

MUSIC PROJECTS WITH OLDER PEOPLE



Europe's only Baroque and Tango Orchestra!







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AN INTRODUCTION

MISSION STATEMENT

Through community concerts and workshops the music of the Oxford Concert Party ignites emotions and facilitates access to an inner world of infinite creativity.

The Oxford Concert Party defies the sterile world of the concert hall and, with an original and kaleidoscopic repertoire, makes music accessible to all; and with passion and energy, humour and sensitivity, skill and experience, they take their listeners on a journey which transforms, heals and humanises, especially those imprisoned by isolation, disability, illness or walls.

BACKGROUND

The Oxford Concert Party is a Europe's only Tango and Baroque Orchestra. Consisting of an eclectic mix of two violins, cello, double-bass and harpsichord/accordion, our music is an original blend of many genres, from Baroque and Latin American to Eastern European, Parisian, Scottish and Irish.

In addition to touring and performing nationally, the OCP undertakes extensive community concerts and workshops and aims to make music accessible to all. For the last 18 years, the OCP has delivered community music to disadvantaged people and isolated communities across the county. Each year we aim to deliver concerts and workshops in residential homes for the elderly or sufferers with Alzheimer's, in community centres to people with special needs, in isolated village halls and to many primary schools and prisons across the country.

We take three hundred years of music from around the world, turn it upside down, infuse it with wit, passion and pathos. It is a recipe with which the Oxford Concert Party, described as ***"one of the most entertaining, mould-breaking groups around"*** (*Oxford Times*) charms and delights their audience wherever they go. Be it Vivaldi or Piazzolla, French café music or Argentinean tango, Irish laments or Finnish polkas, this ***"bunch of superb musicians"*** (*Daily Telegraph*) create a rich, colourful and expressive sound, and their vibrant virtuosity, zany and offbeat humour make theirs an unforgettable performance.





AND OLDER PEOPLE

Since its inception the Oxford Concert Party has made a special commitment to a programme of concerts for the elderly, people with dementia and adults with learning difficulties. This stems from the belief of the Artistic Director of OCP, ARne Richards, in the healing and humanising power of music. As well as his skills as a professional performer and composer, ARne is a highly trained and experienced music therapist.



The late Fred Apps, former Director of Solden Hill House, a home based on the principles of Rudolph Steiner for adults with learning difficulties, wrote: 'We have found music and music therapy to be one of the most effective ways of touching the very heart and soul of these very special people. As a means of helping them to develop their latent talents, we have discovered music to be of enormous help and value. Where, for instance, there is a severe speech or communication problem, we have found the means to 'break-through' when other methods have not always proved effective. For many years ARne Richards has enriched all our lives in his own quite unique way. Many of us have been inspired to

carry on the work he began and we find we can continue to help and enhance the life-style of our people.'

Case Histories

The Oxford Concert Party has had some wonderful responses over the years from people with special needs, Alzheimer sufferers and the elderly. On one occasion during the playing of the famous tango 'La Cumparsita' an elderly lady suddenly got up and started to dance with the most exquisite graceful movements. It transpired that in her youth she had been a dancer but had not danced for years.

At the end of a recent concert at Whitehaven Hospital, Cumbria, where our audience was in the main Alzheimer sufferers, an elderly gentleman rose to his feet and made an eloquent, if slightly muddled, speech of thanks. This would be unremarkable were it not for the fact that as an Alzheimer patient himself the nurses had not heard him utter more than two words in the last five years: the music had unlocked his hitherto imprisoned faculties and given him the power of expression once more.

Ann, born and brought up in Ireland, was suffering from dementia. Her carers at the Calder Day Centre, Banbury, told us that she did not communicate at all except through anger. When she heard Irish music being played she immediately transformed, laughing and talking, even able to translate the Gaelic title of a tune. Her carers were truly amazed.

OCP continues to bring music to residential homes, day-centres and hospitals. Our Intergenerational Project, 'Music and Memories' brings elderly groups together with primary school children and uses both music, poetry and story-telling. We are currently developing two more projects:

More Music and Memories - a music and poetry project based on reminiscence

Safer Steps - a project on the theme of falling, developed in conjunction with Eden Age Concern, Cumbria

MUSIC AND MEMORIES

with poet Geraldine Green

This is an intergenerational cross-arts project which brings together an elderly group and primary school children to interactively and creatively participate in music, poetry and story-telling with two professional musicians and a poet/story-teller.

