die Welt

More information and booking details on the website.



© Bill Lam



© Felix Broede



Signs, Symbols . . . & Secrets in the Archives of New College, Oxford

Saturday 13 June | 12pm – 5pm
Conduit Room, New College Oxford

Come and explore the range of signs, symbols, and secrets in the extensive archive of New College, Oxford, going back now nearly a thousand years. This might take you into such as the range of marks, abbreviations, and signs used by our predecessors in their writing, or the symbolism of heraldry and seals where an image was meant to represent an individual for those who could not read the writing, or the Bletchley Park-related work going on at New College in WW2.

Entrance is free

Image: New College's first seal, showing the college arms, New College Archive, Oxford, 12814.

Lingua ignota: Hildegard's "unknown" language

Voice, vocal trio

Stevie Wishart, hurdy-gurdy

Sunday 14 June | 4pm Part I

The Church of St John the Baptist, Stanton St John Church

Sunday 28 June | 4pm Part II

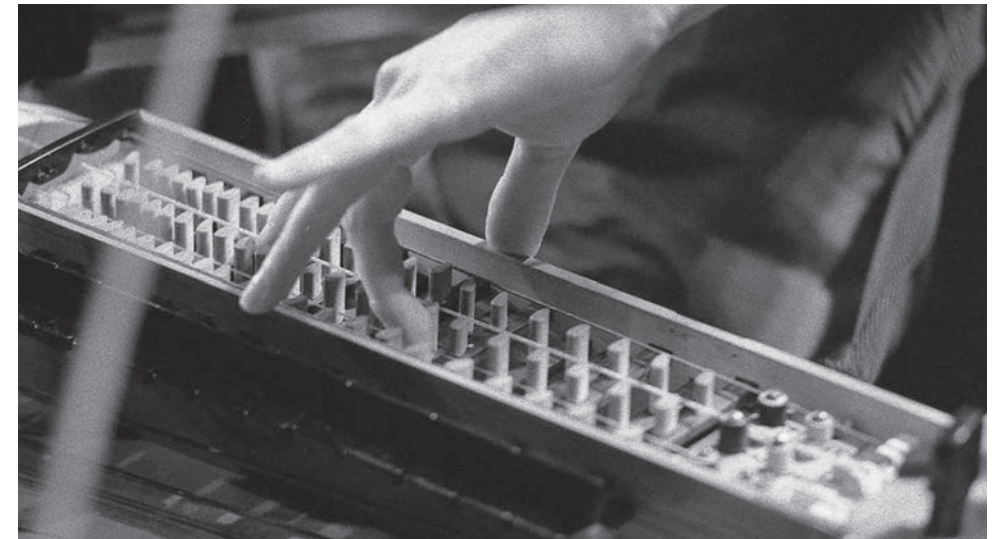
The Church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Beckley

St Hildegard (1098 – 1179) invented a glossary of her own words containing some thousand nouns covering a bizarre range of subjects from spiritual (starting with terms for God and angels) to natural realms (ending with plants and a few birds and insects). Although one can imagine the *lingua ignota* being useful for mystical or meditational purposes among her communities in Rhineland Germany, their purpose remains something of a mystery. What is more certain is that Hildegard's words were invented for their sound, as they are so timbrally colourful when spoken or sung, and form the inspiration for our concert where Voice Trio comes together with Hildegard specialist and composer, Stevie Wishart. They will perform Wishart's compositions that use Hildegard's *lingua ignota* as lyrics, together with medieval, contemporary, and improvised works exploring secrets and signs. The music will also feature the hurdy-gurdy — an enigmatic string instrument, bowed with a wheel and dating from Hildegard's time and with an increasingly powerful voice in music today.

This programme is set over two dates, with Part 1 performed at Stanton St John on June 14th, and Part 2 performed on June 28th in Beckley. They can still be attended separately.

£15 | £12 | £5

Ticket for both performances: £25 | £20 | £10



© Joe Glaysher

Qu Lei Lei & Caroline Deane Exhibition & Installation

19 – 28 June | Weekdays 4pm – 7pm | Weekends 11am – 4pm*
OVADA

An exhibition with a message: aside from our geo-political position, our social status, or our ethnicity, we share one thing: we are all human.

In an environment of largely unregulated exponential development in global science and technology, where benefits to humanity run alongside unknown harm, the layers of uncertainty prevailing in today's systems of governance are alarmingly. Levels of chaos intervene as our grip on reality and integrity are corroded by misinformation.

Humanity, in its simple, modest, and most genuine form is being relentlessly knocked over by greed, war, corruption, abuse of power, and voracious environmental destruction. Its resilience, courage, and ability to constantly pick itself up and dust itself down arguably remain constant as similar predicaments kick it over time and time again, relentlessly, like skittles in a bowling alley, down through the annals of history.

Entrance is free

*Exhibition opening Friday 19 June: 6pm – 8pm.

There will be events linked to this exhibition, including a Chinese Calligraphy workshop, throughout this period. Details on the website.



© LeiLei Qu

Early Music Weekend

in collaboration with
Continuo Foundation

20 – 21 June
Magdalen College Oxford
& New College Oxford



Still Life Musica d'Outroira

Saturday 20 June | 2pm
Grove Auditorium,
Magdalen College Oxford

Música d'Outroira is an early music ensemble founded in 2022 by Galician director and harpsichordist Pablo Devigo. Active internationally, the group specialises in 17th-century Italian repertoire, focusing particularly on the *stylus phantasticus*, a Baroque compositional style characterised by freedom, fantasy and dramatic contrasts. This afternoon we shall listen to this ensemble's debut album, which includes the first recording of works by Gregorio Strozzi and Ignazio Albertini alongside sonatas by Castello, Buxtehude and Stradella. The album, co-produced by Pablo Devigo and Ignasi Cambra, features the collaboration of Christi Park (violin), Timothy Lin (violoncello and viola da gamba), Asako Ueda (theorbo and archlute), Louis Moisan (guitar), Claas Harders (lirone), and Dávid Budai (violone).

£15 | £12 | £5*

Double, Double Toil & Trouble Palisander

Saturday 20 June | 4pm
Grove Auditorium, Magdalen College Oxford

The intrinsic links between magic and music have been recognised for thousands of years. In 'Double, Double, Toil & Trouble', Palisander explores this relationship through music inspired by humanity's fascination with the mystical; pieces reflecting the Renaissance concept of the Three Magics; songs used to share news of witch trials; music sent to composers by supernatural beings, through their dreams; and music composed for the group using magical calculations from the 17th Century. Today's concert will feature music by Hildegard von Bingen, Johann Sebastian Bach, John Dowland and Giuseppe Tartini.

Palisander – making recorders phenomenally interesting and exciting
– Katie Derham, BBC Radio 3

Palisander prides itself in presenting imaginative, historical programmes with a wide range of repertoire; performing largely from memory, on recorders up to 6 feet tall! Devising their own choreography, as well as writing new compositions and unique arrangements for the ensemble, the group's members are keen ambassadors for the recorder's versatility. This is brought to life in the exciting theatrical concerts, for which Palisander is known.

£15 | £12 | £5*

Photo © Becky Mursell

Early Music Festival Evensong

New College Choir

Robert Quinney, director

Saturday 20 June | 5.45pm
New College Oxford

A special Choral Evensong at New College, marking the festival's Early Music Weekend, featuring joyful music by two giants of the German Baroque, Heinrich Schütz and Johann Sebastian Bach.

