



Saturday 15th February  
Sheldonian Theatre  
7:30pm

FACULTY OF  
MUSIC



<http://www.oms.ox.ac.uk/tickets>



Tickets from  
£18/£8

**Mahler**  
*Symphony No.5*

**Debussy**

*Prélude à l'après  
midi d'un faune*

**Clyne**

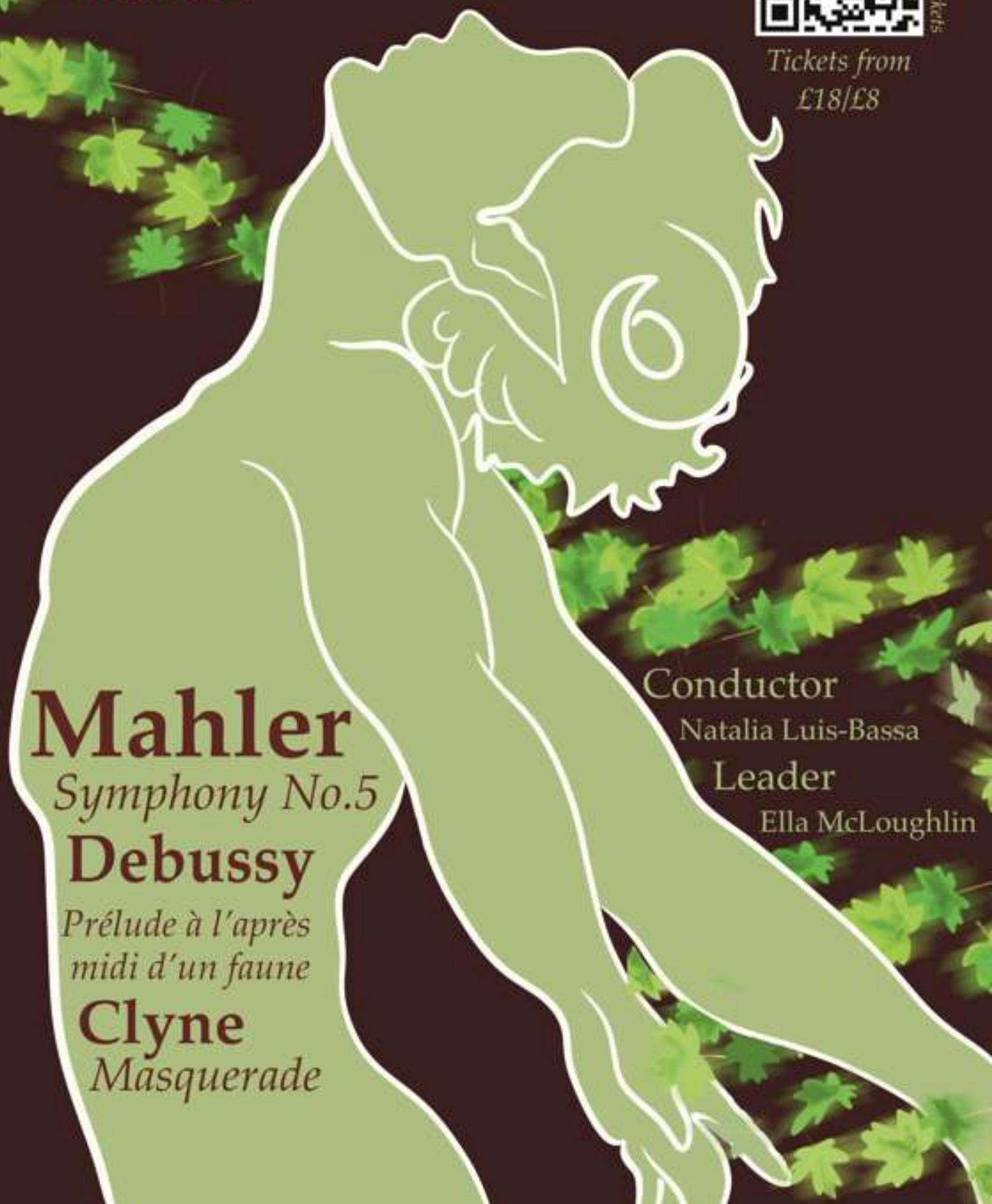
*Masquerade*

Conductor

Natalia Luis-Bassa

Leader

Ella McLoughlin





Debussy – *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune*

Clyne – *Masquerade*

-----Interval (15 mins)-----

Mahler – *Symphony No. 5*

Natalia Luis-Bassa, *Conductor*

Ella McLoughlin, *Leader*

Claude Debussy (1862 – 1918)

*Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune*

*Those nymphs, I want to perpetuate them.  
So bright,  
Their light rosy flesh, that it hovers in the air  
Drowsy with tangled slumbers.  
Did I love a dream?*

Was it all a dream? So asks the first lines of the poem 'L'après de midi d'un faune' by Stéphane Mallarmé, written in 1876. The poem tells of a faun waking from his afternoon sleep, and subsequent encounters with various nymphs... 'The Afternoon of a Faun' and its story led Claude Debussy to compose his 'Prélude' a few years later in 1894. The piece was originally envisioned as a three-part orchestral work (a *Prélude*, *Interlude*, and *Paraphrase finale*). Though sketches exist for the final two movements, these were eventually abandoned, in favour of an extended standalone piece which you hear this evening.

The flute's opening passage has become perhaps one of the most famous motifs of orchestral writing of all time – described variously as “sinuous”, “radical”, “sumptuous”, and “dreamy”. The principal flute remains the star of the show throughout; within the opening bars, she is joined by complementary horns and harp. Together with texture added by the strings, the mood of the opening is set, and the story of Mallarmé's eclogue begins to be told.

After a repetition of the opening phrase, the melody is passed seamlessly to the oboe, before the orchestra works itself up and swells around the oboe's motif. The sound dies away again almost as quickly, and the clarinet emerges from the sound – before passing off, once again, to the flute and harp. The opening melody is extended slightly, as the music alternates between flowing, chromatic movement, and extended notes, feeling as if we are suspended in the air.

The next clarinet entry marks a change in mood, as bell like notes are passed around the orchestra, and the clarinet works itself into a frenzy. The flute responds, and this interplay lasts until the oboe introduces an all-together more laid-back figure. The violins soon join in, the orchestra crescendos and the texture expands - the music reaches its lushest point.

Descending horn and flute notes take us back to the opening mood, and the woodwind together deliver an adapted version of the opening motif. The string section soon adopt this, and their timbre adds a longing, expansive quality to the tune. The wind support with pulsing quavers. Gradually, out of the texture rises a solo horn, joined by violin, clarinet, and oboe in a chromatic passage.

The flute reminds us of the opening motif, before an oboe solo interrupts, reminiscent of a bird call. The phrase is repeated by the oboe – this time, the cor anglais interrupts and responds with the bird call. All of this dissolves and the flute is left to

take centre-stage again, supported by the strings and other woodwind. Plucked descending notes in the harp, and hushed horns provide the foundations for the very last few notes of the flute, with triangle chimes adding to the magical atmosphere. The music dissolves into imperceptible sound, and quiet stillness. Was it all a dream?

© Evie Brenkley

## Anna Clyne (1980 – )

## *Masquerade*

Dedicated to the Prommers (those with standing tickets), Anna Clyne's *Masquerade* was commissioned for the last night of the BBC Proms in 2013 and recorded for her album *Mythologies*. It is a wild ride of swelling semiquavers and surging melodies, depicting the original mid-18th century promenade concerts held in London's pleasure gardens which provided the original inspiration and namesake of the Proms. She describes them as follows:

“As is true today, these concerts were a place where people from all walks of life mingled to enjoy a wide array of music. Other forms of entertainment ranged from the sedate to the salacious with acrobatics, exotic street entertainers, dancers, fireworks and masquerades. I am fascinated by the historic and sociological courtship between music and dance. Combined with costumes, masked guises and elaborate settings, masquerades created an exciting, yet controlled, sense of occasion and celebration. It is this that I wish to evoke in *Masquerade*.”

Opening with a flourish, the piece launches into a sweeping melody, ornamented with intricate semiquavers by the violins. This melody returns throughout the piece, interspersed with winding chromatic scales, meandering up and down sections of the orchestra. Particularly striking is the use of percussion, punctuating the constantly changing time signatures, as well as the brass whose soaring melodies top the hotbed of activity in strings and woodwind beneath.

