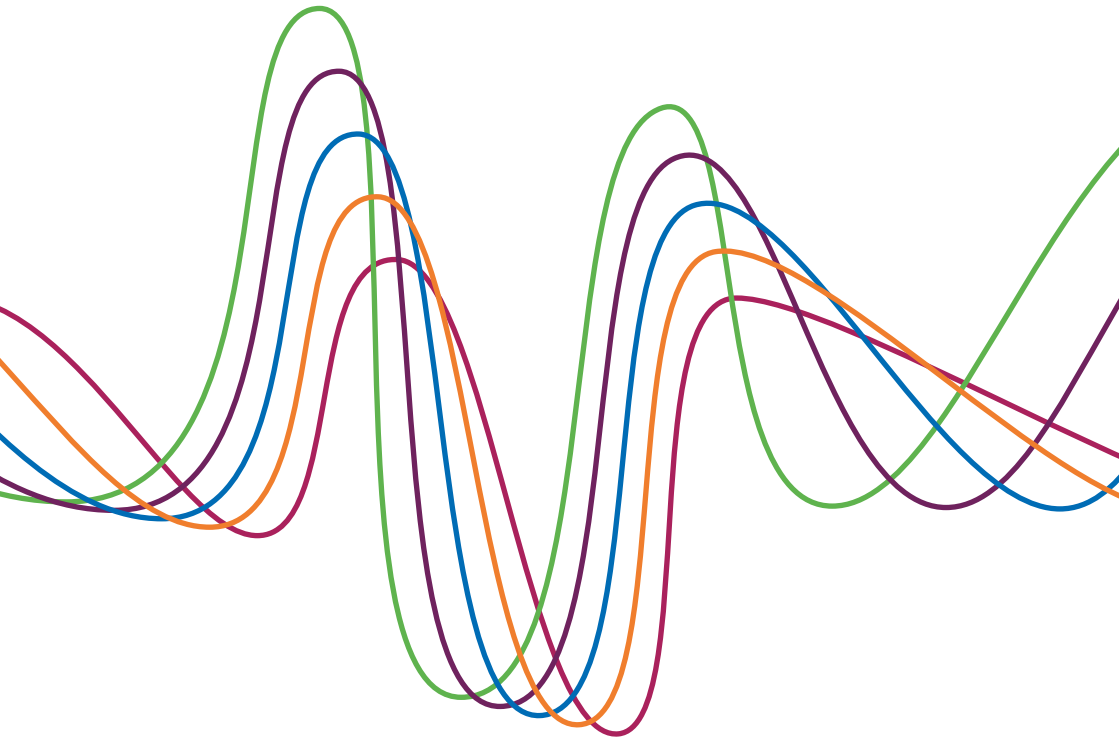


ABRSM

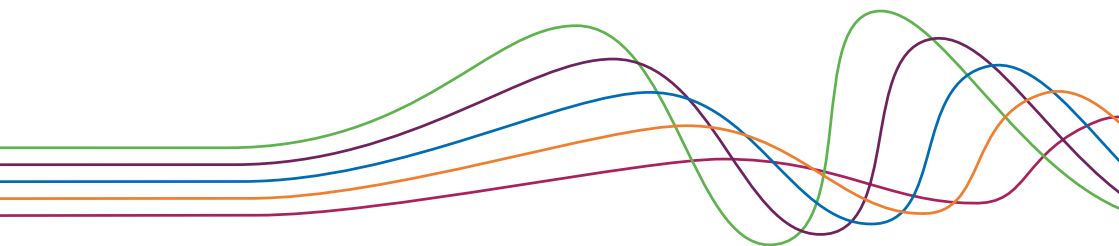
Impact Report



Published 2025

Contents

The ABRSM Alliance	03
The Royal Schools of Music	04
Five impact areas	07
1. Support and growth of grassroots	08
2. Support and growth of teachers	13
3. Driving high standards towards professional life	16
4. Public value and advocacy	19
5. Research	21