Entrance is free. Everyone of all faiths and none are welcome.

Dreams Under the Wings of Morpheus

Bellot Ensemble

Saturday 20 June | 7.30pm
Grove Auditorium, Magdalen College Oxford

The Bellot Ensemble return to the festival by popular demand, after what the festival director referred to as one of the most riveting performances in the festival last year, with a new programme.

'Dreams Under the Wings of Morpheus' follows the quiet journey from sleep into waking, guided by the figures who shaped the ancient understanding of dreams. Scenes from Cavalli and Lully sit beside Italian and English lullabies, with pieces carrying private messages, expressed through signs rather than speech. In myth, the imagined dream world did not end because the dream was finished but because something real cut through it. The calls of the nightingale and the cuckoo in works by Merula, Uccellini and Biber, act as symbols of morning and awareness, breaking the stillness that sleep had held. We follow this shift into daylight – where love, longing, and reflection appear without the disguises of dream through works by Monteverdi, Lambert and Lanier, exploring how signs, symbols and quiet natural cues shape the way we understand inner experience.

£18 | £15 | £5*
Full programme on the website.

John Dowland: songs and ayres in the library

Dowland's Foundry

Sunday 21 June | 11.30am – 4pm
The Old Library, Magdalen
College Oxford*

Magdalen College owns a rare first edition of the printed music of John Dowland (1563?-1626). The Old Library will be open to allow visitors to view this beautiful early sixteenth century book.

Lute-song ensemble Dowland's Foundry are joined by viol player Sam Stadlen to give an intimate & informal table performance of selected Dowland's songs from original print of John Dowland (1563-1626) *Books of Songs and Ayres* (c.1600). Expect to hear lesser-known gems, as well as his greatest hits, all in the technicolour in which it was imaged: 'all of the parts, or either of them severally, to be sung to the lute'.

Dowland's Foundry
Sam Brown, Lute
Gwen Martin, Soprano
Clemmie Franks, Alto
Daniel Thomson, Tenor
Sam Stadlen, Bass Viol

Entrance is free
Booking essential.
* Throughout the day, with allocated timeslots. Please check the website for details and booking.



Echoes of the Spanish Baroque

Lowé Ensemble

Sunday 21 June | 4pm
Grove Auditorium, Magdalen College

This programme will feature works by Spanish composers as well as French, Italian and English composers who were deeply influenced by Spanish culture and language. Notable highlights include Handel's rare and colourful profane Spanish cantata *No se emendará jamás* and Lully's *Sé que me muero de amor* from 'Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme', which reflect the allure of the Spanish language and its poetic expressiveness. Lowé Ensemble are also thrilled to present the debut performance of their own arrangement of 'Fandango, R. 146' by Antonio Soler.

Lowé Ensemble is a Baroque music group made up of five siblings with British and Spanish roots, currently based in London. Driven by a shared passion for Baroque music, they bring the music of the 17th and 18th centuries to today's stage and audiences, with performances that blend the beauty of historical music with the closeness of their family within the immediacy of the contemporary stage, creating a unique and powerful experience to share with audiences from all backgrounds.

£15 | £12 | £5*
Full programme on the website.



© Ben Reason

Who was John Dowland?

Nicholas Mulroy, tenor
Elizabeth Kenny, lute
Sunday 21 June | 6pm
Grove Auditorium, Magdalen College

★★★★★
...the sheer expressivity of [Mulroy's] singing was a thing of wonder here
– Simon Thompson, The Times

... a triumph [...] Kenny's performances are superb, technically assured in the trickiest variations, and always with a sense of spontaneous re-creation
– Instrumental Choice, BBC Music Magazine

The festival continues its celebration of the 400th anniversary of John Dowland, with an evening with two of the most respected and exceptional musicians.

Semper Dowland semper dolens (always Dowland, always mournful) was his motto. And yet Thomas Fuller claimed: 'A cheerful person he was, passing his days in lawful merriment' (*The History of the Worthies of England*, 1662). Was the melancholy persona real, along the lines of Burton's influential *Anatomy of Melancholy*, or was it a carefully-constructed "brand"?

We can imagine his voice in the extremely personal texts, some of which may (but also may not) be written by him. The more Dowland appears to be present, the more he disappears, his secrets closely guarded. In 1595, he wrote a long self-exculpating letter to Sir Robert Cecil claiming accusations of Catholicism had unfairly prejudiced the Queen against him. As well as Italian songs that he may have given his son Robert to publish in *A Muscull Banquet* (1610), tonight will feature music by his contemporary William Byrd, whose recusancy was maintained in a more transparent manner, despite the risks in Elizabethan England.

You never quite know where you are with Dowland, and the intensity of his secrets, hints, and symbols, remain an enduring part of his appeal.

£20 | £16 | £5*
Full programme on the website.

Early Music Weekend
*Saturday pass: £40 | Sunday pass: £30 | Weekend pass: £65

Image: Teardrop emblem from Peachum Minerva Britanna (A garden of heroical deuises), 1612
'neither are teares shed always in sorrow but sometime in joy and gladnesse'. *Preface to Lachrimae*, 1604.



The Hunchback of Notre Dame (1923)

Silent Film with live improvised organ accompaniment

David Bednall, organ
Monday 22 June | 9pm
Magdalen College antechapel

In 1482 Paris, Quasimodo, the isolated bell-ringer of Notre Dame, is drawn into a dangerous chain of events when his master forces him to abduct the dancer Esmeralda. After she is rescued by Captain Phoebus, tensions rise between the city's aristocracy, the underworld led by Clopin, and the church. As jealousy, political ambition, and forbidden love collide, Esmeralda seeks sanctuary in the cathedral, setting the stage for a looming showdown around Notre-Dame in this film based on the novel by Victor Hugo.

Hailed as 'the man of a thousand faces', Lon Chaney was a pioneering figure in the world of silent cinema and special-effects makeup. Beyond this, his ability to embody characters and his acting (he appeared in over 150 films) earned him widespread acclaim, setting new standards in the industry, and leaving a legacy far beyond his era.

His transformation into Quasimodo took three and a half hours to complete. This epic film cost a staggering amount – north of \$1,250,000 – with over 200 carpenters, 60 painters, and famous sculptors making bas-reliefs, statues, and gargoyles, all employed to re-create Notre-Dame Cathedral; and cobblestones brought from a river 20 miles away to re-create medieval Paris in L.A.! The whole construction took six months to finish, with the main sets covering 19 acres of land, eleven of which were for the square of Notre-Dame.

£15 | £12 | £5



© Hugh Warwick

THE OXFORD PROM!

London Symphony Chorus

Mariana Rosas, conductor
Michelle Castelletti, conductor
Benjamin Frost, organ

Wednesday 24 June | 7.30pm
Oxford Town Hall



The Oxford Festival of the Arts is proud to be collaborating with the London Symphony Chorus to bring to Oxford an evening of great music-making, with some of the most-loved choral works, and a chorus of over 120 singers!

Tonight, the LSC Chorus Director, Mariana Rosas, and the director of the Oxford Festival of the Arts, Michelle Castelletti, will be sharing the podium for an evening to remember! They have enjoyed coming up with a programme which will include glorious immortal pieces, as well as (of course!), the chance for the audience to join in, in prom-like fashion!

