

La Folia Friends' News

July 2020

La Folia

The Covid-19 pandemic has taken a massive toll on the arts, but La Folia survives, is in good heart and ready to move forward when government guidelines permit.

We are most grateful for your continued support at this time and we look forward to sharing our music making with you again before too long.



During the 2019/20 season La Folia will have...

...delivered **38** project sessions,
with **7** musicians,
for almost **300** participants

...created **2** virtual performances
involving over **120** professional
and amateur musicians, which have
been watched online over **7,000** times

...appeared on social media
over **39,000** times

...featured a new commission,
Howard Moody's *Stone Songs*,
on local and national radio

LOOKING BACK

New Horizons | September 2019

In a pilot initiative which it is hoped can be pursued at a later date, Howard Moody and Adrian Zolotuhin led a productive day of creative music making with South Wilts Mencap's New Horizons Club for adults with learning disabilities. It was a joy to renew relationships with people familiar from their days at Exeter House.

Requiem | November 2019

This was a pilot for a two-year project exploring and performing Howard Moody's *Brussels Requiem*. Unfortunately, funding was not available for such an ambitious enterprise, so the pilot became a stand-alone three days of workshops, two in schools and one in Salisbury Cathedral, along with a twilight Continuing Professional Development session for teachers. Participants learned music from the *Requiem* in seven languages, with an ease that surprised some of the teachers, and found means of self-expression in writing their own songs. They were both awed and excited at singing in the cathedral; after hearing Elin Manahan Thomas' voice floating round the building in Handel's *Eternal Source of Light Divine* one boy said: 'I thought I was a bird. Elin was singing so high I felt like I was flying in the sky.'

PUSH virtual choir | April 2020

Howard Moody's opera *PUSH* is based on the extraordinary story of Simon Gronowski, who was pushed by his mother from a train bound for Auschwitz in 1943 and survived. This virtual performance of the opera's Epilogue was created during lockdown and features singers from previous productions of *PUSH* in Battle, Chichester, Salisbury, London and Brussels. The video was released for the 77th anniversary of Convoi XX in memory of the three members of the Belgian Resistance who stopped that train in April 1943 and whose bravery saved the lives of many, as our health workers continue to do today. The performance can be seen here: <https://youtu.be/-sm1rl-i5iE>

It is a tribute to a life spent in reconciliation that on June 26 Simon Gronowski received the *Croix d'Officier de l'Ordre du Mérite de la République fédérale d'Allemagne*. Who could have imagined that to be possible?

Stone Songs | postponed from May 2020

This large-scale piece for chorus, vocal soloists and instrumental ensemble has been written by Howard Moody, commissioned by La Folia with generous support from donors. Intended for performance in the cathedral as the opening event for Salisbury Festival 2020, it explores the lives and work of the people who built the cathedral. Unfortunately the performances were postponed due to government restrictions relating to Covid-19, but every effort is being made to ensure a future performance. Meanwhile the piece was featured on BBC Radio 4 and Radio Wiltshire and there is active interest from the BBC for more extensive coverage when the performance actually takes place.

The Big Interview with Wiltshire Creative | May 2020

As part of the virtual *Wiltshire Creative Connects* programme during lockdown, Howard Moody and Sue Kent took part in *The Big Interview* series, discussing La Folia's work and the collaborative relationship with Wiltshire Creative. This can be seen here:

<https://www.wiltshirecreative.co.uk/whats-on/wiltshire-creative-connects/sue-kent-and-howard-moody/>

Major Andy's Marathon | April - June 2020

La Folia supporter Major Andrew Johnston, a retired officer of the Coldstream Guards, was medically discharged in 1966 after 20 years' service, having contracted Multiple Sclerosis. Dependent on a wheelchair for 25 years, he was inspired by Captain Tom Moore to wheel the marathon distance in his kitchen during lockdown, in aid of several charities of which La Folia was one. Andrew and his wife Catherine are working on a long-term project with La Folia and Furze Platt Senior School in Maidenhead, where their late daughter Katie was an inspirational head of music until her death from secondary breast cancer in May 2018. The project will include student compositions based on a theme written by Katie when she was herself a teenager, a commission for an orchestral piece from Jeff Moore, and will continue Katie's work to develop instrumental playing. Andrew and Catherine are determined to work with us to build on Katie's legacy by providing creative and performance opportunities for musicians and non-musicians alike, including young people with special needs, both in the school and the wider community. Andrew in fact exceeded the marathon distance, wheeling a total of 30 miles and raising over £17,000 in total, more than £5,000 of which is for our project at Furze Platt. We thank him for both the donation and his inspiration to us all. For more information, visit Andrew's JustGiving page: <https://www.justgiving.com/team/MajorAndysMarathon>

Continuing the Conversation | September 2019 - July 2020

Thanks to funding from PRS Foundation, we commissioned a new piece by composer Richard Barnard in response to source material gathered during a series of music therapy sessions at Springfields Residential Home in Bridestowe, Devon. The sessions, led by registered music therapist (and La Folia marketing manager) Megan Brand, supported residents, relatives and carers to engage in musical dialogues, and encouraged relatives and carers to use music therapy techniques in day-to-day care. One participant reflected: 'I think this project may have benefited me as much as it has Mum. Memories have been encouraged and revived and to a certain extent relived. But most importantly it has been an opportunity to engage with Mum and do an activity with her that has brought topics of conversation (and snippets of scandal) that might never have been explored otherwise.'

