

The Spirit of England

Newsletter of The English Music Festival

Issue 4 - Winter 2007/8



English music returns to Oxfordshire

Plans for 2008 Festival unveiled

The second English Music Festival will be held in Oxfordshire, the heart of rural England, between 23rd and 27th May 2008.

A number of historic venues throughout the county will be used. The mediaeval Abbey at Dorchester-on-Thames will once again host our main evening concerts, and several concerts will be held in Radley College's imposing Chapel, and at All Saints Church, Sutton Courtenay. We have a new venue in the City of Oxford itself, too – the magnificent Chapel at Keble College, Oxford University.

Fourteen concerts and recitals, spread over five days, will enable audiences to experience some of the most exquisite English music from across the centuries. Opening with a major concert by the BBC Concert Orchestra, with works

including Holbrooke's *Birds of Rhiannon*, Rawsthorne's evocative *Practical Cats* and Mackenzie's *Benedictus*, and also featuring music by Parry and Bantock, the 2008 Festival will include many overlooked pieces, whilst focusing on the twentieth century.

Artists lined up for the Festival include the Carducci Quartet (performing Vaughan Williams and Moeran String Quartets), Vox Musica, the Amaretti Orchestra (including Finzi's Clarinet Concerto, Ireland and Elgar), Keble College Choir (Sullivan's Sacred Music), and Hilary Davan Wetton with the Milton Keynes City Orchestra and City of London Chorus (Holst and Howells).

Elgar's *Banner of St George* and Dyson's *Agincourt* and organ music will also feature, along with a concert of Arne and Linley. Early Music, English Solo Song, and a lighter touch of Mayerl with David Owen Norris will provide a broad picture of the extraordinary diversity of our nation's musical heritage. The Festival will conclude with a special 'Grand Finale' – details of this will be announced in early 2008.

Tickets for the Festival go on sale in March. Please keep checking our website, www.englishmusicfestival.org.uk, as this will be updated regularly, and will have full information on how to obtain tickets. The best way to get advance notification is to join our Friends scheme.

EMF Friends will receive priority booking arrangements and discounts on ticket prices. We rely heavily on the support of the EMF Friends and urge you to renew your subscription now for 2008 – or to sign up if you are not already a member - so that you can take advantage of the membership benefits.



EMF Director Em Marshall with EMF Vice-President Jeremy Irons at Dorchester Abbey, Oxfordshire, during the 2006 Festival.

EMF President: Boris Johnson MP

Vice-Presidents: Lord Armstrong of Ilminster - Lady Bliss - Lord Chadlington of Dean - Paul Guinery - Jeremy Irons - Sir Simon Jenkins
Henry Kelly - Michael Kennedy - Julian Lloyd Webber - Professor Sir Patrick Moore - Sir Roger Norrington - The Most Hon The Marquess of Salisbury
Professor Roger Scruton - Leonard Slatkin - Patrick Stewart - Ursula Vaughan Williams† - Terry Waite CBE - Lady Whitehead

We need your help

The English Music Festival is unique. It is the only event dedicated exclusively to the music of British composers, and to the goal of bringing that vast corpus of amazing works back into the mainstream of the nation's culture.

Education is a key element of the charity's ongoing work, and in addition to promoting interest in the history of music in this country, we are working to involve young people in the creative process, enabling them to experience the joy of playing as well as listening to works by many of the nation's greatest composers.

In spite of the importance of music to England's cultural identity and nationhood, no public bodies have as yet come forward to support the EMF. Nevertheless, we have already shown that the English Music Festival can make a powerful impact, and we believe that times are changing. We are on course for a highly successful Festival in 2008.

Will you be part of this success? We need more volunteers, sponsors and benefactors, donors and Friends.

News from Keble

EVENTS AT KEBLE COLLEGE CHAPEL, OXFORD

22 Feb: David Briggs will improvise on the organ to a silent film.

26 Feb: Talk by Tony Hall, Managing Director of the Royal Opera House.

27 Feb: Thomas Guthrie, accompanied by David Owen Norris, will perform Schubert's *Winterreise* (with stage lighting, animated images and three-quarter life-size puppet).

German Diction for English-speaking singers

By **Jacqueline Pischorn**

A new book has appeared, written specifically for singers. It is designed to have wide appeal as a handbook for English-speaking singers, amateur and professional, who study German vocal music (and dialogue), be it lieder, opera, operetta or oratorio, as well as being a quick guide through German pronunciation for conductors and répétiteurs. It includes a CD with 282 tracks of spoken examples.

