

Oxford
concert
ARne Richards & party
Europe's only Baroque and Tango Orchestra



PROJECTS WITH SCHOOLS

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.

EDUCATION WORK

We have undertaken many concerts and education workshops all over the country mainly for children of primary school age. A one-off concert tends to focus on audience participation in an informal and relaxed way to make the experience as engaging and enjoyable as possible for the listeners.

This is followed by a workshop project, led by two musicians, which consists of five workshop sessions with a final 'performance' and covers aspects of music such as the four elements of sound: rhythm, pitch, duration and timbre, using rhythm games, movement, singing, dancing, simple composition and improvisation. OCP currently offers four such workshop projects.

- 'Musical Bumps' a general music project with no specific theme
- 'A Dustbin Full of Songs' based on environmental issues
- 'Where's my Home?' which addresses issues surrounding immigration, refugees and asylum seekers
- 'Go With the Flow', based around the River Thames

The general aims and objectives of a music projects are to:

- develop listening skills
- learn about sound – pitch, duration, timbre & amplitude
- develop group working and listening to one another
- experience creative improvisation and composing a structure
- stimulate creative visualisation through music
- develop physical co-ordination and spatial awareness through dance
- encourage turn taking

Activities will include:

- Singing
- Dancing
- Rhythm games
- Playing simple percussion instruments
- Group discussion
- Composing
- Improvising
- Drawing
- Making simple instruments out of waste material (A Dustbin Full of Songs)



Where the music project follows a specific theme, wider issues are addressed and these can be developed further in the classroom.

OCP also offers an Intergenerational Project, 'Music and Memories'. This is a cross-arts project combining music and poetry, and brings together children and elderly groups.

MUSICAL BUMPS



A project in nine primary schools in Cumbria

Each project was preceded by a concert, the concert introduced the children in a lively and interactive way to the instruments and musicians and gave an experience of music from around the world. Each musician demonstrated their instrument in turn and played a solo piece. Children were then invited to choose music, involving the whole group, from particular countries by selecting from a hat. We imagined we were flying to each country on a magic carpet and each country visited was preceded by singing a simple song – "Spread your Carpet on the Ground". The audience learnt a song about the environment called "Rubbish", a long-suffering teacher or parent unfortunate enough to be sitting nearby was given an instant violin lesson (and, much to the enjoyment of the children, gave a "world premier" performance), and the concert concluded with "Silly Samba" which involved the whole audience either counting loudly at appropriate times or playing percussion instruments.

Each school then participated in five half day workshops lead by ARne Richards and Isabel Knowland which culminated in a performance in each school at the end of each week. The performances were attended by children en mass, parents, teachers, governors and friends.

During the workshops the children worked closely with the musicians, their teachers and volunteer parents and had the opportunity to develop skills including singing, improvisation and instrumental playing and to express themselves in various ways to music such as dance, painting or poetry.

The aims and objectives of the project were given to each school beforehand as well as a list of activities to be included. At the end of the project children, teachers and parents were asked to fill in a questionnaire so that we were able to formally evaluate the success or otherwise of the project, in addition to verbal comments and feedback.

The idea of the project was received enthusiastically and unanimously by all head teachers and staff and this was reflected by the attitude and commitment of the children. Although each school was very different, we discovered openness and a

willingness to learn and develop new ideas which we have found can very often be missing in less deprived communities. We felt therefore able to develop ideas and activities very quickly in tandem with the children's creative energy and they produced sparkling performances at the end of each week.

Each workshop began with simple clapping games using rhythms based upon names, favourite food or television programmes as a means of "icebreaking" and also to get the children used to working together, to take turns and to take responsibility within a team. The children learnt several songs and dances from different parts of the world and through improvising with instruments from many cultures we quickly developed a process of working which was different in every school according to the responses and ideas of the children. The core of each project was a creative improvisation based around either the poem "The Ballad of Semmerwater" or the "Owl and the Pussy Cat". Both feature water and we took this as our theme throughout the project. The children painted imaginative pictures about their experiences and we listened each day to "The Aquarium" from "The Carnival of the Animals" by Saint Saens as a point of departure.

We observed significant changes in both individual children and groups and the way they related to us and each other during the process of working towards a performance. Teachers often remarked on the behaviour of children and how those with special needs would, after a time, become more confident and creative and make valuable contributions to the project. One child, an elective mute, was a moving example of this and, caught up with the dynamics of the activities, communicated with everyone in a particularly special way. On the whole, we felt we had achieved all our aims and objectives listed and we saw palpable results of how music can enable children to listen and share, to imbue a sense of self esteem and to contribute to language development, co-ordination and academic achievement.

ARne Richards

FEEDBACK AND EVALUATION

Five of the six schools in West Cumbria and two schools in Eden completed and returned the evaluation forms. Below are some typical responses. A copy of our current evaluation form is attached at the end of this section.

Comments from children:

Question: "Would you like to do another music project?"

