

Evolving City approaches its finale ...

Theatre, music, film and visual arts from the new European states—including work never seen before in the UK—have been in the spotlight in Evolving City's autumn season. And two performances of Leonard Bernstein's ambitious and dramatic Mass (see picture on page 4), held in Oxford Town Hall, drew on the artistic resources available to the city through its twinning links, as dancers, singers and orchestral musicians from Oxford's European partner cities joined forces to impressive effect in this rarely-seen work. Cultural events have taken place in unusual venues: throughout June, for example, Oxford University Parks were home to artist Jem Finer and his extraordinary sculptural radio telescope. And from 15–18 December the Clarendon Quad of the University of Oxford's Bodleian Library will be transformed into an Ice Garden, complete with artworks by some of the UK's most renowned artists, including the writer and former Oxford resident Ian McEwan. The finale to Evolving City, a magical promenade performance starting in Radcliffe Square at 6pm on 17 December, and featuring the French company Quidams (pictured top right), will bring a notable year to a conclusion.

Buses and bookmarks

Local buses and libraries helped to carry the Evolving City message to a wider audience in recent months. The Oxford Bus Company, sponsor of the Festivals theme in the programme, and a strong supporter of locally based initiatives, has carried posters on designated bus routes covering Oxford's outlying estates. There have been generic posters for Evolving City, together with posters for specific events such as the Cowley Road Carnival. Nigel Eggleton, the company's Commercial Director, said: "We are delighted to support a programme which celebrates the

life of Oxford and looks to its future." Oxfordshire County Council was the partner in the initiative to distribute 50,000 bookmarks through libraries countywide over the summer. The dual-purpose bookmarks promoted Evolving City and new online library services. Cllr Don Seale, Cabinet Member for Culture, said "I am delighted that as one of the stakeholders in Oxford Inspires, we are collaborating in this promotion of an innovative development for the County Council's library service and of the work of the county's cultural development agency, Oxford Inspires."



Banners at last!

In September, in a landmark development for cultural organisations in Oxfordshire, Evolving City banners went up on lampposts on stretches of three of the main routes into Oxford city: the Woodstock, Abingdon and Garsington Roads. Planning permission was granted after nine months of close collaboration between Oxford Inspires and the City and County Councils. The banners were printed and installed by Bay



Media, the company that dressed London for the Olympic bid. There are 21 lamppost sites currently available for use by not-for-profit cultural organisations. They are not available for commercial advertising. Applications should be submitted via Oxford Inspires to the County Council, which has final approval. For more information contact Cath Nightingale at Oxford Inspires on info@oxfordinspires.org.



... as work begins in earnest for 2007



Oxfordshire will be 1000 years old in 2007. Robert Hutchison, Chief Executive of Oxford Inspires, says: "This is a great opportunity to celebrate the County's past and help shape its future. Oxford Inspires is planning to make 2007 a year of festivals and special events that will encourage everyone in Oxfordshire to enjoy more of what is on their doorstep."



Welcome

As I write, the Oxford and Europe theme within the Evolving City programme is proving to be a source of events that add new dimensions to Oxford's cultural life and international partnerships. Recent weeks have also seen MultipliCity, Oxford's first multi-cultural arts showcase, present a rich and varied picture of the city's diverse communities, while Synergy, the disability arts festival taking place across the county, is engaging many people new to the arts as well as highlighting the talents of existing artists and performers.

There is plenty of anecdotal evidence that Evolving City is raising the profile of the cultural life of the city and county and offering new opportunities for people to engage with cultural activity, be it as attenders, event organisers, or as artists and performers. We will have a clearer sense of how the programme has been received when the formal evaluation is completed early next year. The results of that evaluation will be shared widely. I have no doubt that there will be many useful lessons to be learned, which will also stand us in good stead for the countywide year of festivals and special events we are planning for 2007.

Oxford Inspires' Chairman, Professor Andrew Goudie, recently stepped down because of time pressures. Rachel Martin, our Executive Officer, left earlier this year. We are also saying goodbye to Rachel Viney our Communications Officer. In their very different ways, Andrew and the two Rachels have made considerable contributions to developing Oxford Inspires' work. They have earned the gratitude of Board and staff colleagues and our stakeholders.

