



ROYAL
COLLEGE
OF MUSIC
London



TEF 2023 Submission
The Royal College of Music

UKPRN: 10007778

TEF 2023 Submission: The Royal College of Music

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1. Provider context

1.1 RCM Mission and Aims

Founded in 1882 and opened in 1883, the Royal College of Music (RCM) 'provides specialised musical education and professional training at the highest international level for performers and composers, within an environment that stimulates innovation and research. This enables talented students from all backgrounds to develop the musical skills, knowledge, understanding and resourcefulness which will equip them to contribute significantly to musical life in this country and internationally' (RCM Strategic Plan 2017-27, updated 2022).

1.2 Institutional Profile

Since its foundation, the RCM has trained some of the most important figures in British and international music life, including composers such as Holst, Vaughan Williams, Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, Rebecca Clarke, Benjamin Britten, Lord Lloyd Webber and Mark Antony-Turnage; conductors such as Leopold Stokowski, Sir Colin Davis and Sir Roger Norrington; singers such as Dame Joan Sutherland, Alfie Boe, Sir Thomas Allen; instrumentalists such as flautist Sir James Galway, violinist Vanessa-Mae, cellist Natalie Clein and guitarist John Williams; CEO of the New York Philharmonic Orchestra Deborah Borda, and broadcaster Clemency Burton-Hill. Today, RCM graduates continue to make significant contributions across diverse areas of music, culture and society, nationally and internationally. Graduate outcomes, destinations, and impact are discussed in full in section 8 of this submission.

Located in the heart of London, a global artistic hub, RCM students have access to an unparalleled range of musical and cultural activities. Students benefit from access to the highest quality musicians, creative practitioners, and academics as teachers (see section 3.1), as well as professional exposure during their studies and opportunities to learn through placements with a wide range of industry partners (see section 3.3).

Central to the RCM's learning environment is the institution's busy programme of public-facing concerts and events. In 2022 the RCM presented 393 public events, including orchestral concerts, operas, masterclasses, chamber concerts, children's workshops, and student-led collaborations. This vibrant performance programme is an essential platform for the development of highly skilled and employable musicians (see section 3.3). RCM students are entitled to free entry to concerts and events, and a reduced ticket price for operas.

The Royal College of Music has a long-established tradition of working with international institutions, artists, and organisations, contributing to its global reputation as a leading training and research centre for the performing arts. Post-Brexit, our partnerships across Europe and beyond remain strong. New partnerships established in the past year include the Stauffer Center in Cremona, Italy, and the Royal Saline Academy in France. We organise regular international tours and performance collaborations with our international partners, and, post-Erasmus, students continue to have access to European study exchanges for up to a term with financial support from the RCM. Non-European exchanges are also available to students, funded in the same way. BMus students study alongside small cohorts of visiting students from Princeton University, Boston University and Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts in Singapore as part of these institutions' study experience schemes with the RCM. And our international connections are enhanced through digital

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collaborations, including low-latency online performances and the [Global Conservatoire](#) partnership (see [section 2.3](#)).

RCM has a thriving research culture that promotes artistic innovation, exploration, and self-reflection. In the recent Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2021, the RCM was ranked the top UK conservatoire offering music as a single subject. Research-led teaching is a vital characteristic of the undergraduate learning experience (see [section 3.2](#)).

In 2022, the RCM was ranked as the global top institution for performing arts in the [2022 QS World University Rankings by Subject](#). This achievement builds on the previous six years in which the RCM ranked as the top institution for performing arts in the UK and top in Europe and second in the world for four of these years. In 2022, the RCM was also recognised by the [Office for Students](#) as a world-leading specialist provider.

1.3 Students and Programmes

As a conservatoire, the RCM is a small and specialist provider focussed on the practical training of musicians for the music profession in the broadest sense. Currently (2022-23) there are 923 students in total, 481 at undergraduate level, 394 at postgraduate taught, and 48 postgraduate research students, all specialising in music. The following degree programmes are offered:

Undergraduate	BMus (Hons)	481 students (450 performers, 31 composers)
Postgraduate Taught	MMus in Performance or Composition MPerf in Performance MComp in Composition MSc in Performance Science MEd in Music Education ArtDip in Performance or Composition	65 students 205 students 30 students 25 students 14 students 53 students
Postgraduate Research	DMus and PhD	48 students

Across all programmes, 48% of RCM students are home students and 52% are international. At undergraduate level, 51% are international students from 50 different countries. This high proportion of international students creates a vibrant community of learners with a truly global outlook. More information on how we support our international students can be found in section 5, including our international teaching collaborations.

This TEF submission focusses on the RCM's single undergraduate programme, the four-year **Bachelor of Music with Honours** programme for performers and composers¹ with a focus on Western classical music. However, it is recognised that the intersections between the undergraduate curriculum, postgraduate community, and the RCM's rich research culture provide a distinctive learning environment that challenges and inspires our BMus students.

¹ Until 2021 the Royal College of Music offered a BSc in Physics and Music Performance, delivered and awarded jointly with Imperial College London. All students were registered with Imperial College London. Recruitment to this programme was discontinued in 2021 and the programme is in the process of being phased out.

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The Bachelor of Music (BMus) programme is offered as a full-time, four-year degree, which is the standard duration for conservatoire music programmes. Only a handful of BMus students are enrolled on a part-time basis; this mode of study is only offered when a student requires a flexible study plan due to mitigating circumstances.