The ABRSM Alliance

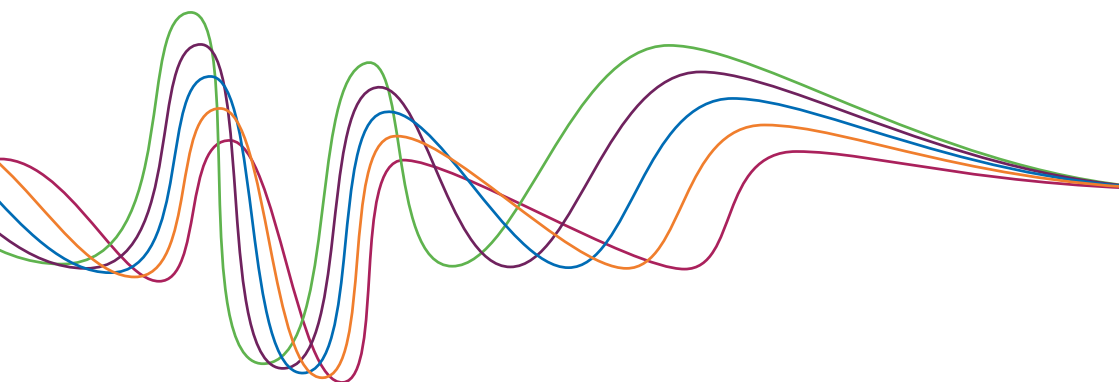
ABRSM is a global music education charity. All the surpluses we generate are used to support music education initiatives and to develop our support for learners and teachers.

The longstanding and unique partnership between the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music (ABRSM) and the Royal Academy of Music, Royal College of Music, Royal Conservatoire of Scotland and Royal Northern College of Music supports and promotes access to musical education, progression and excellence worldwide.

Our vision is to be the most influential and innovative alliance in global music education, shaping futures, enriching communities and inspiring a life-long love of music. ABRSM and the four Royal Schools of Music work in overlapping spaces to achieve shared goals. We bring different and complementary skills and each work in our distinctive areas to achieve impactful outcomes that bring long-term benefits to our audiences and develop future generations of musicians.

ABRSM's financial distributions to the four Royal Schools of Music and the provision of an extensive scholarships programme are central to the fulfilment of its charitable objectives, a critical element of realising its vision of a world that embraces a life of music making.

As an alliance, we share five broad areas of impact and achieve these together, embracing a broad and deep world of music, from grassroots to elite pre-professional levels. This impact report highlights some of the pioneering work each institution undertakes to bring the joy of music to wider society.



The Royal Schools of Music

Each of the Royal Schools of Music that ABRSM supports has a distinctive offer and is world-leading in their provision of excellence in music education.



The Royal Academy of Music has had an inestimable impact on musical life by training outstandingly talented musicians for successful careers for over 200 years. As Britain's oldest conservatoire, it is recognised throughout the world as a leader in its field, and for its peerless placement of graduates in the highest echelons of the music profession.

From the outset, the Academy has been associated with some of the greatest names in music including Mendelssohn, Liszt and Sir Henry Wood. More recent alumni include Sir Harrison Birtwistle, Jacob Collier, Lucy Crowe, Edward Gardner, Dame Evelyn Glennie, Sir Elton John, Sheku Kanneh-Mason and Sir Simon Rattle.

Today, 750 students from over 50 countries are enrolled on undergraduate, postgraduate and research programmes, whilst 700 five to 18-year-olds attend Junior Academy and widening access programmes for young people.

In 2022 the Academy launched the Sir Elton John Global Exchange Scheme, a pioneering partnership with twelve of the world's leading conservatoires (including the Juilliard School and the Paris Conservatoire) to promote global mobility for the most outstanding young musicians of each generation.