Expect Handel's *Zadok the Priest*; Carl Orff's explosive first movement from 'Carmina Burana', *O Fortuna*; excerpts from Brahms *Ein Deutsches Requiem* (German Requiem) and Elgar's *Dream of Gerontius*; and gorgeous works including Fauré's *Cantique*

de Jean Racine, Stanford's *Beati Quorum Via*, Whitacre's *Lux Aurumque*, Ginastera's *O vos omnes* from the 'Lamentations of Jeremiah', Bruckner's *Os Iusti*, and Parry's *I was glad*.

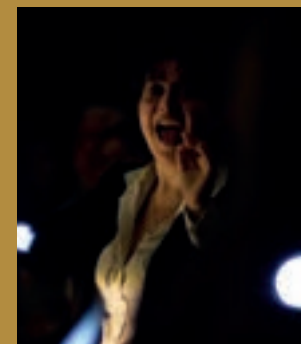
Founded in 1966, to complement the work of the London Symphony Orchestra, the LSC has performed with many leading orchestras – frequently with the LSO, but also with the Berlin Philharmonic, Vienna Philharmonic, Leipzig Gewandhaus, Los Angeles Philharmonic, New York Philharmonic and, more recently, with Les Siècles, the SWR Symphony Orchestra and with the Simón Bolívar Symphony Orchestra of Venezuela. The LSC tours extensively in Europe. Recent tours have included Paris, Baden-Baden and Luxembourg under Sir Simon Rattle, who remains the President of the Chorus.

£35 | £27.50 | £20 | £12 (& concessions)
Full programme on the website.



Mariana Rosas
conductor

© Rodrigo Orquera



Michelle Castelletti
conductor

© Massimo Denaro,
Malta Philharmonic Orchestra



Benjamin Frost
organ

© Hyatt Studios



Monteverdi: Vespro della Beata Vergine, 1610

The Choir and Consort of Voices of Magdalen College, Oxford
His Majestys Sagbutts & Cornetts
Mark Williams, conductor
Thursday 25 June | 7.30pm
Magdalen College Chapel



Magdalen College's celebrated Choir and Consort of Voices join forces with the renowned early music ensemble, His Majestys Sagbutts and Cornetts, in Monteverdi's monumental Vespers, one of the pillars of baroque repertoire, presented in one of the jewel boxes of Oxford architecture, Magdalen College's fifteenth-century Chapel.

£30 | £15 (& concessions)
Full programme and other details on the website.

Sherlock Holmes and the Napoleon of Crime

A Magdalen College School production

Thursday 25 June & Friday 26 June | 7pm
Saturday 27 June | 2pm & 7pm
Oxford Playhouse

London, 1883. Polly Langdale, an aspiring journalist, is looking for her first big story. She pursues Dr John Watson in search of the truth about his friend, the legendary detective, Sherlock Holmes. Through her investigation, we follow Watson's story from their first meeting to a thrilling denouement on the top of Tower Bridge, where Holmes comes face to face with the villainous Professor Moriarty, 'The Napoleon of Crime'.

We are led from the tawdry glitz of the Alhambra music hall to smog-ridden streets and the depths of the newly-opened London underground, with a high-speed boat chase down the River Thames.

With an original musical score and a host of memorable characters, this will be a fast-paced adventure for the whole family, performed by a dynamic young cast.

£16 | £14 | £10



The MCS annual author talk for our partnership with local primary schools will be coming to a packed Festival Hall on Wednesday June 24th. More information on the website.



NOTES & FIZZ THE FESTIVAL ROSE GARDEN HUB

26 June – 12 July | 5pm – 10.30pm
Festival Rose Garden

Friday 26 June:

Bankside
a bluesy, Oxford-based five-piece. Expect gritty covers from across the decades and earthy, evocative songwriting.

Saturday 27 June:

The Shakes
a seven-piece soul and funk collective which feature soul shaking rhythms sure to get you grooving through the streets.

Monday 29 June:

Lee Bo 'Open Mic'
Join us for our Open Mic with the finest musicians in Oxford. Top PA, house guitar and keyboard available. A glorious way to start the week!

Tuesday 30 June:

Klaara
Singer/songwriter with country influence. She has performed in venues such as O2 Oxford and recently released a new single I'll Be Found.

Wednesday 1 July:

Comedy Night
Join us for a night of improv, in collaboration with the Oxford Festival Comedy.

Thursday 2 July:

Bonnie & the Bar Studs
Bonnie and the Bar Studs are four country loving musicians who bring a soulful selection of smooth bluesy tunes.

Monday 6 July:

Lee Bo 'Open Mic'
Join us for our second Open Mic night with the finest musicians in Oxford.

Tuesday 7 July:

Tom Rogers
a new twist on the classic and nostalgic sounds of The Beatles and The Doors, as well as more modern artists like Paolo Nutini.

Wednesday 8 July:

Comedy Night
Our second improv night, in collaboration with the Oxford Festival Comedy.

Thursday 9 July:

The Kirals
a four-piece alt-folk/Americana.

Friday 10 July:

Rich Rainford & Mazawattee
Fresh back from Glastonbury, Oxford's own Mazawattee blend 90s-inspired indie, alternative rock, folk, and R&B into a sound that's both nostalgic and refreshingly original.

Saturday 11 July:

Jazz Jam
Featuring a live house jazz band and the chance for yourself to play along too.

Entrance to the hub and to the gigs is free

Festival photo © Hugh Warwick



THE WHITE CROW (2018)

in collaboration with filmbankmedia

Starring: **Oleg Ivenko, Adèle Exarchopoulos, Sergei Polunin, Chulpan Khamatova, Ralph Fiennes, Alexey Morozov**

Screenplay by **David Hare**
inspired by **Julie Kavanagh 'Rudolph Nureyev: The Life'**

Directed by **Ralph Fiennes**

127 minutes

Saturday 27 June | 8pm
Festival Hall

Genius is as genius does – The Arts Desk

The story of legendary ballet dancer Rudolph Nureyev, whose rise to stardom and sensational defection to the West stunned the world at the height of the Cold War. A portrait of a fierce independent spirit, captured by David Hare's script and Ralph Fiennes' direction in the depiction of raw physicality, beauty, and brilliance of an exceptional ballet dancer, blending artistry with political intrigue, and a high-stakes game of cat and mouse with the KGB. The birth of a legend.

'If I had danced, you would remember' – Nureyev

£10 | £8 | £5

Reading Bosch: new clues in a 500-year-old mystery

Dr Manuel Berdoy

Saturday 27 June | 1pm

This will be followed by a screening of
'The Curious World of Hieronymus Bosch'

Sir Victor Blank Lecture Theatre, Weston Library



Hieronymus Bosch's late-15th/early-16th century triptych 'The Garden of Earthly Delights' (Museo del Prado, Madrid) is famed for its surreal abundance—and for a mystery that is resisting 500 years of interpretation.

Oxford biologist Manuel Berdoy spotted deliberate biological inconsistencies in the imagery and began a seven-year investigation with his father, Pierre Berdoy, the distinguished French photographer. Their findings offer a striking new reading revealed publicly in Oxford for the first time: a biblical-looking narrative that hides a sensational tale of 15th-century political intrigue, complete with a covert accusation of a royal murder.

Join us to experience the pleasure of deciphering new clues hiding in plain sight as we walk through Bosch's most secret garden, mixing science and art on the path of discovery.

