

Music Director

Marios Papadopoulos MBE

Artist in Residence

Maxim Vengerov

Oxford *op*^h
Philomusica

In Residence at the University of Oxford



Exeter College 700

Sir Hubert and his Contemporaries



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Friday 4 April 2014

University Church of St Mary the Virgin, 7pm

Parry

Blest Pair of Sirens *

Vaughan Williams

Five Mystical Songs

Nicholas O'Neill

Flyht *

Parry

Selection from Songs

of Farewell *

Elgar

Cello Concerto in E minor,

Op. 85

Exeter College Chapel Choir

Anil Umer cello

Colin Campbell baritone

George de Voil conductor *

Marios Papadopoulos conductor



Sir Charles Hubert Hastings Parry (1848-1918)

Blest Pair of Sirens (At a solemn Musick)

The man responsible for works as deeply woven into Britain's cultural identity as *I was glad* and *Jerusalem*, Parry is undoubtedly one of Exeter's most celebrated alumni, and – together with Elgar – has long been regarded as a giant of Britain's great turn-of-the-century musical Renaissance. The solemnity and pomp of the occasions at which his work is so frequently performed, including Royal weddings, funerals, and coronations, has seen him viewed – like Elgar – as an Establishment figure and a man of religion. This legacy is particularly evident at Exeter in the splendid Freshers' and Leavers' services in Chapel, which feature feasts of his music (though when Parry came up to Exeter in 1867, the Chapel Choir was in a poor state; it is doubtful whether a performance of *Blest Pair* would have been possible!)

While the famous late *Songs of Farewell*, written against the backdrop of the First World War, show a more troubled side to the composer, *Blest Pair of Sirens* is a work definitely in the archetypal triumphal mould. The work was commissioned in 1886 by Sir Charles Villiers Stanford for the London Bach Choir, to be performed at a concert

celebrating Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee. Stanford had originally intended to perform an existing work of Parry's, the 1885 cantata *The Glories of our Blood and State*, but it was thought that such lines in the text as "Sceptre and crown must tumble down" made the work unsuitable for the occasion. At the suggestion of his colleague George Grove, Parry turned to Milton's ode "At a solemn Musick", which he had been considering setting for many years. The first performance took place on 17 May 1887, with *Blest Pair* acting as a pendant to Berlioz *Te Deum*, an enormous work in scale and conception. It was nevertheless very well received, and has become a firm favourite among choral societies and concert choirs ever since. Parry rises to the challenges of a text concerned with the beauty of divine harmonies, in a work that displays to the full his considerable contrapuntal facility, superb orchestration, and unmatched ability to combine melody with impeccable text-setting. Stanford was evidently, impressed, declaring Parry to be "the greatest English composer since Purcell".

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Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)

Five Mystical Songs:

Easter

I got me flowers

Love bade me welcome

The Call (Come my way, my truth, my life)

Antiphon (Let all the world in ev'ry corner sing)

Anyone who grew up with the hymnody of the Anglican Church will have grown up

with George Herbert's famous hymns 'Let all the world in ev'ry corner sing', 'Teach

me, my God and King', 'King of Glory, King of Peace'. Herbert (1593-1633) was a younger contemporary of Shakespeare, who lived in an age when the English language was expanding and developing, with the Bible and the Prayer Book important catalysts in this process. One of the reasons for his poetry's enduring popularity with both composers (including Leighton, Britten, Harris and Ives) and audiences is surely its affinity with the late-Elizabethan language of these extremely important publications. Both what Herbert said (like most Anglicans he tried to steer a middle course between Romans and Puritans), and the way he said it, strongly appealed to the cheerful agnostic (as his wife Ursula put it) in Vaughan Williams. They shared an intense preoccupation with the age-old conflict between God and World, Flesh and Spirit, Soul and Senses, which is in the background to such works as *Flos Campi* as well as the *Mystical Songs*.

Vaughan Williams completed the *Five Mystical Songs* in 1911 and conducted the first performance in September of that year during the Three Choirs Festival in Worcester. They belong to a cluster of major works, including the song-cycle *On Wenlock Edge*, the *Fantasia on a theme by Thomas Tallis* and the *Sea Symphony*, composed shortly after three months of study with the French impressionist Maurice Ravel. Vaughan Williams was also a pupil of Sir Hubert Parry at the Royal College of Music.

