



Opening Oxford 1871-

A Musical Miscellany in Celebration of Diversity

Gurmat Sangeet Academy • The Choir of New College • Klezjammers
Robert Quinney • Oxford *Shir* • Younis Ghulam Nabi

4 May 2022
7.30pm

The Sheldonian Theatre

<https://torch.ox.ac.uk/event/opening-oxford-1871-concert>



Supported by TORCH as part of the Humanities Cultural Programme

A Welcome from the Vice-Chancellor



Oxford is a truly international university, with students and scholars from more than 160 countries and territories. We take pride in being a meritocracy, open to all regardless of belief or background, so Oxford today is necessarily a multi-faith, multi-cultural institution.

It is worth remembering that this was not always the case. Look above you and you will see a great allegorical painting by Robert Streater, 'Truth Descending upon the Arts and Sciences'. Unveiled at the opening of the Sheldonian in 1669, it is a vision of the University as it was understood for centuries.

In Streater's painting, the advent of Truth effects an expulsion. Envy, Rapine, and Ignorance are cast out of the courts of learning. These were not just abstract evils, however, rather they symbolized the freethinkers, puritans, republicans, and Roman Catholics who were being thrown out of Oxford at exactly the same time.

Over the last year we have been commemorating the process by which Oxford was opened up and became less exclusive. We recognize that barriers remain, and are working hard to overcome them and to open up the University still further. But tonight is a time to celebrate how far we have come.

The diversity of voices you will hear this evening speaks of the wider diversity found in the Oxford of today. That really is something worth celebrating.

Professor Louise Richardson AAAS AcSS FRSE RIIA
Vice-Chancellor



OPENING OXFORD 1871-

Oxford today resounds with many different voices. Walking on a Sunday evening, visitors can hear the singing of Anglican choral music as it mingles with other, more recent arrivals: songs in Sanskrit, Arabic, Hebrew, and a myriad

of other sacred tongues. The talk on the streets is even more diverse, as scholars and tourists from across the globe debate what matters to them.

As the Vice-Chancellor notes, this vibrant, varied, international Oxford is a relatively new development. Until 1871, full membership of the University was confined to members of the Church of England. The Universities Tests Act finally removed these religious restrictions at Oxford. By opening up to people of diverse faiths – or no faith at all – the 1871 Act made it possible for Oxford to become the truly global and diverse place it is today.

Over the last year, we have been marking the 150th anniversary of the Act with a variety of activities, all of which can be found on our website: <https://openingoxford1871.web.ox.ac.uk/>

There are now so many different groups that this event could never hope to be comprehensive. We are only scratching the surface today – and hope that it will inspire future performances of even greater diversity. But this concert is the culmination of our anniversary year: a celebration of diversity and inclusion. Featuring performers from a variety of faith traditions, it is intended to bring our communities together in song.

None of this would have been possible without the support of very many people. We are enormously grateful to the Vice Chancellor, Professor Louise Richardson, and the Pro-Vice Chancellor for Education, Professor Martin Williams. We acknowledge with huge gratitude the financial support of the Humanities Cultural Programme and we must extend our sincere thanks to all those who are giving their time and talents this evening.

The programme was brilliantly devised and assembled by John Dunston, Director of Music at Harris Manchester College, and the whole event expertly organized by Rachel Wheatley. Our debt to them is immense.

Professor Susan Doran
Professor Paulina Kewes
Professor William Whyte

Programme

Introduction by John Dunston

The Choir of New College

A Buddhist reading

Younis Ghulam Nabi

Hindu songs

Oxford*Shir*

A short interval

A Baptist reading

Gurmat Sangeet Academy

Readings from the Quaker tradition

Robert Quinney

A reading from Ukraine

Klezjammers

As we meet this evening, the sounds of war and fierce intolerance are still echoing across the world. As a recognition of that fact, there will be a retiring collection to support charities associated with Ukraine.

