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A Review

Response to Gavin Esler
David Simmonds
Employee Handbook

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Upcoming Events

As higher education gears up for two more weeks of strikes about pensions, casualisation, workload and pay levels, and independent unions continue their campaigns on wages, outsourcing and zero hours contracts, the extent of the reforms that the 2010 student protests and occupations were fighting becomes all too clear.

The rise in tuition fees was just the start in a coordinated plan to reconfigure higher education for the market. Lecturers on permanent contracts were given voluntary redundancy. A new generation of teaching staff was employed on fixed term contracts with twice the workload, staff were outsourced to private companies on zero hours contracts and stripped of their rights, maintenance grants and bursaries were scrapped, a new ranking system linked course value to employability and student debt. Managers were employed to oversee this transition and institute an auditing culture, close down departments, cut courses and commission new buildings. Finally, marketers were employed to promote all this on the strength of university brands and luxury halls of residence.

Purged of critique, dissent and scepticism universities are being hollowed out and divested. With underfunded courses and workshops, aging facilities, ever-shrinking contact time and bleak prospects in the job market, art education in particular has been under attack for decades. It is no surprise that teachers and students are taking radical action by establishing an alternative model to the capitalist university.

Fuelled by the crisis in higher education, a diverse landscape of alternative art schools has emerged and burgeoned into a movement since 2010. A multitude of diverse, experimental and flexible organisations address the crisis in art education by offering free or affordable art education. Unfettered by rigid ties to funding, policy and industry these schools develop new curricula and models of organisation, addressing the unique needs and learning styles of individual learners to create subtle but significant shifts in art education. Yet apart from notable exceptions like AitMFA, The Other MA and Open School East, most alternative art schools are short-lived because they rely precariously on volunteer labour.

The focus of my art practice over the last five years has been the search for a sustainable alternative. The project is composed of archival research at Conway Hall Library, interviews with co-operatives and alternative art schools and participatory action research to crowdsourc...
Anarchism routinely attracts a bad press. The actions of a handful of ‘propagandists of the deed’ shaped popular perceptions in the nineteenth century. Tales of these bombers and assassins were not just the stuff of cheap literature; they styled Joseph Conrad’s depictions of anarchists too. Conrad’s stories of intrigue and espionage may now be considered relics of Victorian culture, but when the Twin Towers were destroyed in Manhattan interest in anarchism soared; a slew of commentaries purporting to show the anarchist origins of Al-Qaeda violence followed. Less dramatic, but equally telling, was the ‘accusation’ recently put to members of Extinction Rebellion, that the movement was a front for activist activism.

What is Anarchism?  
Emergence of a Movement
Anarchism emerged as a distinctive current in European socialism in the 1870s when a dispute between Michael Bakunin, a veteran of the 1848 revolutions, and Karl Marx, the eventual figurehead of international socialism, came to a head in the International Workingmen’s Association (First International). The intellectual origins of their argument could be traced to an earlier dispute between Marx and P.-J. Proudhon, author of What is Property? (1840) who coined the immortal phrase: ‘property is theft’. But the immediate cause of the rupture was Bakunin’s rejection of Marx’s proposal for the organisation of socialist parties. The scheme was still a twinkle in Marx’s eye, but Bakunin argued that it paved the way to the instigation of socialism through the capture of state power. The idea of taking power to end class rule was plain daft, Bakunin thought: more likely would remain.

The boundaries between socialists remained quite fluid for most of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century but two events – the Paris Commune of 1871 and the Haymarket Trial of 1887 – became focal points for anarchist organising, sparking the creation of a global network of libertarian socialist movements.

Calling themselves ‘anti-authoritarians’, the Bakuninists branded Marx and his followers ‘authoritarian’ socialists. By the end of the decade, the labels had changed. Anti-authoritarians became anarchists and Marxists organised as ‘social democrats’. This label stuck until Lenin re-branded social democrats ‘reformists’ and styled revolutionary socialism as ‘communism’.

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Franco–Prussian war in response to the demand made by the newly declared national government to surrender the city's guns. Refusing, Parisian workers pursued a counter-demand for self-government, holding out against the authorities for two months. The resistance ended in a bloodbath, the largest European massacre of the nineteenth century. Twenty-thousand Communards are thought to have been executed and hundreds more imprisoned or deported. They were not all anarchists, but the demonisation of Communards as revolutionaries who struggled for self-rule chimed with anti-authoritarian politics.

The Haymarket Affair was a wholly anarchist event. Following the shooting of strikers involved in a campaign for the 8-hour day in May 1886, anarchists in Chicago organised a rally in the city's Haymarket Square. The detonation of a bomb and the gunfire which followed in the panic left seven police officers dead. Police assumed that anarchists were responsible and eight high-profile activists were charged with conspiracy. There was no strong evidence to convict any of them and the irregularities of the trial were acknowledged in 1893 when the sentences were quashed. But this decision came too late for five of the defendants, four of whom had been hanged and one who had committed suicide while awaiting execution. Moreover, by this time, the Red Scare that Haymarket had ignited had also accelerated the creation of a libertarian socialist movement which characterised all government – liberal or autocratic – as tyranny.

Against Domination
Anarchists are sometimes criticised for refusing to acknowledge the benefits of liberal government. This is inaccurate. Anarchists typically admit that there are significant differences between democratic and authoritarian regimes and that it is possible to distinguish between forms of government. Their argument is that government entails domination, that is, the defence of power inequalities, and that this shapes social relationships. For Proudhon the defence of private property, enshrined in republican and liberal constitutions, was the most pernicious form of power inequality. It re-enshrined the principle of ‘property to waste’. Dostoevsky’s graphic description of Mikolka, the drunken peasant in Crime and Punishment who repeatedly avows his right of ownership to defend the brutal slaying of his horse, captured the tenor of Proudhon’s critique. In property-regimes, owners could endlessly extend their estates and just leave them to rot. Their right also bred a dependency relationship: the well-being of the property-less rested on their whims. The unfairness of the arrangement was highlighted by the legal enforcement of the state’s monopoly of violence. Workers were designated free agents. They were not subject to their masters’ commands. In fact, they were free to sign contracts and workers and employers alike could expect punishment if either broke the terms of their agreements. But the owners always had the upper hand in this relationship. They could deny workers’ access to their property. They could reduce wages to bare subsistence and call out the police if workers went on strike.

