

Sir Bryn Terfel premieres John Rutter's 'Joseph's Carol', dedicated to the Oxford vaccine team in celebratory concert from the Oxford Philharmonic Orchestra



Friday 18 December 2020, 18:30

Streamed on Oxford Philharmonic Orchestra's YouTube Channel:

bit.ly/OPOVaccineTribute

Elgar Chanson de Matin
William Henry Monk Abide with Me
Rodgers & Hammerstein You'll Never Walk Alone
John Rutter Joseph's Carol **WORLD PREMIERE**
John Rutter Look to the Day
Handel Hallelujah Chorus

Sir Bryn Terfel bass-baritone
Maxim Vengerov violin
John Rutter conductor
Marios Papadopoulos conductor
John Suchet presenter

Oxford Philharmonic Orchestra
Choir of Merton College, Oxford
Alexandra Lowe soprano
Alexander Olleson treble

In recognition of the formidable work accomplished by the team of scientists at the University of Oxford on their Covid-19 vaccine, the **Oxford Philharmonic Orchestra** will stream a celebratory concert on **Friday 18 December**, recorded in the city's historic **Sheldonian Theatre**.

Performed by bass-baritone **Sir Bryn Terfel**, the short concert features the premiere of **John Rutter's Joseph's Carol**, written in tribute to the Oxford Vaccine Group, the Jenner Institute and the RECOVERY team. The words by John Rutter recount the long and weary journey of Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem before the birth of the baby Jesus, echoing the programme's journey from struggle through to hope.

Bryn Terfel also joins the Orchestra and the Choir of Merton College, Oxford, in a rousing programme from Rodgers & Hammerstein's You'll Never Walk Alone (with Jette Parker Young Artist **Alexandra Lowe**) to Handel's Hallelujah Chorus. Sir Bryn and the Orchestra are also joined in the hymn of comfort, Abide with Me, by chorister **Alexander Olleson** of Christ Church Cathedral Choir, the recent winner of BBC Young Chorister Of The Year 2020. Joining the Orchestra from Russia and Germany respectively, world-renowned virtuoso



violinists **Maxim Vengerov** (performing the Adagio from Bach's Violin Sonata No. 1 in G minor, BWV 1001) and **Anne-Sophie Mutter** offer their own special tributes to the programme.

The concert will be streamed to a worldwide audience through Oxford Philharmonic Orchestra's YouTube Channel at bit.ly/OPOVaccineTribute, following an exclusive viewing for the team researching and developing the vaccine and coronavirus treatments, for whom it has been created. Clips from the concert will also be available on the Orchestra's YouTube Channel at a later date.

Classic FM, the UK's most popular classical music station, is supporting the concert by streaming an exclusive programme on its Facebook page, which has more than 4 million followers. In addition, Classic FM will broadcast the premiere recording of John Rutter's new *Joseph's Carol*, performed by Bryn Terfel, on air to its 5.5 million weekly listeners, along with Handel's Hallelujah Chorus.

CLASSIC 

Marios Papadopoulos, Oxford Philharmonic Orchestra Music Director, said:

"We are extremely grateful to the researchers, medical staff and volunteers based at the University of Oxford for their tireless work in the search for treatment and a vaccine for COVID-19. As the Orchestra in Residence at the University, we offer this concert in celebration of their recently announced achievements and are thrilled to be joined in our message of thanks by a stellar line-up of classical musicians with whom we have worked with closely in the past."

John Rutter said:

"I am delighted to have been invited to contribute to this celebration, which expresses in music the gratitude we all feel in our hearts. As always, music goes beyond words."

The concert, introduced by Classic FM presenter **John Suchet**, will be interspersed with footage from the lab and trials of the treatment and vaccine process, as well as interviews with performers, researchers, and special messages from the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Oxford, Professor Louise Richardson, as well as from the Orchestra's Royal Patron, HRH Princess Alexandra.

Sarah Gilbert, Professor of Vaccinology and project lead for the Oxford Vaccine Trial, said:

"On behalf of the COVID-19 vaccine trial team, I would like to thank the Oxford Philharmonic for this creative approach to celebrating our work, and look forward to the performance which should provide some welcome respite from the difficulties we have all faced this year."

Director of the Oxford Vaccine Group and chief investigator of the Oxford Vaccine Trial, Professor **Andrew Pollard**, said:

"We are delighted that the Oxford Philharmonic Orchestra has decided to pay tribute to the remarkable and dedicated team of inspiring individuals, at the University and Hospital, who have worked tirelessly through the pandemic to assess the Oxford vaccine and show that it can protect people from the pandemic virus."

"We would also like to dedicate the moment to all those who came forward to take part in the trials during this uncertain time, to help in the assessment of the vaccine."

The concert has been filmed by **Apple & Biscuit Recordings**, with P Burton-Morgan as writer and director and Will Reynolds as lighting designer. Filming took place on Wednesday 2 and Thursday 3 December at the Grade I listed Sheldonian Theatre, the Oxford Philharmonic's main orchestral venue, built between 1664 and 1668 after a

design by Sir Christopher Wren. Handel conducted the first performance of his third Oratorio *Athalia* there in 1733.

This celebratory concert is the first to be announced from the Oxford Philharmonic Orchestra's Winter Series of streamed concerts. The series will see the Orchestra perform four concerts to audiences worldwide and includes two world premieres, with full details to be announced soon.

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 June 2021. 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 Duchon 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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