The Choir of New College

Director of Music – Robert Quinney

CHRISTOPHER TYE (c.1505-c.1572)	Gloria from the Mass 'Euge bone'
JOHN SHEPPARD (d. 1558).	Beati omnes qui timent Dominum
THOMAS WEELKES (1576-1623).	Alleluia. I heard a voice

This trinity of pieces speaks of the complex relationship between faith and music during England's Reformations. John Sheppard was trained under Henry VIII, and sang at the funeral of Edward VI. He served in the Chapel Royal under the Catholic Mary I and composed for her sister, the Protestant Elizabeth I. Tye was a much more explicitly Protestant figure, but is best remembered for his settings of the Latin Mass. Weelkes, by contrast is a central figure in the development of a distinctively Anglican repertoire.

The Choir of New College Oxford is one of Britain's best-known choral ensembles with an international reputation for its performances across wide-ranging repertoire. When William of Wykeham founded his 'New' College in 1379, a choral foundation was at its heart, and daily chapel services have been a central part of college life ever since. The choir is made up of sixteen boy choristers and fourteen adult clerks - the latter a mixture of professional singers and undergraduate members of the college.

Touring is an important part of the choir's profile, and recent highlights have included singing for Pope Francis in the Sistine Chapel, Rome, and tours to Hungary and France. The choir has performed with many of the UK's finest ensembles, including the Academy of Ancient Music, The Orchestra of the Enlightenment, The English Concert, and more recently in performances of Bach and Handel with Instruments of Time & Truth.

The choir has an impressive discography of over 100 recordings, reflecting the diversity of its repertoire and relish of different performance styles. Equally at home in baroque and contemporary music, the choir has attracted stellar reviews for its distinctive sound and expressive interpretations. Five discs have been recorded with director Robert Quinney, including Parry: Songs of Farewell and other choral works, and their debut recording with Linn Records in 2020: Sheppard: Media vita. The choir will return to the USA in spring 2023, including another joint concert, this time with the Choir of St Thomas's Church, New York.



Trebles

Patrick Armstrong
James Arnold
Alexander Compton-Burnett
Toby Conway
Harry Davies
Thomas Howarth
Peter Kendall
Finn Lawrence
Monty Lawrence
Alexander Remoundos
Didrik Tarras-Wahlberg
George Walker
Jacob Whyte
Nahum Whyte
Benjamin Wilson
Ethan Zhang

Altos

Jay Chitnavis
Emily Fraser
Karol Jozwik
Stephen Taylor

Tenors

Andrew Bennett
James Brown
Nathanael Thomas-Atkin
Jonathan Venn

Basses

Jonathan Furse
Dan Gilchrist
Dominic Grimshaw
John Johnston
Theo Nisbett
Daniel Tate

A Buddhist reading

The *Heart Sūtra* (Sanskrit: *Prajñāpāramitāhṛdaya*) is a popular sutra among the followers of Mahāyāna Buddhism. The Sutra is a condensed exposé of the Buddhist Mahāyāna teaching, crystallised in its famous declaration that emptiness is the form, and the form is not different from emptiness.

Om Namo Buddhāya

Homage to the Perfection of Wisdom the Holy! Avalokita, the Holy Lord and Bodhisattva, was moving in the deep course of the Wisdom. He beheld but five heaps, and He saw that in their own-being they were empty. Here, O Sariputra, form is emptiness and the very emptiness is form; emptiness does not differ from form, form does not differ from emptiness, whatever is emptiness, that is form. The same is true of feelings, perceptions, impulses, and consciousness. Here, O Sariputra, all dharmas are marked with emptiness; they are not produced or stopped, not defiled or immaculate, not deficient or complete. Therefore, O Sariputra, in emptiness there is no form nor feeling, nor perception, nor impulse, nor consciousness; No eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, mind; No forms, sounds, smells, tastes, touchables or objects of mind; No sight-organ element, and so forth, until we come to: No mind-consciousness element; There is no ignorance, no extinction of ignorance, and so forth, until we come to: There is no decay and death, no extinction of decay and death. There is no suffering, no origination, no stopping, no path. There is no cognition, no attainment, and no non-attainment. Therefore, it is because of his non-attainmentness that a Bodhisattva, through having relied on the Perfection of Wisdom, dwells without thought-coverings. In the absence of thought-coverings he has not been made to tremble, he has overcome what can upset, and in the end, he attains to Nirvana. All those who appear as Buddhas in the three periods of time fully awake to the utmost, right and perfect Enlightenment because they have relied on the Perfection of Wisdom. Therefore, one should know the following as the great spell, the spell of great knowledge, the utmost spell, the unequalled spell, allayer of all suffering, in truth. It runs like this: Gone, gone, gone beyond, gone altogether beyond, O what an awakening, all-hail!

gate gate pāragate pārasaṅgate bodhi svāhā

Conze. E. (trans.). 1958. Buddhist Wisdom Books: *The Diamond Sūtra and the Heart Sūtra*, pp. 77-108. George Allen & Unwin.