www.ram.ac.uk



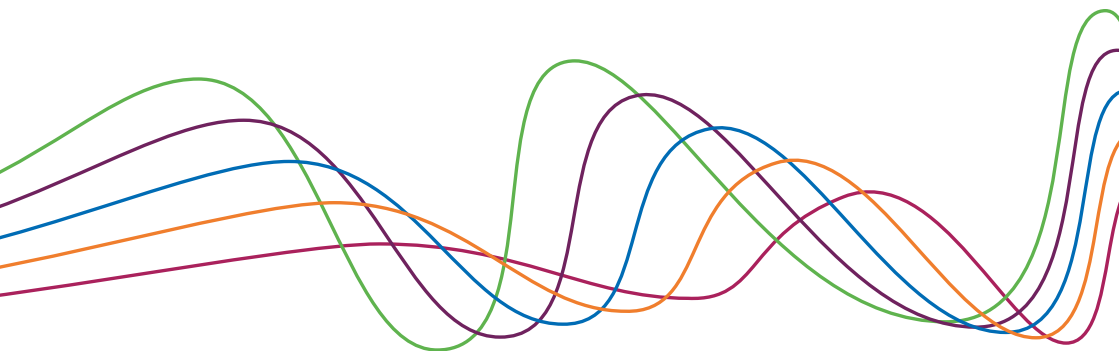
Founded in 1882, the Royal College of Music (RCM) is a world-leading music conservatoire where 900 undergraduate and postgraduate students are taught in a creative environment informed by heritage and driven by innovation. In 2025 the Royal College of Music was ranked the Global No. 1 institution for Performing Arts and Music for the fourth year running in the QS World University Rankings by Subject.

RCM graduates forge extraordinary careers across the global music landscape. Many also thrive in diverse roles across the wider creative sector and beyond, showcasing the versatility and impact of an RCM education.

The Royal College of Music has trained some of the most important figures in music including composers and performers such as Gustav Holst, Ralph Vaughan Williams, Benjamin Britten, Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, Sir Colin Davis, Sir Neville Marriner, Sir Thomas Allen, Dame Sarah Connolly, Lord Lloyd Webber, Anna Meredith MBE and Mark-Anthony Turnage.

As a leading centre for innovation and research, students benefit from the Royal College of Music Library with manuscripts by Mozart, Elgar and Holst and the Royal College of Music Museum with over 14,000 musical items, and on-site collections. Our flourishing Junior College and community programme enables hundreds of talented young students from diverse backgrounds to access high-quality music education.

www.rcm.ac.uk





The Royal Conservatoire of Scotland (RCS) is a place like nowhere else, powered by performance, its people, and their passion.

Established in 1847, RCS is consistently recognised as a global leader in performing arts education (currently ranked as one of the world's top ten performing arts education institutions by the QS World University Rankings 2025).

The variety of artistic disciplines at RCS, and a vibrant global community of students from around 60 countries, cultivates creativity and collaboration, where the next generation develops its craft in everything from classical and traditional music, opera, jazz and musical theatre to acting, ballet, film, education and production arts, management and technology.

With active partnerships with all of Scotland's national arts companies, RCS is a centre of performance offering a learning environment which encourages students create new work, collaborate with peers across disciplines, develop innovative ideas, and grow into artists the world needs.

www.rcs.ac.uk



The Royal Northern College of Music (RNCM) is one of the world's leading progressive conservatoires. Located in the heart of Manchester, UK, the RNCM is dedicated to providing an outstanding education that propels students into careers as inspiring and versatile musicians, fully equipped for exciting futures both on and off stage. Offering an unparalleled portfolio of partnerships with the music industry offering over 50 professional experience placements to students each year.

Founded in 1973 through the merger of the Royal Manchester College of Music and Northern School of Music, the RNCM is home to over 950 students from more than 60 countries.

Leading two networks of globally renowned conservatoires, the RNCM is positioned in the Top 5 in the QS World University Rankings for music, rated Gold in the 2023 Teaching Excellence Framework, and recognised as one of the UK's leading conservatoires for research. The RNCM is also the recipient of five Times Higher Education Awards, two Greater China Awards, a Global Teaching Excellence Spotlight Award, and two Heist Awards.

www.rncm.ac.uk

Our combined support impacts musicians in five main areas



Support and growth of grassroots

ABRSM's assessments, resources and services have a significant impact on learners around the globe.

ABRSM exams, digital resources and publications serve learner musicians from beginner to pre-professional levels, creating a trusted and valued framework for musical progression worldwide.

It provides an annual UK exam discount scheme, delivered through Music Mark, which directly supports students in Music Hubs and Services. This £200,000 scheme helps to alleviate some of the financial barriers people face in accessing music exams across the UK.

ABRSM delivers a range of global partnerships to support access and inclusion to music education at grassroots level, including the Play On fund for non-UK organisations (managed by The Commonwealth Resounds), a Youth Voice Programme and a sector-leading Diversity and Inclusion programme in partnership with Black Lives in Music and Ivors Academy.