The final piece, entitled *Springfields Songs*, will be premiered by Helen Charlston (mezzo-soprano), Sarah Homer (clarinet) and Bryony Moody (cello) in an empty church in Bristol on 22 July 2020. Film-maker Camilla Adams will be recording the performance. We are looking forward to sharing the recording with you and the project participants at Springfields Residential Home.

MOVING FORWARD in the context of Covid-19

La Folia has always been managed with minimal administration and core costs, so can be fleet of foot in a crisis, and indeed there has been crisis worldwide.

Those of you who follow the statistics on our annual newsletters will notice there have been no live performances this year. In the autumn we delivered 10 project days, and in January we had 13 projects poised in various stages of development for delivery over the next two years and beyond. However, due to social distancing, we have only been able to deliver one of these thus far. The essence of La Folia projects is that they are delivered through people being physically in the same place, in real time, creating dynamic music together; it is impossible to achieve that direct mutual inspiration and interaction in the virtual world.

In this context we initiated a plan to ensure that La Folia is alive and well beyond coronavirus and its aftermath. Even with recent governmental support for the arts, we are uncertain when social distancing measures will be sufficiently relaxed to enable us to work and earn again in our usual fashion. So we have decided to husband our resources and maintain our current financial viability by going into 'hibernation' for the rest of the year. During this time, marketing manager Megan Brand will be the La Folia contact point at **megan.brand@lafoliamusic.org** and on **07745 285880**. The office will be closed during August, with no email access, but Megan will be available by phone if there is an urgent matter. From September to December Megan can be contacted by phone or email; there will be little public presence, but planning and preparation will certainly be taking place.

Sue Kent retires on July 31, after which her La Folia email address and phone contact will cease to function. Should you wish to be in touch with Sue, her personal contact details are: **sue.acorn@btopenworld.com** | **01722 714897**.

Under normal circumstances, Sue's successor would be announced at this point. However, lockdown has impeded the preferred appointment process of face-to-face interviews, and the arts job market has been too volatile to ensure an optimum field of candidates. It is planned to appoint a new manager in autumn, ready to join La Folia in January when he/she will collaborate with Howard to follow up work in hand and create a new artistic programme. Watch this space!

NEWS FROM OUR ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

In April 2020, La Folia's artistic director Howard Moody worked with La Folia marketing manager Megan to launch a new website showcasing his work, including international opera tours, recordings, compositions and education projects. When social distancing guidelines are eased and activity can resume, Howard's website will be kept updated with details of future projects and performances: <https://www.howardmoody.co.uk/>

FAREWELLS

Rebekah Bernstein

Rebekah (Bex) has been with us for over two years, managing projects and events and administrating 'Friends' with efficiency and charm. She has recently completed training as a yoga teacher and has set up her own innovative teaching practice, details of which can be found at <https://www.thestablehealthstudio.com/>. We wish Bex every success in her new venture.

Kate Burrough

Kate joined us three years ago as Development and Fundraising Manager. In that time she has extended La Folia's connections and initiatives and raised significant funding which has enabled a wide variety of projects. We thank her for that and wish her well for the future.

Shirley Taylor

We first met Shirley when she was appointed as evaluator for the *Magna Songs* project in 2015. Her wisdom, experience and understanding of La Folia's way of working led to her being invited to become a trustee and member of the board. We have benefited greatly from Shirley's broad knowledge of the arts and her perspective as a practising musician. We wish her well on her relocation to Devon.

Sue Kent (written by John Cox, Chair of La Folia)

If you visit the Who's Who of the La Folia website you are told the following about our general manager: *Sue Kent has been involved since the orchestra began. Sue was a founder member of Salisbury Arts Centre, setting up and nurturing various initiatives there, and has also worked for National Children's Orchestra, The Society for the Promotion of New Music, Between the Notes and Ageas Salisbury International Arts Festival. Sue manages the production company, orchestra and projects.*

This only **just** begins to do justice to Sue's remarkable skills and loyal service that have benefited La Folia and its previous incarnation of Sarum Orchestra. The La Folia Trustees are unanimous in their high regard for all that Sue has done.

She has achieved some distinctively successful balances. Her supportive nurture of core artistic activities has shown idealism and pragmatism. In her capacity to share the vision she displays passion while being capable of objective consideration. She has a strength of character in getting the best out of people and yet remains modest and retiring when her sensitivities deem it right.

There is widespread acclaim for her among the many musicians, colleagues, patrons, arts personnel, benefactors and others who have been drawn in by her to the music and the projects. It is characteristic of her that she has achieved a further balance in dealing with her impending retirement amid the current complexities of our world. She has been thoughtful of others as well as herself in her efficient, creative and far-sighted way.

