"One ought, every day at least, to hear a little song, read a good poem, see a fine picture, and, if it were possible, to speak a few reasonable words."

- Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Wilhelm Meister’s Apprenticeship
EDITIORAL

by Lucia Svecova

I am incredibly happy to present you with another issue of the JC Arts Magazine which we started publishing last term, because this means that it has been turned into a termly tradition! With the gradually increasing numbers in the editorial team and increasing numbers of contributors, we are hoping to make this a permanent part of arts in our college. Therefore, if you have not managed to contribute to the magazine yet, there will be many more coming issues in which we would appreciate if you shared some of your creativity with us!

In this issue, you can see what college artists were up to last term, what we are preparing this term, and you can also read some of the wonderful pieces of creative writing by our lovely freshers! Furthermore, I am happy to see in this issue that the co-operation between JCR and MCR is increasing, as we are also able to celebrate the achievements of the MCR artist, Elena Samarsky.

I hope you are all excited for what lies ahead this term and will support all Jesus artists/musicians/actors/dancers/… in their strivings over the next couple of weeks!

FLOATING

by Aaron O’Connor

He deals in pictures hanging like laminates
From a rusty park gate in November.
Tacky copies printed like posters on pulp,
Grossly overestimated by yellow-sticker figures
Melting in the corner.

He calls himself an artist of the visual sort,
Printed on a label across his ego,
Bearing lies and subtle misprints,
Slowly disintegrating in the winter mist.

He sees life as a disjointed sequence
Of stunts and elaborate set pieces, strewn
Like damp cardboard cut-outs in the rain.

He is a cheap art dealer; a terrible con
Standing on a patchwork of old concrete.

He hates the artist more than the art.
WHAT
WE
HAVE
BEEN UP
TO...

FRIDAY@1

by Josh Venables

Epic. In my opinion, a superb word to describe the inaugural year of Friday@1 in Jesus College which has just come to an end. Originally inspired by the freshers’ concert in Michaelmas Term last year, Ruby and I saw the possibility of having a chilled performance space for students of all different musical styles and skill levels. Over the year, it has emerged into a space for all the creative arts in general to be expressed, even though music is still definitely the most common.

Although it started as a small weekly concert, some Friday@1s didn’t end up as low-key as we might have originally expected. Some of the best moments last year came when we were blessed with some pretty special visits. One of these was an incredibly generous concert given by international pianist and harpsichordist, Sonia Lee, who graced our chapel in April with a virtuosic programme including an exciting world premiere. The other highlight was having our young music scholars and friends, primarily from local primary school St Joseph’s, come and perform for us a couple of times during the year. After the success of these concerts, this is an arrangement which we now hope to do every term.

This year, the dream continues. We’re looking forward this term for a special Diwali-themed Friday@1 on Friday of 5th week as well as a special visit once again from some of our young musicians on Friday of 8th week. To generate a bit of long-term hype, Enrico Presti, professional touring organist, is due to give us a concert during Trinity Term Friday on May 3rd which is also something to look forward to!

If you’re keen to perform at any point, whatever ability you may have, Friday@1 is the place for you! 1:10pm every Friday in Jesus Chapel, just turn up. Also, if you’re not a performer but just want an oasis in your week to listen/watch some magic being made in a chilled environment, we would love to see you there!
ART EXHIBITION

Elena Samarsky

Elena Samarsky (PhD in Sociology) was exhibiting her paintings in chapel in 4th week last term. This was her first art exhibition which opened at the Musical Soiree. It included 10 artworks which were on display for a week in the chapel (15-20 May).

“It was an amazing experience to have my first exhibition last term surrounded by such a welcoming community. I am very grateful to Bev Shadbolt, it would have been impossible to have such a wonderful event without her support and encouragement. Having my exhibition was an important stepping stone, after it I was accepted for an artistic residency in Finland.”

COLLEGE PLAY

by Calvados Che

Last term we were fortunate enough to stage our first very own college play - Amy’s View

Staging our own college play was a bold proposal and I am grateful of all the generous help and warm support from college and JCR, especially Bev, Megan, Joy and Victoria. We went through ups and downs, fleeting ideas yet occasional messy schedules, but found our pace in the end. Producing ‘Amy’s View’ is undoubtedly one of the most memorable experience and I hope it can be a Jesus tradition in the future.

