

Musicians in Residence 2021-22

Oxford, UK

Indicative residency dates:

28th February to 25th March (can be flexible)



Ashmolean Museum, Oxford © Ian Wallman

About Oxford

Oxford Cotemporary Music (OCM) is based in Oxford in the South East of England, Northeast of London and South East of Birmingham. It is a small city, with a population of around 150,000 people. Its population is multi-cultural including international students and academics at the university and communities who live in the city.

Oxford is famous for its university, which is the oldest in the English speaking world. The university has world renowned museum and plant collections, including England's oldest Botanic Garden, and it has the first purpose-built concert in Europe, the Holywell Music Room. Oxford University Museums and collections have been a rich source of inspiration for artists supported by OCM over the years and the organisation has contacts with TORCH, the university's public engagement programme for the humanities which offers access to fascinating research work. Oxford has a second university, Oxford Brookes University, with which OCM works closely, particularly with the music department and composers in sound art and electro acoustic music.

Industries in Oxford include publishing, ground-breaking scientific research, and motor manufacturing – BMW's mini car plant is a major employer in the city.

Culturally it has a rich theatre scene, a modern art gallery, a story museum and many artists live and work in or near the city. Literature is a big part of the city's identity, with connections to Harry Potter, CS Lewis, Lewis Carroll and JRR Tolkien amongst many.

Oxfordshire county is largely rural with beautiful countryside and some notable heritage sites including Blenheim Palace. The county has many nature reserves and Oxford has the Thames and Oxford canal running through them.

101 Outdoor Arts is based in Newbury and is run by Corn Exchange Newbury, the town's theatre and arts centre. Newbury is a small, busy market town in Berkshire with a population of around 70,000. It is in the valley of the River Kennet, which flows through the town surrounded by parks. It is 26 miles south of Oxford and is on the edge of the Berkshire Downs, part of the North Wessex Downs area of outstanding natural beauty. Like Oxford, Newbury has a long history. It was founded in the 11th Century and its original trade was in cloth. It was the site of two battles in the English civil war.

The creation space is based outside the town at Greenham Common on a business park which used to be a USAF military base. In the 1980s, it was one of only two USAF bases in the UK equipped with ground-launched nuclear-armed cruise missiles, causing it to become the site of protests by up to 40,000 protesters and the establishment of the [Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp](#). With the end of the [Cold War](#), the base was closed, the runway was broken up, much of it used as fill material for the controversial [Newbury bypass](#) and road building programme, also the scene of much national protest. The area has now been restored to [heathland](#).



Ablaze Festival by 101 Outdoor Arts

About the music and cultural landscape

Musically Oxford has had many success stories in pop and rock including Radiohead, Supergrass, Foals and Young Knives, and it still has a lively underground music scene with music venues in old buildings and pubs. There are numerous open mic nights where musicians try out material and a strong folk music scene with an annual festival, the Oxford Folk Weekend. There are jazz nights, and many independent promoters running alternative and leftfield music events. The classical music scene is strong in Oxford, especially within Oxford University. There are several great music projects for young people in Oxford including Young Womxns Music Project, Ark T Centre and Inspire Sounds. The city is also home to Hammer & Tongue spoken word promoter and poetry, rap and hip hop are also a feature of cultural life in the city.

OCM itself presents and supports new music from all genres but has a specialism in finding new audiences for sound and music through the presentation of outdoor and site specific work, interdisciplinary work and commissioned work with museums, gardens, and other non-arts organisations.

Newbury Corn Exchange is at the heart of culture in the town, hosting theatre, cinema, dance and music events as well a youth programme. For over a decade the centre has also been presenting large scale outdoor performances from monumental sound installations to large scale outdoor theatre and circus. This programme gave rise to the creation space at 101. Newbury has three other arts centres, The Base for visual arts and crafts, the Watermill and Arlington Arts. The latter is based at the site of the Mary Hare school for deaf children. It also has historic buildings Shaw House and Highclere House.



Nathaniel Mann at the Ashmolean © Ian Wallman

About the host partners – Oxford Contemporary Music and 101 Outdoor Arts

OCM is a music charity which presents and supports new music. It has four strands to its work; a concert series; commissions of new work; artists development and education for children and young people. We believe in opening up access to musical experiences and learning to a wide range of people and our specialism in commissioning and supporting artists working public space, outdoors and in non-arts venues, is part of what makes us unique. OCM was started in the 1990s by university students and staff as a way of sharing and giving access to new music. It was originally a festival but now hosts a year round programme of music of all genres. We are particularly interested in music that crosses genres, is multi-artform or inspired by other disciplines outside the arts.

OCM is has working relationships with many non-arts partners such as the museums and collections (Ashmolean, History of Science, Pitt Rivers, Natural History, Botanic Gardens) and Oxford's hospitals with whom we have collaborated on arts projects. We also have links with other arts organisations in the city, including the grass roots music promoters, and both Oxford and Oxford Brookes Universities. There are also community links through our education and outreach programme and our annual youth music residency programme, Music in Tandem. We also have a large, UK wide, network of music and sound artists working in public spaces through many years of producing and artists development work.

101 Outdoor Arts was founded in 2013 and works locally, regionally, nationally and internationally, hosting over 50 residencies a year for companies making work outdoors and in public space. It has a 20,000sq ft warehouse space which has workshops for creating props and structures, accommodation, kitchens and rehearsal spaces. It aims to provide a much needed facility for companies making new work from across the UK and sometimes internationally.

Through the wider arts organisation Corn Exchange Newbury, of which 101 is part, it has many links into the local area and established partnerships with cultural and community organisations as well as bodies dedicated to public space both urban and natural on a national basis. Halfway between London and Bristol, it also has access to the industrial estate which is the site of the former USAF air base and nuclear weapons facility at Greenham Common (which for many years was also a site of international protest) as well as to Greenham Common itself which is now an extensive nature reserve. More widely, 101 is a gateway into national and international networks for the creation and presentation of work in public space – it is well linked with festivals, creation centres and artistic development organisations in the UK and across Europe.



Ring Out by Ray Lee © J Ross

Music Creator Profile

With our joint range of specialisms and connections we are able to offer support to an artist making work in any musical genre but with a particular focus and passion for making work that is presented outdoors and in public spaces. Examples of artists we have supported include installation artists, sound artists, theatrical street bands and creators working with new technology in an outdoor context.

We are used to supporting artists working in a range of artforms, but with music and sound as the starting point.