- "Yes because it was great" – Sophie
- "I would want to do it again because all the things were really good and fun" – Leanne "Yes because it was fun and you lern (sic) about other instruments" – Charlotte
- "Yes I really want to" – Hugh

And from the teachers:

- "The children have thoroughly enjoyed all the activities, so have I!" – Westfield Primary School "Brilliant!" – Arlecdon Primary School
- "The children really enjoyed the project and the variety of musical activities, worked hard and learned a lot and enjoyed sharing what they had done with friends and parents" – Ennerdale & Kinniside Primary

Every response used the words enjoyable and stimulating to describe the project.

Issues raised by the feedback:

- We were requested by several schools to provide a cassette of the songs and dances for future use in the classroom, and this we will endeavour to do in future projects.
- Although we asked every school for photographs of the project, not many responded: we have now purchased a digital camera so that in future we will be able to keep a photographic record ourselves.
- Where we responded to one school's request to include large numbers of children (40+) as well as a group of children with special needs, the workshops was less satisfactory: we have learned to keep to an upper limit of 30 children per workshop.

A DUSTBIN OF SONGS

A music project for primary schools based on songs about environmental issues.

Background

Some years ago ARne Richards was commissioned by Cherwell District Council, Oxfordshire, to write a series of songs for primary school children addressing environmental concerns. Out of this came such titles as 'Rubbish Waltz', 'Re-cycling Rag', 'There's a Tree Far Away' etc. As part of the project the children learnt to make rudimentary instruments out of waste material. The project, which generated great enthusiasm among children and teachers and significant media coverage, culminated in a 'gala performance' in Banbury Shopping Centre!



The Project

The project aims to stimulate children's musical skills, in particular singing, and visual imagination while at the same time offering valuable learning about environmental issues.

The project will start with an introductory concert by the Oxford Concert Party at which the children will learn about different instruments, listen to a variety of music from around the world and participate in some simple singing. It is our experience that this introductory concert provides a wonderful 'kick-start' to the project as it helps to enthuse the children and engender a real interest in the follow-up workshops. It is also a good way of involving the whole school in the project. The concert will be followed up by a five-session workshop project with a class of 25-30 children aged 8-11, culminating with a final 'performance' for the rest of the school, teachers and parents.

The main focus of the project will be to encourage and develop the children's innate singing skills by innovative and above all enjoyable methods. It will also cover the fundamentals of music such as rhythm, duration, timbre and pitch and will include improvisation and elements of composition. There will also be a strong visual element of design and craft. We aim to explore the potential sonorities of waste material which may range from tin cans, bottles, garden canes and hosepipes to old bicycle wheels, washing machine drums and discarded timber – anything that is capable of producing sound. Thus the subject matter of the project is one that can be extended and developed in many different ways, if desired, in the classroom. The children will also be introduced to a wide variety of percussion instruments from around the world, such as the Tibetan singing bowl, African drums, the didgeridoo, the Vietnamese fish, the Balinese gong, and many others.

Outcomes

In past projects we have observed significant changes in both individual children and groups and the way they relate to us and each other during the process of working towards a performance. We have seen palpable results of how music can

enable children to listen and share, to imbue a sense of self esteem and to contribute to language development, co-ordination and academic achievement. Teachers have often remarked on the behaviour of children and particularly how those with special needs, after a time, become more confident and creative and make valuable contributions to the project.

ARne Richards and Isabel Knowland have led the highly successful 'Dustbin Full of Songs' Project in schools throughout Cumbria, Somerset and Oxfordshire.



WHERE'S MY HOME?

A music project for primary schools addressing immigration issues

Background

The Oxford Concert Party led a three-day music project at Campsfield House Immigration Removal Centre where issues such as families being forcibly separated were highlighted. Since then ARne Richards, OCP's Artistic Director, has been invited to be part of an arts forum addressing issues surrounding immigration. One point that emerged strongly was the lack of education in this area. He was encouraged to devise a project for primary school children, which seeks to address some of the problems that immigrant children might encounter. What does it feel like to leave your home? How easy is it to learn a new language? What is different about living in England and what was life like for them in their countries?



The Project

The project aims to stimulate children's musical skills, in particular singing and dancing, and visual imagination while at the same time offering valuable learning about immigration issues, leading to a greater understanding of ethnicity and celebration of cultural diversity.

The project will start with an introductory concert by the Oxford Concert Party at which the children will learn about different instruments, listen to a variety of music from around the world and participate in some simple singing. It is our experience that this introductory concert provides a wonderful 'kick start' to the project as it helps to enthuse the children and engender a real interest in the follow-up workshops. It is also a good way of involving the whole school in the project. The concert will be followed up by a five-session workshop project with a class of 25-30 children aged 8-11, culminating with a final 'performance' for the rest of the school, teachers and parents.

