

ANNUAL REVIEW

2024/2025



ROYAL
COLLEGE
OF MUSIC
London



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CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME

The Royal College of Music (RCM) is a global leader among conservatoires, with unrivalled performance opportunities, a vibrant learning environment and cutting-edge technology that equip students with the confidence and versatility they need to excel.

RCM students are among the most talented musicians in the world, and the RCM supports the very best from the UK, EU and beyond with scholarships, regardless of background. This year we awarded £5.9 million in scholarships, bursaries and awards, made possible by the generous donations of our supporters, to whom we remain enormously grateful.

Our students are encouraged to be versatile and imaginative, benefitting from the resources and advice offered by the RCM's outstanding Creative Careers Centre, which celebrated its 25th anniversary this year.

Research continues to bring great richness and depth to the College's educational programme, and the precious musical artefacts in the RCM Museum were joined by this year's landmark temporary exhibition, *Kurt Cobain Unplugged*. This attracted new visitors and was made possible thanks to Peter Freedman AM, who generously loaned Cobain's guitar to the RCM, alongside establishing a new Australian Commonwealth Scholarship Fund for exceptional talent.

Cutting-edge technology in unique surroundings continues to benefit RCM students. In an innovative collaboration with Steinway & Sons using the latest live performance technology, the RCM brought performances to audiences worldwide with Europe's first Spiriocast broadcast by an institution.

On Council we were very sorry to say goodbye to Peter Dart, and we welcome new Council member Nadine Thompson. I am delighted that Leila Hooton was re-elected as Students' Union President, and thank all members of Council for their insight, expertise and commitment to the future of music.

Lord Black of Brentwood
Chairman

Opposite
Professor Gabriele Rossi Rognoni, RCM Museum Curator, with Kurt Cobain's Martin D-18E guitar



The Royal College of Music is synonymous with exceptional quality in music education, combining heritage and innovation to empower students as they prepare for their futures in music



DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

The Royal College of Music's reputation for excellence and innovation continues to be on show in its diverse range of teaching, performance and research.

I am delighted that the Royal College of Music has for the fourth year in a row been named the Global No. 1 institution for the Performing Arts in the QS World University Rankings by Subject, as well as retaining the top spot for Music since its introduction last year.

During the course of the year, our students have performed at prestigious venues including the Aldeburgh Festival, Wigmore Hall, Cadogan Hall and Windsor Castle.

I am especially proud of our diverse range of visiting artists, which included George Lewis as composer-in-residence, and tuba player Velvet Brown, as well as renowned conductors such as Vasily Petrenko, Rafael Payare and Chloé Van Soeterstède, while visiting professor Maxim Vengerov was among those who gave masterclasses.

We welcomed Andrew Moore as our new Artistic Director, bringing wide-ranging industry experience and an international perspective that reflects the breadth and creative ambition of our performance programme. New music and innovative projects, including those with the Natural History Museum and Kew Gardens, play a crucial part in that programme.

We have hosted major international conferences focused on music, health and wellbeing, and welcomed new visitors to the College for the RCM Museum's *Kurt Cobain Unplugged* exhibition. I continue to find it particularly rewarding to witness the inspiring work of RCM Sparks and the RCM Junior Department.

Partnerships remain at the forefront of the College's ethos, and we are thrilled to be developing further our relationships with the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music and Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts in Singapore, while initiating a new partnership with Rambert School of Ballet and Contemporary Dance. We also welcomed key figures from the music industry to the College this year, including Controller of BBC Radio 3 and the BBC Proms, Sam Jackson, who gave the 2025 Crees Lecture.

James Williams LVO FRCM
Director

Opposite
Velvet Brown
tuba masterclass

Opposite insert
Sam Jackson giving
the Crees lecture



Beyond the music, it is the Royal College of Music's community of students, staff, supporters and audiences that makes the College a unique and special place, and I thank them all for their ongoing commitment



CELEBRATING SUCCESS

The Royal College of Music nurtures exceptionally talented students in a creative environment, giving them the opportunity to develop as artists and fulfil their ambitions.

RCM students continue to win international competitions, secure positions in leading ensembles and training programmes, reach new audiences and contribute to a dynamic research agenda. These are just some of their accomplishments.

RCM musicians took all four prizes at the Kathleen Ferrier Awards: an extraordinary achievement. First Prize went to mezzo soprano Lily Mo Browne, an RCM Masters student. Alumnus tenor Philippe Durrant won Second Prize, while Ellen Pearson won the Ferrier Loveday Song Prize and pianist Francesca Lauri the Help Musicians Accompanist's Prize; both are 2024 graduates. Baritone Sam Hird was appointed a Royal Ballet and Opera Jette Parker Artist for 2025–27, and tenor Hugo Brady won a place on the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment Rising Stars programme.

Sony Classical signed pianist Jeneba Kanneh-Mason for her first recital album. She also played at the Commonwealth Day Service at Westminster Abbey and was one of three RCM pianists who took part in a masterclass with Yuja Wang for the BBC series *Arts in Motion*. Fellow pianist Amiri Harewood was among Classic FM's 30 under 30, and Jacky Zhang reached the final three of the BBC Young Musician of the Year.