Towards the end of the piece, the lilting second theme appears. This is the *Juice of Barley*, an old English country dance melody and drinking song, which first appeared in John Playford's 1695 edition of *The English Dancing Master*. Clyne's work masterfully intertwines it with her own vibrant style of contemporary composition, offering a tantalising glimpse into this English past in a uniquely modern way. She blends these antithetical styles together in a way that clearly evokes but does not emulate 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>-century English promenading culture; this is not pastiche, but rather a clever and sensitive reworking of musical materials, viscerally depicting the assault on the senses at these early promenade concerts, which demonstrates the virtuosic power of the orchestra in vivid technicolour, through new and shining possibilities of sound.

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|----------|--|
| Part I   | 1. Trauermarsch (Funeral march). In gemessenem Schritt. Streng. Wie ein Kondukt (At a measured pace. Strict. Like a funeral procession). |
|          | 2. Stürmisch bewegt, mit größter Vehemenz (Moving stormily, with the greatest vehemence).  |
| Part II  | 3. Scherzo. Kräftig, nicht zu schnell (Strong and not too fast).   |
| Part III | 4. Adagietto. Sehr langsam (Very slow).  |
|          | 5. Rondo-Finale. Allegro – Allegro giocoso. Frisch (Fresh).  |

Mahler's iconic fifth symphony is a stalwart of the orchestral repertoire. Markedly different from his previous, more vocal symphonies, the fifth represents a shift to purely orchestral music which is equally as huge in terms of orchestral expression and emotional scope – if not more. Written in the summers of 1901 and 1902, it is a marathon piece of 70 minutes which takes the listener on a breathtaking journey from pain and heartbreak to pure, unadulterated joy. Mahler conceived of symphonies like no other composer: with their vast orchestration spreading from the texturally huge to the beautifully intimate, each one is a rollercoaster of emotions unlike any other musical experience.

It begins with the famous, highly dramatic triplet fanfare on trumpet, inaugurating an impassioned *Trauermarsch* (Funeral March). This ominous, tragic theme sets the tone for much of the movement, its dark, foreboding passages in contrast with a much more lyrical, introspective second theme. The tension explodes into a wild section in the middle of the first movement, with frantic descending scales in the violin over screeching brass and scurrying woodwind. Gradually, the music calms into a dance-like section, yet still deeply troubled *wie ein Kondukt* (like a funeral procession). The triplet theme abounds, before the movement ends sparsely with only trumpet, flute and bass drum solos, punctuated by a final pizzicato from the lower strings.

The first movement runs straight into the second and shares much of the same motivic content. In fact, the initial woodwind screech takes its inspiration from the 'sighing' dotted motif of the first movement, however now it is increasingly panicked and almost deafening. After a brief introduction by cellos, basses and bassoons, the violins launch into the main theme, whisking the audience away with swirling quavers whose every bowstroke bites. This change of tone is sudden and profound, embodying the movement's performance direction of *Stürmisch bewegt, mit größter Vehemenz* (Moving stormily, with the greatest vehemence). Soon, the music loses energy, descending into the weeping second theme on cellos accompanied by woodwind interjections – another nod back to the first movement. The movement oscillates between these two themes and characters, providing a pained illustration of passion and indecision, before a triumphant brass chorale breaks forth, then eventually – poignantly – dissolves back into the tragic material of the first movement. It ends cautiously with a steadier rendition of the opening material.

The third movement *Scherzo* represents the start of the second part of the symphony and a distinct change in tone. Opened by a flourish on solo obbligato horn, the music descends into an elegant, refined Viennese waltz, punctuated by woodwind and delicately picked out on strings. Influenced by the flowing quavers of the Austrian *Ländler*, the dance rhythms add a lightness to the movement not yet seen in the symphony. Its strong folk roots are demonstrated in rapid string crossings with visceral effect, which ring true to Mahler's performance direction *Kräftig, nicht zu schnell* (Powerful, not too fast), effectively combining a raw strength and power with a danceable lilt. The contrast of the achingly beautiful middle section, *Langsamer, ruhig* (Slower, quiet), which sparkles with moving clarinet and horn solos, followed by solo string pizzicati, shows how powerfully Mahler's music can evoke such antithetical moods. Then, the music accelerates into the repeat of the first section, and – in dialogue with some material repeated from the second section – eventually whirls forward into an exciting finale to the second part of the symphony, ending in the wild fortissimo thrill of a tutti perfect cadence.