Parry widened Vaughan Williams's musical knowledge, insisting that he "learn more Beethoven", but also provided him with a sense of the nobility and greatness of the English choral tradition. Vaughan Williams had found something "peculiarly English" in Parry's music, awakening a consciousness of the national composer that was to flourish over a decade later. The baritone soloist is prominent in the first four of the *Mystical Songs*, with the chorus taking a subsidiary role. In the expansive opening song, the lute and its music are used as a metaphor for the poet's emotions at Easter, and Vaughan Williams' ecstatic and richly detailed orchestral score looks back to Elgarian prototypes. The second song has a definitely Pre-Raphaelite quality which takes us straight into the orbit of Debussy. It features a simple but moving melody for the baritone soloist, who is joined by the chorus for the third verse. In the third, more introverted song, the choir can be heard wordlessly intoning the ancient plainsong antiphon, *O sacrum convivium*, in a moment of rapt stillness, whilst the fourth movement, *The Call*, is for baritone solo - its chordal accompaniment reflecting the hymnic stance and metre of the poem. An accompaniment suggestive of pealing bells introduces the triumphant final song of praise, in which the chorus is heard to full effect.

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INTERVAL

Nicholas O'Neill (1970-)

Flyht

Flyht was written in response to a commission from Exeter College, Oxford for a work to celebrate the 700th anniversary of the founding of the

College. Even at the earliest stages of the process the College had the idea of using text from The Exeter Book, written in Old English nearly a thousand

years ago, and that the work should incorporate ideas of knowledge, tradition and continuance. After some research, elements of The Exeter Book were combined with seventeenth century writings by Samuel Wesley (1662-1735), an Exonian, in order to create a text with convincing narrative flow encompassing the ideas expressed by the College.

The music is built around quartal harmony and melodies derived from that same harmony, while the basic rhythm, heard at the very start, is developed and used as a binding idea for the work. The musical challenge was to find a distinct musical identity for the central Old English sections, and this was attempted by adopting a chanted style whose melodic content was still based on fourths, and by making the harmony more traditionally triadic in nature, although even this was viewed as relatively dissonant within the overall quartal scheme. The flight of the phoenix is achieved by overlaying melodies that outline the basic constituents of the home chord, while the bass of the organ expresses the same line in retrograde form and augmented note values.

One final problem to solve was that the central section did not yet function as an integral part of the whole work, rather that it had been inserted as a separate entity. After much thought the solution presented itself suddenly and simply - having dropped to $\text{minim}=48$ in the Old English section (related to the opening's $\text{crotchet}=144$) the tempo increases step by step throughout this area until reaching $\text{minim}=72$ (equal to the opening tempo), making the drop into the past pronounced, but the emergence into the present, a product of the phoenix's flight, inevitable. Equally, the tempi at either side of this section are linked to that of the outer pillars of the work.

After the piece was written there was some discussion about what the title should be, and *Flyht* was eventually adopted. It encapsulates the ideas within the text, and acknowledges the inclusion of Old English texts, while still being immediately clear to a modern listener. It also reminds us of what knowledge allows us to achieve.

© Nicholas O'Neill

Sir Charles Hubert Hastings Parry (1848-1918)

Selection from *Songs of Farewell* *

Charles Hubert Hastings Parry remains the youngest successful applicant for the Oxford MusB degree, which he took while still a student at Eton in 1866 at the age of 18. Parry went up to Exeter College in 1867 where he studied modern history and jurisprudence. After leaving Oxford in 1870, he moved to London where he initially worked at Lloyd's Register of Shipping. However, Parry was never destined for a life in business and he eventually abandoned the city for a career in music in the mid-1870s, supported by his friend and mentor, Edward Dannreuther.

In 1883 Parry was appointed a Professor of Musical History at the newly-founded Royal College of Music and became its Director (in succession to George Grove) in 1895. Four years later, he succeeded Stainer as Professor of Music at his alma mater, Oxford University. Knighted in 1898, Parry was made a baronet in 1902, the year of Edward VII's coronation, for which he produced his processional anthem, 'I was glad', to open the service. Its effect was immediate but Parry chose to revise the opening for George V's coronation in 1911. Since then it has been used for every coronation and is considered a treasure of

British ceremonial music and pageantry.

