

JACK GIBBONS' 37th annual OXFORD SUMMER PIANO SERIES

July 10th to August 24th 2025

In partnership with



WADHAM
COLLEGE
UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD



8 concerts in Oxford's historic Holywell Music Room

"High spirited & historically informed" (New Yorker)

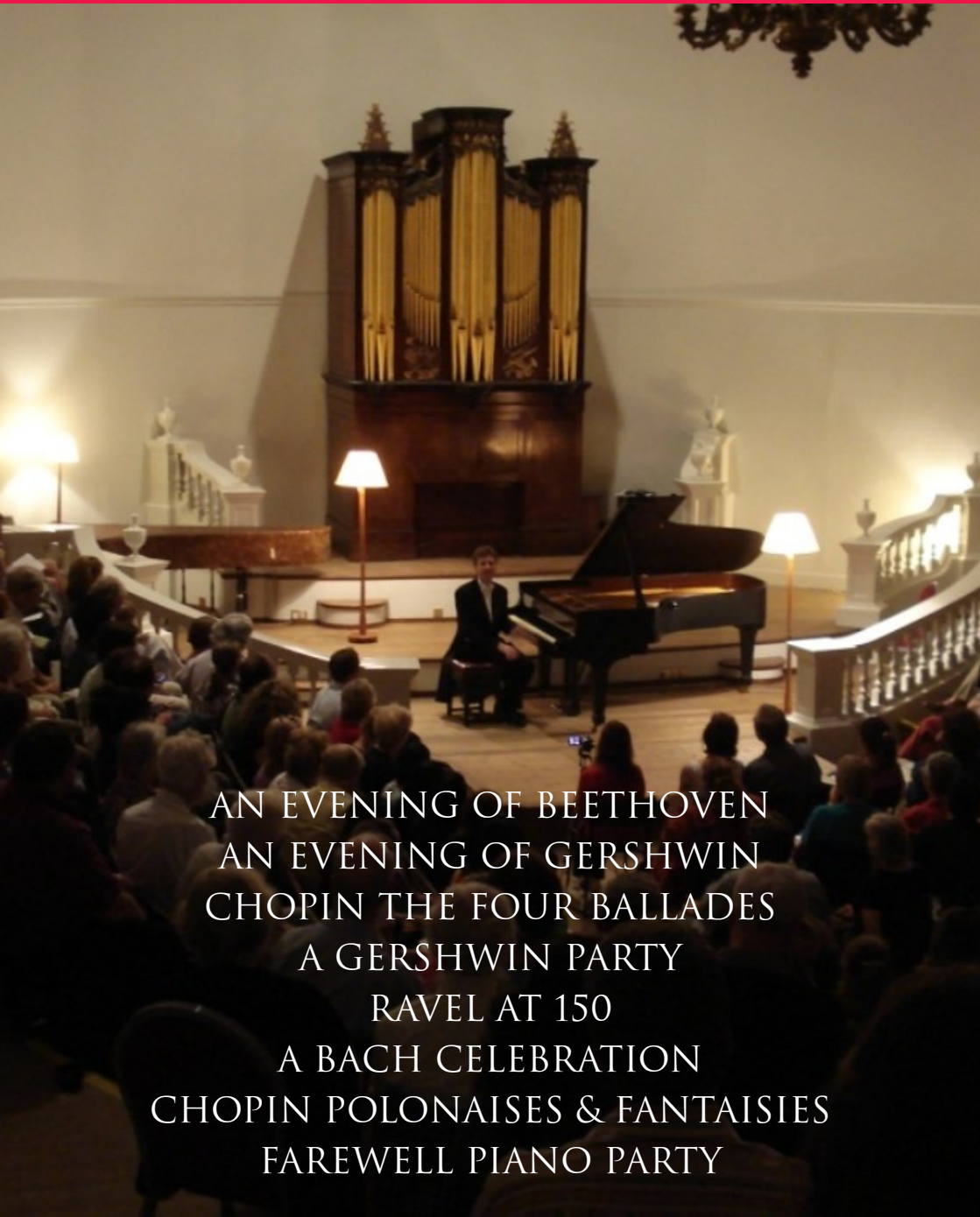
"One of this country's finest concert pianists" (Oxford Times)

