PERM NEWS

The newsletter of the Perm Association

January 2002

Perm Youth Ballet

Just before Christmas, Perm Youth Ballet delighted audiences in Oxford Town Hall, with performances of Copland's *Appalachian Spring* and excerpts from Stravinsky's *Fire-bird Suite* and Tchaikovsky's *Nutcracker Suite*. In the first half of the programme, John Lubbock conducted musicians from the Orchestra of St John's, playing the subtle and challenging Copland. After the interval, the Tchaikovsky and Stravinsky were played by combined youth orchestras from Bonn, Grenoble and Leiden, under the direction of John Lubbock and Patrick Souillot.

The Perm Youth ballet arrived in Oxford on 15 December, and spent five days in intensive rehearsals - as well as finding some time for sightseeing and getting to know the young musicians from Oxford's other twin towns. Performing on the extended stage of Oxford's Town Hall presented the dancers with unfamiliar difficulties - limited space, two levels and an inappropriate surface. Their teachers expressed great anxieties - for both safety and aesthetic reasons, since the dancers were unable to rise on their points. Despite these



concerns (unfortunately glossed over by the reviewer in the Oxford Times), the young dancers performed with astonishing maturity and professionalism, negotiating the changes of level without losing the continuity and flow of movement. The Copland required the combined forces of all sixteen dancers for most of the time, whereas the Tchaikovsky offered the opportunity for individual dancers to show their talents in the brief cameos of various styles of dance.

An especially moving feature of the event was the evident rapport and mutual appreciation between the dancers, instrumentalists and singers from five countries. Much of the credit for the success and smooth running of the event must go to May Wylie, who organised the accommodation, feeding, transport and rehearsing of all the young performers, to members of the various twinning associations, who provided lunches, to members of the Doyle Academy of Irish Dance, who helped with the social programme and did front-of house duties at the concerts, and to John Lubbock, whose commitment to community music-making is a huge bonus for the people of Oxford.

A Tale of Two Cities

The cities of Oxford and Perm have enjoyed a long and very active friendship link. After serving such a worthy 'apprenticeship', the formal twinning between the two cities took place on Saturday 22 December 2001.

At a fitting celebration in the Lord Mayor's Parlour, some sixty members of all Oxford's twinning links watched the formal signing. The Deputy Mayor of Perm Vladimir Mikylaev and the Lord Mayor of Oxford Councillor Peter Moss were the formal signatories. Leaders of the Perm Youth Ballet and committee members of the Perm Association were among the other honoured guests.

Don Rouse chairperson of the Oxford International Links Committee made a particularly fitting speech, emphasising the family nature of twinning and celebrating the inclusion of Perm as a formal twin. Indeed this was very much the spirit of the event - a sense of a new child in the family being welcomed alongside representatives of all of Oxford's links particularly the Burgomeister of Leiden which was twinned with Oxford in 1946.

A perfect example of the working of the extended family of twinning is a possible project involving young people from Oxford and Leiden together going to Perm. What more appropriate way to nurture the family spirit of twinning.

May Wylie

Perm State University visit

The group of Perm University teachers who arrived for a three-week visit in November 2001 were younger than usual – five of the six were in their twenties, post-graduates combining research with their first experiences of university teaching. Many of you met them at the Perm Association party; others met them during their free time. As the organiser of these visits for eleven years, I could not help comparing them with their predecessors of a decade ago, during the last years of the USSR.

They are much less troubled by cultural and economic differences, partly because most of them have travelled briefly abroad already, partly because Russia has changed. As post-graduates, they are very focussed on their research, and proved to be altogether more familiar with the internet and electronic journals than I am. They were hard-working and organised – though also very willing to sample Oxford entertainments. Most significantly, perhaps, they were not at all *defensive* about either themselves or their country. After all, they were children when Gorbachev came to power, and they have grown up in a post-Soviet world.

Consequently I never found myself in the middle of anguished and heartfelt debates on 'Whither Russia?' or on 'Soviet versus anti-Soviet values'. I missed the passion of those discussions, but was reassured at the enthusiasm and broadly-educated outlook of this generation of young academics. Their questions to speakers cut through many of our own easy assumptions.