From the Strings Faculty, Clem Pickering was appointed principal viola with the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, and Olivia Da Costa (cello) and Emmanuel Webb (violin), together with alumni Kei Yin Lui (bassoon) and Joe Smales (trombone), were selected to join the London Philharmonic Orchestra's Foyle Future Firsts.

Kian Hsu became Percussion Fellow on the Philharmonia's Instrumental Fellowship Programme, and trombonist Paul Hernández Santamaria and tuba player Archie McVicar won Yamaha European Music Foundation Scholarships.

Saxophonist Rianna Henriques joined the GRAMMY Recording Academy Class of 2024, composer Gwidian Rhys' *Mistico* received its world premiere by the BBC National Orchestra of Wales, and doctoral students and twin brothers Gergely and Zsombor Tóth-Vajna were awarded the Ferenc Liszt Prize, Hungary's highest state decoration for music.

Opposite
RCM pianist
Magdalene Ho
performs Beethoven
with the RCM
Symphony Orchestra



**The orchestra
and performance
were outstanding,
the equal of any
professional orchestra**

Audience member
at an RCM concert



PERFORMANCE AND PARTNERSHIPS

The Royal College of Music's reputation is enhanced by the extraordinary range and quality of its performance programme, supported by the world-class musicians who regularly visit to work with its students.

In summer 2025, the RCM Symphony Orchestra made its debut at the Aldeburgh Festival, led by Ukrainian conductor Kirill Karabits in a programme that opened with alumnus Benjamin Britten's 'Four Sea Interludes' from *Peter Grimes*, and was repeated in the Amaryllis Fleming Concert Hall.

The College hosted more than 550 recitals, performances and events, and those with guest artists included alumnus Michael Tippett's monumental *A Child of Our Time* directed by visiting professor of conducting Martyn Brabbins, Mahler's Ninth Symphony conducted by Nicholas Collon, and Vasily Petrenko conducting Respighi and Ravel.

RCM students including members of the Junior Department also had the opportunity to play at Windsor Castle for our Patron, His Majesty King Charles III; and at Wigmore Hall, Cadogan Hall, The King's Gallery at Buckingham Palace and at 11 Downing Street.

The RCM Philharmonic Orchestra gave the UK premiere of Ludwig Göransson's Oscar-winning suite for the film *Oppenheimer*, and a chamber ensemble performed Charlie Chaplin's own score live at screenings of his film *The Gold Rush* as part of the RCM Chamber Festival.

Further innovative projects included composition students presenting original works inspired by the Natural History Museum's Wildlife Photographer of the Year competition, and a soundscape created by six RCM composers at Kew Gardens for their Sounds of Blossom experience.

The Opera Studio presented *The Marriage of Figaro*, directed by Jeremy Sams; a triple bill of French language operas by Britten, Weill and Ravel; and *Love, Conflict, Renaissance* directed by alumnus Sir Thomas Allen, with Rambert dancers joining RCM musicians.

New music also featured strongly at the Composition for Screen showcase, the Electric Dreams concerts of electronic music, and at an evening of music inspired by the RCM Museum's *Kurt Cobain Unplugged* exhibition. Visiting professor Maxim Vengerov returned to lead one of 150 masterclasses, as did Sir Thomas Allen, Gerald Finley, Tasmin Little, the Berlin Philharmonic's Sarah Willis and pianists Edith Fischer and Boris Giltburg.

Further events included the Keyboard Festival, Strings Festival and Recorder Festival and the Festival of Percussion, which culminated in a concert given by the RCM Jazz Orchestra and guest drummer Gregory Hutchinson.

We thank the Jerwood Foundation for their very generous support of many of these events through the Jerwood Visiting Artists Fund, and Victoria, Lady Robey CBE HonRCM for continuing the Robey Fund for Visiting Artists.

Opposite top
RCM Symphony Orchestra conducted by Rafael Payare in the Amaryllis Fleming Concert Hall

Opposite middle
Sir Thomas Allen with RCM Vocal & Opera musicians in *Love, Conflict, Renaissance*

Opposite bottom
Ben Palmer conducting RCM musicians accompanying Chaplin's film *The Gold Rush*



INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATIONS

The Royal College of Music is a truly international community, and its worldwide partnerships and collaborations in performance and learning enrich College life and extend its global reach.

In January 2025, members of the Royal College of Music community visited Singapore, Hong Kong and Sydney to celebrate global collaboration, musical innovation, and talent development and recruitment. An event at Government House in Sydney attended by Dame Kiri Te Kanawa marked the launch of the Australian Commonwealth Scholarship, set up by Peter Freedman AM. This will enable exceptional young Australian musicians to study at the College, and the inaugural scholar, soprano Ariana Ricci, gave a stunning performance.