Dr Manuel Berdoy is an award-winning biologist at the University of Oxford, with field experience across four continents and interests in animal welfare, reproducibility and education.

£12 | £10 | £5*

For those of you who fancy using your own investigative powers and coming prepared to this wonderful – perhaps somewhat controversial – analytical exploration of Bosch's 'The Garden of Earthly Delights', do try out this interactive high-resolution image.



*One of the most
important exhibitions
of our century*
– The Guardian

*A once-in-
a-lifetime show*
The Financial Times

*Five stars! Dreamy
and astounding*
– Film News

The Curious World of Hieronymus Bosch

in collaboration with EXHIBITION ON SCREEN

Saturday 27 June | 2.30pm

Weston Library Lecture Theatre

After 500 years Bosch's paintings still shock and fascinate us. Delve into the vivid imagination of this true visionary.

Who was Hieronymus Bosch? Why do his strange and fantastical paintings resonate with people now more than ever? How does he bridge the medieval and Renaissance worlds? Where did his unconventional and timeless creations come from? Discover the answers to these questions and more with this remarkable new film from EXHIBITION ON SCREEN, directed by David Bickerstaff.

The Curious World of Hieronymus Bosch features the exhibition 'Hieronymus Bosch – Visions of Genius' at Het Noordbrabants Museum in the southern Netherlands, which brought the majority of Bosch's paintings and drawings together for the first time to his hometown of Den Bosch, and attracted almost half a million art lovers from all over the world.

With his fascinating life revealed plus the details and stories within his works seen like never before, don't miss this cinematic exploration of a great creative genius.

£10 | £8 | £5*

* Talk + film £18 | £14 | £8

Grains of ... Sound piano & sand art

in collaboration with Soundscapes

Monday 29 June | 7.30pm

Jacqueline du Pré Music Building, St Hilda's College

Maurice Ravel
Modest Mussorgsky

Gaspard de la Nuit
Pictures at an Exhibition

Jacopo Petrucci, piano
Erica Abelardo, sand artist

The narrative of the music is brought to life through the captivating visual storytelling of sand art animation. In 'Pictures at an Exhibition' by Mussorgsky, each of the suite's ten vivid movements depicts a specific artwork by Russian artist Viktor Hartmann; while Ravel's 'Gaspard de la Nuit' is inspired by the poetry of Aloysius Bertrand. The references to the paintings and the narrative of the poems constitute the basis for a live sand art performance. Erica Abelardo manipulates sand, evolving the artwork in real time, complementing the virtuoso performance of pianist Jacopo Petrucci.



£20 | £15 | £5



The Phantom of the Opera (1925) Silent Film with live improvised organ accompaniment

David Bednall, organ

Monday 29 June | 9pm

Magdalen College antechapel

Our third (and final) silent film with organ for this year's series, and our second one starring Lon Chaney – this time in the 1925 version of *The Phantom of the Opera*, based on Gaston Leroux's 1910 novel. Chaney's self-devised make-up was kept a studio secret and caused quite a stir when *The Phantom of the Opera* was premiered – with audiences reportedly screaming or fainting in the scene when Christine pulls the phantom's mask off, revealing 'a skull-like face with a few wisps of black hair on top of his head'.

The Phantom of the Opera (1925) follows Christine Daaé, a young singer at the Paris Opera House who becomes the obsession of a mysterious masked figure dwelling beneath the theatre. Known only as the Phantom, the disfigured genius manipulates events from the shadows – coaching Christine's voice, terrorizing the new opera managers, and committing murder to advance her career. When Christine discovers his true identity, she is entrapped between fear and compassion, while her suitor Raoul races to save her. As the Phantom's desperation grows, the opera house descends into chaos, leading to a dramatic final confrontation in the catacombs below Paris.

£15 | £12 | £5

© Hugh Warwick

Festival Cèilidh with Moonaroon

Tuesday 30 June | 6.30pm
Festival Hall

Back by popular demand!

Founded in Oxford in the legendary Half Moon pub, The Moonaroon Cèilidh Band have been performing together since 2019. They combine a traditional Irish sound inspired by Fleadh-winning bands of recent years with callers from the comedy and theatre worlds to give audiences a thrilling night of dancing that feels rooted in tradition, with fabulous fiddles, irresistible rhythms, and calls that will get any dancer – whether a beginner or a veteran barn dancer – spinning and cheering on the dancefloor!

£10 | £5

* 6.30pm – doors open | 7pm – learn the moves | 8pm – The Barn Dance Proper.

Josh Newman
fiddle, vocals

Mitch Keely
fiddle, guitar,
banjo, bouzouki

Dom McGann
vocals, bodhrán,
percussion, harmonium

Jack Evans
guitar, vocals, whistle



Day after day after day

Recent works by Cally Trench
and Tineke Bruijnzeels

30 June – 8 August | Monday – Saturday | 10am – 4pm*
The North Wall Arts Centre

Daily drawings by the two artists lie at the heart of this exhibition: Tineke's project 'One more line a day' using a wide variety of materials and Cally's 'Left Hand, Right Hand' drawings in ink.

Both projects reveal the passage of time, and focus on the unit of the day – the most important unit of time in our lives, the unit that governs our routines of waking, sleeping, eating and work.

The exhibition also includes Tineke's new patterned abstract oil paintings; curiosity and play are the driving forces behind this project: within the rules that Tineke has set herself, what will emerge?

This will also be the first chance to see Cally's new series of drawings of flooded houses, which continue her exploration of the fragility of everyday life, as well as a new board game and animation films.

Entrance is free

* Exhibition Opening: Tuesday, 30 June, 6pm – 8pm

There will be a drawing workshop with the artists on Thursday, 2 July from 2pm – 3.30pm. This is free, but booking is essential. Details on the website.

Image: Day after day after day: an image combining Tineke Bruijnzeels, '154 lines', oil pastel on paper (6 Jan 2024) and Cally Trench, 'Left Hand, Right Hand 334' (3 July 2024).

White Bouquet

A Labyrinth of Symbolism in the work of Oleksandr Dubovyk

in collaboration with Dom Master Klass and Kyiv Art Sessions

1 – 10 July | Weekdays 4pm – 7pm | Weekends 11am – 4pm*
The Kendrew Barn, St John's College

Dubovyk's paintings are a joy for the eye, soul, and spirit. They are abstract yet concrete... The artist offers each of us the universal exuberance of a magical, sacred ceremonial. – Jean-Claude Marcadé

Oleksandr Dubovyk (b. 1931, Kyiv) stands among the most distinguished figures of contemporary Ukrainian art – an original thinker whose intellectual and artistic trajectory spans nearly a century of cultural history. Emerging from the unofficial artistic milieu of the Soviet era, he developed a highly individual visual philosophy that he termed “suggestive realism” – a language of signs through which images transcend representation and open toward deeper metaphysical meanings.

At the centre of this symbolic universe stands the ‘White Bouquet’, Dubovyk’s most recognisable and enduring motif. It stands in deliberate opposition to the notion of universal “nothingness”, becoming, instead, a symbol of creation – a symbolic window into another dimension of reality.

Dubovyk’s canvases unfold as visual palimpsests – labyrinths of signs where abstraction, memory, and philosophical reflection intertwine, inviting the viewer to navigate between symbols and secrets, between visible form and hidden order.