ABRSM works closely with Music for Youth, a partnership which saw it co-commission a piece from Cassie Kinoshi with the BBC and the Royal Albert Hall. Part of BBC Ten Pieces, the new work was performed to a capacity audience of 6,500 at the Music for Youth Proms with 2,273 young musicians taking to the stage.

The Royal Academy of Music, Royal College of Music, Royal Northern College of Music and Royal Conservatoire of Scotland prioritise grassroots activities throughout the year, including tailored junior departments that work with younger musicians, often through bursary schemes.

Each Royal School of Music co-funds widening participation departments and pathways, programming summer schools and clubs from ages 8 to 18. They have international pre-tertiary links with schools and communities in nearly 20 countries, including courses and online teaching.

Each school also runs community artist programmes and performance platforms as well as partnerships with grassroots performance trusts, venues and health charities.



459,000

ABRSM qualifications
were awarded to recognise
musicians' achievements



1,204,702

ABRSM music
books were bought



£350k

To partner organisations



25,000+

Estimated audience
reach of partner activities
supported by ABRSM



4,000

Estimated number of
participants involved
in ABRSM supported
partner activities



4,250+

Participants in Royal Schools
of Music schemes

ABRSM's global grassroots support



Over the last year we've supported projects in **Guatemala**, the **Dominican Republic** and **Antigua & Barbuda** through Play On funding.

Caribbean
and Central
America

In the **UK** we work with a wide range of organisations, from grassroots through to national youth ensembles and those supporting early career musicians.

UK

We have strategic partnerships in **Hong Kong, Malaysia** and **Singapore** in support of a wide range of music programmes across Asia.

Southeast Asia

India

In **India** our partnership with the India National Youth Orchestra and Chorus supports their annual national and international concert series.

Africa

Over the last year we've supported projects in **Kenya, South Africa, Uganda, Nigeria** and **Mozambique** through our Play On international sponsorship fund.

Support and growth of grassroots at the Royal Academy of Music

Support from ABRSM is vital to the Academy's musical ecosystem and co-funds our Widening Participation and Open Academy Programmes.

Widening Participation includes Primary and Junior Academy, Composers, Jazz and Percussion Clubs and, since 2022, our Musical Theatre Junior Academy. Every project gives young people the opportunity to flourish, regardless of background.

In 2023/24:

- **694 participants** aged 5 to 18 took part in 37 Widening Participation projects.
- **250 young people** attended our weekly Junior Academy, following in the footsteps of alumni including Jacob Collier, Sophie Kauer and five of the Kanneh-Mason family.
- Our first cohort of **90 primary-school children** from Rotherhithe and Brixton graduated after three years of teaching from our Community First Strings Experience with all students being offered the opportunity to continue lessons at school or in their local area.

Our Open Academy programme firmly roots participatory and community music in the curriculum. Annually, 60 students and our six Fellows deliver programmes engaging over 4,000 people including projects working with people living with dementia, those experiencing homelessness, children with special educational needs, adults with disabilities, hospital patients and care home residents.

In 2023/24 we established new partnerships with Harrow Road Community Choir, a choir open to all, regardless of age, background or musical experience, and Woven Gold Choir, a choir for refugees and asylum seekers.

“

Working with Open Academy has been a highlight of my music education. It was important for me to make sense of the role music plays in our society. This experience has shown me how music can connect communities and lead to change.

”

Suzi Qui, Academy student and Open Academy Fellow

Support and growth of teachers

ABRSM and the Royal Academy of Music, Royal College of Music, Royal Northern College of Music and Royal Conservatoire of Scotland work with thousands of teachers every year.

ABRSM continues to empower educators through a wide range of face-to-face and online professional development resources and events. At the heart of this sits the ABRSM Teacher Hub. Its mission is to be the first point of call for every instrumental, vocal and classroom teacher seeking inspiration, support and professional growth. Its vision is to empower and connect teachers through high-quality courses, resources and events that enrich music education.

Alongside this sits Classroom 200, ABRSM's free resource supporting 5 to 14-year-olds in their music making. In addition, ABRSM Voices is building a strong culture of singing across UK schools, nurseries, Music Hubs, multi-academy trusts and training providers.