‘Amy’s View’ seems, effortlessly, to depict the clashes in people’s opinions in the early days of filmmaking and the consequent decline in the popularity of plays among young people, as well as the potential cooperation and symbiosis between these two media.

There is already an interest in drama at our college, but I am confident that it can be brought to another level. I strongly encouraged Jesus people to get involved, and directors and designers were sourced internally. And by choosing the elegant Jesus College chapel as the venue, the staging of this production was challenging but also meaningful, as we were ready to break the fourth wall and set this play filled with conflicts between generations, family members and artistic industries to an imagined theatre.
CHOIR TOUR

by Edward Buxton

The prospect of a choir tour to Georgia had long been on the cards, courtesy of Professor Michael Vickers, Fellow Emeritus in Archaeology at Jesus College, and I’m sure I speak for the whole choir when I say that Georgia made for a first-rate tour destination.

Our trip started in Kutaisi, known as the legislative capital since the Georgian Parliament relocated here from the capital, Tbilisi, in 2012. We started with a visit to the State Historical Museum which was followed by a visit to a museum devoted to the celebrated Georgian composer, Zakaria Paliashvili, whose music, for one, serves as the basis for the country’s national anthem. Our first dinner together, accompanied by Michael, was a hearty affair, comprising an astounding array of the hallowed “khachapuri” (“cheesy bread” for the less linguistically inclined among us), complete with a lesson on how to eat them correctly (cutlery not required). The next day, our first stop was the grandiose Bagrati cathedral, built in the eleventh century, followed by the Gelati monastery which is situated high up in the hills overlooking the city, and has been recognised as a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1994. We were then treated to something the likes of which, it is fair to say, none of us had witnessed hitherto, namely a concert of traditional Georgian dancing; we were truly in awe of the slick choreography and combined finesse and stamina of the dancers, not forgetting the power and cohesiveness of the traditional all-male choir which, to top it all off, performed between the two dance acts. That evening was our inaugural concert of the tour, to be held in the city’s Opera House, a building of immense proportions which offered an exciting if slightly daunting performance opportunity. When the time did come to sing, we certainly gave it our all, and the conclusion of our lengthy and varied programme was greeted with hearty applause and a standing ovation from the over 200 people who filled the auditorium. What a way to end the first leg of our tour!

The following morning, we boarded the bus for Batumi, a lively coastal resort described by Michael as “Las Vegas-on-Sea”. We spent our first evening here in a joint concert ‘on the boulevard’ with the wonderful Revaz Lagidze Girls’ Choir, whose impeccable standards, both technically and interpretatively, left us mesmerised, if slightly daunted; one minute they were basking in the wrenching harmonies of a modern setting of the Agnus Dei, the next they had us clapping along to an upbeat rendition of “The lion sleeps tonight”. Add to this the cameras which seemingly came out of nowhere along with the request for a recording of us for national television, and we were again driven to sing our hearts out; the highlight of the evening for me was Rachmaninoff’s Bogoritsye Dyevo (the Old Slavonic inspired by the Latin Ave Maria), whose extended and immense crescendo really benefited from the extra voices we had present. We must unfortunately concede, however, that we were beaten in the spontaneous singing battle which followed (note for next year: prepare some “spontaneous” rep). After many grateful farewells we enjoyed a beautiful sunset before exploring what the seaside bars had to offer and discovering the national spirit “cha cha” (no, not the dance), popular as it was strong!
Our exploration of the city the following morning had a distinctly archaeological thrust; first we visited the imposing Gonio Fortress, which dates back to Roman times. Our next stop was Batumi’s Archaeological Museum, whose inception in 1994 was down to the perseverance of Michael and his team of local excavators and archaeologists. That afternoon was spent enjoying yet more of the hallowed cheesy bread and perfect sea temperature.

We were once again on the road early the next morning, this time headed for the nation’s faraway capital, Tbilisi. On the way we stopped at Stalin’s birthplace, Gori, where we were taken aback by the grand temple, complete with Soviet Union insignias, which had been constructed around the humble cottage where he had spent his earliest days. Next we stopped at the Tserovani settlement, which houses residents from the disputed South Ossetia region, and here we sang a shorter programme of music to a grateful audience of local residents. Shortly after arriving to the trendy Fabrika Hostel in downtown Tbilisi, we were treated to an extravagant dinner, complete with local wines, at one of Michael’s favourite restaurants, where cheesy bread and dumplings played a starring role.