In Singapore, the RCM engaged with partners at the Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts and the Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music to reinforce its commitment to nurturing young musicians and strengthening educational partnerships. RCM musicians played at special evenings in Singapore and then in Hong Kong, with RCM alumni present together with representatives of the Hong Kong Academy of Performing Arts.

The RCM built on its collaboration with Community Jameel by joining them and the Sawiris Foundation for Social Development in Cairo's Grand Egyptian Museum for three days of masterclasses, workshops and auditions for young Egyptian musicians. The programme ended with performances by RCM alumna violinist Laura Ayoub and soprano Laura Mekhail, the 2021 recipient of the Andrea Bocelli Foundation-Community Jameel Scholarship at the RCM.

The RCM String Orchestra was invited to Athens to perform at the Herodes Odeon Atticus, and RCM Historical Performance students went on a chamber tour to Italy, playing in Rome, Bologna and Frascati. The College's partnership with the Stauffer Center for Strings in Cremona continues, with some of their students playing at the RCM Strings Festival. A number of RCM musicians also performed at the Klosters Christmas Concerts in Switzerland.

As part of the American composer's RCM residency, the RCM celebrated George Lewis Day, and many internationally renowned artists led masterclasses at the College, including American tuba player Velvet Brown and members of the Chamber Orchestra of Europe.

The RCM's Global Conservatoire project continues, allowing students to study online with others across the world, connecting them in a new digital age of global learning, and 11 courses were offered to RCM students this year, more than ever before.

From the RCM's global alumni community, the College is very proud of Nabillah Jalal who runs NJ Studio and has co-founded ArtSee in Singapore, a music and community mentorship programme helping underprivileged boys.

Opposite

Peter Freedman AM,
Ariana Ricci,
Dame Kiri Te Kanawa



PROMOTING DIGITAL INNOVATION

The Royal College of Music continues to advance digital technologies for research, learning and performance, offering unrivalled new opportunities for its students.

State-of the-art digital technology allows RCM musicians to innovate and to connect globally, and broadens access to performances across the world.

Students have been using the RCM's pioneering Performance Laboratory, and its smaller sibling in a second facility, to help overcome performance anxiety and improve stage presence ahead of public performances and auditions. Composition students have experimented in the Performance Studio to explore and create new soundscapes, including writing music inspired by photographs from the Wildlife Photographer of the Year competition, which were then effectively wrapped around the performers in an immersive concert.

The space is frequently utilised by students at the College, combining a 64 speaker immersive sound system with a 270° projection surface to create unique, innovative experiences at the forefront of performance technology.

The College continues to engage with a global audience by livestreaming concerts annually via the RCM's YouTube channel, with more than 31,000 views online, including nearly 10,000 for *A Child of Our Time* conducted by Martyn Brabbins. Other highlights include Rafael Payare conducting Berlioz' *Symphonie Fantastique*, and another livestream from Wigmore Hall.

The spring opera production of *The Marriage of Figaro*, directed by Jeremy Sams, was broadcast on OperaVision in 4k, the first Ultra-HD production by the RCM, attracting more than 25,000 views so far. In total, the RCM YouTube channel attracted 1 million views across the academic year.

In partnership with Steinway, the College gave the first European SpirioCast recital to be organised and broadcast from an institution. The event saw RCM piano students perform on a Steinway Spirio with video provided by the College's broadcasting facilities, which was then experienced by a global audience. The Creative Technology team is working with Steinway to further enhance the possibilities of remote collaboration and distance learning.

The College was delighted to host the annual Global Conservatoire Transnational Meeting. 40 delegates were welcomed from four partner institutions to explore strategic developments in digital learning, AI and transnational collaboration.

The RCM continues to push the boundaries of low latency teaching and performance, hosting regular classes utilising brand-new multi-point audio and video transmission technology (MVTP) to enable music collaboration over distances of thousands of miles.

Following recent investment, all RCM students have access to Apple mac computers with full media suites to create, edit and curate their own digital content. They also now benefit from expanded access to digital library resources including Naxos, Nkoda and the new Henle Digital Library.

Opposite
RCM guitarist
performing at the
Wildlife Photographer
of the Year event



CELEBRATING OUR HERITAGE

The Royal College of Music continues to make its extraordinary collections accessible to students, researchers and visitors, both in person and online.

Two special RCM Museum exhibitions, *Awaken: Sufi Music & Women of South Asia* and *Kurt Cobain Unplugged*, attracted more than 18,000 visitors, many of them visiting for the first time.

The exhibition that reunited the guitar, case and cardigan worn by Kurt Cobain and played during his final televised performance, *MTV Unplugged*, was a huge success and led to an upsurge in online engagement, including a five-fold increase in followers of the Museum's Instagram feed.

Visitor numbers to the Museum itself rose to more than 21,000, with 1,132 visitors attending tours and more than 860 attending concerts. The Museum hosted 43 concerts, providing 136 students with the chance to perform within its galleries.

The Museum also hosted three symposia on its collection, drawing together experts on the Tagore Collection, 3D Printing of Musical Instruments, and the Clavicytherium, which gathered 140 guests in person and online to share their knowledge of this unique instrument.