Anarchists described the situation of the property-less to chattel slavery. Lucy Parsons, a black anarchist who had been born a slave, argued that the American Civil War had been fought in vain: slavery had not been abolished it had merely been transformed. In theory, she was now a free woman, yet she was still dependant on the good-will of an employer-master for her survival. Tens of thousands of homeless, starving workers were in the same position.

Anarchists identified similar relationships of dependency in the domestic sphere. Women were dominated by men just as workers were dominated by employers, though the effects were felt differently: rape in marriage, denial of rights over children, limited access to education and routine disbarment from participation in public life. And in international relations, too, European states dominated non-European people in the most brutal manner, by turns treating the indigenous population as children and non-human animals. Either way, ‘civilisation’ was said to depend on the enlightened masters’ rule.
promised by eighteenth-century revolutionaries in Britain, America and France had failed to materialise. The new constitutional regimes that had been designed to replace autocracy had merely institutionalised new forms of oppression. Anarchists admitted that it was possible to imagine remedial change within these regimes – more liberal labour law and the feminisation of family law, for example. But they concluded that the attempt to legislate for equality would only result in the conservation of prevailing norms, encouraging permanent struggles for supremacy. Anarchy was the only solution.

Anarchists, Socialists and Libertarians

Anarchists defined themselves as anti-capitalist libertarian socialists. While they agreed with Marxists that the abolition of class advantage was a key condition for emancipation, Proudhon's critique of property highlighted the folly of replacing private ownership with state ownership. All the instruments of repression would remain, now deployed to impose the party's view of the general good on the proletariat. Anarchist socialism demanded that all the institutions of the state – parliament, judiciary, police, military – be abandoned along with the exclusive right to property. For most anarchists, the voting re-grounding decision making in local associations on the model of the Paris Commune, anarchists, this meant re-grounding decision making along with the exclusive right to property. For most socialists, demand that all the institutions of the state be subordinated to the will of the proletariat. Anarchist commitment to the rejection of tyranny in polite society, though repressive, had probably brought his assassination on himself. The term ‘Killer Robots’ invokes images of laser-eyed Terminators or dystopian drone swarms. The present-day reality of LAWS is much less glamorous, but potentially no less terrifying. Crucial here is how the AI-enabled autonomous weapons system is always a system, composed of software processes and hardware delivery platforms. Take the drone, for example. In April 2017, the US Department of Defence (DoD) established the Algorithmic Warfare Cross-Functional Team (AWCFT) to “accelerate DoD’s integration of big data and machine learning”. The AWCFT, also known as Project Maven, is the DoD’s pathfinder AI initiative and explicitly aims to make the vast amounts of data collected by drones intelligible for speedy action. In concrete terms, this means the AI evaluates video footage, captured by drones, against the context of a mapped environment, and provides information about what could or should be identified as a threat and, potentially, acted on. Until 2018, Google was contracted to provide AI expertise for Project Maven. The technology giant decided not to renew the contract with the DoD after a number of Google employees walked out in a very public protest over being involved in the development of potentially lethal autonomous systems. At present, Project Maven is not intended to act without human supervision, and certainly not for killing decisions, but it is not a particular stretch of the imagination to foresee how systems like these might one day be used without relevant human oversight, absent a strict regulatory framework or ban. It is also not difficult to imagine how greater proliferation of such systems might end up supplying rogue actors with these capacities. The recent increase in drone use by militant groups should serve as a cautionary tale. The potential use of LAWS is intended to act autonomously, and it is the potential use of AI to create lethal autonomous weapons systems (LAWS) that is raising alarm bells. While not intended to act without human supervision, and certainly not for killing decisions, it is not a particular stretch of the imagination to foresee how systems like these might one day be used without relevant human oversight, absent a strict regulatory framework or ban. It is also not difficult to imagine how greater proliferation of such systems might end up supplying rogue actors with these capacities. The recent increase in drone use by militant groups should serve as a cautionary tale.

Abandonment of Law

In 1856, the same year as the term ‘Artificial Intelligence’ was coined, the philosopher Günther Anders tells the story of General Douglas MacArthur, who was relieved of his duties as United Nations commander in the Korean War on account of his hawkish approach. MacArthur’s decision-making capacities were superseded by a different General or team of individuals, but rather by the latest military technology – a so-called ‘Electric Brain’ that used mechanical calculations to identify the best course of strategic action.

In recounting the anecdote, Anders expresses strong reservations about the use of such a machine for military purposes, arguing that the delegation of morally significant decisions to computer technology represented a clear abdication of human responsibility (Anders, 2010, p. 60–61). Efficiency, speed, and apparent objectivity are not what make decisions moral, and our excitement about new technologies may actually lead us to lose sight of this. Although Anders was responding to a much earlier wave of technological innovation, his concerns resonate with current debates on AI-enabled autonomous weapons systems. 

Automony in military weapons systems has made steady progress over the past five years. A number of countries around the globe – including the US, the UK, China, and Russia – already possess or are developing military systems that exhibit certain levels of intelligent autonomy, and AI is presently being used across a range of military applications, including cyber defense, logistics, medical health, and missile defence. But above all, it is the potential use of AI to create lethal autonomous weapons systems (LAWS) that is raising alarm bells. While spending on military AI soars, bringing us closer to the point where new technologies are able to select and attack targets without any human involvement, oversight and regulation continue to lag behind. This has become a concern for critics and the public alike. In 2013, a consortium of NGOs founded the Campaign Against Killer Robots, with the purpose of advocating for a global ban on the development and use of autonomous intelligent systems with lethal capacities. To date, 29 countries have agreed to support a global ban.

