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limit



  
**Laxton  
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## Oundle International Festival IKONS OF EXCELLENCE

For the nineteenth consecutive year we bring you another idiosyncratic concoction, with a number of criss-crossing themes that aim to offer you inspiration and refreshment through the thrill of live performances, all in a welcoming, festive atmosphere.

The visit of Sir John Tavener, one of Britain's greatest living composers, will be a privilege: his music, atavistic in spirit and increasingly minimalist, draws on the very essence of the ikon - a stylised symbol to focus the mind on spiritual dimensions beyond what we see and touch. For The Academy of Ancient Music's concert, he is joined by soprano Patricia Rozario, whose crystal tones have long been one of Sir John's chief inspirations - and we relish the opportunity to hear some of Tavener's new songs informally premiered at his pre-concert talk.

The Rodolfus Choir, and Seven Saints of Bulgaria contribute more of Sir John Tavener's haunting sonorities, whilst two dance and light shows at twilight introduce a new medium at the Festival - underscored by Tavener's music.

With excellence in classical music as a constant aspiration in our programming, we are happy to welcome back Freddy Kempf, exactly ten years since he first played at Oundle, then recently crowned as BBC Young Musician of the Year; now he is one of the world's most sought-after concert pianists. Ten years may see a similar meteoric rise for the Johnston String Quartet, now emerging with accolades from the RNCM. Young 'medieval' musicians and modern-jazz artists maintain Oundle's commitment to showcase new talent. And Jazz at a Party with *Bop until you drop* on 12 July!

We roll out the red carpet for Rory Bremner to plant banana skins for his victims, and Oddsocks threaten the Bard with serious rearrangement! A visit to Oliver Cromwell's house in Ely prompts you to decide upon his role in history: Lord Protector or purgative Philistine. And in a 'gothic' chapel at twilight, Petr Eben's picturesque organ music evokes the heart of darkness as Faust resorts to infernal advantage to gain his worldly success.

A series of celebrity organ recitals (covering an astonishing range of repertoire, and providing a chance to hear Percy Whitlock's epic Sonata) illustrates the specialisms of the great organists engaged to teach our sixty international students. Indeed, such is the strength of today's Oundle organists summer schools that they now run into a second week of seminars, evensongs and recitals based in Oxford (22-26 July).

Sincere thanks as ever to our many Sponsors, Friends and Trust Funds. We hope to serve them, and you, our audiences, with a Festival to remember. Welcome!

James Parsons  
Artistic Director

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Cover

Patricia Ryan  
the artists, Making Music  
Programme Note Service  
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East window, Oundle School Chapel;  
designed by John Piper and made by  
Patrick Reyntiens (1955/6)  
Photograph Joanna Watkin  
interpreted by Simon Dolby