The RCM Museum was among 40 university collections in England to receive core funding from Research England to support running costs and help serve the research community beyond the College.

The RCM Library again received a top ranking in the National Student Survey for its support of all areas of College life, from teaching to performance. It also welcomed 163 researchers, who consulted more than 1,200 items from the Special Collections.

The Library was invited to create an exhibition for the State Room at 11 Downing Street showcasing British culture, for which it focused on the manuscripts for Hubert Parry's *Jerusalem* and Samuel Coleridge-Taylor's *Symphonic Variations on an African Air*.

Special displays in the Library also promoted College performances such as Tippett's *A Child of Our Time*, and landmark events including the 150th anniversary of the birth of Gustav Holst in 2024 and of Samuel Coleridge-Taylor in 2025.

The family of Avril Coleridge-Taylor generously donated 50 of her manuscripts to the Library, and doctoral student Tom Edney has prepared editions of her work recorded by the BBC Philharmonic and performed in College.

Opposite top
RCM Museum Deputy Curator Jennifer Brian (right) oversees the installation of the *Kurt Cobain Unplugged* exhibition

Opposite below left
RCM Librarian Peter Linnitt outside No 11 Downing Street

Opposite below right
One of the Samuel Coleridge-Taylor scores housed in the RCM Library



REDISCOVERING THE RCM CLAVICYTHERIUM

The Royal College of Music Museum held a two-day symposium in June entitled 'Rediscovering the RCM Clavicytherium: New Perspectives for Research and Performance'. The event brought together performers, makers, musicologists and historians, who gathered to consider the significance of the RCM's clavicytherium, the world's earliest surviving stringed keyboard instrument.

PERFORMANCE LABORATORY

The RCM's Performance Laboratory has received over 50 visits from representatives of arts and cultural organisations, sporting associations and the business world. The Performance Laboratory enables state-of-the-art visual and acoustic simulations of diverse performance spaces, allowing performers to prepare in challenging real-world settings.

Inside the Contemporary Conservatoire



Edited by
Colin Lawson, Diana Salazar, and Rosie Perkins



PIONEERING RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

Research at the Royal College of Music achieves global impact by using innovative methodologies to address key challenges, such as how to support musical talent and widen access and opportunity.

This year has brought particular attention to national priorities, including overcoming barriers to opportunity and supporting health and wellbeing. RCM researchers have produced groundbreaking work on the role of music in early years development, how to support neurodiverse musicians within education and careers, and new approaches to preventing musicians' injuries.

Our research and knowledge exchange has an impact internationally. Exciting new projects on inclusion, health and wellbeing have directly informed policy and practice in Brazil, Greenland and Turkey. Our historical research has been shared with diverse audiences in Australia, Austria, France and Germany and contributed to the missions of international charities, embassies and educational organisations.

At home, our cutting-edge Performance Laboratory continues to receive huge interest

from around the world. RCM researchers are also working closely with music hubs, museums and industry professionals to bring benefit across the UK's cultural ecosystem. Areas of focus have included new research on the role of composition in music hubs, use of 3D-printed historical instruments in new creative collaborations, and investigation of the potential of variable acoustics for artists from multiple disciplines.

At our annual Research Day we celebrated the publication of the landmark Routledge volume *Inside the Contemporary Conservatoire: Critical Perspectives from the Royal College of Music*. Featuring chapters by over 30 RCM staff and a range of external contributors, the volume offers a dynamic overview of the place of the conservatoire within contemporary musical culture, touching on many areas of the College's current research and knowledge exchange activity.

Opposite

Dr Robert Adlington,
Head of Research,
with doctoral student
Ananya Panwar

MUSIC AND PARENTAL WELLBEING

In July, the inaugural 'Music and Parental Wellbeing Symposium' brought together 200 delegates to advance understanding of how music can support parental wellbeing, building on the College's world-leading track record in research on creative health. Distinguished speakers from a range of professional backgrounds delivered keynotes and panel sessions, and a new Music and Parental Wellbeing Alliance was launched, which aims to enable, sustain and expand international work in this area.



INVESTING IN OUR FACILITIES

The Royal College of Music aims to be the UK's most sustainable conservatoire, embedding leading environmental and green practice in everything we do.

As well as offering dynamic performance spaces and facilities with cutting-edge technology, the RCM is determined to reduce its environmental impact and support good social practices.

The RCM's sustainability performance was recognised in the 2024/25 People & Planet University League Table, ranking it as the top conservatoire and among the top 10 universities in London for environmental and ethical performance.

The annual RCM Green Week offered ideas and support on what students and staff can do in their everyday lives and as musicians to ensure a better future for the planet.

The College continually invests in state-of-the-art facilities to ensure RCM students have the best opportunities. This year's improvements have included the refurbishment and upgrade of the chandeliers in the Amaryllis Fleming Concert Hall to mains dimmable LED. A move to LED stage lighting in the hall has led to an 81% reduction in electricity use as well as enabling the College to be more dynamic in its lighting choices.