The fourth movement *Adagietto* is perhaps the most famous part of this symphony and frequently performed on its own. In stark contrast to the moodiness of the preceding movements, this one is a love song to Mahler's wife, Alma, which speaks to the audience with striking vulnerability. The two met in 1901 and fell quickly and deeply in love, and by summer 1902 they were married and expecting their first baby. The iconic main theme is introduced by violins, perhaps based on this poem of Mahler's recorded in a letter:

<i>Wie ich Dich liebe, Du meine Sonne,</i>	In which way I love you, my sunbeam,
<i>ich kann mit Worten Dir's nicht sagen.</i>	I cannot tell you with words.
<i>Nur meine Sehnsucht kann ich Dir klagen</i>	Only my longing, my love and my bliss
<i>und meine Liebe, meine Wonne!</i>	can I with anguish declare.

In a flurry of emotive crescendos and diminuendos, the music eventually swirls into a dizzying forte: the moment of utter bliss we have been waiting for, before ending on a delicate pianissimo.

The finale is a Rondo and begins again with a solo horn, developing a two-note motif into playful, pastoral-inflected woodwind solos. A fugue emerges in the strings – a celebration of Mahler's love of counterpoint and a tribute to Bach – which soon opens up into a full orchestral texture. The main theme is grand and sweeping, contrasting with a later highly expressive, *grazioso* theme in the violins. The opening horn motif is further developed into a catchy staccato motif that works its way around the orchestra. Mahler's *tour de force* combines impressive counterpoint with the tight, multithematic rondo structure, incorporating allusions to the second and fourth movements into a compelling final movement. The music builds up into a large anticlimax, followed by a quieter section interspersed with woodwind solos over sweeping strings, characterised by triplets and fiddly mordents, through which the musical energy increases once more. The ultimate climax comes with a triumphant brass melody over string and woodwind

scales in a playful and virtuosic *Allegro molto*, before the symphony ends rapturously in a *Presto* explosion.

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### **Natalia Luis-Bassa** *Conductor*

Natalia is a dynamic conductor and a passionate advocate for young musicians' education. As part of her career, she has promoted the conducting craft and orchestra playing for young people, and believes that the provision of music education should be a right available to everyone.

Natalia has established numerous successful partnerships with a wide variety of organisations in the UK and globally. These include the National Children's Orchestras of Great Britain, National Youth Orchestra of Scotland, National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain, Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, AMIS, and the Benedetti Foundation.

Her record-breaking accomplishments include being the first person to graduate with a degree in Orchestral Conducting in her native country Venezuela as well as being the first woman to hold a permanent position as Professor of Conducting at the Royal College of Music.

As part of her postgraduate studies at the Royal College of Music, she was awarded the RCM Junior Fellowship in opera conducting. She then completed a master's degree at the University of Huddersfield, where she was a part-time lecturer.

Natalia is committed to widening access to the performing arts and providing opportunities for everyone to get involved. She has been appointed as Principal Guest Conductor of the Oxford University Orchestra since 2020, and the Jersey Symphony Orchestra since 2024.

### **Ella McLoughlin** *Leader*

Ella McLoughlin is currently in her third year studying Medicine at Merton College. She attended the Junior Department of the Royal Academy of Music, where she led the Symphony Orchestra and Senior Strings Chamber Orchestra. She continues to study under Rafael Todes.

In recent years she has performed Mozart's Sinfonia Concertante in Merton Chapel, and Brahms' Double Concerto 1st Movement at West Road Concert Hall in Cambridge. An avid chamber musician, Ella enjoys filling every spare minute with music (when not climbing up mountains or eating chocolate)!