Yizhou Liu grew up in China. He graduated with a BA degree in Sanskrit from Oxford last year and is now studying pitch modulation of Vedic Sanskrit as part of his master's programme at Oxford. A friend of Buddhism, he is also interested in Sanskrit poetry and play, and the relevance of premodern Indian spirituality to the modern world.

Younis Ghulam Nabi



Younis will be performing a Sufi song based around current hardship and asking for mercy from the Lord of the worlds as a prayer but sung classically.

Born in Oxford in 1986, Younis developed an interest in singing at a very young age following his father's footsteps and sharing his passion for Nasheeds and Sufi songs. Younis soon became a regular performer at the Oxford Mosque and community events. Younis moved to Banbury at the age of 10 and was a student at Banbury School from 1997 to 2002.

Having tried and tested several career options, Younis rediscovered his talent in singing and started his career as a Nasheed artist/Sufi singer.

With four successful albums and eight single releases to date recorded with various record labels worldwide, most notably RGH Pakistan where legends like Ustad Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan recorded and were under the same label, Younis has worked with some of the world's most renowned Sufi poets. He is also the successful founder/director at GNP STUDIOS.

Hindu songs



Sathvika Krishnan will be performing a short piece entitled Bho Shambho, composed by Swami Dhayaananda Saraswathi (Raagam: Revathi; Taalam – Adhi). Swami Dhayaananda addresses Lord Shiva as Shambu: the one who removes all torments and suffering and the auspicious one who is self-manifested. The composer has skilfully woven the jathis or sollukattus (rhythmic patterns) into the song. Raagam Revathi brings out the majesty and the awe of Lord Shiva.

The Oxford University Hindu Society will be chanting 'Medha Suktam'. Medha is a Sanskrit word that literally means intellect, knowledge, and wisdom. Suktam means Vedic mantras. Medha Suktam is a set of mantras praising the intellect, knowledge, and wisdom in form of the divine Goddess mother Saraswati. Medha Suktam features in the Taittiriya Aranakiya of the Yajur Veda and is estimated to be 3200 years old. This Suktam is usually chanted in schools, universities, and educational institutes. The Hindu Society members will be chanting this Suktam, in original, and explaining its meaning in English.

Sathvika Krishnan is a first-year biologist at Lady Margaret Hall who works with various national and international environmental organisations, aiming to educate and empower youth to make a measurable difference to our planet. She is a South-Indian classical musician trained in both Carnatic vocal and Nattvangum. She is an Associate of the Royal Schools of Music in classical piano and a budding composer.

HUMSoc (Oxford University Hindu Society) hosts social and cultural events with a Hindu and Asian theme for the student population of Oxford. We have something to offer to everyone regardless of faith and background – from the annual Diwali Ball to the weekly Aarti, from the highly anticipated OxHoli to Bollywood movie nights, HUM is where it's at! Our events continue to attract a diverse range of students as we aim to share all things Desi with the Oxford community.

OxfordShir

HAYOM – TASHLICH – AL HANISIM – MA NISHTANAH – ELI ELI – MY PEOPLE WILL BE YOUR PEOPLE

OxfordShir will be performing six pieces that represent the cycle of principal festivals and days of commemoration in the Jewish liturgical year.

Hayom Hayom is a cheerful and traditional rendition of a text that concludes one of the services held at Jewish New Year–Rosh Hashanah–the beginning of the liturgical cycle that usually begins in early autumn. Next, Tashlich means ‘casting off’ in Hebrew and refers to the casting off of sins during the High Holy Day of Yom Kippur–the Day of Atonement–that follows closely after Rosh Hashanah. Then comes Al HaNisim, a well-known Jewish prayer which offers thanks to God for his gifts and protection, often sung at Chanukah, the Jewish Winter festival that celebrates a miracle of deliverance. Ma Nishtanah is a much loved traditional song, sung during the Passover ‘seder’ or ritual dinner, which poses questions about why ‘this night is different from all other nights’. The words of Eli Eli were written by Hannah Szenes, a young Jewish partisan who gave her life fighting the Nazis, and has become closely connected with Yom HaShoah, the Jewish day of Holocaust Remembrance that is held in Spring. Finally, My People Will Be Your People is a contemporary setting by Oxford based Jewish composer Alexander Massey of words that celebrate the Book of Ruth, which is read during the Jewish summer harvest festival of Shavuot (Pentecost).

