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www.lyre-of-ur.com

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LYRE OF UR NEWS

October 2005

www.lyre-of-ur.com



Gold Lyre of Ur Baghdad Museum (BM)

LATEST NEWS FOR
ALL OUR
SUPPORTERS
AROUND THE
WORLD HELPING US
WITH OUR PROJECT:

***To recreate a playable
version of the
Gold Lyre of Ur***



THE Lyre Of Ur Project at...
"LIVE 8 At the Eden Project"

picture J Sturdy

A telephone call came from the LIVE AID "Africa Calling" team in July ... "Would you allow the GOLD LYRE OF UR to be used during the Eden concert?"

Mr Ayub Ogada from Kenya had been invited by Peter Gabriel to perform at the Concert !!

Honoured to be part of a worldwide initiative to "Make Poverty History", we drove to Cornwall, and thanks to the Womad crew were part of the event.

Televised by all major TV networks and relayed live to all the other simultaneous world events !

It was a great moment to see the Gold Lyre of Ur being played amongst great musicians, and to play a small part in fulfilling the humanitarian aims of both of these projects.



Photo J sturdy

Playing at “LIVE 8” Eden

LIVE 8 Africa calling was a daylong event of African music and all started off by Ayub and his band UNO.

Also there was Dido and Youssou N'Dour and his amazingly diverse African bands.

Ayub's backing singers were three of his Kenyan community: dancers and singers of the Luo people.

These people, Ayub says, tell that they came from Lower Egypt many, many, generations ago. Some say they lived even in the Middle East for a time.

Could this be possible?

It is an intriguing idea and perhaps true. They still play LYRES today.



The necklace of one of the ladies is shown above **“This necklace is Luo...”** she told us.

Yet it is the same style, with the same leaves, as that on Queen Pu Abi's head (shown here below) worn 4,550 years ago!



Lady Pu-Abi's Gold jewellery (British Museum)

Thanks....

to Liverpool University media relations department! They know their job!

“The use of lasers in high quality shell cutting for an ancient musical instrument”

*was the title of their paper presented to a Venice symposium recently. And picked up by the **Press Association** who represent much of the world's press.*

This agency immediately interviewed us and..... we have been inundated with interest as a result.

*On our way by plane to Austria to stay with harpists, we read about ourselves in the **The Times**. We were even interviewed by a major world magazine whilst picnicking in the Alps!*

.....And

We came back to a live interview with the famous **JOHN HUMPHRYS** of the **BBC Radio 4 "Today Programme"**.
To 3.5 million listeners !



BBC TV Centre Today Programme Studios
Photo by Jennifer Sturdy

Ayub played live in the studio with us and Andy talked to the "very interested" Mr Humphrys and Carolyn Quinn.

Thanks to Ayub Ogada who got up at 5 am to help the programme by playing live on air.

**BBC WORLD SERVICE
PRESENTER....
BECOMES A HARPIST!**

Our Edinburgh Harp Festival presentation was recorded live for the **BBC World Service** who broadcast it worldwide.

Fiona Clampin, journalist, spent a whole day with us and then another day recording music.

Fiona is a fine musician herself and after all her work we kidnapped her to insist that we give her her own first harp lesson!



Fiona Clampin of the BBC World Service playing harp!
Picture Sheila Colby

Our World Service Broadcast covered all the story of the Lyre Project. It put together a fine programme with all aspects of the ideas covered. Even interviews at the **Edinburgh International Harp Festival** of the audience feedback were broadcast along with extracts by various members of the team.

Jennifer Sturdy's imaginary account of the last moments of a dying musician was an emotional climax made against the backdrop of the backlit Lyre. Several of the audience were in tears, empathising with the last player's love of music set against their own love of music, even today 5,000 years later.

We appreciate once again the use of **Birds in Winter Prelude 4** by **Michael Mauldin** who gave us express use of this piece for our presentation.

A marvellous short mystical piece that says more than words possibly can. Michael lives in Albuquerque New Mexico and is well known as a top-flight composer.



**Presentation at Edinburgh Harp Festival
April 4th 2005**

KIND THANKS to **Ronnie Baker** owner of the famous glass supplier in Peterborough UK, who donated a complete glass exhibition case (see above) for the Lyre.

Laminated and normally costing over £500 it shows the Lyre of Ur to perfection.

Bands of Gold

The Bands of Gold decoration on the arms of the Lyre have been laid on by **Royal Goldsmith**, Alan Evans.

This took almost three weeks of full time work and required careful cutting out of the templates, firstly on paper and then in GOLD. It was done using gold sheet and nailed in place using hand- made nails of silver.

Absolutely authentic, as was done over 4,000 years ago.