"Jack Gibbons himself is a pianist of genius, with an endearing Jimmy Stewart-like awkwardness, a charming smile and about forty hands. His delight in and enthusiasm for the music is almost tangible in the haze of nervous energy that radiates from him." (Daily Information, Oxford)

See inside for full programme details and ticket information

“Jack Gibbons is an Oxford treasure”

OXFORD TIMES



AN EVENING OF BEETHOVEN
AN EVENING OF GERSHWIN
CHOPIN THE FOUR BALLADES
A GERSHWIN PARTY
RAVEL AT 150
A BACH CELEBRATION
CHOPIN POLONAISES & FANTAISIES
FAREWELL PIANO PARTY

The award-winning pianist and composer JACK GIBBONS has for over 40 years been performing regularly in the world's greatest concert halls, from New York's Carnegie Hall to London's Queen Elizabeth Hall. For many decades he has also been presenting his regular summer concerts at Oxford's intimate and historic Holywell Music Room. This year's special In Memoriam summer series offers one of his most personal collections of music.

CONCERT 1:

Thursday 10th July 2025 at 8PM

AN EVENING OF BEETHOVEN

BEETHOVEN *Pathétique Sonata*

BEETHOVEN *Moonlight Sonata*

BEETHOVEN *Appassionata Sonata*

BEETHOVEN *Sonata in E minor Op.90*

BEETHOVEN *Bagatelle in A minor ("Für Elise")*



By longstanding tradition Jack Gibbons opens his summer piano series with an all-Beethoven programme featuring four of Beethoven's most beloved piano sonatas.

"Gibbons' affinity with Beethoven's music is such that he transcends mere recital; rather, he becomes one with the composer, absorbing his moods and passions." (OXFORD TIMES)

CONCERT 2:

Sunday 13th July 2025 at 8PM

AN EVENING OF GERSHWIN

GERSHWIN *Rhapsody in Blue*

GERSHWIN *An American in Paris*

GERSHWIN *Concerto in F (slow movement)*

& Gershwin's own improvisations on

Fascinating Rhythm, The Man I Love, Swanee, etc.



Hailed by the BBC as *"THE Gershwin pianist of our time"*, Gibbons recreates the spectacular improvisations that made Gershwin's piano-playing legendary in the 1920s, as featured on Gibbons' award-winning *Authentic Gershwin* recording series.

"Gershwin does not come more exhilarating than this" (CLASSIC CD MAGAZINE)

CONCERT 3:

Wednesday 23rd July 2025 at 8PM

CHOPIN THE FOUR BALLADES

CHOPIN Ballade no.1 Op.23

CHOPIN Ballade no.2 Op.38

CHOPIN Ballade no.3 Op.47

CHOPIN Ballade no.4 Op.52

CHOPIN Nocturnes from Opp. 9 & 27

CHOPIN Mazurkas from Opp. 17 & 30



Chopin's immortal four Ballades interspersed with a selection of exquisite Nocturnes, Mazurkas, Waltzes and Etudes in an evening of Chopin's greatest masterpieces.

"Jack Gibbons is a unique phenomenon in the musical world of today. Thanks to his virtuosic skills Gibbons can hold an audience in thrall. His concert-giving style is equally attractive: before his performances he talks unassumingly but with great authority from the platform, drawing the listeners into a special relationship." (HUMPHREY BURTON CBE)

CONCERT 4:

Sunday 3rd August 2025 at 8PM

A GERSHWIN PARTY

GERSHWIN Rhapsody in Blue

GERSHWIN I Got Rhythm, 'S Wonderful, etc.

RACHMANINOFF Prelude in C# minor

RAVEL Pavane pour une infante défunte

SOUSA/HOROWITZ Stars and Stripes Forever

BERLIN Let's Face The Music and Dance

& music by PROKOFIEV, JOPLIN & GIBBONS



Gibbons, *"one of the world's greatest Gershwin exponents"* (Classic FM), plays a unique programme of meticulous authentic Gershwin creations, from I Got Rhythm to Rhapsody in Blue, interspersed with music by Gershwin's friends and contemporaries.