All Perm groups have included one or two teachers of English who sometimes find it harder to cope with a British university where English is taken for granted, than, say, teachers of history or law who have increasing academic contacts with their British counterparts. What the teachers of English need is a diversity of good contemporary writing. They bought textbooks of language teaching for their department libraries; but they and their students continue to use Agatha Christie and Somerset Maugham to explain to each other how the British live today. This is crazy. Oxford friends sometimes give them paperback classics (unnecessary – they have those) or American or Australian fiction; but from us, surely, after a course on contemporary Britain they all need examples of good contemporary British writing –Whitbread or Booker shortlisted novels, for example. Or videos of recent British films which, apart from costume dramas, are also unknown in post-Soviet Russia.

Karen Hewitt

Sounds Russian to Me

I've just come back from a trip to Moscow and St Petersburg to meet with leading musicians active in creating new music, in preparation for inviting a number of them to Oxford next May.

I don't know how I came to be a Russophile, but I do know that Russian music played an important part. Within classical music, Russian music remains a perennial favourite with audiences, whether in the form of Tchaikovsky's *Nutcracker*, Rakhmaninov's *Vespers* or Shostakovich's symphonies. However, little is known in this country of the riches of music being made in Russia today, nor of its jazz and experimental popular musicians. We are left instead with an apparent divide: between a romanticised account of Russian-ness; and a snobbish academic view of the music as somehow outmoded, akin to views of Russian technology in its isolation from the West.

So I was particularly delighted to see the human face of Russian music, and to discover its complex range and diversity. Firstly, let me introduce you to Vladimir Tarnopolsky, Professor of Composition at the Moscow Tchaikovsky Conservatoire. In his late 40s, with much friendly good humour and a sweet tooth, he does not have the wild or disturbed countenance of the unconstrained genius of popular imagination, but this belies the energy with which he has devoted himself to introducing new music from Western Europe to Russian audiences, and vice versa. Together with his two musicologist assistants, Eugenie Izotova and Vera Serebryakova, he runs the Centre for Contemporary Music that he created, organises an annual festival of new music, and is the artistic director of the Studio for New Music Ensemble.

The Ensemble, consisting of professional musicians who studied as postgraduates at the Conservatoire, is the most active new music group in Russia, and whilst they have performed numerous times in Germany, Holland and elsewhere in Europe, their visit to Oxford (17-24 May) will be their first to the UK. And what music! There is a commitment, spiritual energy and passion that emanates from it that is distinctive, a need to be heard, which comes from the dedication and single-minded determination of both performers and composers. Tarnopolsky for one appears to sleep very little, putting all of himself into the music.

This inseparability of life and art was just as apparent when I met Nick Sudnick, who after playing with Sergei Kuryokhin, one of Russia's alternative rock legends, has been forging his own unique path with his group ZGA since the mid-1980s. His modest apartment is immediately striking, with a bed tucked in the corner of what is in effect his workshop. The tools, metals, wires, tape and chaos from which he invents his own instruments and special microphones fill every space, on racks, stands, and hung on the wall. This is his life and his sound laboratory, and his music sounds like nobody else's: a heavy industrial, low technology, rhythmic theatre combined with vocalisations, melodies and repeated patterns in a popular idiom.

I was constantly struck by the invention, wit and intelligence of the musicians I met, whatever their musical style. This was summed up by Remake, a group of six unaccompanied singers that perform their own close-harmony, often satirical, cabaret-style arrangements of classic Russian songs, Soviet patriotic songs, and popular music (including a remarkable version of *Smoke Gets in Your Eyes*). Immediately familiar and yet subtly different, their programmes breathe fresh life and sparkle into the most stale and over-heard songs.

And there are many more anecdotes I could give: of the club housed in a bomb shelter in St. Petersburg; of the new music organisation based in the prison of the Peter and Paul Fortress; and of the chain of pub-cum-bookshops for intellectuals in Moscow. The variety was incredible, and I can't wait to share these experiences with you when many of these musicians come to Oxford in May.

If you would like to help with this festival of Russian music, I would be most grateful for offers to provide accommodation for performers, for stewards and others to help events run smoothly. Tickets for all events will be on sale in March, though of course helpers and volunteers will be able to attend for free. Look out for more information, or contact me on 01865 488369 or by e-mail to edward@ocmevents.org if you would like to help or to find out more.

Edward McKeon

Sounding the Enigma: Russian music and the West

A series of performances, films, seminars and discussions exploring Russian musical identity, organised by Oxford Contemporary Music (OCM) in association with the European Humanities Research Centre (EHRC), Oxford, and the Centre for Russian Music (CRM), London.

