



**The Somerville College, University of Oxford, Choir Tour to India – 2018**

**History of Somerville**

Somerville College, University of Oxford\*, was founded in 1879 to include the excluded, and named in honour of the Scottish mathematician and scientist Mary Somerville. It welcomed women when they were barred from the University and was the first non-denominational College in Oxford. Now as a College for women and men it remains as true as ever to those founding principles.

**The Oxford India Centre for Sustainable Development**

The College has exceptionally strong and meaningful links to India, with distinguished alumnae that include Indira Gandhi, India's first woman Prime Minister and Cornelia Sorabji, the first Indian woman at Oxford in 1889, and the first Indian woman lawyer to practise in both the UK and India. We are also the home of the Oxford India Centre for Sustainable Development, which advances India's sustainable development by bringing different academic disciplines and sectors together. The Centre develops future leaders by offering scholarships to exceptional Indian students to study at Oxford. We carry out multidisciplinary research on sustainable nutrition, the environment and health; and we translate academic ideas to the ground. We have fourteen current scholars, with a further seven OICSD alumni who have since returned to India to work in relevant sectors.



\*The University of Oxford is ranked 1<sup>st</sup> in [the World University Rankings](#), 2018.



### **The Somerville Choir**

The Somerville College Choir is a highly regarded and talented mixed voice choir from within the University of Oxford. Formed in 2001, the choir has made several recordings, and has recently given concerts in Italy, Germany, and the United States of America (the latter in both 2014 and 2016). The College Choir has, in a short period of time, established itself to be one of the very best choirs in one of the foremost choral cities on the planet. The Choir is led by the Director of Chapel Music, Will Dawes, who studied at the Royal Academy of Music in London and is a member of the internationally acclaimed, and multiple-Grammy-nominated vocal ensemble, Stile Antico.



### **An historic first**

This will be the first visit to India by a choir from Oxford University and is an incredible opportunity for its members to visit such a culturally rich part of the world. The Choir, accompanied by the Director of Chapel Music, the Principal of the College (Baroness Royall of Blaisdon) and the Somerville Director of Development, Sara Kalim, will be visiting India in December 2018, to perform concerts and run workshops in Mumbai and Goa.

### **Outreach in India**

The Choir will be taking part in activities with the [Mumbai based charity Songbound](#). Established in 2012, Songbound is an outreach initiative that brings the transformative power of music to some of India's poorest and most marginalised children. The choir will also be running educational workshops with students of [The Karta Initiative](#), a social mobility mission, which aims to widen access to world-class higher education and opportunity for brilliant low income students from developing and emerging countries. This will involve members of the choir talking to the students about their own subjects, different pathways and university life in general. Sara Kalim is a founding partner of Karta, and the Choir looks forward to further developing this relationship between the College and the Initiative.

### **Performance Schedule**

In addition to these workshops, the choir are thrilled to have an invitation to perform at the National Centre for Performing Arts (Mumbai) on 13th December. The NCPA Box Office will open for tickets on 9th November for Members & the 12th November for Public. Please do take a look at the [NCPA website](#) for further event details. They will also give several other performances during this unprecedented visit including at the Mehboob Film Studios as part of the Times Literary Festival, and the Church of St Francis of Assisi in Goa [further details on the latter will be released shortly].