Season's greetings!

Robert Hutchison

Chief Executive, Oxford Inspires



Eddie Nixon

Eddie Nixon, a Fellow of the Clore Leadership Programme, has recently been on secondment with Oxford Inspires. The Programme, whose Director is the former Culture Secretary, Lord Smith of Finsbury, aims to improve the leadership skills of tomorrow's cultural leaders. For the last ten years, Eddie has enjoyed a successful career as a dancer, working with some of Britain's leading companies, among them DV8 Physical Theatre, Protein Dance and the Cholmondeleys & Featherstonehaughs. He was also in the original cast of Adventures in Motion Pictures' production of *Swan Lake*.

Eddie joined the Clore Programme with the aim of making the transition from performer to arts manager. While at Oxford Inspires he organised the county's first Festivals Fair, bringing together over 80 festival organisers from across Oxfordshire to share their experiences and hear from a distinguished line-up of nationally known speakers. Reflecting on his experience of getting to know the



county's diverse festivals scene, Eddie said: "There's a great deal happening on the cultural front in Oxfordshire. It seems really important to have an organisation like Oxford Inspires that pulls together all these diverse strands."

In January 2006 Eddie takes up the post of Manager of Artist Development at The Place in London. We wish him well.

The picture shows Eddie with The Featherstonehaughs. Choreography by Lea Anderson, photograph by Chris Nash.



Corporate Members Programme gathers strength

Oxford Inspires is delighted to welcome three more Oxfordshire businesses into its Corporate Members Programme. They are: Electrocomponents plc, the major international distributor of electronic, electrical and industrial supplies; Finders Keepers, the leading property rental agency, and Qi, the bar, bookshop and members' club in Oxford's Turl Street. Frank Webster, Director of Finders Keepers, said: "We are delighted to support Oxford Inspires in its work of raising awareness of the cultural life of Oxford and Oxfordshire—one of the things that make the county such an interesting place in which to live and work."

The Programme now has fourteen members in all. Of these,

Blake Laphorn Linnell, Blenheim Colour, carbon colour, CPM and Four Pillars Hotels have already renewed their membership for 2006. John Jago, Deputy Managing Director of Blenheim Colour, said: "The efforts of the Oxford Inspires team have enabled an exciting range of new cultural events to happen. Blenheim Colour is delighted to continue its support of these initiatives. We also appreciate the opportunity of keeping in touch with the cultural scene in Oxfordshire."

The Oxford Inspires Corporate Members programme is managed by Kathelene Weiss. To find out more about the benefits of membership, contact Kathelene by phone on 01865 278824 or by email to info@oxfordinspires.org.



My Cultural Life Catherine Boyd

What cultural experience in your life has made the greatest impact on you?

Outdoor spectaculars in Florida where I spent my childhood. More recently working on the OOMF! millennium event straight out of university, which helped shape my future.

What is your favourite piece of music?

Wuthering Heights by Kate Bush.

What is your favourite painting?

I am more into installation and photography and in particular the work of Sophie Calle.

If you could be really good at one sport, what sport would it be and what part would you play?

In a parallel universe I am part of a champion synchronised swimming team.

If you could have been responsible for one scientific invention, which one would it be and why?

The radio—an accessible medium for mass information sharing.

What does the word 'culture' mean to you?

Something that allows us to go beyond the everyday into the creative expression of our thoughts, experiences, environment and society rather than just concentrating on our practical needs for survival. And it is applicable to everyone.

If you could change only one aspect of Oxfordshire cultural life, what would it be?

An increase in the visibility of the city's cultural life, making it more accessible to all.

Catherine Boyd is the Producer of The Ice Garden, commissioned by Produced with OOMF!, which can be seen in the Clarendon Quad of the Bodleian Library from 15–18 December.