...
autonomous intelligent systems take the erratic, unpredictable human element out of the equation: machines don’t suffer from emotional instability, and are therefore able to make more clear-headed decisions in the fog of war. Whether such visions are justified in practical terms is highly contested and opponents raise a number of objections to casting technologies of violence in humane terms. At the heart of the issue is a moral question of the highest order: is it ethically defensible to have autonomous robots kill human beings without any human interference or even oversight? Should we allow robots to kill? For those working towards a ban of LAWS, the answer is a clear no. Such action would breach international humanitarian law and violate human dignity, not least because it would be exceptionally difficult to establish accountability and responsibility for errors, accidents, or otherwise unforeseen actions that might harm other humans. Who, in the end, would be held to account? The software designer? The commander? The operator? The autonomous intelligent system itself?

For many, the key to preventing such a dystopian scenario is to ensure that for any AI system, there is always a human in or on the loop to prevent any catastrophic event from occurring. The term used in the debates is ‘meaningful human control’. Meaningful human control is an important concept and certainly a step forward in providing a legal basis for regulating LAWS. But even if meaningful human control is established as the ground rule for autonomous intelligent systems with lethal capacities, the question is what can this possibility mean in the uncertain, messy reality of warfare, where the operator is caught in a technological web of digital interfaces and processes. Operating an AI-enabled system is not a simple case of command and control. Because such systems entail a number of technological elements, the operator becomes part of the system, and in particular is reliant on information flows produced through AI data analysis. This has important implications. If an AI builds a world model based on available data, it is likely to be much more successful in closed systems where parameters can easily be grasped as data. In the context of warfare, where parameters are likely to be less fixed, more fluid and dynamic, the AI system may suggest a course of action based on an epistemic foundation that may be biased, incomplete, or otherwise not fully appropriate to the situation. This will become more complex and less intelligible to the human mind as techniques in machine learning advance. The ability to retain control becomes an even less realistic prospect when we consider that the main allure of autonomous systems is speed and efficiency. All these points prioritize a conception of war not as a social and political problem, but as an engineering problem. This includes thinking about ethical dimensions to the use of force in scientific-mathematical terms. At present, there are a number of well-funded initiatives that seek to unlock the secret to making ‘moral machines’, which would offer an in-built ethical code that ensures that the system could only be used in morally-sound ways. The methodologies associated with this agenda vary, from statistical opinion polls to more complex design proposals, but each assumes that it is possible to find a way to engineer ethics into a machine. This is misunderstanding ethics at a most fundamental level.

Making ethical decisions is difficult and should not be sacrificed to the allure of technological progress, speed, and efficiency. Ethics is context dependent and relational. Ethics asks us to make choices that often have no clear solution but instead require that we take responsibility. This is deeply uncomfortable to many and counter to the binary logic of computational systems, but a zone of moral discomfort is essential if we are to prevent technological violence from becoming our primary mode of addressing conflict.

Digital technologies, and especially those within which the human is intricately embedded, are seldom just a tool that we employ at will. Rather, they carry a social power. They have the capacity to subtly shape our frames of reference for decision making. In so doing, they exert a powerful – and often invisible – influence over our modes of governance, our security practices, our justifications for violence, and our understanding of ethics as such. As warfare becomes increasingly systematic, through digital networks and algorithmic architectures, we must remember that these architectures might affect our thoughts and behaviour in important ways, eroding long-held humanistic values and reducing our capacity to engage properly in ethical deliberation.

Norbert Wiener, father of cybernetics, was attentive to this problem. In 1960, he wrote: “If we use, to achieve our purpose a mechanical agency with whose operation we cannot efficiently interfere once we have started it, because the action is so fast and irrevocable that we have not the data to intervene before the action is complete, then we had better be quite sure that the purpose put into the machine is the purpose which we really desire to bring about. In that case, we must find a way to engineer ethics into a ‘moral machine’.”

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Dr Elke Schwarz is Lecturer in Political Theory at Queen Mary University London. Her research focuses on the intersection of ethics of war and ethics of technology with an emphasis on the ethics of unmanned and autonomous / intelligent military technologies. She is the author of Death Machines: The Ethics of Violent Technologies (Manchester University Press).
It’s often difficult to pinpoint exactly when something starts, or at what point an idea has enough form to be recognised as a project. In Response is such a project.

The ‘In Response’ exhibition, which features 22 visual essays from students on the Graduate Diploma Graphic Design course at Chelsea College of Arts, opened on 30th January in Conway Hall Library and will be on display until 31st March 2020. Each essay is a personal critical response to the issues and ideas of different Victorian pamphlets held in Conway Hall’s library collection. Individually, the essays cover issues such as feminism, racism, disability, futurism, vegetarianism and speculation, each representing a visual conversation between the present and the past. As a collection, they represent collaboration in response to many different challenges and opportunities.

We had collaborated on the Graduate Diploma in the previous academic year. The course is fairly unique in the way that it brings students from multiple disciplinary and cultural backgrounds together to study Graphic Design, often for the first time. It’s an interesting opportunity to push at the edges of what Graphic Design is and could be, and to embrace the value of different perspectives.

Graphic Design is often defined and understood as working in response to commercial needs. What graphic designers do is invariably understood by what they produce and these objects and artefacts are often created in response to the needs of clients. This is an understanding we constantly seek to challenge in our students, particularly at postgraduate level - to engage with ideas and thinking beyond the abstract references of the traditional art and design canon and beyond the category of ‘commercial’.

Adam had worked with the Graduate Diploma course previously in his role as an Intercultural Communication Trainer. Many of these sessions had provided specific time and space to consider the value of difference in cultural perspectives and different approaches to critical thinking. It is an unfortunate reality that UK Higher Education is often uncritical in the way it defines such ideas. Students can find themselves stranded in the gap between their own cultural understandings and the institution’s opaque definitions. The way that critical thinking is addressed can often make students feel that some ways of thinking and knowing are more valid than others. Students from the last academic year had been vocal about how much they valued the space the course made to explore these ideas and how it had helped them to find their own voice. In response to changes in the design of the course, we recognised the opportunity for these approaches and ideas to become more embedded. This is where the idea for a co-designed and co-delivered project came into being.