The finished bands of gold were given a strong and secure base of hot melted BITUMEN. Doubtful at first about this, Alan afterwards felt it was perfectly appropriate and he was very happy with the result.

“Using bitumen is really very easy. “ he said, ***“it is sometimes still used today as a bed, usually on larger items such as brass Inscribed memorial plates inset into floors.***

This is the first time I’ve used HITT (Iraqi) bitumen. I’ve always used Swedish natural bitumen before”, said Alan, who donated his time.



Alan is part of Simon Benny’s company of Gold and Silversmiths who work amongst others for HRH Prince Charles and he is hugely respected amongst craftsmen in Europe.

Bitumen was obtained for us by Dr Lamia Al Gailani of the Baghdad Museum and carried overland via Kuwait and Abu Dhabi before being sent (in 17 plastic bags because of the smell!) to us here in UK. Thanks to Ayad Abbas in ADMA Abu Dhabi.

BBC Radio 3 The Early Music Show

In July, Steve Portnoi from BBC Radio 3 came to interview Andy, Ayub Ogada and Tara Jaff, and to record some music. The three speakers all spoke about the project from a slightly different angle: Andy tracing the progress of the actual building of the

instrument, Ayub talking about his perception of the links between the ancient Sumerian lyre and the present day East African lyres, and Tara reminiscing about visiting the Baghdad Museum as a child, where the lyre made a lasting impression on her. Then the high spot of the broadcast when the lyre was actually played! One of the current debates is of course, how was it tuned and what music was played? There is endless speculation, even in the most academic circles, but interestingly, the lyre stays best in tune when in the pentatonic mode, which is what Ayub is familiar with in Africa today.

Ayub improvised on the lyre, and then Tara joined in, hastily re-tuning her harp to the same scale. This was an intensely moving and significant moment, to hear the meeting of two cultures, two styles, in the exciting and dynamic combination of the lyre and the harp.

There is an audio link on the website to Ayub playing at the **Live8 concert at the Eden Project.**

Click on and experience the unusual sound of this ancient lyre!



Photo by Keith Jobling

Tara Jaff



Photo by Keith Jobling

Gold Bull's Head

Gold Bull's Head Work at West Dean College Sussex completed!

Daniel Huff worked under Tony Beentjes in the Department of Fine Metalwork at West Dean to create the Bull's Head



Goldsmith Daniel Huff part Of West Dean College who spent months creating the Bull's Head shown here at the hand over ceremony. (Picture Keigh Jobling)

Firstly working over a carved wooden core made by Roger Rose, Daniel laid on the sheet metal. Eyes were carved out of lapis lazuli within a white mother of pearl shell "eyeball".

The Bull's head is a fine and authentic reproduction of the 1960 reproduction held in the British Museum made available to us by the BM.

He carefully recorded details of his work and said, memorably, that the work rather than getting easier as it progressed actually "got harder!"

Many nights were spent thinking about solutions. Thanks once again to **AngloGold Ashanti** who donated the gold sheet to the Project backing the use of gold today. A material that is truly ageless, as valued back then as now.

Daniel's work log will appear on our website: www.lyre-of-ur.com

Bull's Head before assembly



A huge `thank you` to the staff and students at West Dean College of Art. An amazing work of art.

THANKS to **Euro-MP Chris Heaton-Harris** who has donated personal funds to the project.
Great news!

MEDIA COVERAGE

BBC

You can hear the sound of the Lyre of Ur being played on our website www.lyre-of-ur.com

Lyre of Ur's BBC Radio 3 "Early Music" programme was "**PICK OF THE DAY**" in **The Sunday Times** newspaper 28 Aug 05

Venues: -

The British Academy jointly with **Story telling group `Zipang`** invited the Lyre of Ur to be displayed and played in June to a packed invited audience mainly from the **British School of Archaeology in Iraq**.

We were part of an evening of stories from Sumeria held in the packed academy at Carlton Gardens London.

We have been invited to Berlin to give our second paper about the Lyre Project and its music, to the German School of Archaeology next year.

This time they have invited musicians to be part of the event and they say they are looking forward to hearing what we do.

We have been approached by congresses in **Madrid (Spain)** and **Ghent (Belgium)** who would like us to show the Lyre of Ur and make a presentation there.

Plans are already in hand to go to the Middle East as part of a fund raising venture for a war orphanage there.

We are pleased to be donating members to this trip which we are certain will release money for this fine cause.

A cause, which so concerns us all in the world today.

We gave a one-hour talk at the Stamford Harp Festival in August 2005.

We were honoured to be joined by Dr Ismail Jalili and his wife Maureen.

South Kesteven District Council provided the PC equipment and over fifty people came along to see the Gold Lyre of Ur talk.