1.4 Admissions and Access

Entry to the BMus programme, is highly selective. Admission is by audition, with applicants assessed individually on their musicianship and creative potential. Each autumn about 850 applicants apply for 120 undergraduate places. As a result, the BMus cohort at the RCM represents some of the most talented and highly motivated young musicians from around the world.

As stated in the RCM's Strategic Plan 2017-2027, the RCM is committed to its founding principles of excellence, advocacy, and access. Since opening its doors in 1883, the College has been committed to providing financial support for students to access its programmes. The recent More Music fundraising campaign provided for an expanded scholarship programme of more than £3.7m a year (up from £2.3m in 2015/16) that now supports 60% of the most talented students, regardless of means. We also have a new diversity-focussed scholarships programme awarding a total of £40,000 per year to students from Black, Asian, or ethnically diverse backgrounds or areas of low participation in higher education.

By 2027 the RCM aims better to reflect the diversity of contemporary society in the UK and beyond and have integrated pre-tertiary provision and community engagement into the RCM's programmes and ethos from age four up. The RCM's overarching strategic aim for the period of this Access and Participation Plan is to reduce the under-representation of applicants and students from the lowest socio-economic groups and ethnically diverse backgrounds in conservatoire education and consequently in the wider music profession.

The RCM's assessment of both its performance and the evidence regarding the wider national context demonstrates that the greatest challenges lie in improving equality of access to higher music education. The two target groups we have identified as a priority are:

- Students from areas with low participation in higher education (POLAR4 quintile 1)
- Students from Black, Asian, or ethnically diverse backgrounds, particularly students who identify as black or mixed-black

As the timeline for development of the skills needed to enter a conservatoire is a long one, as well as targeting sixth-form students preparing to apply to higher education, the RCM also engages with young people at earlier stages of their musical development, responding to the national inequality of access to quality music education in schools and the community at large and the need to improve ethnic diversity within the music profession.

To date the RCM has met all of our ambitious APP targets. Our robust contextual admissions policy is now well-established and ensures that applicants from under-represented backgrounds have every opportunity to demonstrate their potential at audition. There is a strong mentoring and support system in place to ensure all BMus students accepted via contextual offers are supported before and during their studies. This tailored support runs in parallel with the BMus personal advising system (see [section 5](#)).

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1.5 Development of the TEF2023 submission

This TEF submission has been developed during the period October 2022 – January 2023, steered by a TEF Working Group comprised of staff representatives from Registry, Programmes, Performance & Programming, the Creative Careers Centre, Digital Learning, and the Students' Union President. Regular consultation has taken place during this period with the RCM Senate Executive Committee, the College's principal operational committee, chaired by the Director. All Heads of Faculties have contributed to the submission. RCM Directorate has reviewed and approved the submission. Throughout the development period the Director of Programmes has worked closely with the Students' Union President and SU Committee to ensure that the information provided accurately reflects the student experience.

The evidence used to inform this submission is drawn from:

- Action points from the Student Curriculum Forum and Staff Student Committee 2019 - 2022
- Annual BMus internal study survey results 2019 – 2022
- Annual programme monitoring reports 2019 – 2022
- BMus External Examiner reports 2019 – 2022
- BMus Handbook 2022-23
- BMus Review 2021: internal and external consultation surveys
- KCG Internal Audit of Student Experience including CMA Compliance, March 2022
- NSS results 2019 – 2022, including qualitative comments
- RCM Access & Participation Plan 2020-21 to 2024-25
- RCM Blended Learning Student Survey 2021
- RCM Creative Careers Centre Annual Report 2021-22
- RCM Student Services Annual Report 2021-22
- RCM Student Feedback Tracker 2022-23
- RCM Strategic Plan 2017-2027; RCM Vision Statement 2022; RCM Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy 2021, RCM Education for Sustainable Development Strategy 2022; RCM Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy 2021; RCM Degree Outcomes Statement 2022

A separate student submission has been prepared independently by the SU President in consultation with the SU Committee, student faculty representatives, and a cross-section of BMus students. We are extremely grateful to the SU President and his team for their dedicated and professional approach to their submission, especially as they are a very small team with limited capacity.

2. Teaching and Learning (SE1; SE2)

2.1 The RCM Learning and Teaching Ethos

As a natural first choice for the most talented musicians from around the world, the RCM's vision is to develop 'versatile and innovative creators, communicators, and curators within the world of music and beyond' (RCM in 2027 – A Ten-Year Vision, 2021). To realise this goal, the RCM Learning, Teaching, and Assessment Strategy 2019-2024, refreshed in 2021 in consultation with students, sets out five key pillars that underpin RCM's learning and teaching ethos:

1. **Artistry:** we provide a dynamic and stimulating environment that nurtures creative responsibility, risk-taking, critical reflection, and innovative approaches to discovering and articulating new knowledge.
2. **Professionalism:** we provide professional learning experiences that equip our students with the relevant skills and values to thrive within the music profession of today and tomorrow.
3. **Community:** We provide an inclusive curriculum and learning environment where all students, irrespective of background or circumstances, can achieve success at every stage of their studies. Our students and staff work in partnership to review and enhance the curriculum.
4. **Innovation:** We ensure the provision of outstanding physical and technological resources to support creative, reflective, and interactive learning with peers, teachers, and professional practitioners, within and outside the RCM.
5. **Expertise:** We recruit world-class teachers and visiting artists to inspire our students and provide invaluable connections to the profession. We encourage our staff to reflect deeply on their teaching practice and to explore innovative new pedagogies.

