

Newsletter
April 2023

La Folia



Photo: Finnbar Webster

A message from our Chair, John Cox:

I trust the RAF will allow me to borrow their motto in this article: *per ardua ad astra* – through adversity to the stars. La Folia survived the virtual shutdown of arts activities during the severity of the Covid 19 pandemic in the UK. During its enforced hibernation there was a determination among the board and team that the charity would once again operate in its very special way. We have achieved this - and have even reached the stars during the recent project of *The Planets* in Salisbury Cathedral which is reviewed in this newsletter.

Another sign that La Folia is flourishing is *Voices in the Landscape* which was planned before the national lockdown and which has been active this year. We await its outcome in the autumn, and before that comes a concert in June during the Salisbury International Arts Festival in partnership with Wiltshire Creative and Best Foot Music. Once more music-making of the highest order will show La Folia's innovation and diversity.

Helping us to plan and develop projects for 2024 are our new trustees, Charlotte Bott and Rebecca Harwood Lincoln, whom we welcome to the board. As well as projects

we are working for the financial security of the charity. The past success of La Folia has been ensured by the continuing loyalty of our Friends and the generosity of benefactors – most recently in the outcomes of the Wincanton Charity Race Day. We need to capitalise on this by extending and strengthening grass roots support of La Folia - do encourage friends and family to join our Friends, and don't hesitate to ask if you would like more information to enable this. Other ways of raising funds for our essential core costs and for projects are referred to elsewhere in this newsletter and on the website. Income generation apart, increasing awareness of what La Folia does and achieves is something we may all do.

John Cox
Chair of the La Folia board.

PLANET THREE ELEVEN THOUSAND



Photo: Finnarr Webster

HOLST'S *THE PLANETS* reimagined

It was a VERY special day for La Folia when our Planets Project came to a grand finale in Salisbury Cathedral on 24th February. Since November 2022, we have been introducing Exeter House School and Year 5 from Salisbury Cathedral School to Holst's *The Planets*. Hearing John Challenger's wonderful transcription for the organ of Holst's masterpiece, the students responded to *Mars*, *Jupiter* and *Neptune* by creating their very own new planet – *Planet Three Eleven Thousand*.

What a hugely moving experience it was to see the joy in the Cathedral from the students, teachers, carers musicians and poet Martin Figura, as they sang their

hearts out and danced in the Cathedral Quire.

A huge thank you to our Artistic Director, Howard Moody, John Challenger (Assistant Director of Music, Salisbury Cathedral), Susie Lamb (Head of Music, Salisbury Cathedral School), Jon White, Josh Hamblin and all at Exeter House School, and Martin Figura, but mostly thanks to the inspiring students from both schools.

*Planet Three Eleven Thousand,
A space inside my head,
Where numbers always spin around,
Green, Yellow and Red.
A place where Autumn smiles,
A place where we can fly,
A planet of happiness
A place of no goodbyes.
Planet Three Eleven Thousand,
A place of no goodbyes.*

John Challenger wrote, "[This is] one of the most important and significant things I've ever been a part of in this world of cathedral music."

SEE VIDEO BELOW for a special treat, and **[CLICK HERE](#)** for comments from Howard and more information about the whole project.



Short film of excerpts from PLANET THREE ELEVEN THOUSAND

VOICES IN THE LANDSCAPE



Able Hands Together workshop

Most recently we paid a return visit to Wyvern St Edmund's School in Salisbury to continue creating their own folk song that will appear in a new book of folksongs inspired by the landscape. We are indebted to Head of Music, Emma Ritchie, for her enthusiasm and logistical skills in helping us to organise our workshop. We have now held a vast number of workshops with various communities in and around the Cranborne Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. *Voices in the Landscape* is a partnership between La Folia and Chase and Chalke Landscape Partnership Scheme, funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

We visited Palida Choir on a very foggy evening in Shaftesbury. An a cappella close harmony choir, run by Karen Wimhurst, Palida was joined by members of the Cranborne and District Community Choir, led by Sarah Collins, carrying on from where we left off from our previous workshop creating new folk songs. It was wonderful to be able to invite our young friend Sebastien and his Mum Jane to this workshop. We have known Sebastien since he was a pupil at Exeter House School; now in his twenties he has an excellent singing voice. Sebastien shared a rendition of *Powerful Voice*, the anthem sung at our last Evening Songs at Salisbury Cathedral, and joined in with the whole evening. Teaming up with us for these workshops were Adrian Zolotuhin (fretted instruments) and Jeff Moore (violin and accordion). It is always a joy and privilege to work with such top class musicians.