Based on reminiscence, with the two art forms acting as a catalyst for developing a common language, the project will spread over six days culminating in a final 'sharing' of music, poetry, dance, together with the production of a simple book recording the project. Music and Memories creates a unique opportunity for the elderly and the very young to interact and communicate with one another, creating an enhanced sense of identity within their communities. For the elderly the sharing and comparing of experiences with the younger generation, through music and words, is a real stimulation, giving them a sense of social inclusion and worth, and for the children it helps to develop a sense of history, belonging and pride in their communities.

We use playground games as a starting point: these generate memories from the elderly group of childhood - such as school, the weather, food, celebrations - out of which grow stories, poems, songs and dances. Using a simple questionnaire the children ask the elderly group about their school days - what games they played, what songs they sang, what poems they remembered, what great storms happened when they were young.

We take a number of instruments from all over the world such as African drums, a didgeridoo, a Balinese gong, rainsticks, an ocean drum, a Tibetan bowl, a Vietnamese fish and hen, many other percussion instruments, a violin and an accordion, and work with both groups exploring sounds, rhythm, music and poetry. We sing songs, dance, play games and make up a large improvised piece of music based on 'The Owl and the Pussycat'. The project finishes with a final 'performance' for the rest of the school, family and friends.

Also, during the project we aim to equip the volunteers and teachers with skills to further and deepen the work of the project and to develop further projects themselves, thus ensuring a strong degree of sustainability.

Expected Outcomes

- Development of social and cultural inclusion
- Development of an enhanced sense of community
- Enrichment of the lives of all who participate in the project

For the elderly:

- heightened memory and integration of memory with a common theme; gentle sensory stimulation and mild exercise

For the children:

- Inspiration both with music and words; a deeper appreciation of life's experiences
- For both groups:
 - The encouragement of creativity
 - Increased socialisation and involvement
 - Expanded communication
 - Stimulation of group interaction
 - The lessening of the generation gap

We have run this project in several communities in Cumbria.

Comments from the children and Age Concern members:



"I loved everything, it was fun. I liked the Owl and the Pussycat, Bee Dance, Mr Rabbit and Tree in the Wood. I really liked it a lot. I hope you come again soon."

Amber

"I learnt lots of new things about song and dance. I liked the Seven Steps because it was the longest song that we did. But best of all was when we performed it in front of the audience in the chapel"

Luke

"I really enjoyed everything you did with us and I particularly liked it when we all played our instruments. Also I feel more confident in front of an audience."

Connie

"The performance was great and I liked the poem that the man read out. I had fun making Easter eggs and writing the Easter poem. We will miss you a lot."

Hannah

"I liked everything but the best was the Owl and the Pussycat because everybody got a turn in making music. I learnt that if you play completely different instruments together and make a rhythm it sounds brilliant."

Callum

"The children have thoroughly enjoyed themselves. OCP has been inspirational and both teachers and children have got a lot from the project. I hope we can continue to use some of their ideas in the school in future."

Helen Bedford, Year 2/3 Teacher at Langwathby School

"Old people and children are such a good mix. The lunch club members have loved taking part. The songs and poems have brought back a lot of memories and given everyone such a lot to talk about."

Margaret Watt, Age Concern

"We have really enjoyed sharing our memories and poetry with the children and today's entertainment has been just brilliant"

Nan Greeves, Lunch Club Member

MUSIC AND OLDER PEOPLE – AYLESBURY VALE

OCP developed a new model of working with older people and secured funding for a large new programme of delivery in Buckinghamshire between September 2008 to April 2009. This programme created new partnerships with Age Concern Buckinghamshire and Buckinghamshire County Council and gained OCP a high profile in the county.

The programme included 16 concerts in day centres, 6 'one-off' workshops, 3 x 6-week participatory projects, an 8-week intergenerational project involving primary age children and older people, and a public concert. The total budget was £38,000 and the project was made possible by major grants from Arts Council England South East, Aylesbury Vale Community Chest and Buckingham Community Foundation.

