

Oxford Philharmonic Orchestra and Music Director Marios Papadopoulos lead the UK's most comprehensive Beethoven celebration



- Complete Symphonies & Concertos Cycle
- Complete Piano, Violin & Cello Sonata Cycles
- Fidelio (Sunday 31 May)
- Beethoven Study Weekend (Saturday 1 - Sunday 2 February)
- Symposium (Thursday 6 – Friday 7 February) with Exhibition
- 'Pastoral for the Planet' on UN World Environment Day (Friday 5 June)

**Martha Argerich | Alfred Brendel | Ian Bostridge | Juilliard Quartet | Jeremy Irons
Paul Lewis | John Lill | Mischa Maisky | Anne-Sophie Mutter | Marios Papadopoulos
Sir András Schiff | John Suchet | Takács Quartet | Maxim Vengerov**

Presenting the most comprehensive 250th anniversary celebration of the great composer's life and work in the UK, **Oxford Philharmonic Orchestra** and Music Director **Marios Papadopoulos** announce the **Oxford Beethoven Festival 2020**. Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827) was born in Bonn, twinned with Oxford, making the historic English city the ideal UK home of the **year-long Festival** of musical, academic, and cultural events.

Beethoven's complete Piano Concertos are directed from the keyboard in five concerts throughout the year by Founder Marios Papadopoulos. Another concert highlight is the composer's 'Triple,' performed by **Maxim Vengerov, Mischa Maisky, and Sergei Babayan** on Tuesday 12 May.

On Saturday 1 February, actor **Jeremy Irons** joins Soloists from the Orchestra to narrate T S Eliot's masterpiece Four Quartets beside Beethoven's String Quartet No. 15, Op. 132, during the **Study Weekend** which sees Festival Patron **Alfred Brendel** join Papadopoulos, Misha Donat and broadcaster Rob Cowan in masterclasses and discussion, before the Takács Quartet perform the String Quartet Op. 135, the composer's final quartet.



A **Solo Piano Series** sees authorities on Beethoven such as **Sir Andras Schiff, John Lill, Paul Lewis** and **Martin James Bartlett** - an alumnus of the Orchestra's Oxford Piano Festival - take on the complete cycle of the Piano Sonatas in 9 recitals while titan **Martha Argerich** joins **Stephen Kovacevich** to present an extraordinary piano duo programme including Beethoven's Große Fuge in the composer's own arrangement (Sunday 14 June).

On Friday 5 June 2020 – **United Nations World Environment Day** – the Orchestra joins a worldwide initiative to create a '**Pastoral for the Planet**' by performing Beethoven's Symphony No. 6 and highlighting the need for a global effort to meet the challenges of

climate change and ensure sustainable development for all. In a panel chaired by Professor Lord Krebs, leading climate experts join musicians to explore music as a force in the fight against the climate crisis, drawing on the city's strengths as a global centre for knowledge, learning and research.

In a six-concert series curated by **Mats Lidström** (Solo Cello with the Orchestra), members of the Orchestra pair chamber works by Beethoven with those of his Colleagues, including Ries, Kreutzer, Romberg, and Wölfl. The chamber series is held in Oxford's **Holywell Music Room**, the oldest purpose-built music room in Europe.

In a narrated concert on Friday 6 November, author **Jessica Duchon** will introduce her new book, **Immortal**, exploring the mystery woman behind Beethoven's 'Immortal Beloved' love letter. Baritone Benjamin Appl joins Duchon and pianist Manon Fischer-Dieskau in songs by the composer. The **Juilliard Quartet** give the **UK premiere** of Jörg Widmann's String Quartet No. 9 alongside Beethoven's String Quartet No. 14 on Tuesday 8 December.

The extensive scope of the Festival reaches beyond the composer's symphonic cycle, with repertoire including his Mass in C major (Wednesday 1 July), the sacred oratorio Christus am Ölberge (Friday 11 December), and a full concert performance of Beethoven's opera *Fidelio* starring **Emma Bell** as Leonore and **Andrew Staples** as Florestan on Sunday 31 May.

The Festival culminates in December with a majestic flourish: **Anne-Sophie Mutter** plays the Violin Concerto on Friday 11 December before an international finale on Sunday 13 December with **Der Philharmonische Chor der Stadt Bonn** joining the Orchestra for Beethoven's 'Choral Fantasy' and 'Choral' Symphony No. 9.



Marios Papadopoulos said:

"I have been captivated by Beethoven's music ever since I was a boy learning his piano works. The music – so powerful yet so intimate – speaks to me like no other. On our third homage to Beethoven's symphonies and concertos, we hope to shed new light on these perennial masterpieces with ideas formulated by informed opinion and based on knowledge, experience and considered principles."

The Orchestra, which is **in Residence at the University of Oxford**, pays tribute to Beethoven outside the concert hall in a specially-convened **Symposium** (Thursday 6 – Friday 7 February) with experts attending from across the world: Prof. Glenn Stanley, Prof. Elaine Sisman, Prof. William Kinderman, Prof. Birgit Lodes, Prof. Nicholas Marston, Prof. David B. Levy, Claire Holden, Prof. Barry Cooper, Prof. Laura Tunbridge, Prof. Daniel Leech-Wilkinson, and Prof. Dr. Christine Siegert. An **Exhibition** in the **Bodleian Libraries** (Weston Library) enriches the Symposium with exhibits including an original Beethoven manuscript.