After further discussion, we realised that this project would enable us to work more closely with Siobhan Britton, Graphic Design Subject Librarian at Chelsea. Siobhan collaborated with us on a number of the workshops and in weekly tutorials on the project, bringing her knowledge of libraries and collections but also her experience as a zine-maker and illustrator. Her contribution and expertise was invaluable to the process.

The project also built on an existing collaboration between Adam and Conway Hall, which started back in 2016. After discovering the library and engaging in discussions with Sophie Hawkey Edwards (Library and Learning Manager at the time), I recognised the potential of exploring the curatedness of libraries and archives to question systems of knowledge. In response, he developed facilitated discussions and series of workshops and events around thinking and language, in relation to the multitude of ideas and ideals represented in the library collection and championed by Conway Hall Ethical Society.

At the end of 2017, Conway Hall received support from the Heritage Lottery Fund to run Victorian Blogging - a project that aimed to explore the parallels between the format and purpose of 19th Century pamphlets and 21st Century blogs (and zines). In order to make the collection more accessible, Conway Hall began to digitise their archive of 19th Century pamphlets. Adam was invited to assist Sophie and Alicia Chilcott (then Digitisation Coordinator) in designing and delivering learning activities, and in cataloguing the digitised pamphlets.
These insubstantial, fragile pamphlets represent an aesthetic treasure trove of Victorian ephemera for typographically-minded Graphic Design students. However, and perhaps more substantially, they also provide a record of the enlightened individuals, organisations and movements of nineteenth century Britain, the political and social causes they championed and the ideals they held. In digitising this content, Conway Hall provided a new and very accessible way for our students to engage with and respond to it. Through a series of workshops, we invited the students to draw out some of these historical narratives and consider their relevance, at this moment in time, to them personally. The workshops took place at Conway Hall. In this way, the students’ work was in response not just to the collection but to the realities of the library space. Our first workshop, Creative Library Research, explored the idea of serendipity in the context of the Conway Hall collection. Many of our students later confessed that they didn’t use libraries but preferred to look for content online. They also commented that it had never occurred to them that they would find anything of value to them as designers outside of an art and design library. One student later reflected on the value of “accepting unusual knowledge as a designer”, highlighting what a different experience it was to find themselves in this space.

We also asked them to explore the library and try to decipher what the library was and what its motivations might be. We invited them to consider libraries as curated spaces, representing particular types of knowledge and bias. We challenged them to consider what the value of collections like these might be to a graphic designer. One student wrote the following in response to the workshop:

“...I think it is a completely different approach to creating something. It is almost like the brain goes into ‘survival mode’, and it is in that mode when we start using and discovering skills and ideas that we did not know we had.”

“This is definitely a skill that I want to adopt in future projects as I think it is a very efficient and successful way of expressing ideas and visualising initial thoughts.”

Over the following weeks, each of the students developed their ideas into a visual essay. This was an interesting format for them to work with. Visual essays differ from conventional essays in that they use sequences of images to communicate a critical position rather than words. Students were asked to produce a publication in response to their pamphlet using 10-12 images and up to 500 words. The results were beautiful and surprising. The essays were as varied as the students in terms of format, approach and ideas, even in response to the same pamphlet. Responses to The Man From the Moon, for example, ranged from a paper wallet of ‘moon money’ to a risograph-printed visual poem.

For the exhibition, the essays were classified using the Dewey system and placed back into the Conway Hall collection in their relevant sections. Yellow shelf cards were the only clue as to their location. This contextualisation was a specific choice in response to the all-too-often de-contextualisation of objects in Graphic Design exhibitions. Graphic Design is never without context. This approach at first confused visitors to the exhibition, but it was an interesting experiment which could be developed further in the future.
Give Peace a Chance: Conway Hall and the Peace Movement

Olwen Terris

From Moncure Conway to Yoko Ono Conway Hall has always been a place where peace activists gather to campaign, agitate and perform, in the expectation that their audience, if not in complete agreement with their views and strategies, will be engaged, committed and tolerant.

Two Nobel Peace Prize winners and one three-times nominee have spoken here. Journalist, author and Labour MP Norman Angell delivered the 4th Conway Memorial at South Place Institute on March 1913; his text was ‘War and the Essential Realities’. Angell’s seminal work *The Grand Illusion* (1910) – the inspiration for Jean Renoir’s 1937 film - analysed the nature of war, concluding that the danger of mutual destruction of both aggressors and defenders had made armed conflict unprofitable. Angell was awarded the Peace Prize in 1933 in recognition of the impact of *The Grand Illusion* and his work for the League of Nations.

Mairead Corrigan co-founded the Northern Ireland Peace Movement (later renamed Community of Peace People). In 1976 she was the winner of the Nobel Peace Prize (shared with Betty Williams) for working to a resolution of The Troubles in Northern Ireland. The following year she gave a Sunday Lecture with the title ‘Making Peace’.

Dr Scilla Elworthy is a peace campaigner and founder of the Oxford Research Group, a non-governmental organisation set up in 1982 to develop effective dialogue between nuclear weapons policy-makers and their critics, work for which she was nominated three times for the Peace Prize. In 2017 she lectured at Conway Hall on ‘The Business Plan for Peace: Making Possible a World Without War’.

Bertrand Russell and Fenner Brockway are perhaps the best known peace campaigners to have had strong associations with Conway Hall; both were conscientious objectors, both were imprisoned for their beliefs. Russell spoke to the Conway Discussion Circle on ‘The Pacifist Campaign’ on November 23 1937 , arguing that ‘in the circumstances of modern war you are never likely to secure any end we think desirable by means of a large war’. Lord Brockway spoke at Conway Hall many times including addresses on humanism, the Levellers and Diggers and his 75 years in politics. An extract from his autobiography *98 Not Out* beautifully illustrates his moral strength and compassion: ‘I have an extraordinary sense of freedom in owning nothing. I give all I receive above...’

Laura Knight is a graphic designer and course leader for the Graduate Diploma Graphic Design at Chelsea College of Arts, University of the Arts London.