Summary

These unique events aim to celebrate the diversity of Russian culture today, challenge received notions of Russian identity and foster a deeper understanding of Russian culture, revising outdated Western perceptions of Russian business, products and people by recognising the changes that have occurred during the past decade. It is the first programme of its kind that we are aware of in the UK, so we anticipate a high level of media interest in the specialist Russian press, national newspapers and broadcast media.

At the time of going to press, some events are yet to be finally confirmed – dates have been included where they are confirmed. Full information on the series will be available from Oxford Contemporary Music by the beginning of February – to be added to the mailing list, call Edward McKeon on 01865 488369.

Outline Programme

Thursday 2 May 2002, Museum of Modern Art

TerzaRima (Victor Unukovsky, gtr; Adrian Zolotuhin, gtr; Buster Birch, perc). The trio's influences range from Sambas and Tangos, to Hot Club swing and the haunting romances of East European Gypsies. Based in London, the players have experience ranging from performing with the St Petersburg Philharmonic and jazz stars like Eduardo Niebla, to Russian folk music, and pirate radio DJ.

Friday 17 – Saturday 18 May 2002

The European Humanities Research Centre will hold a conference on *The Problem of Russian Musical Identity*, chaired by Rosamund Bartlett. Speakers will come from across the UK, Russia, Israel and America.

Friday 17 May 2002, Jacqueline du Pre Music Building

Stekpanna (Steve Kershaw, bass; Mads Kjølby Olesen, gtr; Petter Svärd, drums) with Leonid Vintskevich (pno) and David Goloshchokin (vln). Stekpanna is an Anglo-Scandinavian contemporary jazz trio of award-winning graduates of the world-renowned Musicians' Institute in Los Angeles. Leonid Vintskevich is Director of the Jazz Province festival and an outstanding pianist, invited to perform across Europe and America and described by *Downbeat* as "a perfect, unrestrained Russian avant garde." David Goloshchokin is a brilliant violinist and multi-instrumentalist and Director of the Jazz Philharmonic Hall, St Petersburg. He has performed with Duke Ellington, Dave Brubeck, and Dizzy Gillespie, performed across Europe, North and South America, and has recorded over 15 albums.

Saturday 18 May 2002, Magdalen College Auditorium

Launch by the British Film Institute of a new DVD of films by Evgenii Bauer with music written by young British composers. Live performance by Triptych of music by Nicholas Brown with showing of *After Death* by Bauer.

Saturday 18 May 2002

Studio for New Music Ensemble, Moscow. Programme of suppressed music from the 1920s and 1930s. The Ensemble, with 20 players, is one of Russia's most important contemporary music groups. It has given nearly 100 concerts, performed in international festivals of con-

temporary music in Russia and across Europe, and has produced several CDs of music by Russian and foreign contemporary composers on the Belgian label Megadisc. It is the resident ensemble of Moscow Forum, the festival of contemporary music, and has the exclusive rights for Russian premieres of chamber works by some of the principal Russian composers. This will be the Ensemble's first visit to the UK, and it will be 'in residence' throughout the week, giving small-scale performances in venues and day centres in Oxfordshire (Burford, Wallingford, Abingdon etc.), and workshops and masterclasses with the County Music Service and other young musicians.

Friday 24 May 2002

Studio for New Music Ensemble, Moscow. Programme linked to Andrey Platonov's antiutopian novel *Chevengur*, to include Vustin's *Chevengur's Songs* and Tarnopolski's *Chevengur*.

Saturday 8 June 2002

Addison Singers (cond. David Wordsworth): Shchedrin *The Sealed Angel* (UK Premiere) - setting of Leskov's novella for soloists, two boys' voices, mixed chorus and solo flute.

Russian Chamber Orchestra of London, with guest conductor Theodore Kuchar and soloist Alexander Ivashkin. Programme to feature Shchedrin: Cello Concerto (UK Premiere); other programming likely to include Shostakovich Chamber symphony op.110a, Kancheli *Night Prayers* and Tchaikovsky *Serenade*.

Both performances will be in the presence of Rodion Shchedrin and Maya Plisetskaya, who will be interviewed. Shchedrin (b.1932) is one of the most important Russian composers, having had more works staged at the Bolshoi than any other composer and succeeded Shostakovich as Head of the Russian Union of Composers until its closure in 1988. His wife, Maya Plisetskaya, was the unofficial *prima ballerina assoluta* at the Bolshoi after Ulanova.