The lucky finale of the talk was to hear a **BBC Radio 3 Programme** immediately at the finish, with music duet of the Lyre being professionally played by Ayub and Tara on Harp, on the radio.

Dr Jalili contributed by speaking about the Middle East and the instrument's significance there during the meeting.



Dr Ismail Jalili head of NABA
the National Association of British Arabs
(Photo: Keith Jobling)

Decoration of the Lyre is a technical business and goes on apace! Using lapis lazuli, shell and pink limestone on a bed of bitumen the result is like this :-



Soundboard Decoration set in bitumen
1,200 pieces per side...over 12,000 cuts required!
(size approx. 39mm x 59mm shown)

There are of course four sides to arms, and two sides of the soundboard so it's a slow business. In ancient times each piece was cut by hand and individually.... so that is how we have done it again. No two pieces are the same!



100% pure, 1/2 mm thick, silver covered tuning-levers use windlass knots to tension the 8 strings on the lyre
(Picture West Dean College)

Last year, We applied for a “**Performing Rights Society Grant for New Music**” for the Lyre of Ur Project. [see Lyre News 2] Called A “**Journey of strings**”.

It was based upon a collaboration of seven international artists weaving themselves around the story of the Lyre, its journey through the world, and its metamorphosis into other stringed instruments.

This was a hugely ambitious and optimistic idea of a performance, commissioned by the **Stamford Harp Festival 2006** and for a new multi media performance incorporating harps, lyres, dance, drama and song.



Stamford Harp Festival 2004

(Picture Isobel Urch)

Hot Press....

Too bad.... We got turned down this time!!

We will apply again!

WEBSITE

www.lyre-of-ur.com

EVERYONE who e-mails us congratulates us on the site's format and construction!

Thanks to Mr Keith Jobling, the webmaster, for his fantastic support. Keith is part of MUSIC:LINK in Lincolnshire and he has an amazing database of everything that is happening in 'Lincs' and the East Midlands in the music and arts worlds.
www.music-link.org

Keith has donated costs for a new PC to the project when our old one fell on the floor.

Latest news! Hear the LYRE OF UR being played on the BBC live on the Internet on our website.

Click on “LISTEN to the LYRE”

www.lyre-of-ur.com

We use the safe custody of Lloyds TSB Bank for free!

Thank you Lloyds Bank. We will never complain or use any other bank ever again!

VENUES IN THE WORLD

Would you like to hear what we have produced?

If only an outline invitation it will help us raise money, as funders need to know venue invitations before committing themselves to assist a tour.

Would YOU like to hear it played near you ?

Contact us

Tel: ++44 (0)1733 253068

FUND RAISING

It may seem that all this response means that we are also inundated with offers of money !

Nothing could be further from the truth; actually, we have very limited resources.

We need finance for every aspect of the project; helping arrange to make the Lyre of Ur, acquiring and transporting the materials; for printing promotional letters.

Also to assist visits to generate support; to help to pay the telephone bills; the postage bills; the van hire; for the instrument boxes, flights and other travel costs. Increasingly we are being asked for promotional photographs and fliers.

If you would like to sponsor a particular aspect of this project, we would be delighted to hear from you!

This is a real, international team making a well-loved and famous instrument that pre-dates our world divisions.

It can only have a huge impact for good in every community.

Cameos from Italy !

Last summer we were lucky enough to receive another amazing donation of CAMEO SHELL, plaques made by hand, in Torre del Greco Italy.



Plaque of Shells set in bitumen
Size 265x76mm

(Mkt Deeping Photography)

This set of mother of pearl shell images from ancient Sumeria were crafted by Mr Alfredo De Paolo of **La Compagnia del Cammeo s.r.l.** (The Cameo Jewellery Company Ltd.)

and replicate exactly the original scenes made by hand back in ancient times.



Alfredo De Paolo

La Compagnia del Cammeo s.r.l. are amongst a few of the only makers who still craft such scenes today. If you visit Italy and Naples you must go and see the workshops and showrooms at
Via Curtoli, 40,
P.O. Box 219,
80059 Torre del Greco-NA,
ITALY

(under Mount Vesuvius) where amazing workmanship is the norm. Translucent scenes in 3 - dimensions using the same technology as used for us on the Lyre of Ur Project, can be seen. Almost certainly, the Cameo brooch so treasured by your grandmother, and still admired today, was made in Italy with these skills.

La Compagnia del Cammeo s.r.l., run by the supportive and generous **Florindo De Cristofaro** are only an e-mail away.

Why not commission **YOUR OWN** gift of jewellery for this Christmas, made with the skill of millennia?

Florindo is on:
info@cameojewellery.it

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