A platform for cultural debate

Oxford Inspires launched a new event, the Cultural Platform, earlier this year. Its purpose is to attract a well-known speaker to Oxford to discuss a major cultural issue before an audience of local academic, business and cultural leaders. The Platform's first speaker, in May, was Liz Forgan, Chair of the Heritage Lottery Fund. Oxford, she said, encapsulated a challenge that the Fund faces all the time, which has to do with the definition of the word 'heritage'. To view Oxford only as an inspiring backdrop or even an alternative to modernity was, said Liz Forgan, to miss the point. "It is also crucially a huge, proper, living city, teeming with identity old and new, a resource for modern life. A city of people building an exciting future on an impressive past." Ms Forgan also praised the work being done by Oxford Inspires, a theme that was taken up by October's speaker at the Platform: the Director-General of the BBC, Mark Thompson (pictured). In the course of a lively and thought-provoking presentation on *The BBC and British Culture*, he related the BBC's experience of breaking down cultural barriers to the particular context of Oxford, which, he said, has a more abundant and diverse cultural life



than many of its residents realise. Mark Thompson said that, as a Patron of Oxford Inspires, he welcomed the fact that one of the organisation's key aims is to heighten the sense of the cultural interdependence of the communities of Oxford and Oxfordshire.

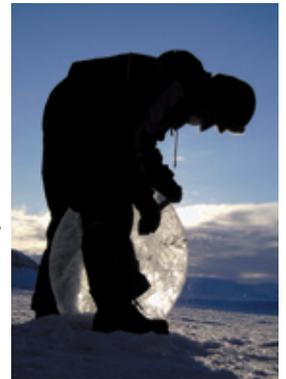
The full text of both Liz Forgan's and Mark Thompson's speeches is on the Oxford Inspires website at www.oxfordinspires.org/what-we-do-events-Cultural-Platform.html

Combating climate change

The Ice Garden, a dramatic sound, light and sculptural installation by leading UK artists working with Cape Farewell, has been commissioned by Produced with OOMF! as part of Evolving City. The Garden will be open from 4–8pm on 15–18 December in the unique setting of the Clarendon Quad outside Oxford's Bodleian Library.

Cape Farewell's founder, the artist David Buckland, has led three expeditions to the High Arctic with artists, scientists and teachers. The aim of last winter's voyages was to explore the Arctic seas, which hold the key to understanding the health of the world's oceans and the changes in our weather patterns and climate.

Pictured are Cape Farewell artist, Heather Ackroyd, carving Ice Lens (top) and artists on Cape Farewell's March 2005 expedition, with the schooner *The Noordlicht* (below).



In brief ...

Free advice for artists

ARC+ is a new regional professional development network and advisory service for artists. Funded by Arts Council England, it is being delivered in partnership with five host galleries around the South East of England. The scheme is available to artists in Oxfordshire and nearby through the OVADA Gallery. Each month, an artist advisor will provide free advice sessions at OVADA. The sessions are available to professional artists at all stages of their careers. A further part of the scheme will be artist networking events at OVADA and Modern Art Oxford. For more information contact Janine Charles on info@ovada.org.uk or 01865 201782.

Oxford car sharing scheme grows

Oxshare, the car sharing scheme we first reported on in Autumn 2004, goes from strength to strength. Pioneered by the University of Oxford and Oxford Brookes University, the scheme also includes the City and County Councils, and a number of local hospitals. It currently has 356 users. Locations available for travel have been extended to include the city's Park and Ride sites. Membership of Oxshare is open to any Oxford-based organisation at the price of £450 for the initial set up cost, and £450 per annum thereafter. For more information about how the scheme works contact Ed Wigzell Edward.Wigzell@oued.ox.ac.uk or Harriet Waters hwaters@brookes.ac.uk. The Oxford scheme is run by 234car. For more information about the benefits of car sharing schemes, visit www.234car.com/.