The programme offers expert-led CPD, one-to-one teacher feedback, choral conducting training, vocal strategy development and inspiring festivals.

In addition to this direct activity, ABRSM has active engagement with international music education organisations and partnerships which extend its reach to teachers including Music Mark and Classic FM. Together, these initiatives provide a holistic offer for all teachers, regardless of specialism, location or experience, inspiring and equipping them to deliver exceptional musical learning.

Each of the Royal Schools run staff training programmes across academic and professional services. They provide new and revised postgraduate degrees and diplomas in education alongside teacher placement with links to PGCEs, UK Music Hubs and international staff and knowledge exchange and partnerships.



8,161

Teachers attended development events, courses, webinars and INSET presentations with ABRSM

22,000

Teachers using Teacher Hub and Classroom 200

4.5m

Classic FM annual listeners with ABRSM sponsoring their Music Teacher of the Year initiative

Support and growth of teachers at ABRSM

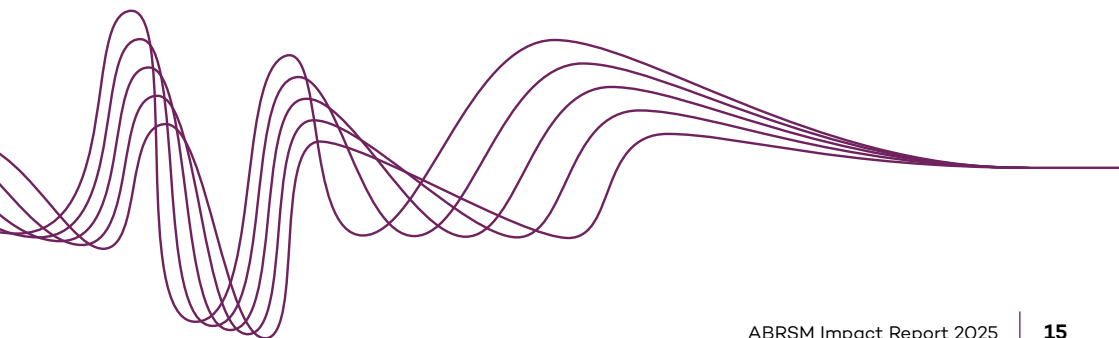
ABRSM Voices

Claire, a classroom teacher and choir leader, joined an ABRSM Voices training course to build her confidence in leading singing. She found the training transformative: *"The quality of training was truly incredible... inspirational."* The interactive sessions, led by Charles MacDougall, helped her develop practical techniques that she could take straight back to her school. *"Content was totally aligned with my needs as a music teacher... fantastic ideas and methodologies that will be put into practice at school,"* she reflected.

Through ABRSM Voices, Claire not only gained new skills but also connected with a wider network of practitioners, giving her both the confidence and resources to embed a stronger singing culture in her classroom and choir. Her story reflects the wider impact of ABRSM Voices in building capacity for high-quality singing in schools, nurseries, multi-academy trusts and Music Hubs across the UK.

Teacher Hub

Chinedu, a piano teacher, turned to the Teacher Hub for inspiration and professional growth. He signed up for one of the online courses, Developing Musicianship Skills with Classroom 200. It's one of the most popular courses with 702 sign ups and Chinedu found it particularly valuable because it showed real teachers working with children. *"It was so helpful to see how the activities were demonstrated in practice, and the progress the children achieved,"* he explained. Like many of the nearly 22,000 active users of the Hub in 2024-25, Chinedu valued the chance to watch good practice in action and apply the ideas directly to his own teaching. With all Hub courses achieving five-star ratings, he describes it as his first stop for trusted, practical professional development.



Driving high standards towards professional life

ABRSM scholarships are a central element of its support for music education and the Royal Schools in their delivery of exceptional outcomes in elite pre-professional training. These scholarships support courses of sustained, high-quality study for individuals showing significant musical potential. ABRSM also supports scholarships at international organisations and offers Diplomas (ARSM, LRSM, FRSM) in Performance, Teaching and Directing. A range of partnerships point towards further study and professional experience with a wide variety of organisations including the National Youth Orchestra, Black Lives in Music and Ivors Academy. Every year ABRSM runs 'Writing for Music Education', a Composer Mentoring Programme in the UK and Southeast Asia.