The programme involved:

- an audience of 478, including 308 frail and/or isolated older people
- 173 older people as participants
- 26 children aged 9 and 10 years
- 61 care staff and 59 volunteers

Each centre had a concert by OCP and these were followed up either with a one-off workshop or with an extended six week project.



Music is a powerful tool when working with these people and can have extraordinarily profound effects: people whose communication has been limited or who often appear confused can suddenly regain clarity of mind through the stimulation of memory through music. People who may not remember what they had for lunch half an hour ago can be transported to childhood holidays through the sound of an ocean drum and before you know it they can recall in vivid detail their annual trips to the seaside years ago. We had many wonderful instances of such memories. At one lunch club Edna, who had hitherto refused to join

in any group activity, became an active contributor and regaled us with stories of singing in the Messiah in her local choir, and about her cat who climbed the church tower! Edward had been refused access to all lunch clubs because of his sometimes unpredictable and aggressive behaviour: he was given a chance at Steeple Claydon lunch club and after Arne had established a connection with him through his love of jazz he became happy, responsive and communicative and has remained so ever since. We had some very amusing incidents too: when performing at one residential home an elderly lady came up to me mid-performance and whispered conspiratorially 'I've had a word with the authorities and it's time you stopped now'!

This project ended with a celebration in St. Peter's Church in Aylesbury where people from many of the centres we had visited came to share together in the concert – and gave an impromptu performance of 'The Owl and the Pussycat' complete with sound effects!

As part of our Buckinghamshire project we undertook an extended intergenerational project in the village of Brill with children from the local school and older people from the village. We were partnered in this project by the poet Pat Winslow who proved to be inspirational. Our subject was the Second World War and life in the fifties. This was probably one of our most successful projects to date as the children were fascinated by the memories that the older people had of air-raids, rationing, evacuees, captured German soldiers, the songs and music of the time etc. This stimulated a series of wonderful poems from each group. The interaction

between both groups was truly astonishing. One child wrote on the school blog 'I used to think old people were boring. Now I think they're great!' And one truly magical poem arose from an older man:

Old people
Are young people
Dressed in their memories

Again, this project finished with a celebratory concert in Brill Church where the children and older people shared many of the stories, poems and songs that had arisen from the project, and these are recorded in a beautifully produced book a copy of which was given to all the participants, a lovely memento of an unforgettable project.

HARBOROUGH, LEICESTERSHIRE



The success of this particular model of working was repeated in Leicestershire between March and August 2009. This programme involved:

- 12 concerts and 8 participatory workshops and 4 x 4-week projects
- opportunities for 3 Leicestershire based artists to develop new skills in working with older people through delivery of 3 of the 4-week participatory projects
- achieved a total audience of 176 older people (the majority of whom were frail and/or isolated older people aged 70+)
- involved 188 older people as participants (of which 121 participated in 'one-off' participatory workshops and 67 participated in 4-week projects)
- 54 care staff and 11 volunteers

Both these projects were largely funded by grants from Arts Council England as well as Local Authority funding.

DAY CENTRE STAFF TRAINING

As a result of the work with older people and in consultation with Age Concern Buckinghamshire and the Prevention Projects Officer from Adult Social Care, Buckinghamshire County Council, it was agreed that OCP would pilot a training programme for day centre staff in Buckinghamshire between September - November 2009. The pilot aimed to explore whether investing in day centre staff/volunteers' development could increase the sustainability of musical activities for older people.