Bonn Square update

Shortlisted entries to the International Design Competition for the redevelopment of Bonn Square went on show earlier this year at Modern Art Oxford as part of the Oxford 2015 theme in Evolving City. The winning scheme, submitted by Graham Massie Architects, is now being drawn up in detail ready for submission for planning approval early in 2006. Jacqui Poncelet, an artist with experience in art in the public realm, has been appointed by the City Council to work with the architect. She is both making a direct input into the design and producing recommendations about the ways in which contemporary art and performance can be incorporated into the future activities in the square. Fiona Bartholomew, Principal Planning Officer at Oxford City Council, said: "This is an exciting scheme which will add an important new dimension to the life of the city."

Capturing urban culture

Photographer Matthew Andrews has been out and about in Oxford in recent weeks, taking pictures of some of the events in Evolving City. Oxford is one of three cities in Arts Council England's South East Region to have received money from the Urban Cultural Programme (UCP), a partnership between Arts Council England and the Millennium Commission. The other cities are Brighton and Canterbury. It was a UCP grant of

£600,000 that made Evolving City possible. Arts Council England, South East, commissioned Matthew, who is an experienced arts photographer, to capture some of the wealth of activity taking place across the three cities. Pictured is one of Matthew's images of the Bernstein Mass, performed in Oxford Town Hall, with a cast of 200 singers, dancers and orchestral musicians from Oxford and its twin towns of Bonn, Grenoble, Leiden and Perm.



About Oxford Inspires

Oxford Inspires is the cultural development agency for Oxford and Oxfordshire. Our purpose is to inspire a richer quality of life for the people of Oxfordshire. Oxford Inspires acts as a catalyst for cultural and environmental action in the County, encouraging new collaborations and working in partnership with other organisations to widen participation in cultural activities and to promote social inclusion.

We have five stakeholders. They are: Oxford City Council; Oxfordshire County Council; Oxford Brookes University; the University of Oxford and Arts Council England, South East.



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My Cultural Life Simon Chatterton

What cultural experience in your life has made the greatest impact on you?
Going to my first festival at the age of 16.

What is your favourite piece of music?
It would be a close run thing between *The Mountain* by South African township jazz piano god Abdullah Ibrahim and the incomparable Captain Beefheart's *Big Eyed Beans from Venus*.

If you could have been responsible for one scientific invention, which one would it be and why?
Fireworks—the closest thing I have ever seen to magic.

Have you ever performed in a cultural event?
I once played The Dodo in a production of *Alice in Wonderland* but my performing career became extinct predictably soon afterwards.

What does the word 'culture' mean to you?
Something that often grows best in dark corners.

What's your favourite place to eat in Oxfordshire?
Aziz on Cowley Road serves the most beautiful-looking Indian meals I have ever seen, but there are surprisingly few great places to eat in Oxford.

If you could change only one aspect of Oxfordshire cultural life, what would it be?
That Oxford becomes synonymous with a living culture to the same degree as it is associated with a historical one.

*Simon Chatterton is an independent producer of arts projects and events in the UK and Europe. He is creating *If on a Winter's Night...*, the finale event on 17 December to Oxford's Evolving City programme.*



Regional Arts Council Chair

Arts Council England, South East, one of Oxford Inspires' five stakeholders, and a major financial supporter of Evolving City, has a new Chair. She is Kentaké Chinyelu-Hope (pictured below), who was appointed in October 2005. Kentaké is the artistic director of Momi Inc, a development agency for Hip Hop in the UK, and also initiated and developed the London Hip Hop Festival. She has been a member of the Arts Council, South East Regional Council since November 2003. She is also Vice Chair of Creative People, a professional development network for arts and crafts.



Oxford Inspires on the move

For the past three years, Oxford Inspires has been fortunate to be based at the Saïd Business School. But the School's recent expansion means that the offices we have been using are now needed for its own staff. From the start of 2006, therefore, Oxford Inspires will be based in new offices in Oxford's Central Library. We would like to thank the Saïd for being such a wonderful place in which to work and we look forward to being tenants of another of our stakeholders, Oxfordshire County Council.

From 9 January 2006 Oxford Inspires' new address will be: **Central Library, Westgate, Oxford OX1 1DJ.** Telephone: 01865 815525. We can still be reached by email at **info@oxfordinspires.org**.