Entrance is free

* Exhibition Opening: Wednesday 1 July: 6pm – 8pm



Kids and Art for Ukraine

1 – 10 July | Weekdays 4pm – 7pm | Weekends 11am – 4pm*
The Kendrew Barn, St John's College

The charitable project ‘Kids and Art for Ukraine’ launched in the summer of 2022 in response to the ongoing war on Ukraine. The mission: to support children affected by the conflict by providing humanitarian aid, medical assistance, and educational resources, while offering psychological and therapeutic relief from the harsh realities of war.

The idea behind the project is simple but powerful: to help children from art schools in Ukraine continue their education and express themselves through painting, singing, playing instruments, and dancing. Art not only offers mental health benefits but also provides a vital escape from the daily horrors of war.

Each piece tells the unique story of the children of Ukraine. These artworks are not just expressions of creativity. They are symbols of resilience and hope.

Entrance is free

* Exhibition Opening: Wednesday 1 July: 6pm – 8pm

Images: Paintings from Art School No. 1, Bakhmut, Bila Tserkva Art School, and Sumy Art School.

UNSUNG THE WARTIME VIOLIN

Fenella Humphreys, violin
Nicola Eimer, piano
Leah Broad, author and narrator
Wednesday 1 July | 7.30pm
Holywell Music Room

Award-winning artists Fenella Humphreys, Nicola Eimer, and Leah Broad bring you the Second World War through the lives of women musicians who entertained the troops, kept hope alive on the Home Front, and fought for their country in secret.

...a revelatory angle on a colossal historical event, transforming what we think we know about women's experience of war
- Whiting Nonfiction Grant Jury

Based on the forthcoming book by Dr Leah Broad, 'UNSUNG: Women and Music in World War II' (March 2027), this concert introduces Avril Coleridge Taylor, whose wartime compositions have remained unheard until now. We'll meet violinist Alma Rosé, who went from a celebrity violinist to the leader of the women's orchestra in Auschwitz — and ballerina Tatiana Vecheslova, who survived performing on the Eastern Front and in Leningrad under siege. Pianists Myra Hess and Elly Ney reveal how Beethoven was used as a wartime symbol in both Britain and Germany. Singer and dancer Josephine Baker was not only one of the most celebrated musicians in the world, but also worked as an intelligence agent for the French and British. And the International Sweethearts of Rhythm were the first racially integrated women's jazz band in the United States, breaking down racial barriers while proving that women, too, could be extraordinary jazz musicians.

£20 | £18 | £5
Full programme on the website.

*Humphreys is technically
and musically superb*
- The Strad Magazine

*Nicola Eimer is an
outstanding artist*
- The Strad Magazine



Fenella Humphreys
violin

© Alejandro Tamagno



Nicola Eimer
piano

© Hedley Dindoyal



Dr Leah Broad
author and narrator

© Monika Tomiczek



Festival Evensong Magdalen College Choir The Choir of Magdalen College, Oxford Mark Williams, Informator Choristarum

Thursday 2 July | 5.45pm
Magdalen College Chapel

A candlelit service featuring works by composers associated with Magdalen College over the last 500 years, including John Sheppard, Thomas Tomkins, Daniel Purcell and Matthew Martin.

**Entrance is free
Everyone of all faiths
and none are welcome**

Preludes, Fugues and Fantasies

Steven Devine, clavichord
(unfretted clavichord by Peter Bavington after
a c.1770 instrument by J.H. Silbermann)

Thursday 2 July | 7.30pm
Holywell Music Room

This programme aims to highlight what composers and performers in the 18th and early 19th centuries did to create not only the music on the page itself, but also live performances. Many gestures were left in skeletal form, allowing the performer (sometimes the composer himself) to create satisfying musical completions. We are in for a treat with that most intimate of sounds – the clavichord – in Europe's oldest purpose-built concert hall (begun in 1742 and opened in 1748) – a landmark in the history of chamber music, with music by J.S. Bach, and W.F. Bach, and Ludwig van Beethoven, including "early music versions" as well as the 'Crab Canon' and the six-part *Ricercare* from 'The Musical Offering' BWV 1079, together with Beethoven's *Two Preludes through all the Major Keys*.

Steven Devine is renowned as a keyboard player specialising in historic instruments and a Music Director who has worked with many of the leading musicians and groups around the world.

£20 | £18 | £5
Full programme and bio on the website.



The Tempest

A Magdalen College School production
30 June, 1 July, 2 July | 7pm
MCS Fields

A man stands on the shore, gazing out to sea. Behind him lies an island on which he has found himself against his will: it is all his own, but is it a paradise or a prison? He will soon find himself exploring his power and be forced to confront its limitations. Will he find release – and possible redemption – as the play concludes?

A talented cast of MCS pupils will perform this iconic play on the beautiful banks of the Cherwell: a perfect entertainment for a summer's evening.

£10 | £8 | £2

Madrigals on the River

Magdalen College School

Friday 3 July | 8pm
MCS Fields

It has long been an MCS tradition that the Trinity term comes to an end with a concert of Madrigals performed from punts on the river. This hugely popular evening will feature a variety of madrigals and folksongs from different periods of our musical history interspersed with some instrumental items. This event even featured in the Oxford episode of Susan Calman's *Grand Days Out*. One not to miss!

£10 | £8 | £2

* Families are encouraged to picnic on school field from 6.30pm. There will be some informal music before the arrival of the punts at 8pm.



© Michelle Castelletti

Unversed...

Written and performed by Beckis Cooper
Directed by Rachel Fowler
in collaboration with the Oxford Preservation Trust
Saturday 4 July | 2.30pm & 6.30pm
The Painted Room

a superbly original and magical hour of Shakespeare – Chawton House

utterly spell binding – Lampport Hall

Step into the world of Antonia, an ambitious young actor in c-17th London, as she discovers a newly printed copy of Shakespeare's First Folio. In a world where women are forbidden from gracing the stage, Antonia dares to rehearse Shakespeare's female characters, grappling with her role both onstage and in society.

We are delighted to be collaborating with The Oxford Preservation Trust, for this performance to return to the wonderful setting of one of Oxford's best kept secrets – The Painted Room – a place Shakespeare himself frequented on his journeys between London and Stratford-upon-Avon.

Audiences have been captivated by Beckis Cooper's dynamic performance, bringing characters such as Lady Macbeth, Beatrice, and Juliet to life in an intimate, historic setting with rave reviews.

Commissioned for the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's First Folio.

£15

Booking details on the website.



© Marc Gascoigne

Joseph Haydn: LE PESCATRICI (The Fisher Girls)

*Performed in an English translation
by Gilly French and Jeremy Gray*

NEW CHAMBER OPERA

Steven Devine, musical director

Michael Burden, director

Sunday 5 July | 6pm

Warden's Garden, and Cloisters, New College Oxford

Haydn's *Le Pescatrici* was the composer's first full-length opera. The libretto was by Carlo Goldoni, who, with a mixture of comic and serious characters, provided witty social commentary. Like Haydn's other operas, it was premiered in the theatre at Eszterháza, the residence of the composer patron. The performance took place on 16 September 1770 to mark the wedding celebrations of Countess Lamberg, Prince Nikolaus Esterházy's niece, and Count Poggi. The staging was extravagant and a huge success, but the destruction of the vocal and orchestral parts in the opera house fire of 1779 has meant that the surviving work is a reconstruction of Haydn's original and receives few modern stagings because of it. This production gives us the opportunity to enjoy this much-rarely performed opera by Haydn in an extraordinary, unique setting.