These values are woven into curriculum design, delivery, and assessment to support the development of every student's technical, artistic, personal, and professional skills. RCM teaching builds on established performance traditions in Western classical music while recognising that music today is a dynamic and evolving field of practices. We embrace new traditions and encourage our students to challenge and innovate the discipline.

2.2 The BMus Curriculum

Key aims of the BMus programme are to develop 'artists who communicate with confidence and independence', to 'nurture artistic innovation', and to develop 'students' musical identity and creative responsibility, both as an individual and as a collaborative artist' (BMus Programme Aims, 2020)

To 'provide professional training at the highest international level for instrumental and vocal performers and composers' (BMus Programme Aims, 2020), the undergraduate student experience at RCM is intensive and individualised. The typical contact time for an RCM undergraduate student is significantly higher than the higher education sector average, including in the performing arts:

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	One-to-one tuition (hrs per year)	Contextual classes and tutorials (hrs per year)	Performance classes and projects (typical hrs per year)
BMus 1	up to 40 hours	80 hours	360 hours (weekly Faculty class, masterclasses and other performance projects)
BMus 2	up to 40 hours	84 hours	360 hours
BMus 3	up to 45 hours	Variable depending on student choice	360 hours
BMus 4	up to 45 hours	Variable depending on student choice	360 hours

All RCM undergraduate students specialise in a 'principal study', an instrument, voice, or composition, for which they receive regular individual tuition from an RCM professor. These weekly one-to-one lessons are at the very heart of every RCM student's learning experience, with every student receiving a minimum of 30 hours of one-to-one principal study tuition each year. This highly personalised approach enables us to nurture the potential in each student through regular and detailed formative feedback that is specifically tailored to their technical and artistic needs. All RCM principal study professors are specialist professional musicians with worldwide reputations, accustomed to working with the most talented students to unlock their artistic potential (see section 4).

In addition to their principal study, students may elect to study related or second study instruments, which are also taught on a one-to-one basis. This level of choice enables students to study doubling instruments for employment as orchestral musicians (e.g., oboe and cor anglais), additional instruments for employment as pit orchestra/session musicians or teachers (e.g., flute and saxophone), or multi-genre skills for professional versatility (e.g., classical guitar and jazz guitar).

All BMus contextual modules are taught in small groups (typically no more than 6 to 12 students depending on the module) or through one-to-one tutorials or supervision. In years one and two, students are assigned to specific groups for aural and musicianship according to their experience. Offering parallel modules at levels 4, 5 and 6 in aural and musicianship recognises the especially wide range of student experience in these areas prior to joining the College. Students can therefore learn at a pace that suits them and be assessed at an appropriate level.

Around their performance or composition activities, all BMus students study a curriculum of core contextual subjects including musicianship, aural, history, healthy musicianship, educational leadership, and professional skills. In years 3 and 4, students can tailor the programme to their strengths and career aspirations. A catalogue of over 50 elective modules allows students to develop a range of skills and specialisms in areas including arranging, conducting, education, enterprise and innovation, music psychology, recording and production, or areas of music research. The subjects on offer are updated regularly to reflect current professional and research practices. Recognising that many RCM graduates go on to develop portfolio careers, we regard this high level of student choice and flexibility in the curriculum as vital for preparing our students

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for whatever the future may bring (see Correia et al, 2022, where this is identified as good practice).

'At the RCM, there is every opportunity to be independent in your studies. There is a lot of freedom on where you would like to put your energy and focus and I believe this is a unique element to studying at the RCM.'

RCM BMus Student, NSS 2021

In recent years the contextual curriculum has been updated annually to reflect the RCM's Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy (2021) and, more recently, a new Educational for Sustainable Development Strategy (2022). As an example, in 2020 all faculty syllabuses and chamber music syllabuses were updated to encourage greater student engagement with repertoire by underrepresented composers. This process was driven by the Students' Union Diversity Officer at the time, in collaboration with the Diversity Action Group, a College-wide committee of students and staff.

2.3 Digitally-enhanced Learning

The RCM has a significant track record of digital innovation in learning, teaching, and performance. Due to the practice-led nature of our provision, post-pandemic we continue to deliver the majority of teaching in person. However, this is enhanced through a wide range of digital resources and pedagogies.

Our virtual learning environment, Learn.rcm (hosted on Canvas), is now used for all teaching, including practice-led modules, and all assessed coursework is now submitted via this platform. In addition, Learn plays an important role in providing information, resources and support for learning and teaching to both staff and students. It is being developed at a faculty level to support individual performance practice and provide community space for interaction and reflection.

In 2020 the RCM conducted a blended learning survey with all students to identify which areas of digital learning were working best for students. Respondents identified clear benefits when contextual or academic teaching was delivered online. This feedback led to a review of the core history curriculum, which now uses a flipped learning model to provide asynchronous study units in inclusive formats (captioned videos, interactive tasks, scores, audio recordings and text) with structured formative feedback delivered on a weekly basis and weekly in-person seminars to stimulate discussion and debate. An external audit conducted by KCG in 2022 identified the Blended Learning Survey and the RCM Learning Innovation Working Group as examples of good practice where students were actively involved in decision-making about online teaching.