OxfordShir, the choir of the Oxford Jewish Congregation, was founded in 1994 by its conductor John Dunston. Shir is the Hebrew word for song and OxfordShir welcomes members from any backgrounds. Its repertoire includes Hebrew and Yiddish melodies, and secular, traditional folk songs and special arrangements. Several pieces have been commissioned by, or written for the choir, including a setting of Psalm 23 by its accompanist, Professor Susan Wollenberg. Since 2018, the choir has been conducted by Matthew Faulk.



Director - Matthew Faulk

Piano - Susan Wollenberg

Singers

Jane Spiro

Jonathan Morris

Phyliss Levicki

Rachael Seculer-Faber

Elizabeth Maisels

Susie Dunston

Sandra Dwek

Mike Harper

Judith Baker

Kathy Shock

Olga Viltale

Wendy Fidler

Renee Aronson

Gillian Morris-Kay

Gregory Burton

Glenda Abramson

Judy Ravetz

A short interval

A Baptist reading

'A Letter from Birmingham Jail', published in 1963 and written by Dr Martin Luther King Jr.

The background to the text was Dr King's imprisonment for challenging the systemic racism of the United States' segregation system. His letter, published as a stand-alone pamphlet, was a challenge to the inertia of white clergy who were arguing that King's civil disobedience was bringing the Christian church and Christianity into disrepute. It says that people have a moral responsibility to break unjust laws and to take direct action rather than waiting potentially forever for justice to come through the courts. Responding to being referred

to as an 'outsider', King writes: 'Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.' The letter, written in response to 'A Call for Unity' during the 1963 Birmingham campaign, was widely published, and became an important text for the civil rights movement in the United States. The letter has been described as 'one of the most important historical documents penned by a modern political prisoner' and is considered a classic document of civil disobedience.

Baptists are a part of the wider Christian family, within the Protestant tradition. The roots of the Baptist tradition go back to the early part of the 17th century, when Non-Conformist Christians (Christian believers who would not subscribe to the control of religious matters governed by the Church of England and top-down forms of Christianity controlled by a Bishop), created new forms of churches. Groups in England and the Netherlands pioneered a form of Protestantism that affirmed the importance of adult baptism of new believers (as opposed to Baptising children) and arguing for self-governance of churches, where authority lies within the local congregation.



Professor Anthony G. Reddie is the Director of the Oxford Centre for Religion and Culture in Regent's Park College, in the University of Oxford. He is also an Extraordinary Professor of Theological Ethics and a Research Fellow with the University of South Africa. He is the first Black person to get an 'A' rating in Theology and Religious studies in the South African National Research Foundation. This designation means that he is a leading international researcher. He is a prolific author of books, articles and chapters in edited books. He is the Editor of *Black Theology: An International Journal*. He is a recipient of the Archbishop of Canterbury's 2020 Lambeth, Lanfranc Award for Education and Scholarship, given for 'exceptional and sustained contribution to Black Theology in Britain and Beyond'.

Gurmat Sangeet Academy



Sikh music has undergone a remarkable transformation in the last 150 years with the most traditional form of Sikh Music all but extinct. The 'Gurmat Sangeet' genre is considered to be the oldest and most traditional form of Sikh Music. This genre promotes the performance of music on traditional stringed instruments, and in strict accordance with the ragas and traditional musical measures.

Harjinder Lallie is one of the two co-founders of GSA. He was trained in classical music by Sri Surjit Singh and Sri Baljit Singh. He is a practitioner and researcher of Sikh Music and has spoken widely on the subject. Harjinder has been largely responsible for propagating this form of music in the UK through the Gurmat Sangeet Academy - the largest Sikh school of Sikh music outside of India.