The story tells the tale of Lindoro, Prince of Sorrento, who is in search of the lost Princess of Benevento; he wishes to marry her and restore her to her rightful throne. She was last seen at the fishing village of Taranto, where two fisher girls – Nerina and Lesbina – live. When the Prince arrives, they both pretend that they are the Princess, in order to catch the his eye. To do so, they ditch their current lovers, the fishermen Fresollino and Burlotto; the men in turn seek revenge by trying to pass off each other's girlfriends as the Princess. However, by means of a dramatic identification of a jewelled dagger, it emerges that Eurilda is the Princess; she has been in Masticco's care all the time.

There will be a pre-performance talk by Professor Michael Burden, Fellow in Music at New College; Professor of Opera Studies; Dean, Chattels and Pictures Fellow, New College Oxford.

£50, including a glass of wine before the opera starts

More detailed information on the website.

The Evening's Events

6.00pm Drinks in the Cloisters

6.30pm Opera Act I

7.45pm Picnic Interval in the Cloisters (Bring your own picnic)

9.00pm Opera Act II

10.30pm Curtain down

Vermeer: A Life Lost and Found

Andrew Graham-Dixon

Tuesday 7 July | 6pm
Festival Hall

Join acclaimed art historian Andrew Graham-Dixon for a revelatory talk on his ground-breaking new biography, *Vermeer: A Life Lost and Found*. Drawing on newly uncovered archival material from Delft, Rotterdam, and beyond, Graham-Dixon offers a dramatic reassessment of Johannes Vermeer – not as the isolated genius of legend, but as a painter deeply embedded in the radical, intellectual, and political life of the Dutch Golden Age. In this richly illustrated talk, he will reveal Vermeer's hitherto unknown friendships, his ties to a radical underground movement, and the powerful women who shaped both his private life and career, as well as fresh interpretations of beloved masterpieces, including *Girl with a Pearl Earring*, *A View of Delft*, *The Milkmaid*, and *Woman Reading a Letter* – recasting them in a bold new light.

Andrew Graham-Dixon is an art historian, biographer and broadcaster. He was, for many years, the main art critic of the *Sunday Telegraph* and *The Independent*. His book *Caravaggio: A Life Sacred and Profane* was shortlisted for the Samuel Johnson Prize and has been translated into seven languages.

£12 | £10 | £5



© Aljona Adrianova



An Evening with James Naughtie

in conversation
with Rob Watson

Tuesday 7 July | 8pm
Festival Hall

The festival is delighted to be presenting veteran broadcasters, James Naughtie, in conversation with BBC political correspondent, Rob Watson.

Naughtie presented *Today* on Radio 4 for 21 years and has written and presented a host of documentaries for radio and television. He has enjoyed a life in newspapers and broadcasting that has spanned almost 40 years, taken him around the world, thrown him together with an extraordinary cast of characters, and given him a ringside seat at many of the events that have shaped our time. Since joining the BBC in 1988, Naughtie has worked on every presidential election, and his store of American political trivia is the stuff of office legend.

He has hosted *Bookclub* on Radio 4 since it began in 1998, and has written and broadcast on literature and music for many years. His political books include 'On the Road: American Adventures from Nixon to Trump', 'The Accidental American' about Tony Blair's relationship with George W Bush, and 'The Rivals' – the book that first revealed the stormy nature of the relationship between Blair and Gordon Brown.

James Naughtie is also the author of a series of espionage novels featuring Will Flemyng of MI6.

A better fit for our **Signs, Symbols... & Secrets** theme this year, there is not.

£12 | £10 | £5

Songs of a Secret Garden

Eleanor and Gus

Tuesday 7 July | 7.30pm
Holywell Music Room

I was enchanted and enthralled by this exceptional duo's soundworld as soon as I heard them. I had to invite them to come to the festival! – Michelle Castelletti

Eleanor Grant (vocals, double bass) & Gus McQuade (guitar) are passionate about showcasing music in its broadest sense. While working together as students at the Royal Academy of Music in London, Eleanor and Gus quickly became aware of a mutual enthusiasm for mixing old with new, and bringing obscure and unknown repertoire to life. This led to the duo becoming recipients of the Musician's Company New Elizabethan Award, followed by their debut performance at Wigmore Hall in 2023. Since then, they have performed all over the UK, in venues such as St Martin-in-the-Fields (London), Stapleford Granary (Cambridge), and St George's Bristol.

£12 | £10 | £5

Full programme and biogs on the website.



© Venetia Jollands

Celebrating Ivor Novello

A Magdalen College School Production
with Alex Thomas and MCS alumni (OWs!)

Wednesday 8 July | 6.30pm
Festival Hall

Songwriter, film-star, playwright, composer, impresario...

From early years as a chorister at Magdalen College School, Ivor Novello went on to become the biggest figure in British theatre for much of the 1930s, 40s and 50s. He died 75 years ago, just hours after performing the lead role in one of his own smash-hit musicals. This much-loved icon of the stage and screen is less remembered now than most of his contemporaries. This evening, Mr Alex Thomas (Head of Drama) will be joined by MCS Old Waynfletes to recreate songs and scenes from his works to pay tribute to the man who was known in the industry as 'Dear Ivor'.

£12 | £10 | £5



© estate of Paul Tanqueray

The Library and Archives of Magdalen College School will be exhibiting artefacts from the MCS archive relating to Ivor Novello's life and career, including school records of his time at Magdalen College School. Big School (aka Festival Hall) will be open from 5.30pm for this. Entrance to the display is free.

The Lodger: A Story of the London Fog (1927)

Starring:
Ivor Novello
Marie Ault
Arthus Chesney
Malcolm Keen
June Tripp

Screenplay by
Eliot Stannard

Directed by
Alfred Hitchcock

A Silent Film | 92 minutes

Wednesday 8 July | 9pm
Festival Hall

Look into Ivor Novello's haunted, kohl-rimmed eyes in Hitch's most overtly Hitchcockian silent film, and you can see generations of matinee idols coming full circle. Willowy and wounded-looking, Novello was the Robert Pattinson of his day, and his gracefully on-edge performance [...] is as intriguing as the director's resourceful formulation of suspense techniques that would later become his bread and butter. – Time Out

Gripping and powerful. A woman screaming. A montage of images. A policeman taking down notes. A silent thriller based on the 1913 novel by Marie Belloc Lowndes, inspired by the Jack the Ripper murders in 1888. Directed by a young Alfred Hitchcock, it is many times regarded as 'the first true Hitchcock movie'.

£10 | £8*

Combined ticket for Celebrating Ivor Novello and film: £20 | £16



Sarah Cracknell

in conversation with Helen Pike

Thursday 9 July | 7.30pm
Festival Hall

A much-anticipated night at Magdalen College School and the festival!

Join The Master as she sits down with Sarah Cracknell, lead singer of legendary indie band Saint Etienne, to talk about the secret of their success over many decades.

'It's a telepathy thing', Sarah reflects on the band's creative process. 'You don't have to explain yourself too much because the other person will always get it.' – BRICKS Magazine, 2024

The trio that is Saint Etienne – Sarah Cracknell, Pete Wiggs, and Bob Stanley – met in 1990, and in 1991 released their seminal debut album Foxbase Alpha, which included relaxed, come-down classics *Only Love Can Break Your Heart* and *Nothing Can Stop Us Now*.