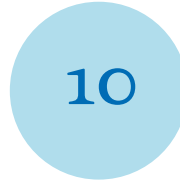
The Royal Academy of Music, Royal College of Music, Royal Conservatoire of Scotland and Royal Northern College of Music offer unparalleled educational experiences driving high standards around the world.

They provide a range of artist development modules and pathways which bring key industry skills and practitioners into the heart of the curriculum.

Between them they create over 200 side-by-side experiences and professional placements with leading performing organisations including the English National Opera, BBC Radio 3, Hallé, Czech Philharmonic, London Philharmonic Orchestra, London Sinfonietta, Nash Ensemble, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and BBC Singers. They have international collaborations with over 50 leading conservatoires, including joint projects, student and staff exchanges, research and digital innovation. Their students are mentored by alumni and they maintain rosters of eminent visiting professors, developing world-class practice, rehearsal, performance and recording facilities to remain competitive.



Total student
scholarships per year



Junior scholarships



Undergraduate scholarships



Postgraduate scholarships



Works by 14 composers who
participated in ABRSM's mentoring
programme in 2024, taking part
in over 100 in-person and online
sessions with support from
43 mentors



Total number of new pieces selected
for exam syllabuses written by
composer mentees since the
programme launched in 2021



Candidates have played pieces
written by composer mentees
in their exams



Countries where mentoring
programme pieces have been
played in exams

Driving high standards towards professional life at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland



Scholarship support has been key to Nikita Lukinov's success.

It has enabled this gifted pianist to study at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland (RCS) and build a career that has taken him from performing at prestigious international venues to inspiring the next generation of musicians and bringing classical music to audiences beyond traditional concert halls.

Praised for his “extraordinary breadth and freedom of imagination” (Gramophone) and named a “rising star” by BBC Music Magazine, he moved from Russia to the Purcell School in 2013, and then for his undergraduate studies at RCS in 2017. Nikita graduated with first-class honours in 2021 and received a full ABRSM scholarship to pursue a Master of Music degree. In 2021 and 2023, he was awarded the Governors' Recital Prize for the most outstanding final recital at RCS, and later that year released his debut CD.

He completed his Artist Diploma at RCS in 2024.

Recently, Nikita embarked on a 40-event tour across Scotland where he was joined by RCS students. Alongside recitals, he led outreach events in care homes and schools for children with additional support needs, reflecting his strong commitment to musical engagement and community impact.

He also serves on the RCS keyboard faculty – making him one of the youngest senior teachers across the UK's Royal Schools of Music.

Nikita said: “*The ABRSM scholarship for my master's degree was truly pivotal. It enabled me to choose the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland over offers from Juilliard and the Manhattan School of Music, and it gave me the freedom to focus fully on perfecting my pianistic craft and exploring opportunities within the industry, without the pressure of taking on unrelated work to support myself.*”

“*As my family were unable to provide financial support and I did not have access to a student loan, this scholarship came at the moment I needed it most. Today, I am an ABRSM-certified pedagogue, a senior faculty member at RCS, and a concert pianist – and I remain deeply grateful for the opportunity the ABRSM scholarship afforded me.*”

4

Public value and advocacy

We use our voice, expertise, professional networks and data to actively champion and support music education. We all play a long-term leadership role. Last year ABRSM held its first-ever annual symposium, *Music the Rhythm of our Lives*. The 2025 symposium will focus on mental health and wellbeing reflecting ABRSM's Making Music UK 2025 research outcomes.

ABRSM regularly commissions articles from a wide range of contributors to stimulate dialogue and engagement with the value of music education, disseminated through digital channels. It hosted an advocacy roundtable in June 2025 with guests including MPs and music education specialists. ABRSM also regularly attends meetings and discussions aimed at keeping dialogue with government ministers alive and proactively engages with contributing towards policy development. This includes strong connections with the Department for Education and Arts Council England. ABRSM has a strong presence within the music education sector, including regular keynote presentations, conference and seminar contributions and attendance at key events run by music, education and cultural organisations.

