



If 2009 was a year of particular financial instability, 2010 also had its fair share of unpredictability, in large part due to natural causes. With its usual tenacity, however, not to mention some good luck, EUCO played on. It performed in nine European countries and also made a very successful tour of South America.

In Europe the Orchestra was in the UK, Spain, Italy, Ireland, Sweden, the Baltic States, Germany and Turkey, offering a platform to young soloists as well as to well-known international artists and performing a very wide repertoire.

A highlight for the strings was a live-broadcast on BBC Radio 3 in July, during a tour of concerts with Nicola Benedetti and for the wood-wind players, an invitation to the Festival of Uzerche in the Limousin resulted in a triumphant performance of classical wind music.



EUCO wind players outside the Abbatiale de Saint Pierre of Uzerche

WINTER IN THE UK / SPRING IN SPAIN

EUCO's February tour included, as usual, major concert halls in the UK such as Reading's Hexagon, the Warwick Arts Centre and St. George's Hall in Bristol where it is a firm favourite. Zoltan Tuska directed a variety of programmes, each including the much-loved Serenade for strings of Dvorak. The Orchestra welcomed back John Lill as soloist for a Mozart piano concerto and also Freddy Kempf, together with Katya Lämmermann, for Mendelssohn's youthful and rarely performed concerto for violin and piano. The tour also included a performance of Glazunov's saxophone concerto with prize-winning Hanna Marcinovicz and one of Shostakovich's Prelude & Scherzo, both works never before performed by EUCO.

The UK concerts were immediately followed by concerts in three new and wonderful halls in Eastern Spain, the well-known Palau de la Musica in Valencia and the Auditori of Castellón and Zaragoza.

APRIL ADVENTURES AND SIR JAMES AGAIN

The Orchestra's concert in Forli in April 2009 was interrupted by an earthquake and just a year later volcanic ash caused its problems. It had a devastating impact across Europe, settling in just after EUCO string players had reached Naples for the tour rehearsals. Three of the four wind players could not reach Naples, so replacements were found locally. Happily all went well and the charisma of French violinist, Gilles Apap performing Mozart, and a series of encores, ensured that the concert in the Auditorio Castel Sant'Elmo was a big success.

The musicians next headed north by train to Milan to perform in the celebrated Sala Verdi, now with the Dutch oboists who had managed to get there on a night train from Holland. An almost complete EUCO was joined by Sir James and Lady Galway for three concerts which included both the Cimarosa Concerto for Two flutes and the Mozart Concerto in D major. As always the Galways worked their magic, not only in Milan but also in Brunico, high up in the Dolomites, and Udine on the Slovenian border.

From Italy, EUCO was due to fly to the UK for a concert in Leeds and there was great concern at the prospect of having to make the trip overland, and much time spent trying to arrange it. By a miracle however, the authorities opened the skies just the evening before EUCO was scheduled to fly. Without even a delay EUCO players sped through Verona airport on their way to Leeds, where 2000 people were waiting for the Mozart's clarinet concerto, performed by erstwhile BBC young musician, Emma Johnson.

Matthias Wollong directed a further five concerts, each night with a different soloist and the tour concluded with a performance of Haydn's St. Nicholas Mass with the Choir of University College, Dublin, conducted by Desmond Earley. Irish soprano Sharon Carty sang Mozart's Exultate Jubilate at this same concert.



Gilles Apap

NEW SEASONS IN MAY

Touring does not always run as smoothly as one hopes and the next problem was caused by British Airways cabin crew, whose strike began the same day as the EUCO tour. New tickets on other airlines had to be purchased on different routes, but rehearsals did start more or less on schedule due to diligent, time-consuming work by the management team.

At the prestigious Newbury and Salisbury Festivals, Sir Andrew Motion, the former Poet Laureate, read the new sonnets which he had been commissioned to write by EUCO. Few people know that Vivaldi based his masterpiece, the Four Seasons, on sonnets probably written by himself to be read before each concerto. This was therefore a sophisticated cross-over project. During the Orchestra's tour in July, Sir Andrew also read them at some of the Orchestra's concerts.

Alexander Sitkovetzky joined EUCO as soloist in Newbury and EUCO director, Hans-Peter Hofmann was the soloist in Salisbury and some other venues. Both were warmly received for their very different interpretations of the Seasons. At the concert in Honiton, it was Natalie Clein's turn to play Vivaldi and there was also the chance for EUCO cellist, Eva Freitag, to partner her in Vivaldi's concerto in G minor for Two Cellos. The orchestra also crossed over to Waterford in Southern Ireland, to play a concert in Christchurch Cathedral and continue its relationship with the Symphony Club there.



Alexander Sitkovetzky

BACK TO THE BALTIC IN MID-JULY

While a heat-wave may not be a natural disaster, it was extremely unwelcome for the people of the Baltic States whose infra-structure is not prepared for humidity Asian-style. Hotel rooms topped 40 degrees, although the Estonian churches at Tartu and Viljandri where EUCO performed were pleasantly cool. The soloist, Alphorn player Carlo Torlontona, nonetheless felt he had not left Italy.

Following a long bus trip across Latvia, the Orchestra was warmly welcomed to Lithuania in Kaunas, it's former capital for a concert in the Filharmonic Hall, arranged by the Pazaislio Festival of Music. Here the programme included Bach's concerto for two violins with the Hungarian director, Zoltan Tuska and Finnish violinist, Laura Rajanen.

MOZART AND SALIERI IN THE LIMOUSIN

EUCO's wind players are always proud to show off their talents although rarely in the limelight and were delighted to be invited to Uzerche in central France. Making up the Octet to perform in the beautiful Abbaye were players from Holland, Italy, the UK Denmark and Germany. Their spectacular performance of Mozart and Salieri, Beethoven and Schubert ensured a return visit to the 2011 Festival for EUCO strings.