## OUSinfonietta

Join our chamber orchestra OUSinfonietta for their next concert:

**Friday 28th February, 7.30pm**  
**University Church**

Noskowski - Morskie Oko Overture  
Vaughan Williams - The Wasps Suite  
Debussy - Petite Suite  
Schumann - Symphony No. 3

*Conductor – James Norton*



## Upcoming events in Oxford

### **Oxford Student Opera Society**

Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> & Friday 21st February, 8pm  
Oxford Town Hall  
Puccini – Gianni Schicchi  
*Conductor – Tommaso Rusconi*  
*Director – Lucas Angeli*

### **Oxford Millennium Orchestra**

Friday 7th March, 7.30pm,  
Sheldonian Theatre  
Mahler – Symphony No. 7  
*Conductor – Joe Davies*

### **Oxford University Wind Orchestra**

Friday 7th March, 7.30pm  
Wesley Memorial Methodist Church  
A Night of Opera and Ballet  
*Conductors – Maria Copley & Joe Sollis*

### **Oxford University Philharmonia**

Thursday 6th March, 7.30pm  
Sheldonian Theatre  
Coleridge Taylor: The Bamboula,  
Shostakovich: Jazz Suite No. 2, Rodrigo:  
Concierto de Aranjuez; Tchaikovsky:  
Selections from Swan Lake  
*Conductor – James Norton,*  
*Soloist – Tom Bruges*

### **Oxford Chamber Orchestra**

Saturday 29th March, 7.30pm,  
University Church  
Beethoven – Egmont Overture & 4<sup>th</sup>  
Symphony, Bruch – Concerto for  
Clarinet and Viola  
*Conductor – Natalia Luis-Bassa*

### ***Save the Date:***

**OUO Trinity Term Concert** *Conductor – Daniel Hogan*

**Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> May, Sheldonian Theatre, 7.30pm**

### **An Evening of Orchestral Dances:**

**Adams – The Chairman Dances; Ginastera – Dances from Estancia; Rachmaninoff – Symphonic Dances**





## RETUNE Festival 2025

Announcing the RETUNE Festival 2025. Dedicated to platforming underrepresented and underperformed music, RETUNE was created by the Alternative Canon Project last year to devote two weeks to concerts, talks and

other events celebrating this music. The nearly 30 events range from Indian classical music to art song by female composers, via an opera co-created with primary school children and a queer panel. OUO are honoured to support the project by regularly programming 'alternative canon' works and strongly encourage our audience to explore all the events on offer here:



<https://www.alternativecanonproject.co.uk/retune-festival>.

## Oxford Mutual Aid

OMA began in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, as a community support group, to fill a gap in Oxford's aid infrastructure. Most of their work involves the delivery of regular and emergency food parcels to vulnerable members of the community facing food insecurity. In addition to food, OMA also provide household items, toiletries, and are the only organisation within Oxford to provide provisions baby supplies for new and expectant mothers. Operationally, they support 170 households weekly and provide an additional 250 emergency food packages a month, with over 25,000 packages delivered since 2020.



Anyone can self-refer via their website, email, or phone line - they don't means test applications, and deliver direct to recipients, meaning they are often a key source of support for those who have fallen between the cracks of other support systems - particularly the homeless, asylum seekers, the mentally ill and the disabled. With a strong community ethos, they believe in supporting physical and emotional health, offering nutritious and inviting food parcels that match the preferences, health requirements and ethical/religious needs of each individual, and hold regular community gatherings to build community between recipients and volunteers.



For more information please see <https://oxfordmutualaid.org/>

OUO are delighted to support OMA's winter fundraiser with a bucket collection after the concert.

# Oxford University Orchestra

Natalia Luis-Bassa *Conductor*

Ella McLoughlin *Leader*

## First Violin

Johnny Blake  
Rhys Evans  
Allegra Hannan  
Yuqi Liang  
Towa Matsuda  
Ella McLoughlin †  
Daniel Munks  
James Murray  
Neil Wary

## Second Violin

Fohdla Dunne  
Joel Hoe  
Tejas Krishnan  
Yao-Chih Kuo  
Helena Landis  
Miriam Mayer  
Amy Moynihan †  
Lucian Ng  
Scarlett O'Connell  
Samuel Oliver-Sherry  
Antonia Zadrag

## Viola

Elizabeth Dallosso  
Julius Kiln  
Kilian Meißner  
Isobel Neary-Adams †  
Ynyr Pritchard  
Nicholas Raptakis  
Alice Sprinkle  
Mali Wood

