

Oxford Trobadors

HOLYWELL MUSIC ROOM

24th January 2011 8 pm

A winter soirée of
Occitan and
English songs



Ray Noble
Denis Noble
Bryan Vaughan
Keith Fairbairn
Helen Cope
Cristina Bordea
Radhika Chadha

Tenor/guitar
Baritone/guitar
Guitar/composition
Percussion
Saxophone
Mezzosoprano
Soprano

Sponsored by *The Music of Life*

Programme

Lo Boier (The herdsman)

Traditional, c. 15th century

The Trobadors

The herdsman returns to find his wife disconsolate (*tota desconsolada*) by the fireplace. He reassures her that the Saracens, the English, and all the other invaders, will not return; there will be peace she will have a kiss (*auretz 'na potonada*) and the sun will shine (*e lo solelh n'en raiara*).

Nadau ta Baptista (Christmas for Baptiste)

Nadau, arr Denoth

Ray Noble and the Trobadors

A gently lilting Pyrenees lullaby. Baptista sleeps while father Christmas (*lo pair Nadau*) flies through the night and gentle snowflakes fall on the lovers (*sus los amors*). From the depths of his heart (*Jo tot au de-hens*) he loves the child always (*que t'aime, tostemps*).

Se canta (It's singing)

Traditional, c. 14th century

Ray Noble, Denis Noble

It's singing, ever singing (*se canta que canta*) This is THE traditional occitan song, performed all over the south of France. Beneath my window (*dejost ma fenestra*), there is a little bird (*i a un aucelon*), it sings all night (*tota la nuech canta*), singing its song (*Canta sa cancon*). The chorus: Se canta que canta, canta per io, canta per ma mio, qu'es au lenh de io. (its singing, ever singing, doesn't sing for me, sings for my loved one, who is far from me).

Arron d'Aimar (After Love)

Nadau, arr Denoth

Denis Noble

A beautiful love song "after making love" (*Arron d'aimar*) in which he dreams of the laughter of children (*aus arrisers gaujos*), and of a country where lovers are forgiven (*ont lo monde es perdonan aus qui s'aiman, uros*). The chorus repeats 'how I love you' (*Que t'aime*) 'through water and lightening' (*per l'aiga o l'eslambrec*).

La Sestina (The Sextine)

Arnaud Daniel circa 1180

Denis Noble, Keith Fairbairn, Radhika Chadha

Arnaut set himself the most difficult poetic challenges: six verses, six lines in each, six rhyme words, used in each of the six lines. He sends this erotic song, proclaiming his firm love (*lo ferm voler qu'el cor m'intra*) to his unreachable (probably aristocratic) lover in her equally unreachable bedroom, before he finds paradise, and his joy is doubled (*qu'en paradis, n'aura doble joi*). The song contains the famous line *tant fina amors com cela qu'el còr m'intra* (such noble love as in my body enters). *Fin amor* is the central trobador theme.

Los de qui cau (Those who must)

Nadau, arr Denoth

Ray Noble and the Trobadors

These are my people (*Que son los mens*), those who till the earth, raise the livestock, they are as they must be (*los de qui cau*). He reflects as he leaves the slopes of the Pyrenees for Bordeaux (*Qu'avi de partir ta Bordeu*). He sees that they are the memories of all who have gone before (*e quian hons de la memoria, tot los qui son passat abans*).

L'aiga de la Dordonha (Waters of the Dordogne)

Peireguda, arr Denoth

Denis Noble and the Trobadors

Boats sail down (*davalan los batels*) the Dordogne river which reflects the chateaux (*miralha los castels*) on the hillsides. This peaceful scene is invaded by the quarry men (*cal far montar las peiras*), pollution destroys the fish (*los peissons s'en van*), and finally a nuclear reactor (*centrala nucleara*). Yet always (*e tot-jorn*) the river flows and the boats go down.

Interval 15 mins

Instrumental

Keith Fairbairn, Helen Cope

Drum Call - An improvisation

(Ethnic Drums)

Songbook

Maslanka (Marimba)

Song for Davy - The Old Year is past (based Bach chorale *Das alte Jahr vergangen ist*)

Hymn tune with four variations (based on Bach chorale *Herr, ich habe misgehandelt*)

Summer Song

Nemesis

Scott (Vibraphone)

movement 2

Michi

Abe (Marimba)

Songs in tribute to modern Trobadors

Ray Noble, Bryan Vaughan, Keith Fairbairn

Summertime

George Gershwin

Foggy Day

George & Ira Gershwin

Fly me to the Moon

Bart Howard

Please don't let me be misunderstood

after Nina Simone

Quan lo riu de la fontana (waters of the fountain)

Jaufre Rudel c 1140

Ray Noble, Keith Fairbairn

When the clear water gushes from the spring (*fontana*) and the nightingale (*rossinholetz*) sings, it is time to sing my own song (*lo mieu refranha*). He sings for his distant lover (*amors de terra lonhdana*) but he can never see her (*Pos tots jorns m'en falh aizina*). Yet his heart longs for her (*de desir mos cors non fina*) for only love can cure his pain (*la dolor que ab joi sana*).