Jacqueline Pischorn was taught German stage-language (Bühnenaussprache) during extensive acting experience throughout her childhood. She studied singing at the Hochschule für Musik und Darstellende Kunst in her home town, Graz. In London she gained the postgraduate Diploma for Singing at Trinity College of Music. She is German language coach for the Royal Welsh College of Music & Drama, and coaches German for Welsh National Opera and notable UK choirs.

ISBN: 978-1-897653-00-5; Published: May 2007; Paperback, 82 pages; Price £8.95 (incl. CD) + postage (discount for students);

Email: info@caddypublishing.co.uk

Fax: +44 (0)1264 350823 Tel: +44 (0)1264 337205

Volunteers please!

The EMF needs professional people to help support our Director and Trustees. In particular, we are looking for a fully qualified accountant willing to manage the charity's finances on a month-to-month basis. We are also looking for people with marketing experience to help us on publicity and fundraising.

If you would like to help but are not qualified in any of these areas, then we would still be extremely grateful for any time you can spare! We urgently need regional representatives to distribute leaflets in their local areas – both here and abroad. Or if you feel you would like to help out with research or administration, we would welcome your input...

If you would like to discuss how you can become involved with the EMF, please contact:

Em Marshall on **07808 473889**
or email em.marshall@btinternet.com

We look forward to hearing from you.

News in brief

Patrick Stewart



We are delighted to announce that the distinguished actor Patrick Stewart is the newest addition to the ranks of the EMF's Vice-Presidents.

We very much hope that Patrick will take part in the 2008 Festival.

A question of identity

EMF founder/director Em Marshall has appeared on BBC Radio Scotland and the online television station 18 Doughty Street, discussing the importance of music to national identity.

See <http://doughty.gdbtv.com/player.php?h=81cfd06dcad85886946a2b7e29a891a>

Prayerbook

Audiences at the inaugural English Music Festival gave special acclaim to David Owen Norris's oratorio *Prayerbook*, written for, and premiered at the EMF. This will receive a repeat performance in Andover Parish Church on Saturday 26th April 2008 at 7.30p.m.

Call **01264 355409** or email Em for more information.

Festival 2006

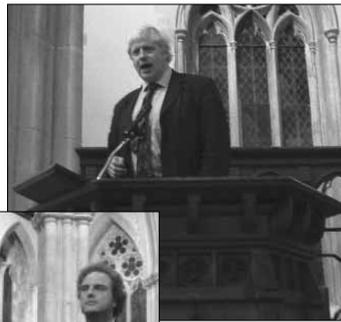
Artistic excellence, encouraging reviews

After five years of preparation, the inaugural English Music Festival was at last held between 19th and 24th October 2006, in and around Dorchester-on-Thames, Oxfordshire.

Despite being run on a shoestring budget, and without the benefit of funding from government or public bodies, the Festival proved a huge success – attracting considerable interest, enthusiastic audiences and positive media coverage.

Highly favourable reports and concert reviews appeared in the national and regional press, including the Daily Telegraph and The Independent, and we were delighted that Radio 3 broadcast our opening concert, with music by Holst, Bridge and Sullivan, performed by internationally acclaimed cellist Julian Lloyd Webber and the BBC Concert Orchestra, conducted by David Lloyd Jones.

Among the highlights of our first Festival was the world premiere of a major new work, an EMF commission entitled Prayerbook, composed by David Owen Norris.



The Festival also saw the first professional concert performance of a long-overlooked work by Gustav Holst, and a stunning performance by the Milton Keynes City Orchestra of Vaughan Williams's highly evocative Oxford Elegy, for which the narrator was the Oscar-winning actor (and EMF Vice-President) Jeremy Irons.

The educational dimension included a series of fascinating talks on different aspects of English music, and a schools programme culminating in a joint schools concert hosted by Radley College.

We offer our heart-felt thanks to all those who helped make our first Festival such a success, including the sponsors and grant-making Trusts

and Funds that supported us, our many Friends and generous donors, and, of course, our audience for showing such overwhelming enthusiasm for the Festival and for this amazing body of music.

EMF in the news

"Any Festival that boasts Boris Johnson as President sounds like a boisterous occasion. Heirs and Rebels, the first English Music Festival, to be mounted in and around Dorchester, South Oxfordshire, is devoted to the 'diversity, innovation and brilliance' of English composers often neglected in concert programming. It's a bold venture. Where else would one bump into the Viola Sonata of Algernon Ashton, a rhapsody by Elgar's supporter William Reed, and a suite by Benjamin Dale? Or venture into Lord Berners's Luna Park, and spot Jeremy Irons narrating Vaughan Williams's An Oxford Elegy?... The chance to hear rare Holst, scintillatingly played, was welcome... The clarinet and viola heralding Vaughan Williams's Norfolk Rhapsody No.1 unleashed a shiveringly beautiful performance... Julian Lloyd Webber proved utterly sympathetic to the angst-ridden solo line, as the cello strives to extricate a pained and poignant lyricism from the tensions of the orchestral hinterland... Patently English music, and palpably alive and kicking"

The Independent, 26th October 2006

"...a great deal of passion had gone into planning this event, and the programming was out of the ordinary... The soloist in Holst's 'Invocation' was Julian Lloyd Webber, who also played Bridge's 'Oration', a work haunted by memories of the First World War. Darkly rhapsodic, brooding and bitter, the music is intensely reflective, and Lloyd Webber's performance encompassed a range of affecting emotion that was deeply poignant."