In 2021 the RCM joined with the Manhattan School of Music (MSM), the Royal Danish Academy of Music (RDAM), and the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna (MDW) to create the Global Conservatoire, an ambitious transnational digital learning environment. This innovative partnership has brought faculty and students from each of the four institutional partners into an asynchronous online classroom, cultivating an international exchange of ideas. Students in the Global Conservatoire gain new perspectives on a range of music studies, learning in a 'global

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classroom' from expertise in subjects unique to the partners, while never having to leave their home institution. Since 2021-22, RCM BMus students have had access to 15 new fully online elective modules through this partnership, including 'Music and Racism', 'Introduction to Music Production', 'Nordic Noir', 'The Art of Improvisation', 'Introduction to Dance for Musical Theater', 'African-American Music History', and 'The Harlem Renaissance'. The course portfolio is designed to enhance students' skills in digital fluency, cultural awareness, and collaboration.

The RCM has an impressive track record in digital innovation in performance. We were one of the first conservatoires to implement our own streaming service and video platform, RCMStream in 2013. Video services have expanded and developed subsequently to provide personal video storage and self-operated recording facilities to support performance based learning and teaching, available to all students and staff. The [Virtual Conservatoire project](#) (2019) was a multi-institution collaboration that explored distance learning, interactive technologies and online performance, supported by the HEFCE/OfS Catalyst Fund. Through low-latency systems we are a member of the [Global Audition Training Programme](#), where students can receive real-time feedback from professors at partner institutions in the US, Europe and China in preparation for professional orchestral auditions. This programme is supplemented with regular video-conferenced masterclasses allowing students to experience musical collaboration online and benefit from an international pool of expertise and guidance. Our experience in livestreaming placed us in a strong position during the pandemic, when many hundreds of online RCM student performances were able to reach a global audience.

2.4 Assessment and feedback

RCM assessments reflect the practical, professional focus of our provision. For principal study, each student participates in annual panel-based performance assessments. In years one and two these performance examinations are internal; in years 3 and 4 all student performers are assessed through a public recital in one of the College's venues, reflecting typical professional practice. Panels for third and fourth year recitals include an external specialist examiner from the profession, and final year recitals are triple blind marked to ensure robustness.

Students are encouraged to take ownership when curating their assessed performance programmes by choosing repertoire, with the support of their professor, that reflects their strengths and musical interests. In recent years we have supported students to explore greater diversity and representation in their programmes through the RCM 'Play Something New' resource, an online searchable database of over 2400 pieces of music by underrepresented composers, cross-referenced with our Library holdings.

In addition to public recitals, other examples of professionally aligned assessment include mock-auditions (mirroring professional orchestral recruitment), group projects, business pitches, funding proposals, and podcasts.

During the most recent BMus periodic review (2020), the programme assessment strategy was revised to become more inclusive, recognising the diversity of our undergraduate study body (52% international; 16% have disclosed disabilities; 10% have disclosed SpLDs). In many core modules students are now able to choose between modes of assessment to demonstrate achievement of learning outcomes. There has also been a move away from timed examinations and large-form essays towards recorded presentations, continuous assessment, short-form question responses, reports, and portfolios.

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The RCM learning environment is rich with regular individualised feedback from staff, visiting staff, and peers. In many classes, including faculty performance classes, students provide constructive feedback on each other's performances and work-in-progress.

Our external examiners consistently praise the quality and detail of summative feedback provided to students:

'Panel discussions were conducted professionally and thoughtfully, with some excellent written feedback collated afterwards.'

BMus External Examiner, Report 2021-22)

'Feedback across all modules was uniformly of a high standard. The annotation function in Canvas was used to good effect to draw out smaller details, while marks and digital feedback was attentive, supportive and fair.'

BMus External Examiner, Report 2020-21

'The standards and quality of feedback is strong, student facing and therefore very helpful to the students, and in the majority of the work that I have viewed, the tone of assessment feedback very supportive of students ongoing development.'

BMus External Examiner, Report 2021-22

In addition to formal written feedback, students are also invited to an interview with one of the panel members on the day or in the days following their principal study recital. This enables students to receive very prompt feedback and ask specific questions about their performance.

3. Engagement with research and the profession (SE3)

3.1 RCM Teaching Staff

Our teaching faculty represents some of the finest musicians and educators in the UK. Our salaried teaching staff include internationally recognised musicians, educators, and academics, as evidenced by the REF (22.28FTE staff submitted with 62.5% of outputs rated as 3* or 4*), staff external activity (in conferences, as adjudicators, and as invited artists and speakers), and international recognition (including awards, commissions, and successful research bids). As examples, the Head of Brass is principal trumpet of the Philharmonia Orchestra; the Head of Historical Performance is a solo recording artist and Director of the baroque ensemble Florilegium; the Head of Percussion is principal percussionist of the BBC Symphony Orchestra and the London Sinfonietta; and the Head of Keyboard is Artistic Director of Hastings International Piano and has been a juror for numerous international competitions.

The College employs over 300 specialist performance and composition professors who teach at the College alongside their professional careers as soloists, chamber musicians and in leading orchestras. The high staff to student ratio enables students to learn one-to-one from expert professional musicians who are active and highly regarded in the music industry. This strong

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relationship with the profession is at the heart of RCM's learning environment and is reinforced through many hundreds of visits each year by internationally renowned visiting conductors, directors, artists, educators, and entrepreneurs, who act as role models for students and provide up-to-date professional insights and connections with the industry.