We are very grateful to Sue. In our appreciation let's recall that John Milton wrote: 'Gratitude bestows reverence, allowing us to encounter everyday epiphanies, those transcendent moments of awe that change forever how we experience life and the world.' There are many, many people who have been gratefully changed by the power of La Folia projects – and Sue has played a vital part in helping to realise those projects.

OBITUARY

Sheila Oglethorpe was absolutely fundamental to the way La Folia works today. She was honorary secretary of the *Salisbury Saturday Morning Concerts* series for children when it closed in 2001, and instigated the transfer of their substantial remaining funds to Sarum Orchestra on the condition that it was spent making music with children. That seed corn funding enabled the establishment of a series of projects and performances beginning in 2002 and still running today. In that time we have made 75 projects over a wide variety of settings and diversity of genres, benefiting thousands of participants and audiences. As well as donating regularly to the organisation, Sheila particularly supported our work with special schools by donating her *Dyslexia and Music* lecture fees to **the singing trust**, our initiative for music with children and young people with special needs. But we will remember her particularly for her unstinting encouragement, her wisdom in a field in which she had great expertise, and her deep understanding. She had rare insight into Howard Moody's aspiration to give a means of expression to those whose voices are rarely heard.

SUPPORT US

As many of us become increasingly accustomed to online shopping, we wanted to remind you that there is a very simple way to generate donations for La Folia every time you shop online. If you sign up to **The Giving Machine** and select La Folia as your charity of choice, a percentage of what you spend will automatically be gifted to La Folia - at no extra cost to you! There are over 2,000 participating retailers, including Waitrose and Amazon. Find out more and sign up here: <https://www.thegivingmachine.co.uk/causes/la-folia-music/>

To make a **donation** to La Folia, please visit: <https://lafoliamusic.enthuse.com/donate>

Thank you to everybody who has supported us during the 2019-20 season:

Nicholas Armour | Arts Council England | Carol and John Carvell | Devon County Council | Mary Dickson | Elmgrant Trust | ESG Robinson Charitable Trust | Alison Evans | Exeter House School | Fawcetts Chartered Accountants | Golsoncott Foundation | Andrew and Catherine Johnston | La Folia Friends | Alison Mayne | Peter Mitchell | Olive Moody | Lady Newbigging | Sheila Oglethorpe | Nigel Salisbury | PRS Foundation | Martyn Ralph and Sally Walden | Debbie Rigg | Salisbury Cathedral School | South Wilts Mencap | St Mark's Junior School | Verdon-Smith Charitable Settlement | Veronica Stewart Arts Trust | Viscount Amory's Charitable Trust | Wallace Curzon Charitable Trust | Wiltshire Community Foundation | Wiltshire Music Connect | Woodford Valley Primary Academy | Woodlands Primary School | Two anonymous Friends | Two anonymous Trusts

A MESSAGE FROM SUE KENT



1 February 1986 found me sitting in the audience for the first concert of Sarum Chamber Orchestra. It was an 'edge of the seat' experience – I knew within but a few moments that something very exciting was going on at the far end of Salisbury's City Hall and felt envious of those involved. I went home, exhilarated and thoughtful, with the music beating in my brain for days – a sensation that was to become very familiar. And I immediately joined the Friends, as the only way I could think of to become closer to whatever this intangible, magnetic thing might be.

I continued to attend every concert, hearing familiar music as if for the first time whilst also experiencing the new, and as the wheels of life turned, found myself no longer on the outside looking in. In 1994 Helen Marriage asked me to set up a new version of the Festival Chorus, committed to performing contemporary work. She also asked for a view on who might direct the group and I suggested Howard. Her response was memorable: 'Is he up to it?!' Indeed he was.

And so began 26 happy and fulfilling years of working with Howard. In 2001 I began to manage the first of the series of projects that still runs today and two years later when Sarum Chamber Orchestra's administrator Nancy Strike relocated, I inherited her role. In addition to many concerts – large scale orchestral and more intimate chamber performances – there have been 75 projects over the past 19 years, all including public performance. This is an enormous output for a small organisation, due largely to Howard's creative musicianship and his skill in realising his ideas into dynamic workshops and memorable performances, all made possible by the support of a committed board. I have learned so much.

I thank all the many people who have contributed to La Folia so generously and in such diverse ways over a long period of time. And thank you also for support to me personally – for profound friendships and exhilarating music making. I cannot fully express what working with the extraordinarily versatile organisation that is La Folia has meant to me. It has been a joy, a privilege, an inspiration, and life enhancing beyond measure.

WILTSHIRE MUSIC EDUCATION AWARDS

The La Folia trustees are delighted to announce that Sue Kent has won Wiltshire Music Connect's **Outstanding Contribution to Music Education Award 2020**. Nick Howdle and Sophie Amstell from Wiltshire Music Connect beamed into Sue's socially-distanced retirement gathering on Sunday 12 July via Zoom in order to share the good news. Sue expressed her gratitude to Nick and Sophie for all their support over the years, and John Cox, Chair of La Folia, described Sue's award as 'very well deserved'. You can read more about the awards on Wiltshire Music Connect's website: <https://wiltshiremusicconnect.org.uk/wiltshire-music-education-awards-2020/>