Sound proofing has been improved at 39 Jay Mews and voltage optimisation equipment has been installed at the Prince Consort Road campus to reduce energy consumption, while the Inner Hall and our café, under its new name of The Carolean, have been redecorated.

The RCM is an active member of the South Ken ZEN+ group established by the Exhibition Road Cultural Group, with support from the 1851 Commission. The aim of this local sustainability group is to transform South Kensington into a net zero emissions and nature-positive neighbourhood. The College has made good progress in reducing carbon emissions through energy efficiency initiatives and moving from gas to electrical-based heating sources, and is on course to achieve its net-zero emissions target by 2039/40, in line with the rest of the group.

Opposite

Lord Black, RCM Council member Geoffrey Richards, Director James Williams and former Director Colin Lawson at the opening of the redecorated café, The Carolean



We are proud to study at the top conservatoire for sustainability in the People & Planet League, while being aware that there is always more we can do to improve

Leila Hooton, President of the RCM Students' Union





SHAPING BRIGHT FUTURES

The Royal College of Music's Creative Careers Centre is recognised internationally for its innovative approach to supporting young musicians and paving their way to successful global careers.

As a world leader in career development for musicians, the RCM emphasises the need for students to be well-rounded, confident, versatile communicators. RCM graduates are highly employable – the Higher Education Statistics Agency graduate employment survey showed that 90% of RCM graduates from the 2022–23 intake were in employment or further study 15 months after graduating.

The Creative Careers Centre (CCC) this year celebrated its 25-year anniversary. It offers resources, guidance, funding opportunities, bespoke career advice and coaching and mentoring, as well as online workshops and presentations by industry specialists and a broad range of professional opportunities, including performances and teaching work.

Talented musicians can be hired for paid work through the RCM's Professional Engagements Service, and the CCC saw a significant increase in bookings this year. The service provided musicians for 628 opportunities (323 of them work placements for international students) at venues including Windsor Castle, the Royal Albert Hall, the National Gallery, Speaker's House at the Houses of Parliament and the Korean Cultural Centre. In-person and online teaching services also provided 86 different teaching opportunities for students, with the online service attracting clients from India, France, Ireland and Romania.

Composer and conductor Eric Whitacre, an Ambassador for RCM Creative Careers, played a key role in the 25th anniversary celebrations, and continues to focus on entrepreneurship, innovation, self-promotion and building a creative career.

The CCC also continued its exciting schemes, RCM Accelerate and the RCM Musicians' Grant Fund. RCM Accelerate supported five graduating RCM students with funding of up to £5,000 plus mentoring, helping kick-start two new creative projects and two business ideas, and take an existing initiative to the next level. The RCM Musicians' Grant Fund provided 14 final-year students with £13,400 towards the purchase of musical instruments and technical equipment.

Opposite top
RCM musicians performing at Windsor Castle

Opposite below
Creative Careers Centre 25th anniversary panel (l-r): Universal UK's President of Audience & Media Rebecca Allen, RCM Director James Williams, Aurora Orchestra Creative Director Jane Mitchell, CCC Ambassador Eric Whitacre, RCM alumnus Peter Brathwaite, Head of CCC Diana Roberts



I'm really grateful for the Creative Careers Centre. It's the jigsaw piece that's missing otherwise; it's the bit that allows you to find work and make a career

Alumna composer Dani Howard





GLOBAL ALUMNI COMMUNITY

The Royal College of Music is immensely proud of its community of alumni from 104 countries, who are some of our finest global ambassadors. Our worldwide network now stands at 19,310.

The RCM encourages its alumni to keep in touch and is delighted that so many still engage with the College. Sir Thomas Allen and Gerald Finley were among those who returned this year to lead inspiring masterclasses, while alumna Sophie Bevan returned as a vocal professor and Martin James Bartlett as an assistant piano professor.

Many of our alumni continue to be hugely successful performers across the world. The 2025 BBC Proms saw soprano Louise Alder centre stage at the Last Night, while Gerald Finley and John Wilson featured earlier in the season, and there was a Proms debut for Nicholas McCarthy playing Ravel's Piano Concerto for the Left Hand, as well as a UK premiere of a work by Hannah Kendall.

This has been an impressive year for RCM alumni composers, including Jorge Ramos who was awarded a position on the LPO Young Composers Scheme, Sasha Scott who was selected for the 2025 RPS Composers programme, Marcos Fernandez-Barrero who won the composition category at the Manhattan International Music Competition, and for Composition for Screen alumna Leah Clarke who won the Best Soundtrack Award at the London South Bank University Film Awards.

Elsewhere, the Astatine Trio have been named as BBC Radio 3 New Generation Artists 2025–27. They also won the Special Prize at the 2025 Franz Schubert and Modern Music Competition in Graz, the first UK-based ensemble to win a main prize in the competition.

Notable appointments included conductor Paolo Urbana as Music Director of the Orquestra do Algarve in Portugal and Adam Lee as co-principal clarinet with the BBC Symphony Orchestra.

