



NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2026

Reshaping the classical music experience: BETTINA VARWIG, Fellow and Director of Studies in Music

Bettina Varwig (2017), Fellow and Director of Studies in Music, is reshaping our understanding of how classical music is experienced. Through her research into the early modern period, she has revived a forgotten conception of music: not merely as something we hear, but also as a deeply physical experience, felt throughout the entire body.

Her work explores remarkable 17th- and 18th-century accounts describing sounds that could supposedly 'contract the innards', 'pierce the brain' and even melt earwax. These vivid descriptions offer a fascinating insight into the world of Johann Sebastian Bach, where music was experienced physically as well as emotionally.

In collaboration with musicians from the Royal Academy of Music, Professor Varwig has brought these historical ideas vividly to life through a series of innovative performances in Cambridge and London. Blending scholarship with artistic experimentation, these events have encouraged professional musicians, students and first-time concert-goers alike to experience music in a more immediate, immersive and embodied way, reconnecting audiences with a richer tradition of listening that engages both mind and body.



MUSIC IN THE FLESH

Bettina Varwig (2017) pictured during workshop held at the Royal Academy of Music

A film accompanying the project showcases *Music in the Flesh*, which follows a pioneering workshop on Bach's *St John Passion* held at the Royal Academy of Music, in which musicians play without a conductor and are encouraged to engage with the music and each other far more physically and freely than they are used to.

PUTTING ON THE RITZ – *The Emma May Ball 2026*



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The sun rises over the Paddock at the Emma May Ball

This year's May Ball was held in record-breaking heat over the summer solstice weekend. The college was transformed into a dazzling celebration titled *Putting on the Ritz*. Students, Fellows and members wandered through gardens decorated with period masks and ephemera, enjoying fairground rides and carnival games inspired by the Roaring Twenties. An elegant art deco dome hosted live bands late into the night, while a vintage helter skelter towered over the library.

The May Ball committee worked tirelessly to make this year's event a memorable success.

SPORTING SUCCESS AT HOME AND ABROAD



The Emma Mixed Lacrosse team continued its remarkable run of success, securing the Cuppers Championship for a third consecutive year.

Jack Lipman (2023), Captain of the Cambridge University Athletics Club, represented Cambridge athletics on the international stage, travelling to Philadelphia for the renowned Penn Relays.

Emma Mixed Lacrosse Team win the Cuppers Championship; far right Jack Lipman (2023) heading to the USA for the Penn Relays with the Cambridge University Athletics Club

Recognition for a Pentathlon Champion

Anna Basford (2022), has received the ‘Unsung Hero’ award at the University of Cambridge Sports Awards in June, recognising her contributions to sport in Cambridge.

The award celebrates Anna’s significant input to modern pentathlon at Cambridge, where her impact extends far beyond competition. From coordinating logistics and transport to delivering fencing and shooting coaching to her peers, Anna’s tireless efforts have been instrumental in supporting athletes and ensuring events run smoothly. She has also played a leading role in organising four Varsity and BUCS [British Universities & Colleges Sport] competitions, creating valuable opportunities for student athletes to compete and develop.

Anna’s own sporting achievements have been equally impressive. In the 2026 Cambridge University Modern Pentathlon Club Varsity Match, she won the Individual Women’s trophy, capping a remarkable year of success. Looking ahead, Anna has also secured a lasting legacy for the sport by obtaining funding for a permanent obstacle rig, helping support athletes and facilitate the transition to the new modern pentathlon format for years to come.



‘Unsung Hero’ award winner Anna Basford (2022) presented by Dr Victoria Harvey (Murray Edwards)

Members gather for a spectacular summer Garden Party

Nearly 300 members and their families enjoyed a sunny, and blissfully breezy, afternoon at a garden party in July. Pimm’s, afternoon tea, lawn games, music from *Emma Jazz* and talks by James Fox (2001) and Ellie Cannon (1995) were enjoyed, and many took the opportunity to cool off in the pool.



Emma Jazz entertaining members in the Fellows’ Garden

New professorships for Emma Fellows

The General Board has recommended that, with effect from 1 October 2026, professorships be established for each of the following Emma Fellows:

- **Professor David Collins (2024)** assigned to the Department of Materials Science and Metallurgy.
- **Professor Robert Jack (1996)**, assigned to the Department of Chemistry and the Department of Applied Maths and Theoretical Physics.
- **Professor Dominique Lauga (2015)**, assigned to Cambridge Judge Business School.

Emmanuel Fellows recognised in University of Cambridge Research Culture celebration



Juliet Usher-Smith (1998), Director of Studies for Clinical Medicine and Ioanna Mela (2010), Fellow in Medicine and Natural Sciences, were recently recognised for their contributions to building and sustaining a positive research culture at the University of Cambridge.



Psychology PhD student Nathaniel Farndale Wright (2024) was also featured in the 118 colleagues from across a wide range of disciplines, career stages and professional roles who were honoured in the University's Research Culture Celebration.