The children will be introduced to a wide variety of percussion instruments from around the world, such as the Tibetan singing bowl, African drums, the didgeridoo, the Vietnamese fish, the Balinese gong, and many others and these will provide a starting point for questions about children coming to live in England from other cultures. We will explore songs and dances from other countries and the project will include some specially composed songs and a large scale improvisation on the theme of travelling. Thus the subject matter of the project is one that can be extended and developed in many different ways, if desired, in the classroom.

The main focus of the project will be to encourage and develop the children's innate singing and dancing skills by innovative and above all enjoyable methods. It will also cover the fundamentals of music such as rhythm, duration, timbre and pitch and will include improvisation and elements of composition.

Outcomes

In past projects we have observed significant changes in both individual children and groups and the way they relate to us and each other during the process of working towards a performance. We have seen palpable results of how music can enable children to listen and share, to imbue a sense of self esteem and to contribute to language development, co-ordination and academic achievement. Teachers have often remarked on the behaviour of children and particularly how those with special needs, after a time, become more confident and creative and make valuable contributions to the project.

GO WITH THE FLOW

A music and drama project for primary schools based on The River Thames

Go with the Flow was devised as part of the festivities celebrating 1000 years of Oxfordshire.



Based on the history of the River Thames the project aims to stimulate children's musical and creative skills through music, singing, dancing, movement and dramatic improvisation. The project will start with an introductory concert by the Oxford Concert Party, a group of six professional musicians, at which the children will learn about different instruments, listen to a variety of music from around the world and participate in some simple singing. It is our experience that this introductory concert provides a wonderful 'kick-start' to the project as it helps to enthuse the children and engender a real interest in the follow-up workshops. It is also a good way of involving the whole school in the project. The concert will be followed up by a five-session workshop project led by two musicians and an actor with a class of 25-30 children aged 9-11, culminating with a final 'performance' for the rest of the school, teachers and parents.

The main focus of the project will be to encourage and develop the children's innate musical and expressive dramatic skills by innovative and above all enjoyable methods. The children will be introduced to a wide variety of percussion instruments from around the world, such as the Tibetan singing bowl, African

drums, the didgeridoo, the Vietnamese fish, the Balinese gong, and many others, and they will learn to improvise with voice and movement.

The project touches on the political and economic importance of the Thames throughout history, and also address the environmental issues surrounding water – the importance of conservation and the impact of failure to do so, and the wider global issues such as pollution and water shortage. Material includes the beheading of Anne Boleyn, the history of the Boat Race, the Great Stink of 1856 and an African scene. Thus the subject matter of the project is one that can be extended and developed in many different ways, if desired, in the classroom. Class teachers will take part in the project, learning songs and dances and techniques which they will be able to use in future.

The project is suitable for children aged 9 – 11. We ask that at least one teacher take part in all the workshop sessions, preferably the same throughout as there will be some extra work to do in class time. We also require the use of a large hall for all the workshop sessions.

Outcomes

In past projects we have observed significant changes in both individual children and groups and the way they relate to us and each other during the process of working towards a performance. We have seen palpable results of how music can enable children to listen and share, to imbue a sense of self esteem and to contribute to language development, co-ordination and academic achievement. Teachers have often remarked on the behaviour of children and particularly how those with special needs, after a time, become more confident and creative and make valuable contributions to the project.

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. Lisanne 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. Lisanne 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 SCHOOLS SAID

Here is some recent feedback on these projects from class teachers;

“It gave them all a sense of worth and pride in what they could achieve and improved confidence in a few of the quieter children.”

Teacher, St Andrew’s C of E Primary School, Headington, Oxford

“The project developed the children’s teamwork and co-operative skills, as well as their confidence in their abilities to perform.”

Teacher, Bayards Hill School

“We found that the style of delivery had a settling effect on our students, especially those on the Autistic spectrum. This enabled them to take part in group activities for longer periods than in a conventional classroom environment and with lower stress levels.”

Teacher, Henley College (A college for children with severe learning difficulties.)

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)

PROJECT COSTS

The Oxford Concert Party is a charity and can only undertake this work with funding.

The inclusive costs of the projects are:

Musical Bumps	£ 3,000
One full concert with 6 musicians	
Five workshops, including final concert session, with two musicians	
Dustbin Full of Songs	£ 3,000
One full concert with 6 musicians	
Five workshops, including final concert session, with two musicians	
Where's My Home	£ 3,000
One full concert with 6 musicians	
Five workshops, including final concert session, with two musicians	
Go With The Flow	£ 3,750
One full concert with 6 musicians	
Five workshops, including final concert session, with two musicians and an actor	

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

OVER THE MOON

SI BHEAG, SI MHOR

OUT OF THE BLUE

Latin American, Scottish and Irish music

300 years of music from around the world – turned upside-down!

Jewish Klezmer, J Scott Skinner, tangos and more!

Classic Carolan – the best of Irish music

Our first live CD recorded in Oxford

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



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or visit our website

www.oxfordconcertparty.org

where you can hear
samples of our music