The Royal Academy of Music, Royal College of Music, Royal Northern College of Music and Royal Conservatoire of Scotland are powerful voices advocating on behalf of music education. They provide real public value with performance at the heart of this offer. Between them they manage a performance diary of events for 200,000 visitors per year in London, Manchester and Glasgow, as well as concerts on the road, most of them free. They provide public access to museums and collections, research events and discussion forums, lead community projects in more than 125 schools, hospitals, care homes and hospices. As key members and partners they work closely with music education organisations worldwide.

All of us increase public access to recorded performances through streaming platforms, expanded websites and YouTube channels and through ABRSM's Stage performance series and Start Here podcast, aimed at inspiring people the world over to discover new music and outstanding performances.

Public value and advocacy at the Royal College of Music

Since its formation, the Royal College of Music (RCM) has evolved through its founding principles of excellence, access and advocacy, which remain as relevant today as they did back in 1882.

Thanks to vital funds distributed from ABRSM, the RCM boasts one of the richest artistic programmes of any conservatoire, annually hosting over 500 public events including concerts, masterclasses and talks. This programme features leading artists such as Sir Thomas Allen, Dame Imogen Cooper, Lang Lang, Vasily Petrenko and Sarah Willis, and across the last decade more than 130,000 low-cost tickets have been secured by people from all backgrounds in the local community and beyond. Embracing the latest technologies allows the RCM to share its programmes via its YouTube Channel, reaching a global audience of 8.4 million views since the channel was launched.

The RCM is conscious of its civic responsibility and through its community and education programme RCM Sparks, delivers a variety of free public events, workshops, and concerts for schools, families, and young people. Our Research and Knowledge Exchange programmes work in partnership with industry and public bodies to drive innovation and training in our sector, providing Government with vital data and evidence to inform the development of policy in the music education and public health arenas.

- **RCM Sparks:** each year the programme benefits around 3,400 children while also giving RCM students invaluable training. Programmes include work with dementia charities and initiatives for children who are deaf or visually impaired to pipeline focussed schemes such as the Young Double Reed Programme.
- **Junior Department:** In 2024/25, 300 students aged 8-18 took part in 1,500 Saturday activities, with over half coming from backgrounds underrepresented in classical music.
- **Research and Wellbeing:** The RCM's Centre for Performance Science, celebrating 25 years of impact, has produced over 300 publications and fostered international collaborations exploring music's role in health and wellbeing, from supporting mental health and dementia care to postnatal recovery.

“

I think the encouragement he received at RCM Sparks fundamentally changed something for him. He had never heard any of his pieces performed before, this was a first.

”

Parent of a participant

5

Research

In 2025, ABRSM launched its latest Making Music report. Making Music is a major large-scale, longitudinal research series bringing insight to the sector and government for 30 years. This year's report shows how music is played, learned and taught in the UK. Stand-out insight from 2025 showed that 97% of people say that they directly engage with music in some way and 84% of children said that music is important for their mental health and wellbeing, with 74% of music teachers feeling that it's extremely important. Later this year ABRSM will be reporting back from its first-ever international research into similar topics.

Each of the Royal Schools has world-leading research departments examining wellbeing and health, connecting with business and sports disciplines, undertaking targeted research into music and specific diseases, and partnering on topics such as AI with music education partners.

97%

of people say that they directly engage with music in some way

84%

of children said that music is important for their mental health and wellbeing

74%

of music teachers feel that making music is extremely important

Research at the Royal Northern College of Music

The Royal Northern College of Music (RNCM) is a leading research institution for embodied scientific investigation on what music is useful for people with Parkinson's around the world.