Parry began to conceive his six motets, now known as *The Songs of Farewell*, in 1913, but much of their composition took place in 1915 and 1916. As an agnostic, and an individual who intensely disliked church ritual and doctrine, Parry did not initially consider the motets to be liturgical in character or function (though later he did concede that their most suitable environment was a cathedral or large sacred space), nor did he intend them to be considered as some form of Christian affirmation of faith. Nevertheless, Herbert Howells, who knew him well in the composer's last years, maintained that valediction was on Parry's mind.

The effect of war on Parry was profound. He could not believe that Germany, the fount of all musical wisdom and greatness, could go to war, and after hostilities were declared in August 1914, Parry described the event as nothing less than 'the fall of Lucifer'. To see a generation of young musicians go to its death in uniform was shattering for a man with so strong a sense of cultural idealism and artistic mission. Something of this shadow undoubtedly hung over the composition of these motets. With a focus on the eschatological (i.e. the hereafter), they express notions of hope, doubt and fear, but most of all they advocate the idea of placing trust in the spiritual rather than the material, and the recognition of man's vanity. At the same time, too, they abundantly convey something of

Parry's most Romantic personality and generous humanitarianism. The first motet, 'My soul, there is a country far beyond the stars', using words by the metaphysical poet, Henry Vaughan, is perhaps the best known, partly because of its length but also because of its more accessible four-part scoring. Through-composed, like the majority of the motets, it reveals some of Parry's most florid polyphony and gift for melody.

Parry's setting of Thomas Campion's 'Never weather beaten sail' is, by contrast, stanzaic in structure. In five parts, the motet has a richer contrapuntal texture which is particularly perceptible in the yearning refrain 'O come quickly sweetest Lord', one that Parry skilfully transforms in the second verse. For his penultimate motet, cast in seven parts, Parry turned to John Donne's emotionally searching sonnet 'At the round earth's imagin'd corners'. Parry reached the heights of his harmonic experimentation in the ethereal paragraph beginning with the higher voices - 'And you whose eyes shall behold God and never taste death's woe' - a passage which seems almost atonal in its contrapuntal wanderings. This is ultimately stabilised by the magical entry of the tenors and basses ('But let them sleep'), and the motet concludes with some of the composer's most luxuriant polyphony, replete with the visionary benediction 'As if thou'dst seal'd my pardon with thy blood'.

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Sir Edward Elgar (1857-1934)

Cello Concerto in E minor, Op. 85

Adagio - Moderato

Lento - Allegro molto

Adagio

Allegro - Moderato - Allegro, ma non troppo - Poco più lento - Adagio

Sir Edward William Elgar, 1st Baronet, is undoubtedly the most celebrated composer in Britain's history. His music, like that of his elder compatriot Hubert Parry, has become so deeply embedded in the national consciousness that it is commonly seen as the embodiment of Britishness. Elgar himself, known so well from photographs for his prominent handlebar moustache and aristocratic bearing, is practically synonymous with the 'stiff upper lip' of late imperialism; it would be difficult to imagine a more establishment figure. However, unlike Vaughan Williams whose *Five Mystical Songs* are shot through with the distinctive colour of indigenous folksong, Elgar drew as much on foreign as on domestic influences, travelling to Leipzig to absorb the music of his idols Schumann, Brahms and Wagner, and corresponding with Sibelius and Dvořák.

The *Cello Concerto* is Elgar's final complete work of significance, composed in the summer of 1919 and first performed in October that year by Felix Salmond, with the London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Albert Coates. Elgar's popularity had by this time receded, and it was a famously disastrous performance, a far cry from the triumphant première of the First Symphony fifteen years earlier. This has not prevented the piece achieving enormous popularity since; indeed, it has become one of the cornerstones of the cello repertoire, not least through the legendary advocacy of Jacqueline du Pré. Like Parry's *Songs of Farewell*, it was written in the shadow of the Great War, and its unmistakably elegiac, 'late' style has often been commented on.