Adam Ramejkis works at University of the Arts London, running workshops, seminars and projects for staff and students on criticality, creativity, communication and collaboration. He has also run workshops and events in Conway Hall Library exploring the links between thinking and language.
the average wage in Britain to the peace movement”. A statue (Brockway) and a bust (Russell) in Red Lion Square commemorate these men and rooms in Conway Hall are named in honour of their distinguished and untiring efforts to promote peace and understanding.

Conway Hall has in more recent times continued its commitment to commemorating conscientious objectors hosting in 2016 Comrades in Conscience, a presentation by Michael Mears marking a hundred years since the introduction of compulsory conscription in the UK. In October 2015 Dr Sharah Ali, formerly Deputy Leader of the Green Party, gave a Thinking on Sunday talk entitled “How is Gandhi and Non-Violence Relevant to Politics”.

Conway Hall has given a platform to the Campaign’s leaders and opened its buildings for its administrative meetings, conferences and AGMs. Bruce Kent, Vice-President and Kate Hudson, General Secretary have both spoken here. Peace activist Pat Arrowsmith, one of the original signatories of the Committee of 100 and co-organiser of the first Aldermaston March, spoke in 1976 from a British prison, was unable to give the address as he had that day received a prison sentence under the Official Secrets Act. The talk urged those present to join the Committee in its civil disobedience protests against the nuclear bomb.

Many artists and musicians have found their way to Conway Hall to perform. One such was Crass, an art collective and punk rock band formed in 1977 who promoted anarchism as a political ideology advocating peace, direct action, animal rights, feminism, anti-fascism and environmentalism. The band has also claimed credit for revitalising the peace movement and the CND in the late 1970s and early 1980s. They played at Conway Hall several times and on one such gig in September 1979 (notorious in punk history) Social Worker Party supporters and other anti-fascists attacked British Movement neo-Nazis in the Main Hall. From Steve Ignorant of Crass: “We went to the gig and there was a lot of rumours going around that the British Movement were turning up. As usual! We got that at every gig. I remember being backstage and this roar went up. All of a sudden there’s this full-scale battle going on and all I could do was watch from the stage – I didn’t know who was thumping who.”

The Sunday Concerts at South Place Chapel continued throughout World War I boosting morale and fostering a sense of normality. There was a rise in composers commissioned from allied countries and national concerts dedicated to the Italian, Russian and French repertoire.

The Conway Hall Library is of course a rich resource for research into peace studies ranging from George W. Footh’s 1887 pamphlet The Shadow of the Sword, a chilling and perspicacious account of the “feverish” political situation in Europe where neutral states “tremble” and “all Christendom is armed to the teeth”, to the political, philosophical and ethical debates of today. The final reflections on Conway Hall and peace must rest with Moncure Conway himself, the very last words from his very last book: “Entreat for peace not of deified thunderclouds, but of every man, woman and child thou shalt meet. Do not merely offer the prayer “Give peace in our time”, but do thy part to answer it. Then though the world be at strife, there shall be peace in thee, Farewell.”

Olwen Terris worked at the British Film Institute, National Film and Television Archive in the role of Chief Cataloguer for thirteen years before moving to the Imperial War Museum, Department of Collections Management as Data Standards Officer. She has been at Conway Hall since 2012 where she started as a volunteer cataloguer and has catalogued the Library’s nineteenth century pamphlet collection.
Something that has long gone beneath the radar of global sport is the rampant sexism of some, invariably Muslim majority, countries with respect to the Olympic Games and which has long been tolerated by the guardians of the games, the International Olympic Committee (IOC).

As late as the 1992 Olympic Games in Barcelona, Annie Sugier, Linda Weil-Curiel and Gerard Biard point out in this translation of an edition first published in French in 2017 that teams from 35 countries were comprised solely of men. This is an indicator that girls and women were denied encouragement, support, and facilities to pursue sports at a high level, in other words, institutional gender discrimination was/is likely to be the reality in these countries. More than that, until the 2012 London Games, some countries did not select women as a matter of policy.

The IOC was compelled to take action when it threatened Brunei, Qatar and Saudi Arabia from exclusion of the 2012 Games if they did not select women to their delegations: religious or cultural reasons for such a brazen sexist policy were deemed inadmissible. Moreover, the IOC refused to change the date of the games so that it did not clash with Ramadan. It tasked a special representative (Lassana Palenfo, former sports minister of the Ivory Coast) to study this question: she firmly declared, “The Games are apolitical and irreligious. If we yield now, the Buddhist, the Jew will also ask for special arrangements”. All this was a positive step forward and, importantly, in accordance with the Olympic Charter which states that “No kind of demonstration or political, religious or cultural reasons for an exemption with respect to sporting attire, they will not be allowed to compete. This flagrant accommodation to women’s oppression must be rejected along with the religious dogma that justifies the veiling of women and, ipso facto, second-class status given that boys and men are not required to veil themselves.”

Indeed, in the past, women from Muslim-majority countries participated in sports events both at home and in international tournaments in the standard attire; there was no question of veiling. There are striking and saddening photos of women participants from Iran before the Islamic revolution of 1979 and from Turkey before the rise of the AKP Party. The most oppressive country for women, Saudi Arabia, did not permit women to compete.

But they face an uphill struggle given the hitherto toleration shown by the IOC and other sporting bodies to the Islamic attire. Furthermore, they and their sympathizers are faced by the full might of Organisation of Islamic Cooperation countries who push for Islamic exceptionalism in not just sports but in other aspects of life. Moreover, they are assisted by Muslim organisations in the west, with support from western fellow-travellers, who rigorously campaign for Muslim women to express their religion in sporting activities. Indeed, it is fair to say that western governments and civil society at large – including feminist groups – have accepted the specious argument that unless Muslim women are granted exemptions with respect to sporting attire, they will not be able to participate. This flagrant accommodation to women’s oppression must be rejected along with the religious dogma that justifies the veiling of women and, ipso facto, second-class status given that boys and men are not required to veil themselves.