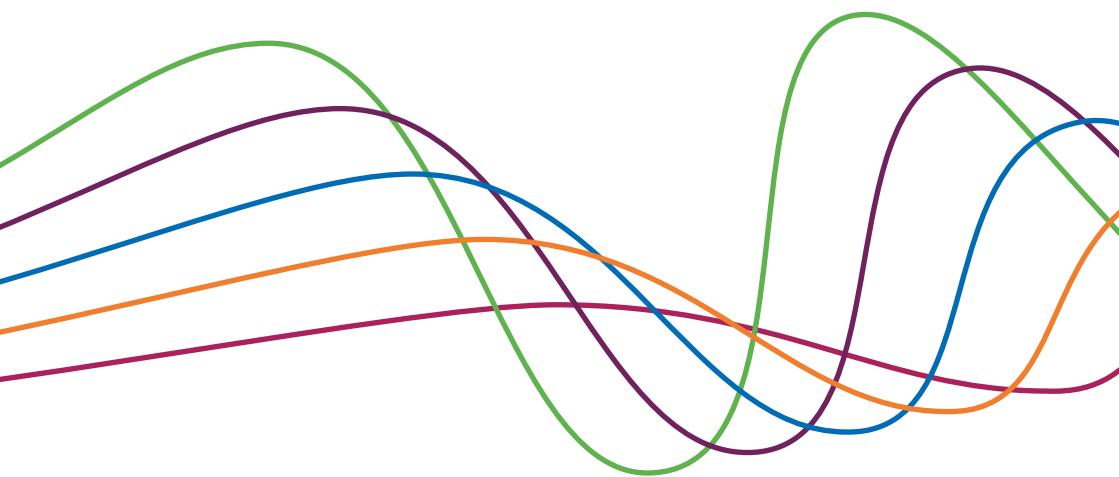
Over 150,000 people in the UK live with Parkinson's, which is 'the fastest growing neurological condition in the world' (Parkinson's UK). Since 2019, an international team of researchers have been exploring the use of music for people with Parkinson's: Dr Michelle Phillips (RNCM), Professor Dawn Rose (University of Applied Arts and Sciences, Lucerne), Professor Ellen Poliakoff (University of Manchester), and Dr Will Young (University of Exeter).

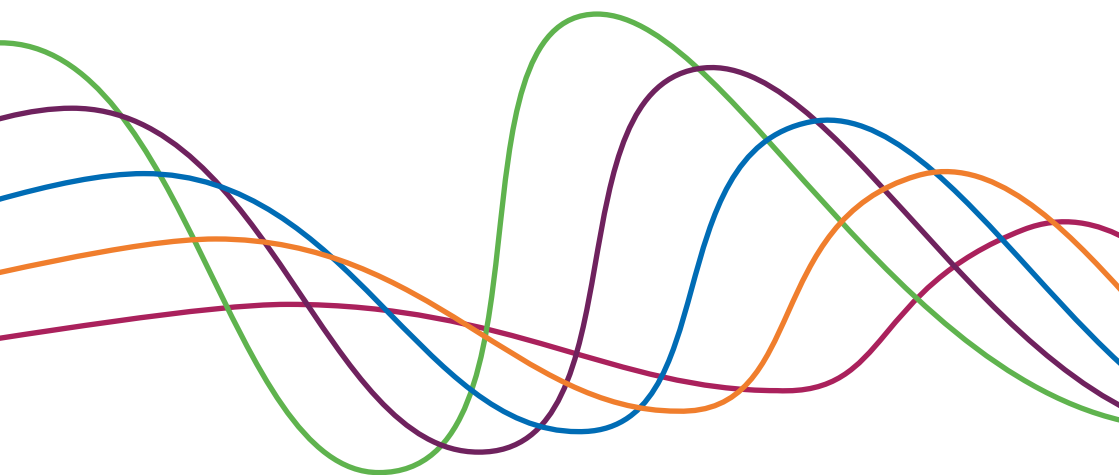
The team is committed to conducting extensive empirical studies, investigating embodied data and evidence that suggests a crucial, multifaceted role for music and social prescribing in treatments for Parkinson's worldwide.

The research has identified new ways in which music may be useful for emotion and mood management, for motivation and as a personal anthem for people with Parkinson's.

The studies also suggested potential benefits of musical imagery (people imagining music in their head), as well as the effects of listening to music of various genres and underlying characteristics. This year, the RNCM enhanced its reputation as a global leader in embodied scientific research on music and Parkinson's, as seven student composers collaborated with People with Parkinson's (PwP) to explore music's role in their lives. The outcome – showcased in a relaxed concert – was a collection of original music designed to help manage symptoms, mood and daily routines.







**Supporting a life with music in partnership
with four Royal Schools of Music**

Royal Academy of Music | Royal College of Music |
Royal Conservatoire of Scotland | Royal Northern College of Music
www.abrsm.org