The work's poignancy should not be allowed to obscure its remarkable stylistic daring and innovation, however. Seizing the gauntlet laid down by Beethoven in his Fourth Piano Concerto, Elgar opens the work with a lengthy and largely unaccompanied cello recitative that melts unobtrusively into the gentlest of first themes, taken by the violas and echoed several times before a central section in E major. The movement is in straightforward ternary form, a clever foil for its expressive boldness that continues in the shadowy *moto perpetuo* Scherzo and the lament-like third movement, which sustains one long melody throughout. The final movement is the longest of the four, though retaining its concise rhetoric, in stark contrast with the sprawling Violin Concerto. It pursues a sunnier course, until the cadenza, which leads to a restatement of the first movement's harrowing recitative. The orchestra interject with the movement's impatient first theme, before the abrupt *fortissimo* conclusion.

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Anil Umer

Cello



Anil Umer read music at Exeter College, graduating last year. Whilst at Oxford he performed in all the major university ensembles and, during his first year, sang as a choral scholar in Exeter Choir. He is now studying for an MA in Performance at the Royal Academy of Music under Professor Josephine Knight. He is generously supported by a scholarship from the Royal Academy and Postgraduate Performance Awards from the Musicians' Benevolent Fund and the Countess of Munster Musical Trust.

Colin Campbell

Baritone



Colin Campbell studied at the Royal Northern College of Music. He has appeared as a concert soloist throughout the UK, and also in numerous festivals on the continent, the USA and the Far East. His discography includes recordings on the Hyperion, Decca, Guild, Naxos, Philips and Deutsche Grammophon labels.

George de Voil

Conductor



George de Voil is Senior Parry-Wood Organ Scholar of Exeter College, Oxford, where he has been reading for a degree in Music since October 2011. There he directs the well-regarded Chapel Choir, with whom he has toured to Barcelona, the Marche, and Northern Italy, and has broadcast a series of choral services live on BBC Radio 4. George's schedule for 2013-14 includes a tour of the USA's east coast, and a landmark première CD recording. He makes his full orchestral conducting debut tonight with the Oxford Philomusica. George also directs the popular Organ Recital Series on Exeter's fine 1994 J. W. Walker organ, of which he is custodian. He is Master of the Music at Pusey House, Oxford's famous Anglo-Catholic establishment, where he runs an eight-voice professional choir, and undertakes frequent engagements at the University Church of St Mary the Virgin.

The Chapel Choir of Exeter College, Oxford

The Chapel Choir of Exeter College, Oxford remains the only choir in either Oxford or Cambridge under the sole direction of the Organ Scholar to sing three Evensongs a week, and is widely regarded as one of the finest student ensembles in the country. The choir has recently toured Barcelona, Northern Italy, Paris, and the USA. In 2013 they visited the Adriatic Coast of Italy as part of the Anglican Communion's ecumenical relations with the region, and they return to the States in April 2014, singing in Philadelphia, Washington DC. and New York. Invitations have also been extended for the choir to sing at St Paul's Cathedral and Westminster Abbey. To mark the 700th anniversary of Exeter College's foundation in 1314, the choir was heard on BBC Radio 4 for a week of daily services, as part of a series of upcoming broadcasts by the choir. The choir have also recorded a new CD for the anniversary year, including the world premiere recording of Stanford's Mass in G and of the specially commissioned piece *Flyht* by Nicholas O'Neill, as well as of Parry's *Songs of Farewell*. It will be available this month on

Amazon and iTunes, at Blackwell's Music, and from the college.

Other concert repertoire has included Duruflé and Fauré *Requiems*, Howells *Requiem*, Handel *Alexander's Feast* and Tippett *Five Negro Spirituals* alongside specially commissioned works from leading contemporary composers Cecilia MacDowell and Jonathan Dove.

The choir's *raison d'être* is to provide music for services throughout the year in the college's magnificent Gilbert Scott chapel, modeled on the Sainte-Chapelle in Paris. Famous as the site of the death of Inspector Morse in the eponymous television series, which also featured the choir singing the In *Paradisum* from Fauré's *Requiem* in the same episode, the chapel celebrated its 150th anniversary in 2009. The year culminated in the recording of a CD on Regent Records, *One thing have I desired*, released to critical acclaim. International Record Review praised the choir's 'beautifully soft-toned and well balanced sound'.



Marios Papadopoulos

Conductor



Marios Papadopoulos is the founder and music director of Oxford Philomusica, Orchestra in Residence at the University of Oxford.