Carlo Torlontona



Alina Ibramigova

EVENINGS OF NORDIC FESTIVALS

EUCO first performed in Båstad on Sweden's western coast in 2002, when the legendary soprano Birgit Nilsson was Patron of the Festival. It was a welcome return invitation and an inspiring place to rehearse one of the major works for chamber orchestra, Tchaikovsky's *Souvenir de Florence*. The first concert of the tour was held in the beautiful Mariakyrkan with EUCO director, Hans-Peter Hofmann as soloist in Vivaldi's *Four Seasons*.

The tour continued to England for a further nine concerts, three of them in the wonderful cathedrals of Chichester, Lichfield and Chester and five with Nicola Benedetti as soloist in the *Seasons*. In a beautiful church in Deal on the south coast, Rumanian violinist, Vlad Maisterovici premiered his own new work for violin and strings and two days later he was with EUCO in the church at Thaxted for a performance of Mendelssohn's violin concerto in D minor.

In Cheltenham Town Hall, for the eponymous Festival, the young Russian violinist Alina Ibramigova was the soloist for the *Four Seasons*, a concert which the BBC broadcast Live.

"BEST CONCERT OF THE YEAR"
votes Chilean Circle of Critics

Since EUCO toured S.E. Asia in November 2005, assisted by the British Council, intercontinental travel has been rare. The anticipation among players for a South America tour of four countries was therefore extreme. Coordinated in Buenos Aires, it began with two concerts in Santiago de Chile. The Orchestra's first concert there, held in the Teatro de las Artes, has since been voted the Best Concert of 2010 by the Chilean Circle of Critics. Clearly the long travel via Madrid, and some extra delays, did not dampen players' spirits.

An unexpected problem arose because Brazil's system for issuing visas had apparently changed a month before the Orchestra left Europe and it was suddenly not possible to collect visas at European Consulates. While rehearsals took place near Heathrow airport, EUCO management spent the weekend typing information for 18 individuals onto the new website. On arrival in Chile, players had IMMEDIATELY to visit the Brazilian Embassy in Santiago and thus had no time to relax before work began. Two days later they flew to Sao Paolo, and gave one concert in the spectacular new concert hall at Paulinia. From eastern Brazil they crossed back to the Pacific coast for two concerts in Lima in the Auditorio Santa Ursula. The Head of the EU Delegation to Peru, Hans Allden, invited the Orchestra to a post concert reception. As EUCO has already, over the years, performed six times in Lima, the event was an appropriate gesture. The last country on the 2011 tour was Argentina, and after a touristic exploration of Buenos Aires, the Orchestra performed in Rosario, the bustling city about four hours drive from the capital.

The principal soloist was star British cellist, Natalie Clein but in the second half of the concert programmes, it was possible to show-case EUCO wind players, oboist Arco van Zon and hornist Mark Paine who played respectively Cherubini's *Sonatas for Cor Anglais* and Glazunov's *Idyll for Horn*. At the second concert in Lima, EUCO's German cellist Eva Freitag again partnered Natalie in Vivaldi's concerto for Two Cellos.



Natalie Clein



Eva Freitag

EUCO ENLIVENS QUIET CITIES

Matthias Wollong was back in the UK with EUCO, now also as its soloist with two different Mozart Violin concertos for four of five concerts. The performance in the peaceful city of Malvern included also Copland's *Quiet City*, and everyone welcomed Crispian Steele Perkins as a perfect trumpet soloist for this piece. After a concert in Kings Lynn with a young prize-winning flute and harp duo, the Orchestra continued to Steinhagen in north-western Germany. Here, Marcin Zdunik, the really exceptional young Polish cellist, was back with the Orchestra to perform Haydn's C major concerto.

FIRE AND DE FALLA IN HIS HOME

In November 2008, former EUCO director Gernot Süssmuth led several days of classes at the University of Granada and students had augmented the EUCO strings in the first piece of their concert. It was possible to repeat the project, indeed even to include new elements. Several players gave lessons to students in the Conservatorio and the full orchestra rehearsed for an important concert in Granada's newly refurbished Auditorio Manuel de Falla. The programme began with a Mozart Divertimento with some of the students playing alongside EUCO players and continued with Mozart flute concerto in D major with Turkish flutist, Şefika Kutluer, as guest soloist.



Şefika Kutluer



EUCO principals and Miguel Angel Laiz perform de Falla in Granada's Auditorio Manuel de Falla

To celebrate the reopening of the Granada's beautiful Auditorio EUCO was happy to include a well-known piece by the city's most famous composer. Five EUCO players joined pianist Miguel Angel Laiz to perform de Falla's own arrangement for Sextet of El Amor Brujo at the start of the second half of the concert which then concluded with Haydn's Fire Symphony. Violinist, Wojciech Garbowski made his debut as EUCO director.

HIGH NOTES FOR 2011

MARCH

UK tour with Nikolai Demidenko and project with Galeri Arts Centre

APRIL

Concert in Treviso with the Rostropovich Competition winner, Enrico Dindo

APRIL

Nicola Benedetti directs two EUCO concerts

JULY

Summer Festivals, including Kings Lynn

AUGUST

Uzerche in France - Matthias Wollong performs Vivaldi's Four Seasons

OCTOBER

Soignies in Belgium - Yossif Ivanov playing Mozart

NOVEMBER

Spain with Nicola Benedetti as soloist



Nikolai Demidenko



Yossif Ivanov



Nicola Benedetti

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