

Impact case study (REF3b)

Institution: University of Oxford
Unit of Assessment: 35 Music, Drama, Dance and Performing Arts
Title of case study: The social, cultural and economic impact of practice-led early music research
<p>1. Summary of the impact</p> <p>Practice-led performance research at Oxford fosters dynamic, interactive relationships between academics and professional ensembles that are of huge cultural and economic impact to a wide variety of beneficiary groups. This case study presents two internationally recognised research-led groups – Phantasm and the Choir of New College, Oxford – whose work offers strong examples of social and cultural impact, including: a significant contribution to public understanding of English and European musical and cultural heritage; increased public access to previously inaccessible repertoires; contribution to the local economy and tourism industry in Oxford; and the provision of unique educative opportunities for instrumentalists and singers.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research</p> <p>The University of Oxford is a world-leading centre for performance, and the Faculty of Music hosts several internationally renowned practitioners and performance researchers. Professor Laurence Dreyfus (Lecturer in Music and Fellow of Magdalen College since 2005) and Professor Edward Higginbottom (Lecturer in Music and Director of Music at New College since 1976) lead this community. Dreyfus' research has focussed on interpretations of J.S. Bach and English consort music of the 16th and 17th centuries, while Higginbottom has published on the organ and early French music. Both have a strong interest in performance practice and research in this area.</p> <p>Prior to arriving at Oxford, Dreyfus' research considered the close interrelationship between theory, compositional practice and performance in early music, e.g. Dreyfus, <i>Bach and the Patterns of Invention</i> (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996) and Dreyfus, 'Idiomatic Betrayals: François Couperin as composer for the viol', <i>François Couperin: Nouveaux Regards. Actes des Rencontres de Villecroze 4 au 7 octobre 1995</i>, III: 3. pp205-221 (Paris: Éditions Klincksieck, 1998). He has continued along these research lines during his time at Oxford, feeding directly into his creative work with 17th-century consort music, reassessing the relationship between instrumental parts and contrapuntal voice-leading in ways that have had important repercussions for interpretation, performance, and recording [1]. Higginbottom's research has been directed toward the restoration of lost or historically neglected repertoire (e.g. Couperin motets), locating primary documentary research concerning performance forces, realisation and interpretation within the contexts of ritual service, commercial recording, and practical training [2, 3].</p> <p>The contemporary performance of music from 300-500 years ago presents thorny problems of analysis and interpretation. A key problem is grounding a rendition in historically appropriate evidence while projecting a persuasive voice that speaks to contemporary audiences. Dreyfus and Higginbottom each lead a professional ensemble that provides a dynamic, interactive dimension to their early music performance research. Founded in 1994, Phantasm has focused on performing English consort music from the 16th and 17th centuries and is led by Dreyfus. It has been in residence both at the Faculty of Music and at Magdalen College (from 2010). One of Dreyfus' key research findings relates to unusual metrical conflicts between equally disposed instrumental parts: intentional metrical conflicts in instrumental Fantasies formed an integral part of musical composition, and a newly expressive performance style resulted from rendering these conflicts meaningful within a harmonious whole. To accomplish this, the group learned to play without barlines in Dreyfus' own editions, resembling the original conditions of performance. Phantasm's recorded research outputs during the census period have focussed on the English composers Byrd, Ward, and Lawes [1, 4, 5]. For the Lawes disc, Dreyfus collaborated with organist Daniel Hyde (University Lecturer, Oxford). He unearthed primary sources for their repertory not only in University of Oxford libraries, but also in reconstructions and restoration of works with lacunae as a result of collaborations with John Milsom (Christ Church Library, Oxford), Oliver Neighbour (British Library) and Warwick Edwards (Glasgow University). Dreyfus undertook his own analysis of primary sources and prepared editions for performance in modern times. There are two other professional viol consorts in the UK at present (Fretwork and the Rose Consort), but neither engages in the degree of practice-led research nor has the same level of acclaim as Phantasm.</p> <p>Edward Higginbottom's leadership of New College Choir facilitates the vital practice-based real-time analysis work at the centre of his research. Through rehearsals and performances,</p>

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Higginbottom is able to apply key insights from his theoretical research, such as experimentation with tempo, timing, and word setting, which (complemented by his deep knowledge of historical contexts and familiarity with relevant local genres and their stylistic properties) often lead to substantial new conclusions. Some of his most significant recent research involved reconstituting lost parts in the works of leading French Baroque composer François Couperin [6]. Reconstructing a musical work with crucial lines missing involves in-depth knowledge of the composer's style as well as an experimental thrust that can only be tested in live performance. Further research has required a similarly close attention to instrumentation in Monteverdi's *Vespers*, avoiding the instrumental doubling of choral parts adopted in many modern performances: singing without such support is a challenging but fruitful experiment in recreating early seventeenth-century performance practice [7].