Described by The Times at his 1975 piano recital debut as 'having all the attributes of one of the world's greatest players', Papadopoulos has gone on to enjoy an international career both as pianist and conductor. He has appeared as soloist with and conducted many of the world's great orchestras, and worked with a host of eminent musicians including Vladimir Ashkenazy, Hélène Grimaud, Nicola Benedetti, John Lill, Menahem Pressler, Maxim Vengerov, Nigel Kennedy and Lang Lang. His recordings of the Beethoven Sonatas have been set on a level with Schnabel, Brendel, Barenboim, and Kempff (Daily Telegraph, Classic FM Magazine Critics' Choice).

As part of the world-wide celebrations for Mozart's 250th anniversary year, Papadopoulos directed from the keyboard the composer's complete cycle of piano concertos with Oxford Philomusica. He has conducted the complete cycle of Beethoven symphonies and directed from the keyboard the five piano concertos in Oxford Philomusica's 2008 Beethoven Festival, a feat he repeated again to celebrate the Philomusica's 15th anniversary in the 2013-14 concert season.

A prolific recording artist, Papadopoulos' catalogue includes his critically acclaimed Beethoven Sonatas, performances of Stravinsky's Concerto for Piano and Wind with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra (Hyperion), works by Mozart for a Reader's Digest album, works by Mussorgsky - including Pictures at an Exhibition - piano works by Cesar Franck, and the 24 Preludes and Fugues by Shostakovich. Most recordings are now available on Oxford Philomusica's record label.

Marios Papadopoulos holds a doctorate in music from City University and is both a member of the Oxford University Faculty of Music and Fellow by Special Election of Keble College Oxford. He became an Honorary Fellow of the Worshipful Company of Musicians in 2010 and was awarded Oxford City's Certificate of Honour in 2013. Papadopoulos was awarded an MBE in the Queen's 2014 New Year's Honours List for services to music in Oxford.



Oxford Philomusica

Oxford Philomusica is one of the leading orchestras in the UK. Praised as 'excellent' by Gramophone Magazine and 'thoroughly impressive' by BBC Music Magazine, the Orchestra's reputation is based on the uncompromising artistic standards of its founder and music director, Marios Papadopoulos, and maintained by some of the finest musicians in London, Oxford and the Thames Valley. Since 2002, the Philomusica has enjoyed a close association with the University of Oxford as its first-ever Orchestra in Residence.

The Orchestra has performed with a remarkable roster of distinguished artists, including Vladimir Ashkenazy, Nicola Benedetti, Valery Gergiev, Hélène Grimaud, Nigel Kennedy, Lang Lang, Menahem Pressler and Andrés Schiff. The 2013/14 concert season has seen the appointment of Maxim Vengerov as the Orchestra's Artist in Residence.

Oxford Philomusica's achievements include an extensive concert season at the Sheldonian Theatre; outstanding recordings of Haydn's Creation with New College Choir, and the Handel/Mendelssohn Acis and Galatea with Christ Church; major celebrations of Mozart, Haydn and Beethoven; hugely popular family concerts; and its annual Piano Festival and Summer Academy. An acclaimed Chamber Music Series and a Summer Baroque Festival both showcase The Soloists of Oxford Philomusica - a tight-knit family of musicians described by The Times as the Orchestra's 'glorious individual players'.

Oxford Philomusica has been firmly committed to community and education work from its earliest days. Its projects in the community focus on taking music where access is not normally available, in areas of social and economic disadvantage. The Orchestra's work in special schools and hospitals has been honoured with a major award for its excellence and effectiveness. As part of its University Residency, the Orchestra collaborates with the Faculty of Music in educational programmes for the student community. Partnerships with Oxford City Council and Oxfordshire County Council provide performance and tuition opportunities to hundreds of talented young musicians. 2013 saw the Orchestra and its Director awarded with the City's Certificate of Honour, in recognition of the contribution they have made to education and performance in Oxford.

Now in its 15th year, Oxford Philomusica continues to embrace its role of filling what Arts Council England defined as 'an identifiable regional need' for a professional symphony orchestra based in the area between Birmingham and Bournemouth. As such, the Orchestra performs regularly at venues in Bristol, Cheltenham, Basingstoke and Aylesbury, where it is the Orchestra in Association. Beyond its home region, the Orchestra appears often in London and other parts of the UK and is rapidly expanding its overseas touring programme and its recording catalogue.