There was also success for Joseph Howson who took the Kerr Memorial Prize at the Royal Over-Seas League Keyboard Final, for fellow pianist Alim Beisembayev who won the Critics' Circle Music Award for Young Talent, and for RCMJD alumna cellist Laura van der Heijden who won the Instrumentalist Award at the Royal Philharmonic Society Awards.

Opposite
Louise Alder at the
Last Night of the Proms



**I loved every day of my time at the Royal College of Music.
The thoroughbred training we received is something I'm grateful
for every day of my working life**

Conductor John Wilson





SUPPORTING TALENT

The Royal College of Music remains committed to its founding principle that those with talent should be able to access tuition from the best professors and enjoy unrivalled facilities, regardless of their means.

The RCM Scholarship Fund enables gifted musicians from across the world and from all backgrounds to study at the College. This year, over £5.9 million was awarded in life-changing scholarships, bursaries and awards, meaning that over 54% of RCM students received financial support.

We are truly grateful to all those who choose to support our talented students and help shape the future of music. We wish to recognise the Estate of Sue Balston, the Cleminson family, the Estate of David William Patterson, the Croucher Hong Kong Charitable Foundation, the Estate of Maureen Hyacinth Adams and The Harry & Gylla Godwin Charitable Trust for their generosity this year.

Thanks to a further 172 donors, an amazing £223,419 was raised for the RCM Scholarships Fund during the 2024 Big Give Christmas Challenge. This includes a generous matching gift from the Reed Foundation.

Our scholars have had another successful year. Soprano Henna Mun (Andrea Bocelli Foundation-Community Jameel Scholar supported by the Midori Nishiura Scholarship and the Basil Coleman Opera Award) won the 2024 John Christie Award at the Glyndebourne Festival and the Clonter Opera Prize.

Madeline Boreham (Kiri Te Kanawa Scholar supported by the Il Circolo Music Award) made her debut as understudy for Mimi in *La bohème* at English National Opera, then continued to perform for the full run. Fellow soprano Madeleine Perring (Brooks-Anderson Award holder supported by the Douglas and Hilda Simmonds Scholarship) won the Royal Over-Seas League Singers Final, and trombonist Meggie Murphy (Leverhulme Arts Scholar and LSO Conservatoire Scholar) was awarded the Phillip Jones Memorial Prize in the Brass and Woodwind Final.

Pianist Magdalene Ho (Dasha Shenkman Scholar supported by the John & Marjorie Coultate Scholarship) won the 13th International German Piano Award 2024, while Mariamna Sherling (Christopher Hogwood Scholar supported by the Steinway Scholarship) took First Prize in the Chappell Medal Piano Competition 2025.

Double bassist Levi Andreassen (Neville Wathen Scholar) won joint First Prize in the Fifth Haslemere String Competition, and oboist Hannah Seymour (H R Taylor Charitable Trust Scholar) co-founder of the EMPOWER: Women Changing Music initiative, co-hosted a Female Musical Icons event and launched the composition competition OpusHER.

Opposite
RCM saxophonists



I am deeply grateful for my generous scholarship that has allowed me to dedicate myself to my studies without the stress of financial burdens

Thomas Luke (Margaret Mount Scholar)





NURTURING TALENTED YOUNG MUSICIANS

The Royal College of Music Junior Department (RCMJD) offers advanced training at the highest level to young musicians between the ages of eight and 18, combining individual tuition with chamber music, orchestras, choirs and musicianship classes.

The RCMJD is committed to nurturing the next generation of music students from a diverse range of backgrounds and to ensuring successful applicants are not prevented from attending through financial hardship. This year over £220,000 of support was allocated to the families most in need. Many of our students go on to win scholarships to continue their studies at the RCM.

We have forged partnerships with several other music organisations who share the same commitment to addressing the lack of diversity in music education, such as Nucleo, Future Talent and Music Masters. In June, 24 current RCMJD/Nucleo students performed at a gala concert at Cadogan Hall, with trumpeter Lucas Gebrehiwet as soloist. He has since continued at the RCM on a scholarship, and played alongside Bashy in the first number at this year's livestreamed MOBO Awards.

RCMJD students have been involved in more than 120 concerts, including a celebration of the 150th anniversary of the birth of alumnus Samuel Coleridge-Taylor. There were also more than 450 other solo and chamber performance opportunities.

Young instrumentalists were invited to perform at 11 Downing Street, and 26 RCMJD students gained places in the National Youth Orchestra, meaning that current or ex-RCMJD students now make up a quarter of the orchestra. Eight RCMJD students also made it through to the televised round of the BBC Young Musician of the Year competition.

RCMJD jazz musicians performed sold-out gigs at the 606 Club and the Royal Albert Hall's Elgar Room, and the winners of the Michael Kaznowski Chamber Music Competition performed at Wigmore Hall.