Our concert the next evening was at Tbilisi State University, another auditorium of vast proportions which we did well to fill with our singing. Though we might have held it together in the performance itself, the journey back was another matter, with the combination of astronomical temperatures, crammed buses, reckless driving, failed attempts to make the ticket machines work, and, to top it all off, doubt about where we were in fact going, making for rather a bizarre experience. The next morning, we were invited to a delicious lunch kindly hosted by Michael and his wife Manana at their immaculate villa on the hills of the capital. Here, to our surprise, we met the British Ambassador to Georgia, Justin McKenzie, whom we spontaneously serenaded with a hearty verse of the College hymn, “Guide me, O thou great Redeemer”, in promise of a fuller programme of music at the British Embassy the next day. That afternoon we sang for a traditional Catholic Mass, followed by a short concert afterwards, in the beautiful church of St. Peter and Paul, where we blessed with a warm welcome and wonderful acoustic.

Our last full day in Georgia captured the essence of the whole tour; full of adventure, surprise, and of course singing. We started out at the British Embassy to Georgia, where we were fortunate to be invited to an interesting talk by the Ambassador, in which he addressed topics from the promotion of higher-level education to Georgia’s prospects about joining the EU. In return we sang our best to an appreciative audience of Embassy employees. Then we boarded the bus for the ancient town of Mtskheta, where we visited the remote Jvari monastery, dating from the sixth century, followed by Svetitskhoveli Cathedral, another UNESCO World Heritage Site. Our final excursion was to an excavation site, Grakliani Gora, which was discovered in 2007, and is of great interest to archaeologists worldwide. The nonchalance with which our host handed round various artefacts, some dating as far back as 4000 BC, emphasised that this certainly was first-hand archaeology; British Museum eat your heart out! That evening was spent outside in the beautiful rustic surroundings of Grakliani, as we feasted on a wonderful array of Georgian specialties, all washed down with local wine and of course more cha cha, which, a forgiving reviewer might say, buoyed us in our final performance as we sang our last. As for the remainder of the evening – “what happens on tour, stays on tour” is the maxim I shall here invoke.

I would like to close by thanking everyone for their excellent company and wonderful singing, and in particular to express my gratitude to those whose organisational input made this trip possible; Michael and Manana Vickers; our wonderful Chaplain Megan; and my steadfast colleagues Lucy, Jack and Tom.
PLAYS
Many of the talented members of Jesus College are again involved in several plays across Oxford this term. Use the opportunity to see so many wonderful plays and support your Jesus folks by coming to these:

Joe Woodman, Alexander Marks
and Gregor Roach are involved in Journey’s End which will be performed in St Mary Magdalen Church in 5th week.

You will also be able to see Cameron Forbes in Table Manners in Crisis Café in 6th week.

Finally, Joe Woodman will also perform in The Admirable Crichton in Oxford Playhouse in 8th week (27 Nov - 1 Dec).

CONCERTS
Several musicians from our college are also involved in various ensembles and concerts across university. If you are free, they would appreciate your support in the audience!

Desson Au-Yeung and Kwan Ann Tan will be performing in the concert of Oxford University Philharmonic Orchestra (performing Vaughan Williams, Bax, Elgar) on 21st November (7th week) in the Sheldonian Theatre.

Anton Blackburn will perform with the Oxford University Wind Orchestra at their concert on 24th November (7th week).

WHAT WE ARE UP TO THIS TERM...

PRINCIPAL'S SOIREE
Thanks to the generosity of Sir Nigel and Lady Shadbolt, we can continue in the termly tradition of concerts in the Principal’s lodgings. On Tuesday of 4th week, the 30th of October, you will be able to enjoy a lovely evening, hearing a collection of musical talents in college in a nice company! If you would like to get a place at this concert, respond to the email invitation sent by Helen Gee. And if you would like to get involved in the future, contact Ruby Turner (ruby.turner@jesus.ox.ac.uk).