Oxford Philomusica on Stage

Violin I

Anna-Liisa Bezrodny #
Natalia Lomeiko*
Charlotte Scott
Eva Bindere
Rhys Watkins
Madeleine Easton
Richard Smith
Kristine Balanas

Violin II

Clare Duckworth
Simon Lewis
Helena Smart
Charlotte Edwards
Jamie Hutchinson
Stephen Rowlinson

Viola

Jon Thorne †
Sophie Renshaw
Karin Norlen
Bryony Mycroft

Cello

Peter Adams
Sebastian Comberti
Francois Rive
Nathaniel Boyd

Double Bass

Thomas Martin**
Adam Precious
Andy Baker

Flute

Anthony Robb
Robert Manasse

Oboe

Joseph Sanders
Rachel Ingleton

Clarinet

David Rix
Lorraine Schulman

Bassoon

Richard Skinner
Fiona Bryan

Horn

Mark Johnson
Chris Davies
Richard Steggall
Jon Bareham

Trumpet

Joe Atkins
Tom Rainer

Trombone

Danny Scott
Richard Cross

Bass Trombone

David Eaglestone

Timpani

Tristan Fry

Harp

Sally Pryce

* *Professor at the Royal College of Music*

† *Professor at the Royal Academy of Music*

Professor at the Guildhall School of Music

** *International Chair in Double Bass, Birmingham Conservatoire*

Co-leader's chair sponsored by Mark & Jill Pellew

Principal Oboe chair sponsored by Sir Anthony and Lady Kenny

Exeter College Chapel Choir

Sopranos

Amelia Anderson
Annie Hamilton
Betty Makharinsky
Davina Pearce
Eleanor Franzén
Eleanor Hurrell
Ella Kirsh
Zoe Jackson

Alts

Ella Harold
Ellen Luckins
Ivo Almond
Jane Goodenough
Karl Gietzmann
Lydia Stephens
Maks Adach
Pamina Smith

Tenors

Archie Maybury
Richard Collett-White
David Crispin
Jack Granby
Matt Stokes
Roland Slade
Sam Keeler
Sam Williamson

Basses

Daniel Trott
David Hansford
John Forster
Joseph Fell
Luke Howarth
Robert O'Regan

THE ORCHESTRA

VIOLINS



Tamás András
Concertmaster



Carmine Lauri
Concertmaster



Natalia Lomeiko
Concertmaster



Yuri Zhislin
Co-Concertmaster



Anna-Liisa Bezrodny
Associate Concertmaster



Eva Bindere
Associate Concertmaster



Shlomy Dobrinsky
Associate Concertmaster



Charlotte Scott
Associate Concertmaster

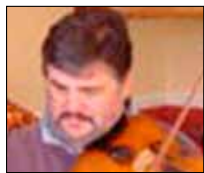


Emily Davis
Assistant Concertmaster



Michael Gurevich
Assistant Concertmaster

VIOLAS



Jonathan Barritt
Solo Viola



Jon Thorne
Solo Viola



Sophie Renshaw
Principal Viola

CELLO



Peter Adams
Solo Cello



Thomas Martin
Solo Bass

WIND



Tony Robb
Principal Flute



Robert Manasse
Sub-Principal Flute



Tim Watts
Principal Oboe



Joe Sanders
Principal Oboe



David Rix
Principal Clarinet



Lorraine Schulman
Sub-Principal Clarinet



John Orford
Principal Bassoon



Fiona Bryan
Sub-Principal Bassoon

BRASS



Richard Dilley
Principal Horn



David Wythe
Sub-Principal Horn



Joe Atkins
Principal Trumpet



Danny Scott
Principal Trombone



Ian Moffat
Sub-Principal Trombone



Paul Lambert
Bass Trombone

PERCUSSION



Tristan Fry
Principal Timpani



Julian Poole
Principal Percussion

Exeter College 700

Sir Hubert and his Contemporaries

The Rector and Fellows of Exeter College are most grateful to members of the Founder's Day Music Committee for their work in the conception and creation of this concert. Special thanks are given to Gregory Hutchinson, Andrew Huddleston, Stephen Hearn, John Leighfield, and George de Voil.