3. References to the research (*quality indicators)

- [1] William Byrd, *Complete Consort Music*. Phantasm, dir. Laurence Dreyfus (Linn Records CKD372, 2011) *[REF 3b(3)] – N03] *Diapason d'or* (July 2011); *BBC Music Magazine* CD of the Month, (August 2011); *Gramophone* Editor's Choice (September 2011), Gramophone Award Nomination (2011), Nomination for International Classical Music Award (2012).
- [2] Higginbottom, 'Organ music and the liturgy', and 'The French classical organ school', *The Cambridge Companion to the Organ*, (Cambridge: CUP, 1998), 130-147 and 176-189. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CCOL9780521573092>, * leading academic press, peer reviewed.
- [3] Higginbottom, 'Guest Editorial: Laudate Pueri', *The Musical Times*, 138/1858 (1997), 3-4. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1004050> *one of world's oldest classical music journal
- [4] John Ward, *Consort Music for Five and Six Viols*. Phantasm, dir. Laurence Dreyfus (Linn Records CKD339, 2009). *Finalist for *Gramophone* 2010 Early Music Award.
- [5] William Lawes, *Consort Music for 5 and 6 Viols to the Organ*. Phantasm with Daniel Hyde (organ), dir. Laurence Dreyfus (Linn Records, CKD399, 2012). *Chamber Music Choice (September 2012) *BBC Music Magazine*, *BBC Music Magazine Award Nomination* (January 2013).
- [6] François Couperin, '*Exultent Superi*': *motets choisi*, with Collegium Novum (Novum NCR1384, 2011). *Radio 3 CD of the week; 5 stars, *BBC Music Magazine*; Recording of the Month, *MusicWeb International*, February 2012.
- [7] Claudio Monteverdi, *Vespro della Beate Virgine, 1610*, with Charivari Agréable (Novum NCR 1382, 2010). *Top mid-price recommendation, Simon Heighes, BBC Radio 3, 'Building a Library' (December 2010).

4. Details of the impact

Dreyfus' and Higginbottom's early performance research - particularly the restoration of lost works and parts of works, the recreation of historical performance techniques, and the communication of early music to a contemporary audience - has contributed to the increased accessibility of the early music repertoire, and thus to an enhanced public understanding of this important part of English and European musical heritage. Their research has brought previously inaccessible works back into the public realm, interpreting them for modern audiences, and generating cultural capital to benefit current and future generations.

Research outputs achieve impact through live performances, radio and television appearances, specialist CD recordings, and online webcasts. Since 2008, Phantasm have released three recordings of rarely performed consort music by William Lawes, William Byrd, and John Ward, and have given live performances of these and other select repertoires across the UK and Europe, and additionally in Hong Kong. Amazon UK reviews are overwhelmingly positive [1]. Stephen Churley (27 June 2012) gave the William Lawes CD 5 out of 5 stars and wrote, "This CD contains essentially Lawes's greatest works and the performances are stunning. Phantasm handle the complex textures of the 5 and 6 part consorts, which can sound muddy in the wrong hands, brilliantly [...] In his sleeve notes Laurence Dreyfus gives an insightful personal commentary on each piece which enhances the listening pleasure of the music. The recording is also excellent [...] This is a real corker of a disc that ought to win awards. Buy it!" Another reviewer commented, "Phantasm is a great ensemble and this is a remarkable disc. Hitherto unfamiliar with William Lawes, I found this a persuasive introduction. The copious 'notes for the perplexed' in the booklet explain things very clearly". Concerts and recitals by Phantasm often include a pre-performance or interval talk by Dreyfus designed to increase the audience's appreciation of the programme and their understanding of the works being performed. A Phantasm performance of Dowland and

Lawes (with organist Daniel Hyde and lutenist Elizabeth Kenny) at London's Wigmore Hall on 6 June 2012 was broadcast live on BBC Radio 3 with commentary by BBC presenter Catherine Bott. It was simultaneously broadcast by the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) to 1.7 million listeners^[iii]. The broadcast included a pre-recorded interview with Dreyfus heard during the interval and was very well received^[see §5.1].