Daily Telegraph, 23rd October 2006

It would be difficult to find a more appropriate setting for this concert than the glorious Dorchester Abbey in the quintessentially English village of Dorchester-on-Thames... Jeremy Irons provided a well-paced and nuanced narration for Vaughan Williams's rarely performed An Oxford Elegy, which brought the concert to a wonderful climax... This work of aching beauty should be performed more often... The choir and the orchestra excelled under the adroit direction of Davan Wetton. Together, they were able to demonstrate what great English musical treasures have been allowed to gather dust and to show what a great shame it is that they have been allowed to do so.

Independent, 30th October 2006

"A music festival devoted entirely to English composers is a welcome addition to the cultural calendar, and Em Marshall's four year dream finally came to fruition last Friday with a thrilling and inspirational concert by the BBC Concert Orchestra. Appropriately, the evening started with a fanfare – heralding the genesis of a festival that will continue for many years to come. Conductor David Lloyd Jones seemed in buoyant mood, ensuring an exhilarating account of Holst's sublime Walt Whitman Overture... This thrilling performance brought the Festival's opening concert to a suitably magnificent finale. Wonderful."

Oxford Times, 27th October 2006

Ursula Vaughan Williams

Ursula Vaughan Williams, née Lock, died on 23rd October, aged 96. She was an enthusiastic supporter of the EMF from its inception, and was one of our distinguished Vice-Presidents.

Wife and collaborator of Ralph Vaughan Williams in his final years, Ursula contributed to several of his works, and was an accomplished writer and poet, with several published novels to her credit, as well as a major biography of her husband.



Ursula Vaughan Williams talking to EMF Director Em Marshall.

"She was a great inspiration," said EMF founder-director Em Marshall, "and her death is a heavy blow to many people in the music world."

Sir Rowland Whitehead

We are sad to report that Sir Rowland Whitehead, Bt., one of the strongest supporters of the EMF, and a Vice-President of the charity since 2004, has died. Rowland was tireless in his efforts to promote the EMF and to draw in sponsors and supporters for us. He invested a vast amount of time and energy in the Festival and will be sorely missed. His widow, Lady Isa Whitehead, has agreed to take his place.



Your details

Do we have your correct contact details? As our organisation grows and the date of our second Festival approaches, we need to make sure we are able to contact all our supporters. If we don't have up-to-date information on you (including email addresses), please let us know as soon as possible so that we can keep in touch as our Festival plans are finalised.

Please note OUR new address. The EMF has moved from London SW1 to Kew, Surrey. Our full contact details appear at the foot of this page.

Have you joined?

To join the Friends, or to renew your subscription, either download a form from the EMF website, or if you don't have internet access please call Em Marshall on **07808 473889** to request a form. Please don't forget that if you're a UK taxpayer we can reclaim the tax on your subscription or donation to the charity through the Gift Aid system, so PLEASE fill in a Gift Aid form for us, whether or not you have already done so at some point in the past. Every little helps! (And there is no extra cost to you.)

Our Friends scheme is a vital way of providing funds and support for the EMF and creating a strong base of support for our work. Joining the Friends of the EMF is one of the most valuable things you can do to help us.

Stewards

We need EMF supporters to help out during the Festival as stewards. Please drop us a line if you think you'd be available between 23rd and 27th May to help out.

About The English Music Festival

From Tallis and Purcell in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to Holst and Britten in the twentieth, England has given rise to many of the world's most talented and ingenious composers, whose music continues to excite, enrapture and inspire audiences even today.

The EMF provides a focus for celebrating this unique and diverse musical heritage. A registered charity, the EMF provides opportunities for present-day audiences to experience the finest English music, performed by the nation's most accomplished musicians.

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Registered Office: 36 Forest Road, Kew, Richmond, Surrey TW9 3BZ.

Managing & Artistic Director:

Em Marshall, MA (Hons) Oxon, MCIJ

Telephone: 0203 274 1054 Mobile: 07808 473889

Email: em.marshall@btinternet.com

www.englishmusicfestival.org.uk