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The push for this exemption stemmed from the Women, Sports and the Challenge of Change conference held in 1994 in Brighton, UK that was attended by 280 delegates from 82 countries. As part of the Brighton

**How Islamism Perverted Olympism**

**Dr Rumy Hasan**


Since the Iranian revolution of 1979, and rule by an Islamic theocracy, women in all walks of life – including in sports – have been compelled to cover themselves from head to toe, a profoundly oppressive practice. Thereafter, other Muslim countries – albeit to varying degrees – followed suit. Whereas previously, women athletes from Muslim countries wore the standard outfit – usually shorts and t-shirts – this changed to hijabs and full leggings to ensure their “modesty”. The authors are forthright in their denunciation of this turn of events by asserting that “we must confront regimes that impose on women rules that are incompatible with the principles of equality and of non-discrimination set forth in the Olympic Charter. Otherwise, the risk is great of losing what is left of universal values on which Olympism was founded”.

The IOC had taken a principled stance in banning South Africa because of its policy of racial apartheid and the authors wish the same for countries such as Iran and Saudi Arabia on the grounds of gender apartheid. As writers and activists from France, they are campaigning and petitioning the IOC and the Paris organisers to firmly adhere to the Olympic Charter at the Paris Games scheduled for 2024. But they face an uphill struggle given the hitherto toleration shown by the IOC and other sporting bodies to the Islamic attire. Furthermore, they and their sympathizers are faced by the full might of Organisation of Islamic Cooperation countries who push for Islamic exceptionalism in not just sports but in other aspects of life. Moreover, they are assisted by Muslim organisations in the west, with support from western fellow-travellers, who rigorously campaign for Muslim women to express their religion in sporting activities. Indeed, it is fair to say that western governments and civil society at large – including feminist groups – have accepted the specious argument that unless Muslim women are granted exemptions with respect to sporting attire, they will not be able to participate. This flagrant accommodation to women’s oppression must be rejected along with the religious dogma that justifies the veiling of women and, ipso facto, second-class status given that boys and men are not required to veil themselves.

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The push for this exemption stemmed from the Women, Sports and the Challenge of Change conference held in 1994 in Brighton, UK that was attended by 280 delegates from 82 countries. As part of the Brighton...
Declaration, the following recommendation was provided:

Those responsible for sport ... should ensure that an equitable range of opportunities and learning experience, which accommodates the values, attitudes, and aspirations of girls, is incorporated in programmes to develop physical fitness and basic sport skills of young people.

At the Women, Sports and Islam workshop, led by Muslim countries, especially Iran, an explicit recommendation is made designed to overturn Rule 50(2) and similar rules by other sports federations:

Lobbying of relevant national and international sports organisations needs to take place regarding rules and regulations of international competitions so that these are inclusive rather than exclusive. This specially relates to dress where strict rules and regulations may exclude Muslim women.

The Islamist bandwagon designed to subvert the norms relating to sports attire had begun to roll in earnest and with considerable success given that very little resistance was provided. The next decisive step in this endeavour took place at a seminar organised by the Sultan Qaboos University in Oman with delegates from Muslim and western countries. A Declaration Accept and Respect was provided:

The culmination of this lobbying was that at the Women, Sports and Islam workshop, led by the Civitas Think Tank, London.

We urge international sport federations to show their commitment to inclusion (of Muslim women and girls) by ensuring that their dress codes for competition embrace Islamic requirements, taking into account the principles of propriety, safety and integrity.

The authors point out that this was the first explicit restriction of the freedom of sportswomen labelled as Muslim – and which the westerners endorsed. By so doing, they supported the most regressive theocratic regimes whose laws and policies degrade women. Indeed, the stance of westerners on not only this issue but in general when it comes to religious groups has been characterised by a robust cultural and moral relativism.

The culmination of this lobbying was that at the London 2012 games, 17 countries had women contestants in Islamic attire in clear breach of Rule 50(2); a great victory for Islamists and theocratic regimes. The die had been cast and pressure was applied to other sports federations and politicians to follow suit. Political success was garnered at the 5th World Conference of Ministers and High Ranking Officials of Physical Education and Sport held in Berlin in May 2013. This yielded the Berlin Declaration that stressed:

The importance of gender mainstreaming that is guided by the concepts of diversity, freedom of choice and empowerment when undertaking efforts to increase the participation of girls and women in and through sport ... to ensure, in accordance with national law, appropriate facilities, equipment and dress options taking into account both ability and cultural specificities, particularly for women and girls.

This was a factor in UNESCO changing its 1978 Charter where physical education and sport were characterised as the “universal language” to “the universal principles set out in the present Charter”. But the only new principle in the revised Charter is the reference to “cultural diversity” which directly contradicts universal language.

The organisations of the world’s most popular sport, football, also began to retreat from their hitherto universal principles. In 2014, the International Football Association Board (IFAB), which has the sole authority for the laws of the game, authorised the wearing of the hijab and turban in football. However, there was a gargantuan outcome of this rule change: in September 2015, Barney Henderson of The Daily Telegraph reported that eight (sic) of the Iranian women’s football team were men! Despite the fact that they play in hijabs, long-sleeved tops and tracksuit bottoms, this brazen deception could not be fully concealed.

The authors highlight the demeaning status of girls and women in Muslim-majority countries that have been at the forefront of demanding exemptions to the dress code in sports for women in international competitions – to replicate what they impose at home. This has given encouragement to Muslims in the west to do the same and with much success as, fearful of being charged with racism and Islamophobia, the authorities meekly succumb to their demands. Hence, with barely a murmur, the veiling of girls and women in sports activities has also become prevalent in western countries.

The authors also level a powerful charge against western academics in particular who thought they were being helpful to Muslim women by bowing to the demands of these dictatorships arguing that they bear a heavy responsibility in having contributed to putting aside the rule of neutrality, that is, universalism and equality, in sport.

If the Paris 2004 Games are to re-impose the Olympic Charter, then this will necessitate considerable and effective campaigning and persuasion. Doubtless Annie Sugier, Linda Weil-Curiel and Gerard Biard will be relentless in pursuing this principled – and truly progressive – stance. However, they will need support not only from allies in France but also in Europe and from across the world if they are to succeed. Their short book is excellent in drawing attention to this important yet neglected reality and ought to be followed up in the English-speaking world with similar interventions on the subject.