Other programmes planned

- ZGA: Latvian group formed by Nick Sudnick and Valery Dudkin, based in St Petersburg since 1991. After releasing their first album in 1989 and appearing on the BBC, they have performed at festivals in Canada, Austria, Switzerland, Germany, France, Italy, and Russia. The band uses instruments and original sound sources using piezo-electric technology invented by Nick Sudnick, and has a 'post-rock', post-punk industrial sound. "Legendary Russian group who operate on the fringes of noise, pop and improvisation. Their instrumental sound is built out of specially amplified metal debris, fused with brittle guitar distortion and disturbing voice-overs. They generate a level of spiritual intensity which could only emanate from the old 'East'." (Chris Cutler).
- Remake: *a cappella* vocal group / jazz sextet a bit like a Russian 'Swingle Singers', performing original (usually jazzy) arrangements, often humorous and satirical, written by the director Mikhael Serkov. As their name suggests, they aspire to give a new look and sound (remake) to famous musical works. They have performed at festivals across Europe, and with jazz musicians such as Vivian Martin, Deborah Cameron, and Mark Bernstein.
- Talk by Nick Dmitriev, Director of the Longarms Musical Agency and jazz critic.
- Film programmes, hopefully to include *Mr West in the Land of the Bolsheviks* (dir. Lev Kulishov), and *Brother 2*.

Edward McKeon

Allotments and Dachas Exchange

A report on the allotments and dachas exchange appeared in the October 2001 newsletter. Valentina Vereshchagina sent in an article which arrived too late for inclusion in that edition. It is reproduced below, with a translation.

Оксфорд встретил нас прекрасной погодой. Девять лет назад, покидая Оксфорд после научной стажировки, я не предполагала, что приеду сюда вновь. Но по приглашению Ассоциации Оксфорд - Пермь я снова в Оксфорде, на этот раз вместе с моим мужем Анатолием.

Нам была предложена весьма насыщенная программа. Завершился наш визит приемом у лорд-мэра Оксфорда, где за чашкой чая мы рассказали о своих впечатлениях от поездки. Основная цель нашей поездки - установить и расширить контакты между садоводами и огородниками Перми и Оксфорда. Представитель администрации города Дэвид Стилл и Ричард Силлз, как переводчик, подробно рассказали нам об истории возникновения аллотментсов, познакомили с интересными людьми. Секретарь ассоциации аллотмантсов, бывший мэр Оксфорда, показал нам свой земельный участок, с гордостью продемонстрировал свой урожай, провел экскурсию по соседним участкам. Как ботаник, я заметила, что в Перми и у вас выращивается почти одинаковый набор овощей, хотя ваш климат мягче. Вместе с тем, мы обратили внимание, что выращивается много брюссельской капусты (у нас в основном белокочанная и цветная), пастернака, лука-порея. Много цветов. Великолепен репчатый лук! Было непривычно видеть, что на участках нет домиков, где можно было бы укрыться от непогоды. На наш недоуменный вопрос Дэвид ответил так: "Зачем? Если пойдет дождь, садовод раскроет зонтик, сядет на велосипед и уедет домой".

В Перми и других городах России земля для садоводческих объединений (кооперативов), как правило, выделялась за городом, на расстоянии 20-50 км от города. Для работы на земле наши горожане обычно используют конец недели (субботу и воскресенье). Размер участка 5-6 соток (500-600 квадратных метров) позволяет построить домик, чтобы ночевать в нем и жить во время отпуска. Некоторые пенсионеры живут на своих участках весь год. Конечно, для нашей зимы дом должен быть теплым. Кое-кто покупает дома в деревне, где размеры земельных участков значительно больше - 10-20 соток.

Для нас был очень интересен опыт объединения людей, имеющих проблемы со здоровьем, в аллотментс для совместной обработки земли. Нам показали их общую

Oxford greeted us with fine weather. Nine years ago, leaving Oxford after an academic study visit, I did not suppose I'd be coming back again. But thanks to an invitation from the Perm Association, I was back in Oxford, this time with my husband Anatoly.

