



ARne Richards and

The Oxford Concert Party



Annual Report 2011



Baroque



Klezmer



French



Celtic



Finnish



Tango



OUR WORK IN 2010 / 2011

Work in Prisons

Most of OCP's work in the past year has been either in prisons or with older people. We have been very fortunate in obtaining funding from the Patsy Wood Trust and the Joseph Rank Trust to undertake three prison projects each year for three years, and we have just completed the first three of these, in HMP Peterborough, HMP Blundeston and HMP Shepton Mallet.

The project in HMP Peterborough began with a concert for as many prisoners who wanted to attend, after which 20 inmates enrolled into the 6 workshops during which inmates and OCP worked together. The material that was produced was performed at the culmination of the project, in a concert where the inmates played for their fellow inmates and staff.

This was one of the most challenging projects that OCP has undertaken to date: a few of the inmates clearly did not want to join in and insisted on sitting on the sidelines and, to our surprise, under the nose of the attendant officer, smoking! This was very distracting to both OCP and the other participants. However, after Arne appealed to them to be more respectful all of the offenders came up to him at the end of the session and apologized. From that



moment the project was a great success. There were many memorable moments – including a rendition by one inmate of a Lloyd Webber song which could not have been bettered in the West End.

HMP Blundeston was an intensive three-day project the success of which was largely due to the writer-in-residence, John Rowe, who managed and masterminded it. Picture a portly version of Ben Gunn with long flowing white hair, sandals and a permanent smile on his face and there you have John, endlessly good humoured and warm hearted. What a wonderful person to have in a prison. Thanks to him everything went swimmingly and we had some really heartening feedback from the inmates.

Here are some of the comments:

- “First time I had heard music like this – gives music a chance – will now listen to classical music on the radio”
- “Classical music keeps me calm”
- “I thought classical music was just for posh people but it is for everyone.”



There were also comments on how the project brought people together: "It brought the different nationalities of men together which is unusual in prison"; "Usually you see people but don't talk to them, but now we have got to know each other."

Sitting in on all of the sessions was an inmate who edits and writes much of the prison magazine 'The Bugle'. He also wrote several poems during the project and at the end of each session would read them out. Here is the first one he wrote:

Our masters all lost in the depth of creation,
Caressing strings with strokes of imagination,
To a mixture of race and multi generation,
Who sat around, listening with no obligation.
Joined together in tactile education,
Learning the music that creates elation,
By transforming words into intense emotion,
We applaud these tutors of musical devotion.



We all looked forward to returning to HMP Shepton Mallet where we last worked three years ago, remembering to be a very special place. It still is. Once again we had a wonderful time with a truly remarkable group of inmates who were sensitive, creative, talented and enthusiastic, producing a final concert that really would be hard to better. It was good to meet up again with Trevor, who we first met about 18 years ago in HMP Grendon, and to find him still drumming, this time with real control and sensitivity.

It was Trevor's idea that OCP should play on the wing for inmates who were too ill to join the workshop project. In fact, for the first time ever we played in the yard which is a thoughtfully constructed area with a pond surrounded by a garden, all built by the men. It was a beautiful sunny day and many of the really ill inmates were able to sit in the sun while listening to us play. This was a memorable and moving experience. Part of the success of this project was due to the wonderful stewardship of the Chaplaincy under the current chaplain, Peter Brown. His enthusiasm and his caring relationship with the inmates created a perfect atmosphere in which to work.



Work with Older People

Wild shouts of laughter, a heated discussion on the merits of steam as opposed to diesel trains, an escaped lion from Kidlington Zoo (now Sainsbury's), impassioned singing, spontaneous dancing, a word-perfect recitation by a 98 year old of a lengthy ballad remembered from childhood, more uninhibited dancing to the sounds of Glenn Miller and a moving, often hilarious group improvisation based on "The Owl And The Pussy Cat".

These are just some of the delights that emerged from our latest projects with Older People –many with Dementia and Alzheimers – in Oxfordshire this autumn.

Isabel and Arne delivered these projects in Long Hanborough, Charlbury, Shipton – on – Cherwell and Kidlington. Each project consisted of 6 sessions which is just long enough to establish a rapport with participants and to create some meaningful activities which stem from the memories and lives of those taking part. This also gives us an opportunity to pass on some ideas for further activities for staff to continue with in the future.



As we have said many times before, Music is a very powerful way of connecting with Older People, helping them to realise their amazing worth within their own communities –connecting with their skills, knowledge and memories in a reassuring but stimulating and fun way. Many of the participants and staff have commented afterwards that they hadn't realised that they were capable of generating such a wealth of creativity!

Thanks to a generous grant from Barings Foundation OCP is now set to deliver a series of projects in Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire over the next two years.



Concerts

OCP's concert work has diminished over the years as we have concentrated more on community music. However, in June, following a week at HMP Peterborough we performed at Kit Hesketh Harvey's venue at Stoke Ferry in the heart of East Anglia. This converted church, a candle-lit DIY performing space is as eccentric as its owner and well-suited to OCP!

We had a splendid time, as we did in September at the Beccles Festival where we played to a large and enthusiastic audience and received a wonderfully warm reception. This concert was the culmination of a week in Suffolk where we did an intensive 3 day project at HMP Blundeston and a day of school concerts – a really good mix of work, perfect for OCP.



Accounts 2010 / 2011

Income

Voluntary income	88,411
Merchandise sales	460
Investment Income	134
Total	89,005

Expenditure

Cost of goods sold	460
Generating voluntary income	32,062
Charitable Expenditure	35,432
Governance Costs	4,548
Total	72,502

As always we are deeply indebted to all our funders without whose support we would not be able to undertake any of this work. In particular we would like to thank the Mary Kinross Charitable Trust for their continued core funding.



Oxford Concert Party

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

The Daily Telegraph