Dr Rumi Hasan is a senior lecturer at the University of Sussex and Visiting Professorial Research Fellow at the Civils Think Tank, London.
Response to Gavin Esler

David Simmonds

Gavin Esler writing in the article “Brexit Without the Bull” in the Winter 2020 Ethical Record (Vol 125 (1)) questions whether there are any EU laws at all which this country is forced to abide by against its will. There are many. I remember protesting many years ago against the cruel practice of exporting live lambs for slaughter in Europe. The Labour government wanted to ban the practice, but the EU said “No”. More recently Michael Gove, as Minister for Agriculture, expressed frustration at being prevented from imposing the ban.

I also remember a Labour government being told that the commercial growing of any GM crops, even proven safe ones, such as wheat, was not allowed under EU law. (In 2003 over 60% of British farmers said that they wanted to grow GM crops). Some years ago the government was prevented by the EU from scrapping the hated “tampon tax” (VAT on tampons) and also from scrapping VAT on domestic fuel. The ECJ also ruled that doctors sleeping in hospitals but being on call, had to be paid full time: which contributed a lot to staff shortages in the NHS.

The nationalisation of the train system would be an infringement of the EU’s “Fourth Railway Package” (2012), which now requires governments to open up train services to the markets. If Corbyn had become PM he would have found it extremely difficult to deliver on his pledge.

There are numerous other examples. Whether one agrees with some of these EU laws or not is beside the point. Many EU laws are good. But it should be up to our elected governments to decide, not a group of unelected bureaucrats. Even if we accepted these laws 20 or 40 years ago, does this mean that we must be stuck with them forever?

Mr Esler may be too young to remember Tony Benn’s texts of democracy. (He was pro Brexit till he died I believe). If people have power over you, you should ask them certain questions such as “who put you there? To whom are you accountable? How can I get rid of you” and so on. If the answers include: “I am accountable to no-one, and no you cannot get rid of me” then we have a problem with our democracy. I believe that the case for leaving the EU is stronger now than it was then, given the EU’s stated objective of increasing federalism. I love Europe, but love the rest of the world too – it is the EU that I’m not too fond of.

Mr Esler finds examples of dishonesty in the Brexit campaign, but this was easily balanced by the dishonesty on the anti-Brexit side. George Osborne said that he would have to tear up the Conservative manifesto promises with an emergency budget within weeks of a leave vote. Such a budget turned out not to be necessary. Many of the other Remain ‘experts’, including Mark Carney and George Soros, also prophesied with considerable publicity that the consequences of a leave vote would be dire and immediate. They were neither dire nor immediate.

I would argue that such prophesies of doom were not just mistaken, but dishonest. Economists surely knew that such predictions could not safely be made. The big lie on the Brexit side was the assertion on the side of a bus that £9 billion a year would be freed for the NHS. However, almost every time I turned on the radio or TV this lie was, quite rightly, being exposed for what it was.

Another argument used by the Remain side to block Brexit or to have a second referendum was that the electorate did not understand the ins and outs or the implications of Brexit. Many didn’t it is true. But the goalposts (accepted by almost everyone) were clearly laid down at the beginning, and after five months of campaigning and arguing, you cannot then tell the electorate: “you were too ignorant to know what you were voting for, and the result is therefore invalid”. This is more characteristic of dictatorships. The same applies to the other arguments, such as “the young were not properly represented”, “the Brexit majority was only a small one” etc. You cannot change the goalposts after the electorate have voted. Such a move would mean the result is therefore invalid: would be like accepting a referendums result if you had been told not to vote. Such a move would be quite wrong and invalid. This is more characteristic of dictatorships.

Of course there was dishonesty in the Brexit campaign, but this was easily balanced by the dishonesty on the anti-Brexit side. George Gable, a leaving the EU is stronger now than it was then, given the EU’s stated objective of increasing federalism. I love Europe, but love the rest of the world too – it is the EU that I’m not too fond of.

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The government’s promise at the time of the referendum was that the result would be respected, and that “there will not be another referendum”. The seeming determination of a majority of MPs to frustrate Brexit at every turn was then bringing Parliament into even greater disrepute than was already the case. A large majority of MPs had said that they would accept the result. The vote to trigger article 50 was won by a majority of 6:1. It was only when the Labour Party saw that it could make life extremely uncomfortable for the government that they decided to forget about their pledge. Is this an example of what Mr Esler refers to as “negation”? The main Liberal-Democrat slogan then became “Stop Brexit”, which for me made them neither liberal nor democratic. Surely the word “liberal” implies, in any democratic exercise, an acceptance of the result. When those who lose do not accept that they have lost, I think it sets a dangerous precedent.
### Sir Jonathan Miller

**1934–2019**

A man of far-ranging talents, Sir Jonathan Miller was best known as a theatre and opera director, actor, author, television presenter and humourist. He was also a medical doctor and would likely have become a leading neurologist, had he not risen to prominence for being part of the groundbreaking satirical show *Beyond the Fringe*, with Peter Cook, Dudley Moore and Alan Bennett.

He was born in 1934 into a Jewish family and grew up in St John's Wood, London. Interested in the biological sciences from an early age, he studied natural sciences and medicine at St John's College, Cambridge, and went on to train at University College London, qualifying as a medical doctor in 1959. For the next two years he worked as a hospital house officer, but began work on *Beyond the Fringe* in 1960 as one of the writers, performers and producers, launching his career in the world of arts and entertainment.

He worked on the show for two years, but left in 1962 following its move from the West End to Broadway, going on to become the editor and presenter of the BBC TV arts programme Monitor. He wrote, produced and directed a BBC film adaptation of Alice in Wonderland in 1966, and an adaptation of an M. R. James ghost story, *Whistle and I'll Come to You*, in 1968. In the 1970s he began directing and producing operas, and in the early 1980s he produced 12 Shakespeare plays for the BBC.

Miller was a committed atheist and humanist and sought to explore the history of atheist thinking and its positive impact on society, as well as the roots of his own atheism, leading him to write and present the television series *Atheism: A Rough History of Disbelief*, which aired on BBC Four in 2004. Additional conversations, debates and discussions from the series also later aired in a six-part series *The Atheism Tapes*.