The quality of teaching staff is consistently recognised in the NSS as a major strength, with the RCM performing significantly above the sector average in the questions 'staff are good at explaining things' (RCM 94% in 2022, sector average 84%) and 'staff have made the subject interesting' (RCM 88% in 2022, sector average 78%).

3.2 Research-informed teaching

The RCM has a thriving research culture that promotes artistic innovation, exploration, and self-reflection. In the recent Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2021, the RCM was ranked the top UK conservatoire offering music as a single subject.

The RCM hosts the Centre for Performance Science (CPS), one of the world's leading centres for performance science. CPS researchers make a significant contribution to the core BMus curriculum through research-informed teaching in health and wellbeing for musicians, leadership and resilience, and performance psychology. This is enhanced by our institutional leadership of the AHRC-funded Healthy Conservatoires Network. Our bespoke Performance Simulator enables students to prepare for high-pressure performance situations in a simulated environment. With the support of a recent £1.9m AHRC capital funding grant we are currently upgrading this facility to install a cutting-edge virtual reality system where students will be able to perform in a range of simulated acoustic environments through surround sound and sophisticated data monitoring.

An ethos of enquiry-based learning and learning from expert researchers as role models is woven into curriculum design at all levels. Our 'Musical Care' undergraduate elective module is informed by the outcomes of the ESRC funded Songs from Home project, which has been investigating the benefits of group music-making online to address loneliness, social isolation, and postnatal depression. Our music history curriculum is taught by active musicologists, and we are one of the only institutions in the UK to offer music students the opportunity to be taught in and through our onsite museum and extensive collections. In BMus 3 and 4, students are supported to develop their own independent research projects, supervised by active researchers in musicology, composition, performance, performance science, music education or material culture. And there are regular opportunities for students to learn through active participation in active research projects, for instance recent student performance workshops as part of the AHRC 'Music, Home and Heritage, Sounding the Domestic in Georgian Britain' project.

3.3 Embedding Professional Practice

The RCM provides students with myriad opportunities to connect with and learn from the profession today. These can be categorised in four ways:

3.3.1 Professional Performance Opportunities

Each year our extensive performance programme provides students with many hundreds of practical learning experiences. These activities are carefully curated to provide students with experiences, small and large in scale, that reflect a wide range of professional contexts. In 2022 the RCM presented 77 masterclasses, 231 chamber concerts, 67 large ensemble and orchestral concerts, 18 talks, seminars, and children's workshops, 4 sets of opera scenes and 3 operas.

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These activities are led by visiting conductors, directors, and artists who are internationally renowned leaders in their fields. Examples include Sakari Oramo, Martyn Brabbins, Sir Antonio Pappano, Jac van Steen, Joana Carneiro, Ryan Bancroft, Natalie Murray Beale, Rafael Payare, Vladimir Ashkenazy, Nicola Benedetti, Anthony McGill, Vladimir Jurowski, Vasily Petrenko, and Maxim Vengerov.

In addition, each year the RCM organises 22 internal competitions, many of which are adjudicated by visiting industry professionals.

RCM staff take great care to ensure that opportunities are assigned with due consideration of students' abilities and stage of learning. The breadth of provision available means that there are opportunities for students to grow and develop at all levels, from informal performance classes through to small-scale lunchtime concerts, different levels of masterclasses, opera scenes, orchestral concerts, and Royal visits.

Composers have regular opportunities to hear their work performed by students and professional ensembles, from solo performances to full orchestral works and operas. A biennial collaboration with Tête à Tête opera company gives six RCM composers an opportunity to have their new operas produced, directed, performed by RCM students, and filmed. This unique collaboration with a pioneering professional company provides all student participants with outstanding professional experience and documentation for their professional portfolios.

Effective collaboration and group performance are essential skills for all musicians. To promote this, we offer unlimited chamber music coaching to all students. Composers can be matched to chamber groups to facilitate workshops and public performances of their pieces.

'I feel extremely privileged to have studied at the RCM. The amount of opportunities on offer is so exciting, and being able to go and see masterclasses and concerts all the time is something I will seriously miss.'

BMus student, NSS 2022

We also provide a wide range of opportunities for students to curate concerts and develop student-led projects while studying. Our Great Exhibitionists scheme provides a supportive platform for students to explore imaginative new projects, including cross-disciplinary collaborations and experimental work for new audiences and spaces. This experience enables students to develop vital skills in collaboration and project management in a supportive environment where we encourage brave ideas and innovation. Projects and ensembles founded at the RCM have gone on to form successful professional activity, such as the Explore Ensemble, fast becoming one of the UK's leading contemporary music ensembles.

The Catalyst Concerts initiative is a funded series of concerts where students are invited to propose concert programmes that engage with contemporary social justice issues. Students receive specialist mentoring to assist them to curate, manage and deliver thought-provoking new programmes that engage with equality and sustainability issues.