The New College Choir has released 13 CDs since 2008 and broadcasts regularly to large audiences on BBC Radio 3 (e.g. the programme of sacred French music for the Baroque Spring series in March 2013) and Classic FM (e.g. appearing in their Hall of Fame Favourites, The Full Works Concert - Wednesday 3 April 2013^[iii]), enhancing and enriching public understanding of early music. The Choir recently featured in Oxford in *Voice*, a web series examining the city and university's choral tradition, which included interviews with Edward Higginbottom, footage of the Choir, and accompanying music taken from recent Evensongs^[iv]. New College Choir was the first in Oxford to launch regular webcasts of choral services^[v]. Each week, one service is selected for webcasting, and is available shortly after the service takes place. With an average of 30,000 hits per annum, the webcasts have successfully extended audiences beyond the chapel walls, to musicians and enthusiastic listeners internationally. Webcast listeners take part in a 'live' service: not a studio recording of a concert, but the daily liturgy offered as part of the chapel's tradition of Christian worship. Post-production editing means that the listener is presented not only with the appropriate sound, but the details of the music and readings for each service: when the choir is singing full tilt the sound engineers are able to raise the microphones higher within the roof space, to descend again for the more intimate polyphonic repertoire. The webcasts page of the New College Choir website has been shared on Facebook 652 times, on Twitter 64 times and 164 times^[vi] via other social media platforms, further demonstrating the popularity of these performances with the general public. Twitter comments reveal the impact of performances: @etnobofin (7/6/09, Paris) tweeted "New College Choir nailed Wesley's "Ascribe unto the Lord" tonight at evensong. Beautiful and magnificent as usual."

The creation of New College Choir's record label, *Novum*, in 2010, has permitted greater freedom in the choice of recorded repertory, focusing on research-led projects with substantial accompanying materials (essay booklets and web pages). This venture has also represented an innovative social enterprise, entailing a vigorous search for funds to support the recordings, none of which would otherwise be commercially viable. Since inauguration, over £100,000 has been raised, resulting in 11 releases, including a world premiere of *Motets choisis* composed by François Couperin. BBC Music Magazine wrote of the Ludford disc that 'Scrupulous scholarship, masterful conducting and committed singing merge to restore the legacy of one of England's most inventive 16th-century composers'^[vi]. The commercial impact of such projects has sustained the first-ever recording of repertoire reconstructed from manuscript sources by Higginbottom, with ongoing benefits to listeners and professional practitioners. One listener tweeted "Might have blown out my car speakers listening to new college choir CD a little too loud. Totally worth it." (@ajwms 21/6/10, Knoxville, TN).

New College Choir performances also positively impact on different groups in the local community. Webcasts of evensong are now being played to patients in the Oxford hospitals. "*Choir revives 16th century custom*" <http://tinyurl.com/od7dp6>" (@oxon): this tweet refers to a tradition of performance at Bartlemas chapel in Cowley, a socially-mixed area of east Oxford, that New College Choir reinstated after a 400 year gap, demonstrating one of the ways they engage local communities and people from different social settings with early choral music. Jane Harrison, Project Officer for the East Oxford Archaeological Project, said: "It is very exciting that New College is experimenting with bringing back this wonderful historical tradition. The closure of Magdalen bridge on May Day means those living in east Oxford feel excluded from the city's celebrations. This is something special for our community."^[2]

The tourism industry makes a huge contribution to economic prosperity in the city of Oxford (tourism-related expenditure in 2011 was £1.7bn, with 11% spent on entertainment/attractions). Visitors to the University play no small part in this: 'Oxford University estimates that the university alone attracts more than nine million tourists to the city, resulting in a combined spend of £589m and supporting 13,700 local jobs.'^[vii] Both Phantasm and New College Choir have made significant contributions to generating tourism income for the city. Tourists and other visitors are welcome to attend evensong services, and New College is among the most popular, attracting over 60,000 visitors a year to the 150 public services (average weekly attendance is 400-500 people