We were offered a very full programme. Our visit concluded with a welcome by the Lord Mayor of Oxford where, over a cup of tea, we talked about our impressions of our trip. The basic aim of our visit was to establish and extend contacts between gardeners and allotment holders of Perm and Oxford. David Steel, an officer of the City Council, with Richard Sills acting as interpreter, gave us a detailed account of the origins of allotments and introduced us to interesting people. John Power, secretary of one allotment association and former Lord Mayor of Oxford. showed us his plot, proudly displayed his produce and conducted a tour of neighbouring plots. As a botanist I observed that an almost identical range of vegetables is cultivated in Oxford and Perm, although your climate is milder. Moreover we noticed that many sprouts are cultivated (whereas in Perm on the whole we grow white cabbage and cauliflower) as well as parsnips and leeks. Lots of flowers. Magnificent onions! It was surprising to see that on some allotments there were no huts, where you could have sheltered in bad weather. To our puzzled question, David answered: "Why? If it starts to rain, the gardener opens his umbrella, gets on his bike and goes home "

In Perm and other Russian towns, as a rule, land was allotted for gardening associations (cooperatives) 20 - 50 kilometres outside the towns. Our town - dwellers usually use the weekends (Saturday and Sunday) for working on the land. The size of a plot (0.05 - 0.06 hectares, or 500 - 600 square metres) permits the construction of a small house, where you can spend the night and stay during holidays. Some pensioners live on their plots all the year round. Of course, to cope with our winters the house has to be warm. Some people buy houses in the country where the dimensions of the plots are significantly greater (0.1 - 0.2 hectares).

One thing we found very interesting was the association for people with [mental] health problems, on a cooperative allotment [Elder Stubbs]. We were shown their canteen, their mechanical

столовую, минитрактор для обработки земли и наборы инструментов, магазин для продажи продукции. Это садоводческое объединение является пропагандистом своих достижений. Здесь монтировался видеофильм о буднях и праздниках объединившихся людей. Мы также видели объявления о проведении яблочного дня, нам рассказывали о конкурсах на лучший участок и лучший урожай.

В другом аллотмантсе, где мы побывали, нас познакомили с Лили, которой 82 года и которая была 4 года подряд победителем таких конкурсов. Она пошутила, что в последний год она слишком много разговаривала и поэтому не добилась успеха.

Синтия Стайлз, в доме которой мы жили, сделала очень интересную программу для нас. Благодаря Синтии мы побывали в яблоневом питомнике, который является филиалом Ботанического сада университета. Профессор Барри Джунипер очень интересно рассказал о происхождении яблонь и истории их селекции. Сад, в котором собрано более 100 сортов яблонь различного происхождения, произвел большое впечатление.

В небольшой заметке трудно написать обо всем, что мы видели. Это замечательный фестиваль сыров и садовый центр, где я не удержалась от покупки семян и луковиц, и магазин для пчеловодов с самым разнообразным инвентарем и оборудованием. С этим магазином мы познакомились благодаря любезности Джона Пиггота. Надо сказать, что мы имеем 6 семей пчел. Анатолий отобрал несколько образцов вощины и рамок, чтобы показать их в Пермском обществе пчеловодов (общественная организация). Когда владелец магазина узнал, что мы из России, он подарил нам эти образцы. Нас тронуло такое внимание.

К вечеру мы приехали к дому Джона. Накрапывал мелкий дождь, темнело, но мы успели еще дать покормку двум семьям пчел из шестнадцати, которые содержит Джон на своей усадьбе. В разговоре выяснилось, что Джон занимается пчелами уже 40 лет!

За 8 дней мы посетили также Ботанический сад Оксфордского университета, предприятие по фасовке меда, мы видели чудный Готсволд, роскошный Бленем и небольшую выставку работ аранжировщиков цветов, созданную призерами Челси. Мне это было интересно, поскольку я увлекаюсь аранжировкой.

Мы вернулись в Пермь, полные впечатлений. Мы расскажем о них нашим садоводам. С удовольствием примем и гостей из Оксфорда и постараемся сделать их пребывание в Перми интересным.

cultivator and collection of tools, and the shop for the sale of produce. This gardening association gets publicity for its achievements. They produced a video of the members' working days and their fetes. We also saw their advertisements for an apple festival; and they told us about competitions for the best plot and the best produce.

On another allotment [Twenty Pound Meadow on Botley Road] we were introduced to Lily, aged 82, who had won similar competitions four years in a row. She joked that, the previous year, she had spent too much time chatting and so had not achieved success.