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3.3.2 Side-by-Side Schemes

Side-by-side schemes allow students to gain work experience with professional orchestras, with mentoring and feedback from professionals. These prestigious opportunities provide invaluable experience and insight into life as a professional musician. Examples include:

- The **BBC Pathway Scheme** is open to BMus 4 students. This is an opportunity for students to play in around six rehearsal patches (12-18 hours per patch) and watch the corresponding concerts over the course of the season, guided by an individual mentor or group of mentors from within the orchestra. There are occasional opportunities to play as part of the orchestra in Studio concerts at Maida Vale Studios.
- The **ENO (English National Opera) Evolve scheme** offers BMus Year 3 and 4 students the opportunity to work with the ENO orchestra. Over 15 years over 225 students have benefitted from this experience. Five graduates now have jobs in the orchestra and countless more play as extras.
- Students can accompany the **Chamber Orchestra of Europe** on tour for 3-5 days, observing rehearsals and playing chamber music with members of the orchestra between orchestral rehearsals.
- BMus 4 are eligible to audition for the **London Symphony Orchestra Strings scheme**, where they can play in around four rehearsal patches and concerts throughout the season, guided by a mentor from within the orchestra.
- Regular **Philharmonia Orchestra sit-ins** enable six students to sit beside the second player in six rehearsals across the year.

Case-study: RCM Philharmonic Film Music Project with Angel Studios

Music for films and games represents one of the fastest growing audiences for orchestral musicians. In November 2022 students performed with the RCM Philharmonic in a project based around the 'Golden Age of Hollywood'. The students performed a sold-out concert at the RCM to a public audience and later that week they performed a second, separate interactive family concert designed to inspire and appeal to a younger audience. Repertoire included carefully chosen film themes from the main programme including Star Wars, Jaws and ET. The orchestra rehearsed with a conductor renowned for his professional experience in conducting film music, had sectionals with professional musicians who are experts in their field, worked with a presenter to create an interactive song for children to join in with and met the families attending the concert. The orchestra then recorded two of the pieces at the renowned Angel Recording Studios in London with studio engineers from the Abbey Road Institute. Here they were able to learn more about the intricacies of the recording process including recording to click track. All of these elements: film repertoire, working with diverse audiences, and studio session musicianship, are vital to the career development of a well-rounded professional musician today.

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3.3.3 A Professional Curriculum

In response to student feedback and industry consultation the most recent BMus review placed greater emphasis on musicians' health, educational leadership, and professional skills, with new core modules developed in each of these areas. Each of these areas is delivered with input from visiting industry specialists including representatives from music hubs, the British Society for Performing Arts Medicine, and the Musicians' Union.

'There is a breadth to the teaching to prepare students for a professional career, including communication and promotional skills, encouragement of experimentation and support for work around equality and sustainability. [...] Courses offered include all expected elements including regular industry masterclasses and are shaped for flexibility and specialisation. Industry panels inform curriculum design. Students have multiple opportunities for direct exposure to leading sector organisations and individuals. The specific approach outlined is entirely appropriate to the discipline.'

Office for Students, World-Leading specialist provider funding panel feedback, 2022.

3.3.4 Placements

RCM Sparks, the College's Learning and Participation department, offers students invaluable experience of working in music education, which is a cornerstone to the careers of many RCM graduates. The BMus core curriculum introduces all undergraduate students to the principles of education through a short Sparks education placement. Following this, students who opt to participate in Sparks projects are provided with comprehensive training, which helps equip them with the tools to take on diverse roles in their future professional lives. RCM Sparks provides opportunities to develop specialist skills in workshop leadership, work as a paid mentor or assistant in a range of educational settings, learn from experienced educators and workshop leaders, and develop their contacts. Students who participate in these opportunities are ideally equipped to progress to employment in a range of educational roles. As an example, at present there are 30 RCM graduates employed by the Tri-Borough Music Hub following their initial work experience with RCM Sparks.

'Over many years the Tri-borough Music Hub (TBMH) has benefitted from, and supported, career pathways for RCM students joining the Music Hub as music educators. Through the RCM's well-structured teaching and learning modules at all levels, training delivered by the TBMH for RCM students, and a joined-up approach to future workforce development, the graduates emerge as highly skilled and very employable. Of the Music Hub's current workforce over a third are ex-RCM graduates – this demonstrates the strength of outputs from the RCM and how valued their graduates are to our local area.'

Head of Tri-borough Music Hub, 2022

Learning through placements is an important practical learning activity in many options modules, especially in areas of music education and musical care. Students benefit from observation, work experience and/or mentoring with local partner organisations including:

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- Centre for Young Musicians
- Intergenerational Music Making
- Mind and Soul Choir
- Music Therapy Tree
- Richmond Music Trust
- Tri-borough Music Hub
- Wigmore Hall
- Local schools and nurseries

4. Staff Development and Learning Enhancement (SE4)

Annual programmes staff development days cover a range of current topics in learning and teaching in higher education. Activities during the 2021 and 2022 events included workshops on inclusive teaching, tools for digital learning, universal design, active bystander training, and staff wellbeing.

Hourly staff have opportunities to connect with their peers through regular faculty and subject area meetings, convened by the relevant Head of Faculty or Area Leader. These are a platform for sharing and discussion about student feedback and new teaching initiatives. The hybrid format enables maximum attendance by professors who often have busy schedules with external commitments. During the pandemic these subject area meetings were supplemented by regular online 'Teachers' Cafes' to share ideas and good practice in online teaching.

All staff have access to a dedicated staff development fund for financial support to attend training and conferences. All staff (including Graduate Teaching Assistants and administrative staff) are encouraged to engage with the Higher Education Academy Fellowship scheme. Each member of staff is supported to prepare a direct application to AdvanceHE through one-to-one mentoring and financial support. Human Resources also offer regular in-person and online training in mental health awareness, unconscious bias, and active bystander training. Hourly professors are paid to attend.

Through Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership funding for the Global Conservatoire project (2021-23), eight members of staff have had access to specialist workshops in online teaching and an international peer network to share practices.