In a dance world where drum machines and pounding basslines rule, Saint Etienne have always been a welcome purveyor of fresh pop, dance, and ambient fusion. With Sarah Cracknell's breathy, ethereal vocal still sending shivers down the spine, this is the night to get the back stories and ask your questions. Who knows? – We might even get to be the first to learn of another gig!

Yeah, we keep saying, 'Oh yeah, we're playing live next year,' and people go, 'Where?' And we just say, 'I don't know yet.'
– Sarah Cracknell

£20 | £18 | £5



© Elaine Constantine

Luck be a Lady!

LP Swing Orchestra

with Georgina Jackson, Nicola Emmanuelle & Julia Sullivan

Friday 10 July | 7.30pm

Festival Hall

Classics from Ella Fitzgerald, Sarah Vaughan, Peggy Lee, Liza Minnelli, and Judy Garland, alongside iconic Big Band favourites and hidden gems from some of the era's unsung voices.

Fresh from their acclaimed Sky Arts show '100 Years of Big Bands', the 16-piece dynamic LP Swing Orchestra comes to festival with a brand-new celebration of swing!

Under the musical direction of vocalist and phenomenal trumpeter Georgina Jackson (the UK's only female commercial Big Band leader) and joined by the glorious vocals of Nicola Emmanuelle and Julia Sullivan, this reimagined 'Ratpack' style trio will take us on a journey back to the golden age of the big band.

Step into the smoke-filled clubs and grand stages of the swing era, where women's stories were told in song – of love, loss, defiance, humour, and joy – and experience them anew.

'LUCK BE A LADY!' honours those voices while refreshing their spirit for today's audiences, with the unmistakable thrill of live big band music. This will be the final jazz night for the Oxford Festival of the Arts 2026! I hope to see many of you there!

£30 (& concessions)



THE AGE OF SILVER & GOLD

SCHUBERT – MAHLER – SCHOENBERG

Maria Razumovskaya, piano with students from the Faculty of Music in collaboration with the Faculty of Music, University of Oxford

Saturday 11 July | 7pm

University Church of St Mary the Virgin

Franz Schubert

Sonata in B \flat major, D 960

Gustav Mahler (arr. M. Castelletti)

Adagietto from 'Symphony No 5'
(arranged for harp and string quartet)

Arnold Schoenberg

Verklärte Nacht (Transfigured Night), Op. 4

Fin de siècle? Which one? A wonderful coming together of minds – a conversation (or several conversations!) between the Director of the Oxford Festival of the Arts, and the Director of Musical Performance & Performance Studies at the University of Oxford, Dr Maria Razumovskaya, each with their own fin de siècle. One, the Silver Age of Russian poetry, and how composers like Schubert impacted Russian and European pre-revolutionary creatives; the other the Vienna Secession, the lushness of that sound, and the beauty of its philosophy: To every age its art, to every art its freedom.

Maria Razumovskaya has been described as a 'virtuoso story-teller of the piano' (Le Courrier), and possessing a 'beguiling musical artistry' (BBC Radio 3). She is always keen to share her curiosity for the stories behind the music and its makers.

£18 | £15 | Students free



*Staggeringly
passionate playing*
— Gramophone

*Two people are walking through
a bare, cold wood;
the Moon keeps pace with them
and draws their gaze.
The Moon moves along above
tall oak trees,
there is no wisp of cloud to
obscure the radiance
to which the black,
jagged tips reach up.
— extract from
'Transfigured Night'*



Signs, Symbols... & Secrets

in the Library of New College, Oxford

Saturday 11 July | 12pm – 5pm

Lecture Room 6, Holywell Quad, New College, Oxford

New College Library's collections of manuscripts and rare books are famous the world over, with the earliest manuscripts dating from the 9th century. More manuscripts survive from the medieval library of New College than from that of any other Oxford college, and New College's holdings of incunabula and other rare books are likewise extraordinary.

Discover some of the secrets – the signs, signatures, symbolism, and spectacle – of the astonishing books and manuscripts of New College, Oxford, one of Oxford University's great collections. Come and view its sensational treasures...

Entrance is free

Image: Shell-gold letter C filled with a Tudor rose
Bernard André, *Annales* (1515) New College Library, Oxford, MS 287, fol. 2v (detail).

Sir Philip Pullman

in conversation with
Professor Kristen Poole

Sunday 12 July | 5pm

Sir Victor Blank Lecture Theatre,
Weston Library

*Everything has a meaning,
if only we could read it*
– Philip Pullman

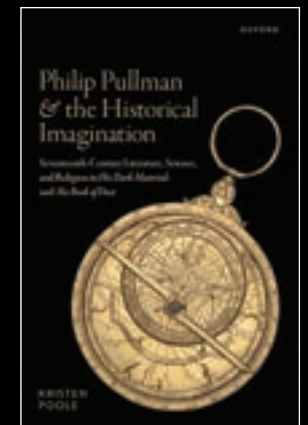
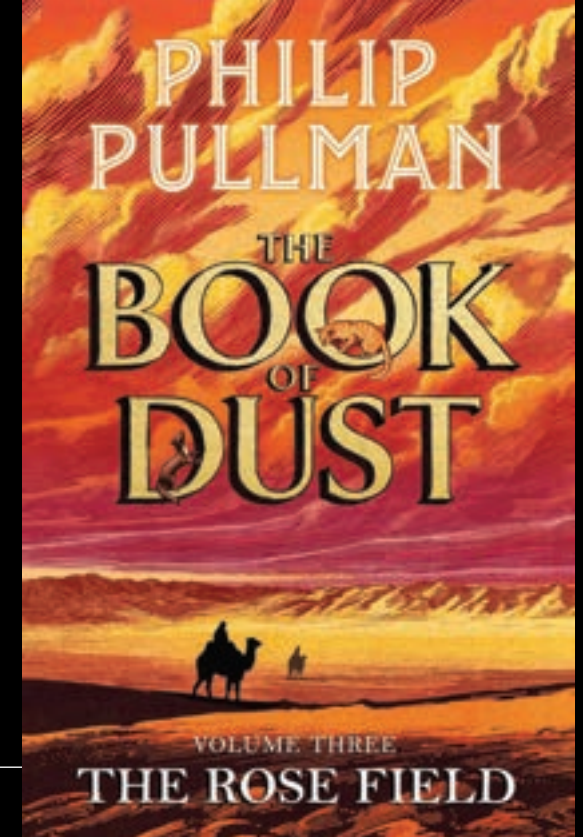
We finish with a flourish!

Join us for the final event of the festival where Sir Philip will be discussing signs, symbols... and secrets together with Professor Kristen Poole.

Philip Pullman was born in Norwich, but has lived most of his life in Oxford, having failed to leave the city since he studied here as an undergraduate. He read English Language and Literature at Exeter College, and had a very good time, but didn't work very hard, or maybe did the wrong sort of work. He spent a few years school teaching, but is probably best known for his novels, including the series 'His Dark Materials' and 'The Book of Dust'.
[from the author himself]

Professor Kristen Poole holds an endowed chair in English Renaissance literature at the University of Delaware (USA), and was recently a Visiting Fellow at Exeter College, Oxford. Her most recent book is *Philip Pullman and the Historical Imagination: Seventeenth-Century Literature, Science, and Religion in His Dark Materials and The Book of Dust* (Oxford University Press, 2025).