"This is music that requires verve, nerve, and Gibbons' enviable capacity to generate party atmosphere" (YORKSHIRE POST)

CONCERT 5:

Wednesday 6th August 2025 at 8PM

RAVEL AT 150

RAVEL Sonatine

RAVEL Oiseaux Tristes (Miroirs)

RAVEL Alborada del gracioso (Miroirs)

RAVEL Ma mère l'Oye (selection)

RAVEL Jeux d'eau

RAVEL Pavane pour une infante défunte

RAVEL Gaspard de la nuit



From the very beginning of his career Gibbons has received great acclaim for his Ravel interpretations. Tonight's special programme, celebrating the 150th anniversary of the composer's birth, includes some of Ravel's most evocative and inspired piano music.

"Jack Gibbons could be Britain's answer to Ivo Pogorelich. Gibbons's hyperactively poetic account of Ravel's Gaspard de la nuit - more considered, I felt, than Pogorelich's recorded performance - was yet both vivid and hypnotic" (THE TIMES, QEH LONDON DEBUT REVIEW, 1984)



CONCERT 6:

Sunday 10th August 2025 at 8PM

A BACH CELEBRATION

Goldberg Variations

Bach-Liszt Prelude & Fugue in A minor, BWV 543

Prelude & Fugue in E flat minor, BWV 853

Chorale Prelude: Ich ruf zu dir, Herr Jesu Christ

Largo from BWV 1056, Chaconne in D minor

A selection of uplifting keyboard works by the incomparable Johann Sebastian Bach, including the lively *Goldberg Variations* (with which Gibbons wowed critics and audience alike at his Queen Elizabeth Hall London debut in 1984) plus transcriptions by Liszt and Busoni. Gibbons will also offer a light-hearted lesson on how to write a fugue!

"Freshness of manner: His playing is absolutely convincing. Nothing was predictable in his account (without repeats) of Bach's Goldberg Variations, yet each and every detail made some musically valid point." (THE TIMES)

CONCERT 7:

Sunday 17th August 2025 at 8PM

CHOPIN POLONAISES & FANTAISIES

CHOPIN Fantaisie Op.49

CHOPIN Nocturne in C minor Op.48 no.1

CHOPIN Mazurka in A flat Op.59 no.2

CHOPIN Waltzes Opp.18 & 64 no.1

CHOPIN Preludes Op.28 nos.4 & 15

CHOPIN Polonaise in A flat Op.53

CHOPIN Fantaisie-Improptu Op.66 (posth.)

CHOPIN Etude in B minor Op.25 no.10

CHOPIN Berceuse Op.57

CHOPIN Polonaise-Fantaisie Op.61



Gibbons includes, for the first time in his longstanding summer series, Chopin's epic Polonaise-Fantaisie masterpiece, alongside the incomparable Fantaisie, 'Heroic' Polonaise and other iconic works.

"Extraordinary talent... Gibbons has a distinct and distinguished recreative gift and artistic personality, the most exciting pianist I have heard since John Ogdon" (DENIS MATTHEWS CBE)



CONCERT 8:

Sunday 24th August 2025 at 8PM

JACK GIBBONS' FAREWELL PIANO PARTY

Jack Gibbons concludes his 37th annual Summer Piano Series with his traditional end of summer mix of reminiscences and audience requests, including a selection of his own piano works, now available on his latest recording.

"Awe-inspiring" LONDON TIMES

"There is an immediacy, freshness and infectious sense of complete confidence that will certainly take your breath away... both moving and magical" (CD REVIEW MAGAZINE)

TICKET INFORMATION

Full price: £30 (available on the door)

Purchased in advance from Tickets Oxford: £23

Season ticket for all 8 concerts: £90

All seating in the Holywell Music Room is unreserved. Tickets purchased in advance will be held for collection from the concert hall box office before the concert(s)

TICKETS CAN BE PURCHASED AS FOLLOWS:

- **SEASON TICKETS ONLINE:**

Available exclusively from www.jackgibbons.com/oxfordconcerts.htm

- **INDIVIDUAL TICKETS ONLINE, BY PHONE OR IN PERSON:**

from TICKETS OXFORD (a transaction fee is applied to Tickets Oxford bookings)

Online: ticketsoxford.com/jack-gibbons-36th-annual-oxford-summer-piano-series

In person/by phone: Oxford Playhouse, Beaumont Street, Oxford/01865 305305

- **ON THE DOOR:**

Tickets on the door (full price only): £30 each

Full price tickets can be purchased (subject to availability) at the concert hall box office (Holywell Music Room, 34 Holywell Street, Oxford OX1 3SB) from 45 minutes before the start of each concert.