In 2021 RCM received a research grant from the Society for Research in Higher Education to examine the ways in which digital technology can enhance one-to-one instrumental and vocal teaching in conservatoires. The outcomes of this project, Transforming Performance Pedagogies, are informing professor staff development, ensuring that our one-to-one pedagogies embrace both traditional techniques and digital innovation.

The Digital Learning team and Student Services maintain comprehensive online resource pages to inform and support staff in the areas of accessible and inclusive teaching, student support and wellbeing, and learning and teaching innovation.

Case-study: Student/Staff Co-learning with Digital Learning Ambassadors

The Digital Learning Team has an established group of student Digital Learning Ambassadors (DLAs) working with staff and students to explore innovative ways of applying digital technology to enhance learning and teaching practice and develop career skills.

DLA projects have included supporting practical workshops in audio and video recording, digital performance and research tools and various platform and equipment orientation workshops to support students and staff in making the most of the resources available to them. DLAs have also worked with staff on more experimental learning and teaching projects including using a VLE to support performance practice and multi camera/360 recording for video analysis of performances.

The group aims to ensure its work is collaborative and reflective of the needs of students and staff at the college and consults widely to ensure this is the case.

5. Student Support (SE5)

As a small institution with a high student to staff ratio we are proud of the personalised support we can offer to students. All BMus students are assigned a personal advisor, a member of staff who can provide in-depth academic guidance and refer students to additional specialist support where this is required. Personal advisors are aware of Learning Agreements, contextual admissions information, and other student support needs so that they can monitor and support students on a personal level. The emphasis on one-to-one teaching and small group classes at the RCM means students of concern can be identified and referred for support extremely quickly. Students also meet at least twice annually with their Head or Deputy Head of Faculty to review their individual progress.

The College has a dedicated English Language Tutor who delivers group classes in academic and conversational English for EAL students. The English Language Tutor also offers individual tutorials to students on a sign-up basis.

'As an international student, I felt very welcomed by the RCM staff and supported despite language barrier. It made me feel safe and confident to keep on with my studies'

BMus student, NSS 2022

A robust Learning Agreement system, managed by the Student Services Manager in collaboration with the BMus Coordinator, ensures students who disclose a disability are fully supported in their studies. Updated information on support needs and adjustments to assessments is communicated to all relevant teaching staff at the start of each academic year. The Learning Agreement system is supported by regular staff training and updating of online resources. Our disability fund pays for SpLD assessments and specialised 1:1 study support for students with SpLDs.

As the lead institution of the Healthy Conservatoires Network, we recognise the importance of health and wellbeing support for musicians to realise their full potential and develop sustainable

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careers. In addition to core provision in the curriculum, students have access to free extra-curricular one-to-one Alexander Technique lessons to improve their posture and avoid injury. In preparation for recitals we also offer additional workshops on managing performance anxiety. Other wellbeing activities include weekly yoga, meditation, and massage (for a subsidised fee). We have a long-standing relationship with BAPAM, the British Association of Performing Arts Medicine, which offers free consultations to students with injuries and access to a range of workshops. We continually review our student support with reference to professional practice and the needs of today's performing artists-in-training. For instance, during 2022-23 we are piloting a ballet class focussed on core strengthening for woodwind players. Student feedback and self-evaluation will inform whether we integrate this class into our core curriculum from 2023-24.

We are acutely aware of the financial barriers that can hold back students from reaching their full potential, especially in such an intensive course. Our annual scholarship fund of over £3.7m provides generous support for students, enabling them to focus on their artistic development at the College. In 2022-23 262 BMus students (54%) have been awarded core scholarship funding with an average amount of £6442 per student. In addition, for student who experience unexpected financial difficulties the College has a means-tested Hardship Fund of £78,000 per year.

The College offers a comprehensive range of mental health services including a team of three professional counsellors and access to the 24hr mental health support service TogetherALL. In 2021-22 our counselling service supported 50 BMus students.

6. Resources (SE6)

Conservatoire students in music require specialist facilities to perform at the highest level. To succeed in the profession, they need to develop familiarity with the opportunities and challenges of professional music environments. Our magnificent building in South Kensington, our concert halls with full audio-visual broadcast facilities, 400-seater opera theatre, organ recital room, recording and broadcast studios, and library all provide professional-standard facilities for RCM students. Performance spaces are soundproofed and acoustically optimised, with high quality keyboard instruments, including concert grand pianos and historical performance keyboards. In addition, large spaces are required for sound protected teaching studios that can accommodate grand pianos and louder instruments. Students also have access to fully equipped practice rooms (bookable online), percussion suite, opera wardrobe and workshop, electronic keyboard room, organ practice rooms and composers' score-writing suites.

Our recent £40m More Music Campaign has added to these facilities. In full, the new spaces comprise a 150-seat state-of-the art Performance Hall and 70-seat Performance Studio, each with audio-visual, broadcast and other digital infrastructure; new visitor facilities and public spaces, including a café bar and restaurant; step-free access and intuitive circulation between key public spaces; increased provision to a total over 100 multi-purpose teaching, rehearsal and practice rooms; an additional recording and broadcast control room and increased capability, enabling access for global audiences; a new Museum, offering a permanent and interactive space for our exceptional and internationally significant collections; a rebuilt entrance hall, welcoming the public to our performances and events, and a 3-manual Flentrop concert organ for the 400-seat Amaryllis Fleming Concert Hall.