The performance this evening will comprise a pacy rendition of a sabad (hymn) dedicated to Guru Ramdas—the fourth Sikh Guru. The performance is performed in Raga Malaar, a classical raga performed extensively during the monsoon season.

Dr. Harjinder Singh Lallie (Sarangi)

Narinderjit Singh Lallie (Tabla)

Harminder Singh Dhinsay (Taos)

Ravinder Singh Sandhu (Taos)

Amarjeet Kaur (Dilraba)

Ishar Kaur (Dilraba)

Jaspreet Singh (Rabab)

Harvinder Singh (Sarangi)

Jujhar Singh (Taos)

Readings from the Quaker tradition



Quaker Peace Testimony of 1660 (read by Matt Rosen)

Upon the restoration of the Stuart Monarchy in 1660, the recently formed Society of Friends (or Quakers) presented a declaration to Charles II, disavowing all violence and war, because they believed that Christ led them into a way of life in which war didn't figure. This corporate declaration has become known as the Peace Testimony, and the spirit it expresses continues to move Friends to conscientious objection and peacemaking to this day.

'Pray for Peace' by Ellen Bass (read by Meryem Kaylaci)

Ellen Bass is a Chancellor of the Academy of American Poets. Her most recent book, *Indigo*, was published by Copper Canyon Press in 2020. Her poem "Pray for Peace" hints at what a commitment to peace in today's world could look like.

Matt Rosen is a DPhil student at the Faculty of Philosophy and **Suzan Meryem Rosita Kalayci** is a British Academy Postdoctoral Fellow at the Faculty of History. They are both members of Oxford Quaker Meeting. Matt is one of the Elders of Oxford Quaker Meeting. Meryem is St Hilda's College Chaplain and the inaugural Director of the College multifaith space, called The Sanctuary. She is the first Quaker to be appointed Chaplain of an Oxford college.

The Religious Society of Friends (commonly called Quakers) is almost 400 years old. It grew out of Christian soil and today we also find meaning and value in other faiths and traditions. We recognise that there's something transcendent and precious in every person. Friends believe we can encounter something beyond our individual selves, and seek to do this through mainly silent communal worship. Friends don't use traditional religious structures or paid ministers. We share responsibility for what we do because everyone has a valuable contribution to make. We have no creed but instead share a form of life together.

Robert Quinney



The British premiere of 'Elegy for the Time of Change'
by ROBERT A. HARRIS (b. 1938)

The piece, performed by courtesy of OUP, was written in response to the horrifying murder of George Floyd at the hands of the Minneapolis police in May 2020. Imbued with singing melodies and richly expressive harmonies, the work makes several brief allusions to the spiritual 'There is a Balm in Gilead', offering a hopeful vision of healing and unity to a nation (and world) riven by mistrust and disparity.

The composer, Robert A. Harris, Professor Emeritus at Northwestern University's Bienen School of Music (Evanston, IL), served as Director of Choral Organizations and Professor of Conducting at the Northwestern University Bienen School of Music from 1977 to 2012. Prior to Northwestern, Dr. Harris taught at Michigan State University, where he served as Director of Choral Activities from 1970 to 1977, and at Wayne State University (Detroit, Michigan) from 1964-1970. He also has held visiting professorships at Wayne State University, the University of Texas (Austin) and the University of South Africa in Pretoria.

Robert Quinney is Organist of New College, Oxford. In addition to the daily direction of New College's world-famous choir, his work comprises teaching, lecturing, and examining, as a Tutorial Fellow of the college and an Associate Professor at the University Faculty of Music. He also maintains a parallel career as a solo organist, and he is a prolific recording artist: his discs of organ music by J.S. Bach, Elgar, Dupré, Wagner and Brahms – and several CDs with the Choir of Westminster Abbey and The Sixteen – are widely acclaimed.

A reading from Ukraine

Contra Spem Spero, by Lesya Ukrainka (1871–1913)

Translated by Vera Rich

Thoughts away, you heavy clouds of autumn!
For now springtime comes, a gleam with gold!
Shall thus in grief and wailing for ill-fortune
All the tale of my young years be told?

No, I want to smile through tears and weeping...
Sing my songs where evil holds its sway,
Hopeless, a steadfast hope forever keeping,
I want to live! You thoughts of grief, away!