FRESHERS' CONCERT
Join us on Tuesday the 6th of November (5th week) to celebrate the new musical talents we have in college this year! This is a wonderful opportunity to appreciate the talented students in college and get together as a college that is actively involved in music-making. We will be able to hear variety of genres and instruments and that should undoubtedly be a very enjoyable experience. Any freshers interested in performing any piece of music can let themselves known to the Music Rep, Josh Venables (joshua.venables@jesus.ox.ac.uk).
PHOTO PROJECT

by Athishan Vettivetpillai

A couple of weeks ago the JCR approved funds that would be spent buying coloured anoraks, which students would wear on 2nd quad positioned in the style of a poppy in order to commemorate Remembrance Day. A bird’s eye view photo will then be taken of the students and compiled with other participating colleges. Although primarily the gesture would serve as a poignant reminder of the sacrifice of many on the 11th November, the JCR agreed to donate the anoraks (via the Jesus College Homelessness Society) to those in the city currently living without a shelter, through these rainy months. Our thanks go out to Joe Hughes and Charlotte Peart, of the JCHS, for their help in distributing the anoraks as well as our wonderful chaplain, Megan Daffern, for speedily sorting out the logistics of such an endeavour.

REMEMBRANCE CONCERT

by Lucia Svecova

In the afternoon of the Remembrance day, after the photo project, everybody is invited to the Jesus College Chapel where at 3pm Jesus College Chapel Choir in collaboration with several Jesus musicians will provide a thoughtful atmosphere in a concert. The theme of the concert is Life, Love, and Loss, which provides reflection on the memory of those who died in the war as well as on our lives in the present and how we use the gift of living in peace that others died for. Concert will include for instance works by French composer Jehan Alain who died in war, as well as some reflective works by Elgar.

ART EXHIBITION

by Sebastian Hatt

This term, Megan kindly gave me the opportunity to display some of my recent oil paintings for a week in the Jesus College Chapel. I tend to enjoy producing detailed landscape scenes, so there is a general theme of nature and landscape to the paintings, with the centre piece being two allegorical depictions of Paradise and Inferno. I particularly enjoyed painting the chapel, and hope to complete some more scenes from around Oxford during my time here.

You will be able to see this exhibition throughout 4th week.
"How’s the colouring in going?" is a question that geography students are all too familiar with. I argue, however, that this association with colouring in serves as an entry point into a discussion about the relevance of art to social sciences research. Geographers spend a lot of time lamenting the lack of geographical perspectives in public discourse and pondering how to speak to non-specialist audiences about the crucial societal issues of our time (Murphy, 2005). Murphy’s newspaper offers up a readership of people from myriad disciplines as well as from outside of the academy, all united by an interest in the arts, thus presenting an opportunity to engage a wider audience in some of the research that geographers actually do. Here, I draw on recent work by geographers to briefly examine some of the possibilities for artistic engagements in social sciences research and conclude that artistically informed work has a bright future ahead.

Geography has a long history of engagement with artistic practices, notably in cartography, field-sketching, and creative writing in relation to exploration (Livingstone, 1992). Over the last few years, however, geography has undergone a ‘creative turn’ whereby geographers have embraced creative practices and engaged with a wide range of artistic methods to undertake geographical research that is ‘art-full’ (Hawkins, 2015), hence the title of ‘back to the drawing board’. There is a growing branch of interdisciplinary work by geographers drawing on literatures from artistic disciplines such as theatre studies (Rogers, 2018) as well as a proliferation of geographer-artist collaborations, involving, for example, drawing, painting and conversing together to gain a better understanding of landscape (Wylie and Webster, 2018). Across the breadth of human geography, artistic methodologies are being enacted, whether that be the development of a fictional play by Raynor (2017) to uncover women’s experiences of austerity in North East England or Madge’s (2018) use of bricolage to sense the intimacy of breast cancer survival. The wide-ranging and vibrant work emerging from geography’s creative turn therefore indicates that social sciences research has much to gain from engaging with artistic literatures and methodologies.