Complementing these endeavours, £5 tickets will be offered to students for every concert, and Young Artist's Platform recitals will be held preceding several symphonic cycle concerts.

Full listings for the Festival can be found on the Orchestra's website and in the Festival Brochure: https://issuu.com/oxfordphilharmonic/docs/beethoven_2020_singles

Oxford Philharmonic Orchestra



Praised as 'excellent' by *Gramophone* magazine and 'thoroughly impressive' by *BBC Music Magazine*, the Oxford Philharmonic 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 the UK.

Established in 1998 and formerly known as Oxford Philomusica, the Oxford Philharmonic Orchestra occupies a unique position within the UK orchestral landscape. As an orchestra of the highest quality, the

Oxford Philharmonic attracts some of the world's greatest artists to appear in its series, including Maxim Vengerov, Valery Gergiev, Anne-Sophie Mutter, Martha Argerich, András Schiff, Renée Fleming, Lang Lang, Nicola Benedetti, and Vladimir Ashkenazy.

In addition to the Oxford Philharmonic Orchestra's annual concert season in Oxford, touring performances across the UK, family concerts, annual Oxford Piano Festival, and Chamber Music Series, it boasts a growing list of international engagements including the Orchestra's debut at the Tivoli Festival in Copenhagen in June 2019, and an upcoming US debut at Carnegie Hall in May 2020. Acclaimed recordings include works by Nimrod Borenstein for Chandos, cello concertos by Shostakovich and Mats Lidström (Solo Cello of the Oxford Philharmonic), both conducted by Vladimir Ashkenazy, on the BIS label, *A Merton Christmas* with Merton College Choir, Haydn's *The Creation* with the Choir of New College, and the Handel/Mendelssohn *Acis and Galatea* with Christ Church Cathedral Choir. The Orchestra's upcoming disc *The Enlightened Trumpet* with soloist Paul Merkelo will be released on Sony Classical in Autumn 2019.

Following his remarkable debut with the Orchestra in 2013, Maxim Vengerov became its first Artist in Residence. Over an unprecedented four-season collaboration, Vengerov and the Oxford Philharmonic performed across the UK, recorded the violin concertos of Brahms and Sibelius as well as Mendelssohn's Octet. In July 2018 Vengerov appeared at Cheltenham Music Festival and Saffron Hall with the Soloists of the Oxford Philharmonic - a tight-knit group of musicians described by *The Times* as the ensemble's 'glorious individual players' and by Jessica Duchan as 'a line-up to match any top-notch international chamber ensemble and probably beat them on their own turf'. As part of the Orchestra's 20th anniversary celebrations in the 2018/19 season, Vengerov joined the Orchestra at the Barbican in a performance of the Bach 'Double' with Anne-Sophie Mutter, in a gala concert also featuring Martha Argerich.

The Oxford Philharmonic Orchestra has been firmly committed to outreach work from its earliest days, with projects taking music to areas of social and economic disadvantage, including hospitals, special schools, and partnerships with Oxford City Council and Oxfordshire County Council. In 2002, the Oxford Philharmonic Orchestra was appointed the first ever Orchestra in Residence at the University of Oxford, and frequently collaborates with the Faculty of Music in educational programmes. In the 2019/20 season, the Orchestra launches its Side-by-Side scheme for school and University students, which provides an opportunity for young musicians to perform within the ranks of a professional orchestra.

The Orchestra and its Music Director were awarded the City of Oxford's Certificate of Honour in 2013, in recognition of their contribution to education and performance in Oxford.

The continual search for excellence underpins the Oxford Philharmonic Orchestra's reputation, and is reflected in an Orchestra that strives to create bold musical statements with every concert it presents.

Marios Papadopoulos



Marios Papadopoulos is the Founder and Music Director of the Oxford Philharmonic Orchestra, the 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 worked with a host of eminent musicians including Vladimir Ashkenazy, Anne-Sophie Mutter, Menahem Pressler, Renée Fleming, Martha Argerich and Lang Lang.

Papadopoulos's recording catalogue includes his critically acclaimed Beethoven sonatas – which have been set on a level with Schnabel, Brendel, Barenboim, and Kempff (*Daily Telegraph*, *Classic FM Magazine*) – and works by Stravinsky (with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra), Mozart, Mussorgsky, Franck and Shostakovich. He and Maxim Vengerov have recorded the complete Brahms violin sonatas and performed them at Vienna's Musikverein in 2016.

Papadopoulos has conducted the complete cycle of Beethoven symphonies and directed from the keyboard the five piano concertos in the Oxford Philharmonic's 2008 Beethoven Festival, a feat he repeated to celebrate the Orchestra's 15th anniversary in the 2013/14 concert season, and will again with the 2020 Beethoven Festival, celebrating the composer's 250th anniversary.

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.

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