As well as being President of the Rationalist Association and a patron of Humanists UK, Miller had ties with Conway Hall and took part in two Conway Memorial Lectures. He chaired the 1972 lecture on ‘Humanity and Animality’ along with Sir Edmund Leach, where Miller gave the introduction. The following year he gave the Conway Memorial Lecture on ‘The Uses of Pani’, chaired by Peter Cadogan. He was also interviewed in the library in 1993 as part of the events marking the foundation of South Place Ethical Society (now Conway Hall) in 1793, and in 1972 he chaired a debate on Darwinism.

Miller died on 27 November 2019 aged 85, after suffering from Alzheimer’s disease, and is survived by his wife, Rachel, and their children, Tom, William and Kate.

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#### FORTHCOMING EVENTS AT CONWAY HALL

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<td><em>‘The Secret is Out’ Exhibition</em></td>
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<td><strong>THINKING ON SUNDAY</strong></td>
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<td><em>Display It Like You Stole It: Museums and Ethics</em> Alice Proctor</td>
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<td>19 April</td>
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<td><em>Feminism, Interrupted: Disrupting Power</em> Lola Olufemi</td>
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<td><em>Murdoch: The Man Who Owns the Media</em> Tom Roberts</td>
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<td><strong>PARTNERSHIPS</strong></td>
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<td><em>International Bee Day</em></td>
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<td>14 June</td>
<td>Afternoon, TBC</td>
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<td>3 May</td>
<td>13:00–17:00</td>
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<td><em>Conway Hall &amp; Humanists UK: World Press Freedom Wikithon</em></td>
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<td>6 June</td>
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<td><em>United Strings of Europe Concert</em></td>
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<td><strong>TALKS</strong></td>
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<td>8 April</td>
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<td><em>Reweirding: The Alchemy of Us – How Humans and Matter Transformed One Another</em> Ainissa Ramirez</td>
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<td>20 Apr</td>
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<td><em>Ethical Matters: Split – Class Divides Uncovered</em> Ben Tippet</td>
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<td>18 May</td>
<td>19:30–21:00</td>
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<td><em>Ethical Matters: No Visible Bruises — What We Don’t Know about Domestic Violence can Kill Us</em> Rachel Louise Snyder</td>
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Events subject to alteration • For current information and tickets see conwayhall.org.uk

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<td>12th</td>
<td>6.30PM</td>
<td>Highgate Festival Musicians</td>
<td>Haydn - Sibelius - Beethoven</td>
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<td>Brahms - Schumann</td>
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<td>19th</td>
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<td>Robert Hugill • <strong>FREE PRE-CONCERT TALK</strong></td>
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<td>6.30PM</td>
<td>Maria Canyigueral &amp; Lana Trotovšek • Beethoven</td>
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<td>26th</td>
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<td>The Oriole Ensemble • <strong>FREE PRE-CONCERT TALK</strong></td>
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<td>Paolo Rinaldi • <strong>FREE PRE-CONCERT RECITAL</strong></td>
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<td>Noûs Quartet •WEBERN/BEETHOVEN</td>
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<td>9th</td>
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<td>Simon &amp; Raphael Wallfisch, Edward Rushton • Brahms - Schumann</td>
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<td>16th</td>
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<td>23rd</td>
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<td>Robert Hugill • <strong>FREE PRE-CONCERT TALK</strong></td>
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<td>6.30PM</td>
<td>Lydia Shelly &amp; Nicolas Stavy • Beethoven</td>
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<td>1st</td>
<td>6.30PM</td>
<td>Tippett Quartet &amp; Héloïse Werner • Ravel - Waley-Cohen - Debussy</td>
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<td>Poulenç - Debussy</td>
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<tr>
<td>8th</td>
<td>5.30PM</td>
<td>Royal College of Music Musicians • <strong>FREE PRE-CONCERT RECITAL</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6.30PM</td>
<td>Simon Callaghan &amp; Friends • Beethoven</td>
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<tr>
<td>15th</td>
<td>6.30PM</td>
<td>Solem Quartet • Brahms - Reeves - Beethoven</td>
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<tr>
<td>22nd</td>
<td>6.30PM</td>
<td>Phacelia Ensemble • Stravinsky - Mozart - Brahms</td>
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<td>29th</td>
<td>6.30PM</td>
<td>Ruisi Quartet • Britten - Mendelssohn - Webern - Beethoven</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>April</strong></td>
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<td>5th</td>
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<td>Robert Hugill • <strong>FREE PRE-CONCERT TALK</strong></td>
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<td>6.30PM</td>
<td>Trio Khnopff • Schumann - Brahms - Shostakovitch - Weinberg</td>
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<td>19th</td>
<td>6.30PM</td>
<td>Galliard Ensemble &amp; Simon Callaghan • Strauss - Thuille - Beethoven- Poulenc</td>
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<td>26th</td>
<td>6.30PM</td>
<td>Piatti Quartet • Beethoven</td>
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<td><strong>May</strong></td>
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<td>3rd</td>
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<td></td>
<td>6.30PM</td>
<td>Simon Callaghan &amp; Friends • Beethoven</td>
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<tr>
<td>10th</td>
<td>5.30PM</td>
<td>Robert Hugill • <strong>FREE PRE-CONCERT TALK</strong></td>
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<td>6.30PM</td>
<td>Robert Max • Bach</td>
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<td>17th</td>
<td>5.30PM</td>
<td>Royal College of Music Musicians • <strong>FREE PRE-CONCERT RECITAL</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6.30PM</td>
<td>Zoffany Ensemble • Schubert - Beethoven</td>
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<td>24th</td>
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<td>United Strings of Europe &amp; Simon Callaghan • Beethoven - Rodgman</td>
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<td>31st</td>
<td>6.30PM</td>
<td>Trio Sora • Haydn - Ravel - Mendelssohn</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>June</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>7th</td>
<td>6.30PM</td>
<td>Oculi Ensemble • Mozart - Webern - Brahms</td>
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