There were 6 participatory music sessions, led by ARne Richards and Isabel Knowland with clients at Wing Day Centre. Staff from 7 centres each observed one music session (2 members of staff from Age Concern Bucks/Wing Day Centre were present at all 6 sessions). The music sessions/staff observation visits were preceded with a preparatory meeting with ARne and Isabel. Staff were asked to observe 3 particular aspects of OCP's delivery:

- The 'Desert Island disc' approach
- Passing an instrument as a focus
- Memory books

Immediately after the music session, staff met with ARne and Isabel to reflect on their observations and discuss how to apply some of the ideas and techniques in their own centres. On completion of the 6 sessions at Wing Day Centre, all participating staff came together for 2 training sessions led by ARne and Isabel. These sessions included:

- Discussion on each individual's experience and relationship with music.
- Short lectures including the elements of sound, psychology of sound, impact and affect of sound.
- Understanding the 'families' of instruments and exploring the reasons why people are drawn to certain instruments and sounds.
- Experiencing a range of techniques and processes for leading individual and group work in day centre settings including: developing a sequence of words and sounds for performance, developing a sequence of words and movements, sounds to a known poem for performance, and creative ways to use instruments to engage clients on a one-to-one basis

All staff that observed an OCP led session considered it to have been a useful and valuable experience and they felt the opportunity to observe professionals in practice was key to building their confidence and understanding before applying the techniques for themselves in their own setting. The evaluation found that staff observed differences between OCP's approach to engaging older people and their own usual approaches. Most notably staff observed techniques that enable one-to-one engagement for everyone, whilst also stimulating and involving the whole group.

This project attracted local authority funding in association with Age Concern.

In spring 2011, with funding from the Barings Foundation, this project was run again in Buckinghamshire. This was with a new cohort of staff and the structure of the project was changed slightly. This time, ARne and Isabel went to 6 different centres and ran one session at each, meeting with staff/volunteers afterwards. When all 6 sessions had been run, all the staff/volunteers came together for a training day. The project could run this way because the staff already trained up could support the new trainees. It also allowed the clients of 6 centres to experience a music session by professional musicians.

In summer 2011, the full project was run with AgeUK Oxfordshire. To make the project fit in with the centres, 6 sessions were run in each of 2 centres and staff/volunteers from across 6 centres attended (2 at each session). A training day for all staff/volunteers was held at the end and additionally, a session was held at each centre co-led by the trainees alongside ARne and Isabel.

AN INTERGENERATIONAL MUSIC PROJECT IN THE DISRAELI WARD OF HIGH WYCOMBE

The project has been developed in collaboration with Wycombe District Council between October 2009 and March 2010.



The project began with a participatory music workshop at 'Disraeli Day' a community event, on 28th October, organized by Wycombe DC (which included other activities and information on local services such as health, fire and rescue, police etc). This event attracted large numbers from the local community (including families, older people, young people). The workshop (to be led by 2 musicians) engaged and built a relationship with local community members and also served to promote and develop an audience for an OCP concert that was free and open to all members of the local community, held at Disraeli School a week after Disraeli Day. OCP also undertook development work to support older residents, from the nearby Sheltered Housing unit, to attend the concert, at which all of OCP's 6 professional musicians performed.

At the concert, OCP recruited adults to participate in a follow up 6-week intergenerational music project that took place at the school. Participants included one school class (Year 5 or Year 6) and adults (including frail older people) from the local community.

During the course of the intergenerational project the young and older people explored a range of musical styles and traditions that reflected the demographic of the community. Project sessions included reminiscence, story telling and sharing of memories as well as the opportunity to listen to live music, sing and participate in playing a diverse range of percussion instruments from around the world. The project worked towards a small and informal sharing event that marked the end of the project and celebrate achievements.

This project was funded by local authority grants.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

We were delighted to receive funding from three Oxfordshire District Councils: Vale of White Horse, West Oxfordshire and Oxford City Council, to deliver 'Food for Thought', a combined arts project for older people. This project was a new departure for Oxford Concert Party where we were managing the project which combined music with storytelling, drama, and visual art, and working with other community artists from different disciplines to run a rich, multi-textured project which explores food through arts processes and explores the arts through the prism of food. This project ran from January to April 2010.



Food for Thought was a five-week creative project delivered in 6 centres for older people across the Vale of White Horse, West Oxfordshire and Oxford City councils: one day centre and one residential centre in each District. This provided a total of 30 creative participatory sessions across the three districts. It was delivered by highly skilled community artists, who have extensive experience in working with older people and for whom inclusive practice is a prerequisite. It combined music, song, drama, storytelling, visual and decorative arts and reminiscence in creative ways that nourished the sensory, artistic, intellectual and emotional appetites of participants of all levels of ability.