£15 | £12 | £5



Oxford Indie Book Fair

Sunday 12 July | 11am – 4pm
Festival Hall | JS Hall | Festival Hub & Rose Garden

The Oxford Indie Book Fair (OXIB) – a vibrant celebration of independent publishing, bold storytelling, and creative community returns to the festival, bringing together independent presses, authors, poets, illustrators, and readers, for a day dedicated to discovering books you won't find everywhere else.

More than just a marketplace, OXIB is a meeting place – a space for conversation, collaboration, and inspiration. Visitors meet authors face-to-face, hear the stories behind the stories, attend talks and readings, and connect with a thriving community that champions creativity and originality.

Whether you're a passionate reader, an aspiring writer, a publishing professional, or simply curious to explore something new, this day offers a welcoming atmosphere where independent voices take centre stage. Join us, and discover your next favourite book, author, or publisher!

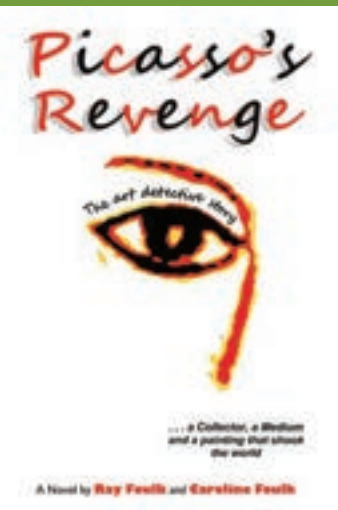
There will be talks throughout the day, as well as a book launch slam, and a poetry slam, together with The Oxford Poetry Circle.

Speakers include winners of the Luxembourg Peace Prize, Professor Jake Lynch and Annabel McGoldrick, who will talk about the secret menace of deep fake AI; Ray Foulk delving into the extraordinary 1907 mystery of how and why Pablo Picasso invented modern art; and our huge festival fan, Hugh Warwick, whose latest book will be hitting the shelves this summer, who will be talking about the hidden history of hedgehogs!

Did Mrs Tiggy-Winkle really change the way we look at the bundles of prickles? – Hugh Warwick

Entrance is free

Further information on the authors, talks, and book launches on the website.



Hugh Warwick

BOOKING INFORMATION

Online at www.artsfestivaloxford.org

For ticket information or assistance with purchase, please get in touch on info@artsfestivaloxford.org or **01865 253505**

(Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm)

All online and phone payments are subject to booking fee per transaction. Most events have unreserved seating. Different prices listed reflect pricing categories rather than seating areas, typically Full Price | Concession | Under 18. Tickets are non-refundable.

This brochure was correct at the time of going to print. Events are sometimes subject to change due to circumstances beyond our control. For the latest details see www.artsfestivaloxford.org



ACCESSIBILITY

For specific information about accessibility, please see the Venues and Access selection of our website or get in touch at: info@artsfestivaloxford.org or **01865 253505**

HOW TO FIND US

By Car: The M40, M4 and A34 provide easy access to Oxford from London and the south. The M40 links Birmingham to Oxford from the north. The A420 and A40 approach Oxford from the west.

Parking: We are unable to offer parking for Festival events. If you have access needs, please contact us on 01865 253505 or at info@artsfestivaloxford.org. Parking in Oxford city centre is limited. Visitors are advised to use one of the five Park & Ride systems, which are all clearly signposted from the Oxford Ring Road. The nearest car park to MCS is at St Clement's Street, OX4 1AB.

By Bus: Oxford has an extensive network of local buses, making it easy to visit the town centre from every direction. The main Festival site is a short 5-10 minute walk from central bus stops. The closest bus stops are The Plain (Cowley Road) and St Clement's. There are also fast and frequent bus services from central London (closest stop St Clement's).

By Train: Oxford has a centrally located train station with frequent and direct train services from London and Reading, as well as from Birmingham via Banbury and Coventry. Oxford Parkway station, north of the city, serves London Marylebone. The main Festival site is a 25-minute walk from the station.

There are frequent buses available from there.

We work hard to make everyone welcome at the Festival. If you have any concerns or particular access issues you would prefer to discuss with us before arranging your visit, please get in touch with us at info@artsfestivaloxford.org. We are happy to make any reasonable adjustments we can to make your visit as smooth and enjoyable as possible.

Official photographs will be taken throughout the Festival. Please contact us if you do not want your image used.

FESTIVAL VENUES 2026

Bonn Square Oxford City Centre OX1 1LQ

Church of St Mary the Virgin
Church Way, Iffley, Oxford OX4 4EG

Festival Hall Magdalen College School,
Cowley Place, Oxford OX4 1DZ

Festival Hub and Rose Garden Magdalen
College School, Cowley Place, Oxford OX4 1DZ

Grove Auditorium Magdalen College
(access via Longwall Street), Oxford OX1 4AU

Holywell Music Room
Holywell Street, Oxford OX1 3SB

Jacqueline du Pré Auditorium St Hilda's College,
Cowley Place, Oxford OX4 1DY

Kellogg College 60-62 Banbury Road,
Park Town, Oxford OX2 6PN

Kendrew Barn St John's College,
St Giles, Oxford OX1 3JP

Magdalen College Chapel Magdalen College,
High Street, Oxford OX1 4AU

MCS Grounds Magdalen College School,
Oxford OX4 1DZ

Modern Art Oxford 30 Pembroke Street,
Oxford OX1 1BP

New College Holywell Street, Oxford OX1 3BN

New Theatre Oxford 24-26 George Street,
Oxford OX1 2AG

OVADA 14a Osney Lane, Oxford OX1 1NJ

Oxford Playhouse 11-12 Beaumont Street,
Oxford OX1 2LW

Oxford Town Hall St Aldate's, Oxford OX1 1BX

Pegasus Theatre Magdalen Road,
Oxford OX4 1RE

Sheldonian Theatre Broad St, Oxford OX1 3AZ

St Bartholomew's Chapel
Cowley Road, Oxford OX4 2AJ

St John's College Oxford OX1 2JP

Stanton St John Church Middle Road,
Oxford OX33 1DN

**The Assumption of the Blessed
Virgin Mary Church** 1 The Shippen Drive,
Beckley, Oxford OX3 9US

The North Wall South Parade,
Summertown, Oxford OX2 7JN

The Painted Room
3 Cornmarket St, Oxford OX1 3EX

The Perch
Binsey Lane, Binsey, Oxford OX2 0NG

University Church of St Mary the Virgin
High Street, Oxford OX1 4BJ

Weston Library Broad Street, Oxford OX1 3BG

Oxford Festival of the Arts wishes to thank all its partners and supporters

FOUNDER
& LEAD SPONSOR



MAGDALEN
COLLEGE SCHOOL
INDEPENDENT DAY SCHOOL
BOYS 7-18 & SIXTH FORM GIRLS



"Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much." Helen Keller

*Sponsa quondam Sui Rudi de Bost
fena etia med confirmasse Ex
vidyse omes etas medo de kelt*

 01865 253505 (festival office)

 @artsfestivaloxford

 @artsfestivaloxford

 info@artsfestivaloxford.org

 artsfestivaloxford.org