with substantially larger numbers at Advent, Christmas, and Easter). The central focus of these services is liturgical worship, but the research component of the performance is no less significant: the services provide the audiences with participatory experience of working with historical texts and materials in a ritual context that engages and benefits a community of listeners well beyond the academic environment. Phantasm performs regularly to public audiences in Oxford, e.g. in the Holywell Music Room, Magdalen, Brasenose and All Souls' Colleges. 'The Divine Office' brought 200 tourists to Oxford for an intensive week of concerts and lectures held at Oxford University (26 Sept. 2012), with each tourist paying up to £3000 to Martin Randall Travel (commercial travel company who specialise in expert-led cultural tours) to hear cutting-edge groups in various intimate Oxford College Chapel settings, including performances by Phantasm in Magdalen and by New College Choir. Feedback points to the transformative impact of the performances upon listeners and the promotion of a high-quality tourist experience within the cultural sphere. A Canadian tourist wrote: 'an incomparable musical experience that exceeded all expectations.' Another testimonial from the UK states: 'I doubt I will ever again have such an educational and aesthetic experience. To say "I was there" at the Divine Office is something I shall treasure.'^[viii]

Another important impact from Dreyfus and Higginbottom's Early Performance research is the ongoing practical and theoretical education for international instrumentalists and singers. In February 2013, Phantasm participated in the Hong Kong International Arts Festival^[ix], giving two performances, an outreach lecture-recital on English Consort Music delivered to c. 600 Hong Kong teenagers, a master class on viol and consort technique delivered to music students and staff at the Hong Kong Academy for the Performing Arts (HKAPA), and a lecture by Laurence Dreyfus (entitled 'Beyond the Interpretation of Music') on the musicological research underpinning both the historical and engaged subjectivity of Phantasm's performance work. One striking indication of the impact of Phantasm's performances was the receptivity of audiences – young and old – to the clarity of texture and 'democratic' distribution of the part-writing. By gaining a keener sense of the rhythmic and metric independence of parts, through Phantasm's master classes at HKAPA, players learnt that they needed to approach their own lines with greater vigour and commitment. The combination of the outreach event and the teaching worked well in this key Asian location with teachers reporting this as the first time students had heard period instruments live^[3]. The HKAPA lecture was delivered to invited students and staff from neighbouring institutions, Chinese Baptist University and the University of Hong Kong, and resulting questions productively explored aspects of Phantasm's approach by interrogating the relation between programme notes and performance style at the Festival concerts. New College Choir also benefits international groups and individual choral directors, who come to observe the group's research-led work. During 2011-2, visitors came from Alsace-Lorraine, Luxembourg, France, and the USA.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

[1] Email statement of 14 June 2012 from BBC Radio 3 Presenter

[2] Online statement of 21 May 2009 from Project Officer, East Oxford Archaeological Project

[3] Emails statement of 26 Feb 2013 from Outreach Officer of the HK Festival

[i] [Amazon UK reviews for Phantasm CD http://www.amazon.co.uk/product-reviews/B0072IVGU6/ref=dp_top_cm_cr_acr_txt?ie=UTF8&showViewpoints=1

[ii] Listening figures for EBU: http://www.ebu.ch/en/union/under_banners/Music.php

[iii] Classic FM, Full Works Concert programme <http://www.classicfm.com/radio/shows/full-works-concert/full-works-concert-wednesday-3-april-2013/>

[iv] New College Choir on 'Oxford in Voice', a 6-part series of films on the Oxford choral tradition: <https://www.oxfordtoday.ox.ac.uk/voice>

[v] Choir webcast archive, <http://www.newcollegechoir.com/webcast-archive.html>.

[vi] Online Review of Nicholas Ludford, Missa Benedicta & votive antiphons (K617: K617206, 2008), BBC Music Magazine, <http://www.classical-music.com/review/ludford-3>

[vii] Shared Intelligence, *Oxford Economic Narrative*, July 2012, §2.26, p14 <http://www.oxford.gov.uk/Library/Documents/Council/Oxford%20Economic%20Narrative%20July%202012.pdf>

[viii] Martin Randall Travel website and testimonials from tourist participants: <http://www.martinrandall.com/tour/483-the+divine+office:+choral+music+in+oxford/intro/>

[ix] Programme for Hong Kong Arts Festival 2013 <http://www.hk.artsfestival.org/en/about-us/2013>