LOCATIONS

Holywell Music Room

34 Holywell Street, Oxford OX1 3SB

Tickets Oxford

Oxford Playhouse, Beaumont Street, Oxford (tel: 01865 305305)

For refreshment before and after the concerts

Turf Tavern public house (entrance opposite the Holywell Music Room)

4-5 Bath Place, Oxford, OX1 3SU (tel: 01865 243235)

Kings Arms public house (on the corner of Holywell Street & Broad Street)

40 Holywell Street, Oxford, OX1 3SP (tel :01865 242369)



HISTORICAL INFORMATION

The Holywell Music Room, built on the grounds of Wadham College, Oxford, has been described as "*the oldest custom-built concert hall in Europe*". Designed by amateur architect Thomas Camplin the building was funded by a public subscription established in 1742. It opened its doors to the public for the first time in 1748, its opening concert likely being a performance of Handel's oratorio *Esther* on 9 July 1748, possibly directed by the composer himself. The room continued as a concert venue throughout the eighteenth century. Due to the unruly behaviour of students attending the music room in its early days various rules had to be introduced, including a notice that dogs should not be brought to the concerts. The throwing of fruit was also banned when, in 1792, a member of the audience threw an orange at John Malchair (1739-1812), the leader of the building's resident orchestra, the Holywell Music Room Band. The orange destroyed Malchair's Cremona violin and after that Malchair (whose sight was failing) never led the band again. After 1836 the music room was used for a number of other events, including auctions and exhibitions. By the 1870s it was being used by the Oxford Philharmonic Society for its weekly rehearsals and in 1910 the Oxford University Musical Union obtained a lease on the building. The Holywell Music Room was restored and refitted in 1959-60, based on the building's original plans.

Composer and pianist JACK GIBBONS was born in 1962, began performing in public at the age of 10, made his London debut at the age of 17 (with an all-Alkan programme) and at 20 won First Prize in the Newport International Pianoforte Competition with a performance of Beethoven's Fourth Piano Concerto described by the renowned Beethoven scholar Denis Matthews as "*masterly*". His Queen Elizabeth Hall debut followed in 1984 with a programme of Bach (Goldberg Variations), Ravel (Gaspard de la nuit) and Chopin (Funeral March Sonata) which was described by the Times as "*monumental*". In 1990 Gibbons gave the first of what became for the next 16 years annual all-Gershwin programs at London's Queen Elizabeth Hall. In 1991 he was invited to New York to meet friends and relatives of Gershwin, including Gershwin's sister Frances Godowsky, and which led to his New York debut in 1994.

Gibbons' recording career began in 1992 with a debut on the Hyperion label that was nominated for a Gramophone award. In 1992 he also began his acclaimed recording series *The Authentic George Gershwin*, a 4 hour collection of never before recorded original Gershwin described by the distinguished Gershwin biographer Edward Jablonski as "*a remarkable recreation of Gershwin's unique keyboard style*". In 1995 Gibbons made the first digital recording of Alkan's epic *Douze Études dans les tons mineurs* Op.39, which Gramophone described as "*among the most exhilarating feats of pianism I've heard on disc*", at the same time performing the set complete in historic recitals in Oxford and London. Gibbons has remained committed to promoting the extraordinary music of Chopin's contemporary Charles-Valentin Alkan, having premiered many of the composer's works in the US. In 2007 Gibbons gave the Carnegie Hall premiere of Alkan's gargantuan Concerto for Solo Piano, and in 2013 performed the complete *Douze Études dans les tons mineurs* for the bicentenary of the composer's birth in historic recitals in New York and Oxford.

In recognition of his developing career as a composer Gibbons was in 2010 appointed artist-in-residence at Davis & Elkins College, located deep in the scenic Appalachian Mountains of West Virginia. After childhood successes as a composer Gibbons had returned to composing in 2001 (after a gap of 25 years) while convalescing from a life threatening car accident. His music has since been performed at major venues in the US and the UK, and recorded by various networks including the BBC. Gibbons' music to date includes over 50 songs and choral works, 50 solo piano works, and two works for string orchestra. In November 2023 Gibbons became a U.S. citizen. For more information visit www.jackgibbons.com