Juliet Usher-Smith (1998); Ioanna Mela (2010); Nathaniel Farndale Wright (2024)

NEWS FROM THE BOATHOUSE: May Bumps

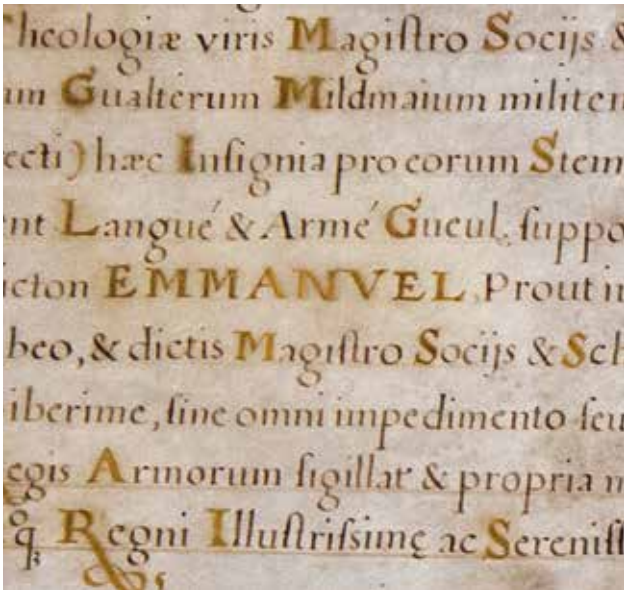
Report by Pete Twitchett, Boatman:

'The Mays this year saw Emmanuel fielding eight boats in the Bumping Races: four Women's and four Open Eights. The Men's First Boat maintained their position at 4th on the river, though the Women's First Boat is unfortunately down to 8th. The rest of the boats had mixed fortunes, but everyone had a great time enjoying some lovely weather and getting a break from exam stresses. With 70 students participating, rowing still remains the most active sports club in college. Next year the Boat Club will celebrate its 200th anniversary, with details of various functions planned will follow later in the year.'



May Bumps: W4 and M3

A-Z from the Archives



The Grant of Arms, E is for Emmanuel in the Members' Blog *An A-Z of Emma Snippets* from College Archivist, Amanda Goode

In March 2024, College Archivist Amanda Goode launched *An A-Z of Emma Snippets*, a series of blogs for our members, shared in the *Emma Connects* email newsletter. Over the next 26 months, Amanda has guided readers on a fascinating alphabetical journey through the college archives, uncovering stories, characters and objects that have shaped Emma's rich history.

The series began with Acorn, exploring the legacy of our founder, Sir Walter Mildmay, and concluded with Zumpiano, highlighting the rare English-made square piano housed in the Queen's Building. Along the way, readers encountered a remarkable range of subjects, from *Doctor Who*, when Front Court was transformed for BBC filming and played host to an incognito Time Lord, to Henry VIII, whose break with Rome paved the way for Protestant reformers which ultimately led to Sir Walter's acquisition of the college site, following the Dissolution of the Monasteries and the departure of the Dominican order.

Other highlights included JCR, recounting the opening of the undergraduate bar in 1955. Although initially governed by strict rules, its attic location above the Old Library meant it struggled to attract regular custom. At W, for Westmorland, readers discovered the history of one of Front Court's distinctive buildings.

We hope you enjoy revisiting these wonderful stories and insights into college life and history as you explore the series in its entirety.

Revisit the A-Z of Emma Snippets on the members' blog – <https://apps.emma.cam.ac.uk/members/blog>

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Emmanuel Society London Drinks

Tuesday 15 September 2026, 6pm, Bunghole Cellars, Davy's at Holborn, 57 High Holborn, WC1V 6DT

You are warmly invited to our next London Drinks event. This is a great opportunity for networking and a chance to catch up with fellow Emma members from across the subjects and years.

Curator's Tour of Modern Art Oxford

Friday 6 November 2026, 5.15pm, Modern Art Oxford, 30 Pembroke Street, Oxford, OX1 1BP

Members are invited to a curator-led tour of Modern Art Oxford's major autumn exhibition, also marking the gallery's 60th anniversary and artist Mike Nelson's first return to the gallery since 2004. Refreshments in the museum café are included.

A visit to the Institute of Astronomy

Saturday 14 November 2026, 4.45pm, Institute of Astronomy, Madingley Road, Cambridge, CB3 0HA

A special guided visit to Cambridge's Institute of Astronomy returns this year, featuring Paul Fellows (1979), Chair of the Cambridge Astronomical Association. Enjoy a tour of the historic telescopes and buildings, plus Paul's talk on discovering planets beyond our solar system.

Ely Book Talk and Tea with Charles Moseley

Friday 27 November 2026, 12.00pm, Ely Museum, The Old Gaol, Market Street, Ely, CB7 4LS

Join us for an afternoon of stories, history and tea in the city of Ely with Charles Moseley. Spend the afternoon with Charles and Emma members, discovering the story of Hereward the Wake – the subject of Charles's new book – in the city that was his base of resistance and enjoy a sumptuous afternoon tea in the famous cathedral.

Advent Carol Service at St. Pancras Church

Wednesday 9 December 2026, 6.30pm, Euston Road, London, NW1 2BA

Members, students, families and friends are invited to the annual College and Society Advent Carol Service at London's St Pancras Church. Welcome the festive season with the Emmanuel College Chapel Choir, followed by refreshments.

Future Gatherings of Members

(dates in brackets refer to the year of matriculation):

- September 2026 (2003, 2004, 2005)
- April 2027 (1995, 1996 & 1997)
- September 2027 (1987, 1988 & 1989)
- March 2028 (1979, 1980 & 1981)
- September 2028 (1966 and all years before)

Visit emma.cam.ac.uk/members/events for all events



Careers Database

Join more than 900 members by adding or updating your entry to the Emmanuel Careers Database.

Do sign up even if you graduated relatively recently, as advice on applications, surviving interviews and getting started in a new job can all be really valuable.

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