Nulhs hom non pot d'amor gandar

Peire Vidal c 1140

Ray Noble

No one can escape love once he is under its sovereignty, Whether it please him or not, he must follow its desires. He cannot follow another will, but where he wants, he runs there and has no care for sense or folly.

A l'ora de l'aubada (at the hour of dawn)

Nadau

Denis Noble

At the hour of dawn I know when to find you, when you are beautiful. If your eyes are on the dark, I will make suns for you, I know stars that will turn your head.

Immortela (the Edelweiss)

Nadau

This is THE song of the Occitan-speaking areas of France, sung everywhere. The chorus is catching:

HAUT PEIROT, VAM CAMINAR, VAM CAMINAR, DE CAP TA L'IMMORTELA,

HAUT PEIROT, VAM CAMINAR, VAM CAMINAR, LO PAIS VAM CERCAR

The Oxford Trobadors take their inspiration from the music of the language, Occitan, in which the 12th and 13th century Troubadours composed. The language and culture are still alive today in the south of France and parts of Italy and Catalonia. 'Troubadour' in Occitan is written 'Trobador'. The language resembles Italian, Spanish and Portuguese.

Winter Serenade, this evening's concert is performed by a group of the Oxford Trobadors:

Denis Noble is author of the widely-acclaimed book *The Music of Life* which sponsors this concert. He has studied Occitan language and music for 35 years and has appeared in live and broadcast concerts with native language musicians in France. He formed the Oxford Trobadors in 1998. They have performed in concerts in The Maison Francaise, Balliol College and in the Perigord, as well as performing regularly in the Holywell Music Room.

Ray Noble's distinctive, versatile voice has been described variously as 'deep and cavernous' to 'soft and velvet' ranging from rock, pop, blues and jazz to folk and classic in style. He has been a vocalist in Jazz and Blues groups performing at the Edinburgh Fringe and was lead vocalist in the Oxford based rock band, The HeartBeats.

Bryan Vaughan has been playing 40 years : a veteran of hundreds of gigs, playing and influenced by folk blues pop rock and lager. He is a member of the Heartbeats with Ray Noble and together they composed songs in a variety of styles. He is currently recording a CD of melodic songs trying to capture the style and spirit of music from the 1960s.

Keith Fairbairn has played with major London orchestras and chamber ensembles such as the London Sinfonietta and London Symphony Orchestra. From early in his career he became involved in studio work and was soon one of the very few 'first call' percussionists on the London session scene. He has played on numerous TV shows, recordings and films & major tours. Some of the artists, conductors and composers he has worked with include Mike Oldfield, Dionne Warwick, John Williams, Madonna, John Dankworth, Oliver Knussen, Richard Blackford, Graeme Revell and the London Jazz Percussion Ensemble.

Helen Cope studied music at the University of Southampton, gaining MMus in 2009 under the tuition of Dr Angela Space. Whilst studying she performed recitals in the Turner Sims Concert Hall, as well as forming a saxophone quartet. She is now teaching saxophone at Headington School, Oxford, working for her own company teaching music at primary school level and performing in small events. She is pleased to be able to join in this performance opportunity with the Oxford Trobadors.

Cristina Bordea sings mezzosoprano with the Balliol College choir. Born in Romania, she studied violin at the High School of Music before graduating in Medicine; while studying in Oxford for a DPhil, member of Radcliffe Orchestra; currently specializing in plastic surgery; married with two children.

Radhika Chadha was a choral scholar at Somerville College and has taken part in numerous concerts and chamber ensembles throughout her time at Oxford. She has trained in choral societies since the age of ten and has toured both nationally and internationally.

Friends of the Occitan Trobadors. Please sign up at the entrance to be informed of future events, or email Denis Noble on denis.noble@balliol.ox.ac.uk

CHORUS of the last song for those who want to sing with us:

HAUT PEIROT, VAM CAMINAR, VAM CAMINAR, DE CAP TA L'IMMORTELA
HAUT PEIROT, VAM CAMINAR, VAM CAMINAR, LO PAIS VAM CERCAR