Each project featured music and song with OCP artists as a backbone, with other art forms contributing to the project. Projects involved a process of collating a 'recipe book' of thoughts, songs, stories, poems, images and work pieces by the participants which were left as a legacy with the group, and each project culminated in a small performance or sharing by the participants. Each session had three artists working together in different combinations to provide stimulating and varied exposure to different art forms for each project. This meant that participants experienced the themes in multi-layered and complementary ways.

This project was funded by local authority grants.

We are currently running this project with AgeUK Buckinghamshire using the same format which was so successful. Following this, we will be working with AgeUK Oxfordshire to deliver the project across the summer at more day centres in Oxfordshire. This will be funded by the Patsy Wood Trust.

THE OXFORD CONCERT PARTY IS:



ARNE RICHARDS (Artistic Director - harpsichord/accordion) made his highly acclaimed debut at the **Wigmore Hall** in London, and has since developed a colourful and varied performing profile in many parts of the world. Well known for his exciting and stylish playing, he has recorded regularly for **BBC Radio and Television, Channel 4 Television**, and has appeared on Italian, German, Mexican, Australian and US networks. An authority on music for healing, his work as a consultant music therapist has taken him to Scandinavia, the Far East and Australia. He is also a qualified hypnoanalyst. ARne's unique compositions and arrangements for the Oxford Concert Party reflect his great love of world music, particularly Celtic music and the tango.



ISABEL KNOWLAND (violin) studied at the **Royal Academy of Music** with Frederick Grinke. During her varied professional career she has played in West End shows, recorded with groups such as **Procul Harem**, played in many major London orchestras and recorded several trio recitals for the **BBC**. From OCP's formation in 1992 to 2008 she managed the group, and has played a major role in developing projects in prisons, schools and residential homes. Brought up in Ireland, her playing reflects her love of its passionate music and energetic dance.



GREGORY WARREN WILSON (violin) is a jack of all trades, known nowadays as a post-modernist renaissance man. He trained at the **Royal Ballet School** and danced at **Covent Garden** before studying at the **Royal College of Music**. He was a member of the **Razumovsky Quartet** for three years and the **London Mozart Players** for ten. He now enjoys a wide variety of work, performing and recording classical, contemporary and pop music. Passionate about tango, he teaches at **The Tango Club** in London. He has also published four books of poetry, most recently "The Mercury Fountain" (Enitharmon Press, 2008).



LISANNE MELCHIOR (viola) won violin and viola scholarships to the **Royal Northern College of Music** and later to study in Chicago. Lianne enjoys different forms of music playing in symphony orchestras, opera orchestras including **Glyndebourne** and **Welsh National**, and jazz ensembles. She has a particular love of chamber music and has performed concertos in both England and Germany. Lianne lives on a smallholding with animals both feathered & woolly and also keeps free-range children.



TREVOR BURLEY (cello) hails from Halesowen in the West Midlands. At the age of eleven, having failed miserably with the trumpet, he fell in love with the cello and later studied at the **Welsh College of Music** in Cardiff and the **Guildhall School of Music & Drama** in London. Since then his busy freelance career has included playing in thirteen West End shows, performing chamber music at the **Purcell Room** and working with the rock group "**Suede**". He now lives in Oxfordshire with his partner Shelley, with whom he plays 1920's Palm Court music. He also cooks with gusto, flirts with church organs and is a practising Craniosacral Therapist.



LUCY HARE (double bass) is in great demand as a freelance player in London and abroad. She has worked with many of London's major orchestras, chamber ensembles and recording companies. A traveller, gastronome and dancer at heart, Lucy's unique percussive playing brings together her wild energy and love of world rhythms and music. Obsessed by the tango she has formed her own tango quintet, **Tango Volcano**. She has recently acquired a new passion, gardening, and she and Isabel are known to spend many hours over their veg boxes, wine glass in hand, discussing slugs and compost.

WHAT THE PAPERS SAID

“A decidedly unstuffy bunch of superb musicians Look out for them whenever your spirits need a lift.”