Opposite
RCMJD musicians outside
No 10 Downing Street



My time at the RCMJD has shaped me as a player. My teachers have nurtured and inspired me, allowing me to grow in confidence as a performer

Amalia, RCMJD clarinettist and pianist





These workshops are so inspiring, a wonderful opportunity for these young musicians and a reminder to them (and to all of us) that they belong in spaces like the RCM

Parent of RCM
Sparks attendee

WIDENING ACCESS: RCM SPARKS

RCM Sparks is the Royal College of Music's Learning and Participation programme, providing an accessible pathway designed to engage children from early years to age 18.

RCM Sparks offers workshops and live music experiences for children, young people and families from low-income households, groups underrepresented in higher education, and children or young people with disabilities.

RCM Sparks subsidises the cost of all activities to provide value for money for families and to ensure equal access. In addition, some families are eligible for free places or tickets.

The programme benefits around 3,400 children each year and, this year, provided more than 190 Royal College of Music students and graduates with practical training and work placements.

RCM Sparks once again worked closely with the Tri-Borough Music Hub (TBMH) to bring music to schools and families in the London Boroughs of Westminster, Hammersmith & Fulham, and Kensington & Chelsea. The RCM also supported TBMH in its leading role within the newly formed London West Music Hub.

RCM Sparks remains committed to strengthening and diversifying the UK pipeline of talented young musicians, particularly in shortage areas such as lower brass, woodwind, lower strings and percussion. Our partnership continued with the organisation Gender and the Large and Shiny Instruments, encouraging greater participation among female and non-binary brass and percussion players. Other specialist projects included the Young Double Reed Programme, Youth Brass Course, and Woodwind Performance Day, designed for those further along in their musical journey.

The Springboard Music Creators course continued to develop the skills of young composers in Years 9 and 10 from underrepresented groups, through practical composition workshops and collaboration with RCM musicians and composers.

RCM Sparks also supported the fourth Musical Senses programme, delivered in partnership with TBMH and ABRSM, for children who are deaf or hard of hearing and/or blind or vision-impaired.

Training the next generation of music educators remains a key priority. Alongside Sparks activity, specialist training was provided for RCM musicians in collaboration with arts partners including Music for Life (working with young people who are deaf or hard of hearing), Turtle Key Arts (working with people with dementia and with autistic children and young people), and In Deep (a music therapy programme for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities).

Other ongoing projects include Sparks Juniors, which provides tuition from RCMJD staff and student mentors for children from underrepresented groups; the Mini Sparks early years programme in local Family Music Hubs; and Get Set Play, a family initiative offering first access to music education for families in areas with limited provision.

Opposite
Young RCM Sparks
participant



LEGACIES

As a charity, bequests play a vital role in supporting talented young musicians and advancing the Royal College of Music's core mission to foster talent, widen access and encourage innovation.

We are truly grateful to everyone who has chosen to leave a gift in their Will, and to those who have shared their commitment by letting us know of their pledge. Your generosity ensures that music will continue to thrive for generations to come.

In the past academic year, the Royal College of Music received an incredible £3.6 million from gifts in Wills. On average over the past three years, gifts in Wills contributed nearly a third of total philanthropic support, and much of the support was directed towards our scholarships programme.

In the past year, 102 scholarships were awarded thanks to donors who left gifts in their Wills or established named scholarships in memory of a loved one, together contributing over £1.4 million to our vital scholarships programme.

In June, our Chairman, Lord Black of Brentwood, hosted the annual Legacy Ensemble Lunch, welcoming 45 members of our community to thank them for pledging a gift in their Will and to share the remarkable work taking place at the RCM.

This year we highlighted our Junior Department and RCM Sparks, two vital programmes opening doors to music for young people from all backgrounds. Guests enjoyed a performance by Lucas Gebrehwet, a Junior Department student and 2025–26 RCM Undergraduate Scholar, along with fellow scholars who shared moving personal stories of how legacy gifts have supported their studies and created new opportunities.

Bequests have a lasting impact, helping us nurture the next generation of musicians. If you would like to learn more or let us know of your intention to leave a gift in your Will, please contact our Head of Philanthropy and Corporate Partnership, David Sutherland, at david.sutherland@rcm.ac.uk or our Development Manager for Legacies, Natalie Matias, at natalie.matias@rcm.ac.uk

Opposite
RCM harp student



OUR GENEROUS SUPPORTERS

We thank the ABRSM music education charity for its support for our students and for our wide-ranging artistic programme.

The Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music (ABRSM) is a global music education charity that supports and promotes access to musical education, progression and excellence worldwide. A long-term partner with the Royal College of Music, ABRSM supports access to music education at grassroots level as well as staff training programmes.

Thanks to vital funds distributed from ABRSM, amounting to £1.7 million in 2024/25, the RCM boasts one of the richest artistic programmes of any conservatoire, hosting more than 500 public events each year, including concerts, masterclasses and talks.

With support from ABRSM in 2024/25, we were also able to offer scholarships to 18 talented students from across the UK, the EU, and further afield, enabling them to pursue world-class training at the College. These scholarships not only alleviate financial barriers for these students but also foster a rich, inclusive artistic community that strengthens the global reach and reputation of the RCM.

