

A brief history

When Somerville opened its doors in 1879 it was founded to be 'undenominational.' In other words, while other Oxford colleges generally aligned themselves with Anglicanism or Catholicism, Somerville chose to have no affiliation to any particular church. In 1935 the Chapel was opened, following a generous donation from former student Emily Georgiana Kemp. It was her desire that the Chapel, although dedicated to God, would be a place where members of all nationalities and religions could meet, pray, and discuss philosophical and theological themes. The inscription on the outside of the Chapel in Greek translates as 'A House of Prayer for all People'. This is a verse from the Book of Isaiah, which is referred to by Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew, and Kemp selected it personally to reflect her vision for the building.

True to its foundation, and in keeping with the college's inclusive tradition, the Chapel today hosts visiting speakers with a range of religious perspectives. The stained-glass window by Reginald Bell presents a landscape symbolizing the gateway to the knowledge of life. The figure of Christ is joined by two female figures, who are depicted wearing chasubles and stoles, and who represent Truth (left, holding a lamp) and Learning (right, holding a mirror). Whilst the Chapel has always been an ecumenical space, Emily Kemp saw the figure of Jesus as important to people of all faiths and none, albeit only the Christians regard him as divine. For her, and the college today, there's no contradiction between installing an overtly Christian image in a building such as this and intending the building to be used by a wide variety of believers and those who do not profess religious faith. Under the stained-glass window is a Theorama – ten panels which represents the nine major religions as well as humanism.

Choral Contemplation

In recent years we have moved away from using the Chapel solely as a place for worship and re-modelled it as a space for visiting scholars, commentators, and faith leaders, to share reflections on a range of social, political, theological, historical, and philosophical subjects. Each term a selection of speakers present on a common topic on Sunday evenings as detailed in this termcard. The topic of these talks varies from term to term and where possible we try to include a wide range of religious and non-religious perspectives. We aim to alternate speaker events with themed music and readings. Our Choral Contemplations are not just open to other colleges, but also members of the public, of all faiths and none.

Booking the Chapel

The Chapel is available to students for use during term time, and can be booked for private music practice or for other suitable purposes. To book the Chapel for an approved activity, please send a calendar invite to chapel.booking@some.ox.ac.uk from your Somerville email account. If approval has not been granted beforehand, please contact the Chapel Director before booking a slot on the calendar.

Chapel Director: Monty Sharma
Director of Chapel Music: Will Dawes
Organ Scholars: Annabel Hannan, Luca Morgante
Contact E-mail: chapel.office@some.ox.ac.uk



Beyond Resilience

Hilary Term 2022

1st Week, Sunday 16th January, 5.30pm

Challenging Challenges

Mina Fazel, Professor of Adolescent Psychiatry, University of Oxford

Choral works by Britten, Chilcott, and Hensel

2nd Week, Sunday 23rd January, 5.30pm

Music and Readings for Burns night

Choral works by Parry, MacMillan, Vaughan Williams, and Beethoven

3rd Week, Sunday 30th January, 5.30pm

He is the Christ of Every Crisis

Anthony Akinwale, St. Catherine's College & Founder of Chosen Oxford

Choral works (sung for us by Aseda Gospel Choir, led by Danielle Welbeck, Music 2020) come from contemporary gospel music genre, sacred music that has remained the soundtrack to the faith of Black Christians across the diaspora.

4th Week, Sunday 6th February, 5.30pm

Music and Readings to Celebrate the Platinum Jubilee of The Queen

Choral works by Parry, Vaughan Williams, East, McDowall, and Weir

5th Week, Sunday 13th February, 5.30pm

Theories in Secularisation: A Systematic Theologian's Perspective

Prof. Johannes Zachhuber

Choral works by Britten (Rejoice in the Lamb), and MacMillan

6th Week, Sunday 20th February, 5.30pm

**Music and Reflections on African Resilience
and Nguva Ya Tabia (Strength of Character)**

Finlay Dove (Music, 2018) returns to Somerville from Kenya with his friend and colleague Moses Arati to present a selection of Afro-Fusion music and Kisii song.

7th Week, Sunday 27th February, 5.30pm

Music as Wellbeing

Dr. Esther Cavett, Somerville College & Kings College London

Choral works by Finzi, and Clemens non Papa

8th Week, Sunday 6th March, 5.30pm

Music and Readings for Lent & Spring

Choral works by Larsen, Quartel, McDowall, Wallen, Bettinis, and MacDonald

Other Chapel Events in Hilary Term

- **Joint Contemplation with Hereford Sixth Form College Choir:** At 5:30pm on 29th January, there will be an additional contemplation on the theme of Light, sung by our college choir and singers from Hereford Sixth Form College, with music by Whitacre, Andrew, Tallis, McMillan, Wood, and Dyson
- **Choral Scholars recital:** The annual recital by the college's Choral Scholars takes place at 6pm on 18th February. Entry is free and tickets are not required.
- **Bach: St John Passion:** The biennial performance of this extraordinary work takes place at 7:30pm on 11th March. Tickets priced at £15 (£5 for students) are available by email from choir@some.ox.ac.uk. This event sells out quickly.
- **Somerville Music Society** (music.soc@some.ox.ac.uk) organise concerts every week, of which, the following are particularly noteworthy:
 - 4th February at 5:30pm: Margaret Irene Seymour Concert
 - 11th February at 5:30pm: SMS Orchestra concert, featuring concertos for piano and violin.
 - 2nd March at 5:30pm: International Women's Day Concert
- **Multi-faith Services:**
 - On 7th February at 5:30pm, the University's Catholic Chaplaincy will conduct a **Roman Catholic Mass** in the Chapel.
 - On 24th February at 7:00pm, there will be a **Baha'i Service** in the Chapel and everyone's welcome to attend.
- **Quiet time:** Each afternoon from 12:00pm-1:00pm the Chapel will be reserved for individual prayer or meditation.
- **Wellbeing Classes:** Each term, yoga, meditation and taichi classes, are organised in the Chapel. The schedule for this term will be circulated in due course.