The Daily Telegraph

“Concerts of Baroque music, tango, and Scottish and Irish tunes are not two a penny at Festival or any other time the concert never loses its sense of fun there is no sense of a self-conscious blowing of boundaries as the Oxford Concert Party just play and give entertainment”

**** The Scotsman (1997 Edinburgh Fringe Review)

“**The Oxford Concert Party** create a link between Vivaldi, the Irish dances of O’Carolan and the South American Tango, and in the process release rhythms of Latin lasciviousness and relaxed rusticity. Thanks to Arne Richard’s engaging comparing and the wit and energy of the players, this concert created a palatable, and welcome, sensation of warmer climes.”

**** The Scotsman (1998 Edinburgh Fringe Review)

“It’s totally different, crazy and triumphant with a peculiar vitality.”

BBC Radio

“One of the most entertaining, mould- breaking groups around.”

Oxford Times

“One of the major qualities that sets this Orchestra apart from any other ensemble is not only virtuosity but also their wit and rare entertainment value, which immediately puts everyone at ease and produces instant audience participation.”

The London Arts and Fringe Directory

WHAT THE PEOPLE SAID

“You were all quite magnificent. The power that you communicate via the music was superb, inspiring and spiritual.”

Codsall Village Hall (Staffordshire)

“Dear Lovely People, I have heard and seen you twice. I love you and think we should all get married. There is not much culture in my life so you were a great breath of fresh air to me.”

Grendon Underwood Prison (Berkshire)

“the depth and quality of the playing were remarkable, without in any way compromising or being compromised by your ability to make it all enormous fun. There are plenty of ensembles who give people the aesthetic pleasure that one expects from good music; **I don’t know another group of players who make their audience so happy.**”

Aston Cantlow Village Hall(Warwickshire)

“Thank you for coming to Wisbech and giving us such a treat. I have been treasurer of the Wisbech Music Society for 18 years and have attended all the concerts which must run into several hundred. **I can honestly say that I have never heard such a varied and exciting programme on one evening.**”

Wisbech Music Society (Cambridgeshire)

“ * * * * ing great!”

Inmates, Whitemoor Prison (Cambridgeshire)

APPEARANCES AND RECORDINGS

TOURS

Ireland, Scotland, the Shetland Islands, Holland, Italy. Rural Touring Schemes: Live and Local, North Pennine Highlights

FESTIVALS

Newbury, Henley, Rye, Church Stretton, Swaffham, Bolton, Lanercost, Galway – Ireland, Spoleto – Italy (by personal invitation of the late Gian Carlo Menotti), Edinburgh – voted ‘Pick of the Fringe’

RADIO

Radio 3 ‘In Tune’; Radio 4 ‘Kaleidoscope’, ‘Loose Ends’; Radio 2 ‘Friday Night is Music Night’; Radio Scotland ‘Fine Tunes’; Radio Telefais Eireann ‘Gay Byrne Show’

TELEVISION

Border Television, Italian Television

COMMUNITY OUTREACH WORK

PRISONS

Regular five-day projects at HMP Whitemoor, HMP Grendon, HMP Dartmoor, HMP Lancaster Castle, HMP Cornhill. Concerts in prisons throughout UK and Ireland, concerts and projects in detention centres

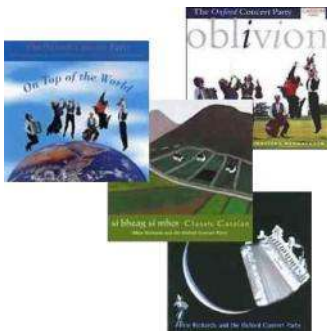
HOMES

Concerts at Day Centres, Homes for the Elderly and people with special needs throughout the country. Inter-generational projects.

CHILDREN

Concerts and workshops projects in schools throughout the UK.

DISCOGRAPHY



OUT OF OBLIVION
ON TOP OF THE WORLD
– turned upside-down!
OVER THE MOON
more!
SI BHEAG, SI MHOR

Latin American, Scottish and Irish music
300 years of music from around the world

Jewish Klezmer, J Scott Skinner, tangos and

Classic Carolan - the best of Irish music



The Oxford Concert Party is a registered charity number 1049340
and a limited company number 02923444



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www.oxfordconcertparty.org

where you can hear
samples of our music