Another workshop was held for the co-farmers at Able Hands Together farm, who participated in our previous workshop at Exeter House. These young people, all with learning disabilities, were extraordinary in their enthusiasm,

commitment and unrivalled sheer joy in music making. In two hours they managed to create 5 new folk songs, *The Poo Picking Polka* being the favourite! (See video below.)

A few quotes:

"Singing makes me happy!" - Toby (Co-farmer, Able Hands Together)

"I don't want to join in but now I do" - Josh (Co-farmer, Able Hands Together)

"I like dancing" - Barnaby (Co-farmer, Able Hands Together)

Our final workshop was with a wonderful Ukrainian family consisting of Milan (14) playing the bandura (traditional Ukrainian instrument), Marharyta (14) and Liudmyla (Mum) singing, with Viktor (Dad) joining in from a distance. It was a joy to share a folk tune written by our violinist Jeff, and to hear the family play and sing their Ukrainian folksongs. Huge thanks to Lucy and Nigel Salisbury for agreeing to host at their house.



Ukrainian Evening: L-R Milan, Liudmyla, Alla and Marharyta

We have also been out into the community gathering folksongs wherever we can - thanks are due to Sarah Collins for her help with this - and working with people living with dementia. We held an intimate workshop with such a group in early March, with all participants very engaged in singing songs that they remembered. They created their own new words to the traditional English folksong *O Waly Waly* during the workshop:

*"I love my home in the countryside
Where sheep and hares and deer reside
Where otters bark and red kites fly
Where oak trees grow towards the sky".*

The next step in the project is for Howard to collate everything and to weave his musical magic, turning his findings into something rather wonderful, forming the basis of a new book of folksongs from the Cranborne Chase area.



Able Hands Together workshop
Poo Picking Polka and Collecting the Eggs from the Chicken Shed

SALISBURY INTERNATIONAL ARTS FESTIVAL 2023



Bashir Al Gamar (oud)

Photo: Grzegorz Iwanski

MUSICAL OFFERINGS

On Wednesday 14th June please join us in a transporting evening of music from La Folia under Artistic Director Howard Moody, in partnership with Wiltshire Creative and Best Foot Music – an agency supporting musicians, poets and communities who have moved to the UK from around the world.

Bach's 'Musical Offering', for violin, flute, cello and harpsichord, will be woven with vocals and sounds from around the world on oud, mbira, guitars and percussion, opening borders between musical traditions, and will include Sudanese musician and poet Bashir Al Gamar's chilling poem 'A Child and a Doll', speaking of a displaced child on a beach.

Howard Moody *harpsichord*

Jeff Moore *violin*

Fiona Kelly *flute*

Robin Michael *cello*

Adrian Zolotuhin *guitars*

Buster Birch *drums/percussion*

Bashir Al Gamar *oud*

Jamaal *percussion*

Edith WeUtonga *bass/vocals/ mbira*

For more information and to [book tickets](#), please [CLICK HERE](#)

IN THE PIPELINE FOR 2024

A number of projects and concerts are being planned for 2024, once funding has been secured. We are currently in discussion with Salisbury Cathedral about another *Evening Songs*, such was the success of the last 2 occasions.

We are buzzing with excitement to tell you all about our 🐝 Bee Fest 🐝 weekend. Still in very early stages and needing a huge fundraising effort, it will be a weekend celebrating the bee, through film, music and poetry.

Intrigued? Watch this space, our website and social media for latest news.

SUPPORT US

We rely entirely on donations from individuals and grants from Trust Funds and Foundations, and without this generous support we could not keep La Folia's vision alive, to bring professional music making to young people and adults who might not otherwise have the opportunity to experience it.

We are extremely grateful for all the continued support we have been given by our Friends and benefactors, and are always hoping to encourage new people to become Friends of La Folia. To find out more about how to become a Friend, please [CLICK HERE](#).

Other ways to support La Folia:

*** SHOP & GIVE *** (The Giving Machine)



A very easy and simple way to generate donations for La Folia is while 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, John Lewis and Amazon. Find out more and sign up [HERE](#).

*** JustGiving ***

JustGiving®

To make a donation directly to La Folia via **JustGiving**, [CLICK HERE](#).

For more information on how to **DONATE** to La Folia [CLICK HERE](#). Your donations can support specific projects, or can be used to fund our core costs and the day-to-day running of the charity.

If you have any queries please don't hesitate to email Cesca Eaton (Administrator) at cesca.eaton@lafoliamusic.org. Thank you.



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