## 'Cello

Rudyard Cook  
William Dickens  
Edwin Gatward †

Sarah Jenkinson  
Miriam Mayer-Rieckh  
Elena O'Connor  
Aaron Rambow Czarny  
Karthik Seetharaman

## Bass

Arthur Bird  
Emily Chambers  
Adam Cole †  
Laurence Flower  
Amelie Jones

## Flute/Piccolo

Amy Fry §  
Isabella Gregory ‡  
Izzy Nunn\*  
Oliver Rzycki

## Oboe

Evie Brenkley\*  
Tom Kirby ‡  
Myfanwy Meeran  
Daisy Middleton §

## Clarinet

Alex Buckley §  
Lucy Deng  
Matthew Jones\*  
Tom Kwok ‡  
Erin Townsend

## Bassoon

Matilda Cairney-Leeming ‡  
Adrien Carrère  
Sam Honeybone\*  
Conrad Spencer §

## Horn

Julian Faultless  
Noah Hall  
Retha Kruger  
Jack Reilly §  
Tommaso Rusconi ‡°  
Callum Scott\*  
Bradley Young

## Trumpet

Guy Barwell §  
Lucy Butlin\*  
Chaia McQuail  
Molly Skeil

## Trombone

George Blundell §  
Topher Colby  
Seb Higgins\*

## Tuba

Jordan Iga

## Harp

Heledd Newton  
Isabel Samuel †

## Percussion

Jonathan Hampshire †  
Hannah Kelly  
Euan Kemp

† section principal

\* principal Clyne

‡ principal Debussy

§ principal Mahler

° obbligato Mahler

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Mari Prichard  
George Teal

This ensemble provides an opportunity for the University's top musicians to play challenging and exciting repertoire with exceptional professional conductors and soloists. Ticket sales alone are unable to cover the cost of any concert, so it is thanks to the generous support of the University's Music Faculty, corporate sponsors, and people like you that we are able to continue to put on these ambitious concerts. With a small donation, you could help support us in this activity.

Become a **Friend** of OUO for £40 each year (£60 for a couple) and enjoy:

- Advance booking of concert tickets
- An annual newsletter with updates on the orchestra's development and plans
- Acknowledgement in each concert programme and on our website
- Help finding a string quartet/musical entertainment for your personal events

As a **Sponsor** for £100 each year (£150 for a couple) you will enjoy the additional opportunity to attend a pre-concert rehearsal and receive a 10% discount on tickets (max. 2 per concert).

For a donation of £500 or more each year you could become a **Benefactor**, where you will have the opportunity to be named as the sponsor of a specific activity each year. You will also receive one complimentary ticket for the OUO concert of your choice each year.

To join the OUO Friends' Scheme please use the QR code to link to our online donation page.

If you would like further information, please email us at [ouofriends@gmail.com](mailto:ouofriends@gmail.com)

Thank you for your support.



# The Oxford University Orchestra Committee

Tommaso Rusconi	<i>Manager</i>	Alex Buckley	<i>Treasurer</i>
Molly Skeil	<i>Secretary</i>	Daisy Middleton	<i>Publicity</i>
Aaron Rambow Czarny	<i>String Rep.</i>	Adam Cole	<i>Social Secretary</i>
Lucy Deng	<i>Woodwind Rep.</i>	Bradley Young	<i>Development</i>
Arthur Easey	<i>Brass Rep.</i>	Ella McLoughlin	<i>Leader</i>
Jonathan Hampshire	<i>Percussion Rep.</i>	Erin Townsend &	<i>Outreach &amp; Welfare</i>
Callum Scott	<i>IT Officer &amp; Webmaster</i>	Alice Sprinkle	
Andrew Ker	<i>Senior Member</i>	Sarah Jenkinson	<i>Librarian &amp; Friends' Secretary</i>

We would like to thank:

- the Newman Trust, The Wesley Memorial Methodist Church, and Christ Church College for rehearsal venues;
- Sam Scheer and Leif Tse for taking rehearsals;
- the Faculty of Music and OUMS for instruments;
- Jemini Flowers;



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- Martha Wall for poster design;
- Cat Booth and Freya Parche at OUEV and the Sheldonian Theatre;
- OUMS and the Faculty of Music for funding.