Cynthia Styles, in whose home we stayed, devised a very interesting programme for us. Thanks to Cynthia we visited an apple orchard in a nursery which is a branch of the University Botanical Garden. Professor Barry Juniper gave us a very interesting talk about the origins of apples and the history of the selection of cultivars. The orchard, which contained more than 100 kinds of apple trees of various origins, made a great impression on us.

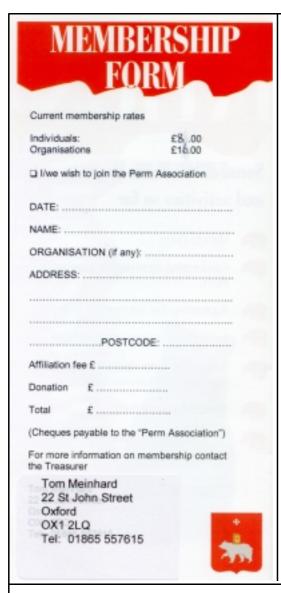
In a short article it is difficult to write about everything that we saw. The remarkable cheese festival; the garden centre where I couldn't resist the temptation to buy seeds and bulbs; the beekeepers' shop with a most varied range of stock and equipment. We got to know this shop thanks to the kindness of John Pigott. I should explain that we have six colonies of bees. Anatoly took away several samples of honeycomb and frames, in order to exhibit them at the Perm Beekeepers' Society (a voluntary organisation). When the shopkeeper discovered that we were from Russia, he gave us these samples as a gift. We were very touched by this gesture.

In the evening we went to John's home. There was a light drizzle and it was getting dark, but we still managed to feed two of the sixteen colonies that John keeps in his garden. In the course of our conversation it became clear that John had been keeping bees for forty years!

In the course of our 8-day stay we also visited the Oxford University Botanical Garden and a honey bottling company; we visited the lovely Cotswolds, luxurious Blenheim and a small flower-arranging exhibition, mounted by Chelsea prize-winners. This was interesting for me, as I love flower-arranging.

We returned to Perm full of impressions. We shall talk about them to our gardeners. We should be delighted to welcome guests from Oxford and will try to make their stay in Perm an interesting one.

Valentina Vereshchagina



Dates for your diary

28 January - 5 February: Educational exchange.
Visit by group from Perm Pedagogical University, with senior figures from Perm City and Perm Region.

Wed 6 February: Annual General Meeting.
The AGM of the Perm Association will be held on Wednesday 6 February at 6.00 pm in Rewley House.

Thursday 2 May - Saturday 8 June: Musical events.
A series of events featuring many aspects of Russian music, under the auspices of Oxford Contemporary Music. Further information is on pages 3 – 5.

May: Perm State University. A group will visit Oxford in early May.

<u>19 - 24 June:</u> International Folk Dance Festival. A group of folk dancers and musicians from Perm will visit Oxford to take part in this event.

Recent Events

In November a group of six academics from Perm State University spent three weeks in Oxford, following a course, sightseeing and meeting fellow academics from Oxford University. Report on page 2.

In December a group of sixteen dancers and four teachers from the Perm Ballet School spent a week in Oxford, rehearsing then giving two performances, accompanied by musicians from Oxford and Oxford's other twin towns. Report on page 1.

On 20 December the Lord Mayor hosted a buffet lunch, at which documents were signed by himself and the Deputy Mayor of Perm, formalising the twinning of the two cities. Report on page 2.

News of other links

Bonn A youth choir from Bonn, under the direction of Marcus Gruenter, took part in the Lord Mayor's Carols, together with singers from Oxfordshire and musicians from Grenoble, Leiden and Oxford.

<u>Grenoble</u> Members of the University of Grenoble Orchestra, under the direction of Patrick Souillot, took part in the two performances by Perm Youth Ballet and also the Lord Mayor's Carols. A group of about 25 OGA members and 15 members of North Oxford Tennis Club will visit Grenoble for a long weekend in May.

<u>Leiden</u> Musicians from the Leiden Youth Orchestra, directed by Mark Templaars, took part in the two performances by Perm Youth Ballet and also the Lord Mayor's Carols. Jan Postma, Burgomeister of Leiden, and his wife, and Alderman Pechtold and his wife were also present at both events.

<u>Leon</u> A superb evening of opera by Quentin Hayes and his friends from Covent Garden raised almost £2000 for the Leon link. Thanks are due to members of the Leon link who ran the bar at the Perm Youth Ballet performances.

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