Above
ABRSM Scholar
Deniz Sensoy

OUR GENEROUS SUPPORTERS

In 2024/25, we are grateful to over 1,100 supporters who donated to the Royal College of Music, including many significant donations through the newly launched **Future Music Fund** and our three pillars of **Access, Talent, and Innovation**. We particularly wish to recognise the Estate of Sue Balston, the Cleminson family, the Estate of John Donnelly, the Croucher Hong Kong Charitable Foundation and the Keattch family, as well as the inspired support from our senior leaders and loyal donors who have enabled us to be the top performing global arts institution once again.

Providing access to music

Our supporters play a vital role in our outreach programmes for young people: RCM Sparks and the RCM Junior Department. We are especially grateful to the Wolfson Foundation and The Leverhulme Trust for their longstanding multi-year commitment to Junior Department bursaries, which allow students aged 8–18 from underprivileged backgrounds to study intensively and consider careers in music. We also received a significant commitment from Victoria, Lady Robey CBE HonRCM to support increasing diversity in both the programme and student body.

Supporting the most talented

In 2024/25, we facilitated more than £7 million in financial support, including £4 million directly for scholarships, benefitting around half of our student body. This was made possible through the generosity of many individuals, trusts, organisations and legators, whose contributions allow us to offer exceptional music education to talented young musicians from all backgrounds.

Cultivating innovation

Philanthropy at the RCM is helping to ensure that music thrives and that our students can fulfil their potential as future performers, educators, researchers and global citizens. We delivered a diverse and exciting programme of performances and masterclasses that were invaluable and transformative. Support for core activities such as our artistic programme is so valuable.

In addition to philanthropic support, our Development & Alumni Engagement team manages venue hire at the College, which generated over £400,000 of income this year. The surplus from these activities also makes a vital contribution to our mission and core objectives.

From venue hire to becoming an RCM Friend to leaving a gift in your Will, every contribution truly makes a difference. In the face of increasing living costs, we owe a humble debt of gratitude to all our supporters who join us. Together, we ensure a vibrant future for music and its transformative power in our society.

Lily Harriss HonRCM
Director of Development and
Alumni Engagement



**MORE THAN
1.1K
TOTAL
SUPPORTERS**

£5.9M
**IN SCHOLARSHIPS,
BURSARIES AND
AWARDS GRANTED**

2024/2025 IN NUMBERS



£7M

**IN PHILANTHROPIC
SUPPORT RAISED**

£3.6M

**RECEIVED FROM
GIFTS IN WILLS**

54%

**OF STUDENTS RECEIVED
FINANCIAL SUPPORT DURING
THEIR STUDIES**

STUDENTS OF

52

**NATIONALITIES
AWARDED
SCHOLARSHIPS**



THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS

Music has the power to transform lives. Your generosity has enabled us to reach and nurture gifted students so they can become leading musicians of the next generation, and contribute fully to the worldwide musical community, our society and economy. We would like to thank all those listed below, as well as those who wish to remain anonymous, who have generously supported the RCM between 1 August 2024 and 31 July 2025. We would also like to thank members of the RCM Legacy Ensemble who have so thoughtfully pledged a gift to the RCM in their Will.

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Opposite
RCM Vocal & Opera students

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STUDENT NUMBERS

UK Nationals

410

(43.1%)



Rest of the
World Nationals

367

(38.6%)

EU Nationals

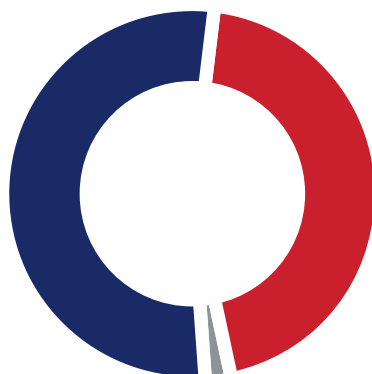
174

(18.3%)

Female

514

(54.1%)



Male

432

(45.4%)

Use
other term

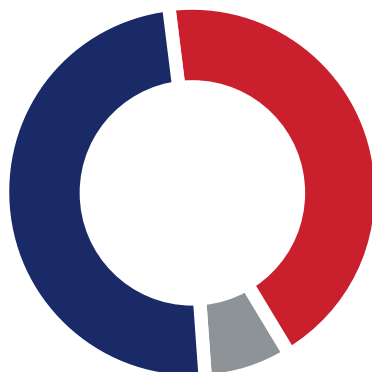
5

(0.5%)

Undergraduate

470

(49.4%)



Postgraduate

410

(43.1%)

Doctoral

71

(7.5%)



FINANCES

In 2024/2025, the College made a surplus for the year of £10.7 million. After adjusting to remove the impact of gains and losses and pension adjustments, the underlying surplus was £6.1 million. In the previous year there was an underlying surplus of £1.3 million.

	2024/25 £m	2023/24 £m
Reported (deficit)/surplus for the year	10.7	8.8
Remove losses/(gains) on investments and disposals	(5.1)	(2.9)
Remove pension adjustments	0.5	(4.6)
Underlying surplus before gains and losses	6.1	1.3

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