On poor sad fallow land unused to tilling
I'll sow blossoms, brilliant in hue,
I'll sow blossoms where the frost lies, chilling,
I'll pour bitter tears on them as due.

And those burning tears shall melt, dissolving
All that mighty crust of ice away.
Maybe blossoms will come up, unfolding
Singing springtime too for me, some day.

Up the flinty steep and craggy mountain
A weighty ponderous boulder I shall raise,
And bearing this dread burden, a resounding
Song I'll sing, a song of joyous praise.

In the long dark ever-viewless night-time
Not one instant shall I close my eyes,
I'll seek ever for the star to guide me,
She that reigns bright mistress of dark skies.

Yes, I'll smile, indeed, through tears and weeping
Sing my songs where evil holds its sway,
Hopeless, a steadfast hope forever keeping,
I shall live! You thoughts of grief, away!

2 May 1890

Contra Spem Spero (Against All Hope I Hope) is a moving poem penned by the celebrated 19th century poet Lesya Ukrainka. She was writing at the height of tsarist oppression when publications, education and performances in the Ukrainian language were criminalised and Russification through one nationality, one language, and one religion policy was enforced. Tsar Alexander III's triptych was 'orthodoxy, nationality, autocracy.' He strove to crush the life out of Ukraine as a nation, but despite his relentless and brutal endeavour Ukrainians maintained their distinct identity. The indomitable will to survive against all hope, and to do so with a defiant smile, is true of Lesya Ukrainka and of Ukrainian people.

The poem echoes Ukraine's unending battle for self-assertion. Even in the darkest hour Ukraine has never once given up the struggle for independence. Sometimes the battle seems to be futile. But against all the odds Ukraine has survived – and it shall live and prosper!

Vera Rich was a poet, journalist and an acclaimed translator of Ukrainian literature. She shared her wonderful translations with students at poetry recitals organised by Oxford University Ukrainian Society. Vera was a vocal and unwavering supporter of Ukraine. In 2004, at the time of the Orange Revolution, she denounced Russia's controlling and aggressive stance towards Ukraine. She was awarded the Shevchenko Prize by the National Union of Writers of Ukraine for popularising Ukrainian literature and culture in English, and in 2006 the Order of Princess Olga State Award of Ukraine for outstanding cultural achievements.

Eleonora Suhoviy is the co-founder of Oxford University Ukrainian Society. Born in Lviv, a city that produced many brilliant luminaries of Ukrainian culture, Eleonora is a passionate student of Ukrainian literature and its role in Ukraine's self-determination.

Klezjammers



Klezmer music is the music of the Yiddish speaking Jewish communities from Eastern Europe. Originally the music of both solemn ritual and wild celebration at weddings, this music is still played at Jewish weddings all over the world, as well as on stages and in pubs and clubs.

Klezjammers take their inspiration from source recordings from the 1900s onwards and play these joyful and soulful tunes to make you want to dance, weep, clap and sing. With the knowledge that Yiddish culture and music was almost lost in the pogroms of 1900s Eastern Europe and the 2nd world war Holocaust, we are proud to be part of the revival and rebirth of this beautiful traditional music.

Played with a deep love and respect of the music and culture, this collaboration of musicians always aim to take you on an emotional and joyful journey. As an amateur community group, Klezjammers are regularly invited to play at charity events, community gatherings and celebrations.

Jo Green - clarinet
Edward Jarvis - violin
Rachel Susser - flute
Oliver Presman - trumpet
Millie Presman - French horn
Karen Yarnell - poyk
Seppi Pogadi - ukelele bass
Adina Presman - accordion

Opening Oxford, 1871-

In 1871 an act of parliament finally opened Oxford to all faiths and none. For centuries, the University had been closed to those who were not members of the established Church. The Universities Tests Act changed all that. It was an incomplete process, not least because women remained excluded. But the result was, in many ways, the beginning of the modern global university, with students and staff of diverse faiths, sexualities, genders, nationalities, and races. Here, we mark the 150th anniversary of that reform and consider the ways in which Oxford can open up still further.

For more information on our project, and future events, please visit <https://openingoxford1871.web.ox.ac.uk/home>



There will be a retiring collection by the Oxford University Ukrainian Society
in aid of Charities associated with Ukraine.

<https://ukrainianoxford.org>
Twitter @oxford_ukraine