Art’s strength in bridging academic research and everyday public life also offers up exciting opportunities for social scientists. Hawkins and Kainzieser (2017) look at how audio and visual art can aid the communication of climate change research by making climate change less abstract, situating the impacts of climatic processes, and increasing public recognition of human-environment relations. There is increasing geographical interest in “yarnbombing”, a form of knitted graffiti (see right) that acts as a practice of ‘craftivism’ (activism through crafts) whereby artists knit themselves into the urban fabric of cities to make their presence felt (Price, 2015). Moreover, Zebracki and Luger (2018) tap into the development of digital art and the rise of digital ‘artivism’ (art activism) which mobilises the ‘stretching’ of art in the digital sphere to enact political change. Social scientists can thus enlist artistic practices to bolster research dissemination to broader publics and to enhance understanding on emergent forms of social activism.
To sum up, engaging with art offers up exciting possibilities for social sciences research as a vehicle for cross-pollination between disciplines, as a methodological tool, as a research dissemination aid, and as a lens for engaging with new forms of activism and protest. Art’s ability to connect people makes it a great means for reaching out to other disciplines and to broader publics. Social sciences research can thus be greatly enriched by social scientists engaging with various artistic practices, acquiring new artistic skills as part of the research process (Wylie and Webster, 2018), and drawing on previously gained artistic experience and understanding. How’s the colouring-in going? We’re just getting started.

References:


Oesol olion Prydyddol yd,  
a folodd ein gwendid, teyrnasiad y cryf.  
Ein heiddil tir, heldir ein hofnau.  
A’i hanwesyd yn hanes ein hangau.

Poendod pobloedd ein tiroedd cledd,  
a’u concrwyd dan rhai b yr allgaredd.  
Gair y genedl felly a’i fygyw,  
ym myd y Saesnigrwydd abwyd.

Ggoniant gynhenid genedl,  
nad oedd ond danteithfwyd, yn chwyd chwedl.  
Actau’n hachau oedd tardd adleisiau – ‘Hynt rhyddid  
hyd hanes hafddydiau’.

Anfeidrol fedd, sail ein hamrwyfusedd,  
a’n calon coll yn friwddoll mawredd.  
Ym hanes ein harteithglwyd,  
cydweidiad y Cymry a rhydwyd.

Ystyrwch, a oes hedd i’w gael ym moliant hunllef – a’n harchifau’n  
  drwch mewn colled?  
Gwerth gwlad yw hâd ei chynnydd,  
A’i phlant yw ei chyfoeth hi.
“Well, well.” The chilling voice brought her back to reality, and even though she couldn’t fight her natural reaction of snapping her head up to him and flinching at his menacing tone, she fought her facial expression into haughtiness – perhaps even disdain. “If it isn’t the prodigal son. Or, rather, the runaway wife,” His chuckle at his own joke elicited a shiver from Genevieve, but nothing more.

“Well now my interest is piqued,” He finally began to move along to the top of the staircase, placing a hand on the ornamented rail and smiling at her.

“Pray tell, dear wife, what it is that made you run from me?” He descended the first step and she fought the urge to take a step back. “Or better still,” he continued, walking closing to her. “What it is that made you return?”

She took a deep breath, allowing him to reach the bottom of the stairs before even considering her response. When he didn’t stop approaching her she wondered if he was going to walk right up to her, the way he used to. She wondered if he would grab her chin just like old times and pull her eyes up to his. She wondered, even, if he would seize her by the throat or throw her against the door. She couldn’t stop him physically- she doubted if she even had the capacity to mentally. He was cruel and subtle and abusive but she had another trick up her sleeve.

Deep down, she was too. So she smiled at him.
To the sea

by Anonym

How often she thought about all the evil in the world. How unjust, how unfair that the world should be created like this! Why can never the good things come without the bad? So much pain and suffering, though she realised she had experienced only a glimpse of all the evils of the world. She struggled a lot with accepting this nature of the world and life.

But, after all, a reconciliation has to come at one point. Then, when she was sitting at the beach, just after the sunset, oh the waves washed all the thoughts about evil away. Soft hissing of the water covered with dancing sparkles of the very last beams of sunshine... All this set into the scenery of the chalky white cliffs with the green glazing of the grass on top of them, with a far shore on the horizon. Has she ever seen anything more beautiful? Even if she has, right now she was completely engulfed by this sudden peace.

Maybe life is like the waves. They can be terrible, invoking great fear, being extremely dangerous with a strength that cannot be conquered. Yet, they have to be like this out in the ocean so that when they finally pilgrim to the shore, they can swing one’s ears with their soft hissing. Even though out in the ocean you still feel the terror, in the end you have to give up and let yourself be carried by the waves, for you cannot fight against them forever. In the end, they will carry you to the beauty of the shore...