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To support a student's development as a rounded musician we provide a collection of high-quality keyboard instruments and access to a range of specialist and orchestral doubling instruments including historical performance instruments, and a substantial collection of string instruments. To maintain these instruments, we have specialist instrument workshops and staff, including a College-appointed luthier, a woodwind reed-making room and two permanent piano technicians.

The support from our Library was recognised in the National Student Survey 2021 in which it received the highest score of any UK higher education institution, university, or conservatoire for access to learning resources (95% student satisfaction). The Library has taken a pioneering approach in investing in digital music score libraries, as the first in world to partner with digital sheet music library *nkoda* in May 2020. Described as 'the Spotify of sheet music', *nkoda* can be accessed via phone, tablet or desktop and gives users access to digital scores with a wide range of solo, chamber and orchestral repertoire from over 100 publishers. The RCM was also the first conservatoire in Europe with full access to the *Henle Library* tablet app, offering Apple and Android users scores to download, annotate and customise. RCM students also enjoy extensive access to ebooks, journals and dictionaries, along with the comprehensive audio and video recordings from Naxos Music Library, MetOnline and the Berlin Philharmonic Digital Concert Hall. Together the RCM Museum and Library offer students unparalleled access both in-person and digitally to specialist collections of over 14,000 instruments, portraits, images, engravings and equally impressive collections of manuscripts, prints, letters, concert programmes and books.

The RCM has been world-leading in its use of technology to share its performances and classes. Regularly, and notably during the recent Covid lockdowns, the College presents a rich programme of online events, both through its RCM Youtube channel and with commercial partners. Made-for-film productions included Handel *Rodelinda*, RCM InFocus Series, and Stravinsky *Soldier's Tale*. OperaVision, an independent platform featuring the major professional opera houses around the world, has broadcast RCM performances of Mozart *The Magic Flute* and *le nozze di Figaro* to tens of thousands of viewers. These productions provide our students with training and experience in performance to camera, an essential skill for today's profession. The RCM gives concerts and holds masterclasses by visiting musicians of international repute and many are live-streamed and available on the RCM's YouTube channel: highlights so far released in 2022 include performances by Sir Antonio Pappano, Sir Thomas Allen and Rafael Payare, and classes by Maxim Vengerov and András Schiff. Combined with the RCM's extensive concert recording library, since 2018 the RCM's digital content has received 3,126,547 views with 532,573 hours of content watched in 115 regions across the globe. As an example, a video of Sir Thomas Allen directing a student performance of the opera *The Marriage of Figaro* has had 446,416 views. 41,237 people now subscribe to the RCM's YouTube platform.

Recently installed Panopto video recording technology in all venues provides students with one-touch tools to document their practice and performance and to produce high-quality video recordings for assessment, competition entries and promotional purposes. The technology is also used for lecture capture, providing students with flexible access to recorded lectures and masterclasses. Since installation, we have captured over 7,000 hours of material.

Students also have opportunities, in the curriculum and informally, to develop their skills in behind-the-scenes roles to support digital performance and create their own media content. An Office for Students capital funding grant of £227,443 in 2021 accelerated the development of our Digital Innovation Lab. All BMus students now have access to a studio specifically designed for student-

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led audiovisual recording, mixing and broadcast project. This new facility, which is equipped with a professional Dolby Atmos surround sound system, recognises the imperative to develop students' digital production skills through hands-on experience in industry-standard facilities.

7. Student Voice (SE7)

Each faculty (instrumental family) has a nominated student representative who represents student views. This system of faculty representation recognises the range of different student needs and experiences across the different faculties. Representatives are nominated and voted for through a democratic system, overseen by the Students' Union. Across the representatives we take care to ensure that a broad range of voices are represented. In 2021 we introduced a dedicated BMus 1 representative to address a repeated gap in that yeargroup.

The Students' Union is led by the Students' Union President, who is elected annually by the RCM study body. There are five Students' Union officers covering Diversity, Events, International, Welfare and Disabilities, and Marcomms. The Students' Union has formal representation on RCM Council (the institution's governing body), Senate (Academic Board), Programmes Forum, the EDI Committee, and the Environmental Management Committee.

The termly Student Curriculum Forum, chaired by the Students' Union President, is the principal forum for students to discuss their experience of teaching, assessment, and resources for learning. The termly Staff-Student Committee is chaired by the RCM Director and covers general student feedback on life at the College, with all members of Directorate (the Senior Management Team) in attendance. The Student Performance Forum, again termly, invites feedback from students specifically about the performance programme. The SU President also meets fortnightly with the Deputy Director, the Director of Programmes, and the Student Services Manager.

Student feedback actions, including those from annual monitoring and termly committees are reported at the relevant committees and logged in a live student feedback tracker which is published on Learn.rcm with information on the outcomes and status of actions. The tracker was introduced in response to students requesting more information on actions taken in response to student feedback. It is maintained by the Director of Programmes and the Students' Union President, with input from committee chairs and action holders. The two BMus external examiners have opportunities to meet with students during their annual visits and external examiner reports are published to all students on Learn.rcm.

Each student faculty representative also attends regular Faculty Meetings, which are chaired by the relevant Head of Faculty and attended by faculty professors. Student feedback is a standing item for every Faculty Meeting.

As a small institution, we ensure that all students know that they can approach any member of staff, including Directorate, with a concern. The RCM Director himself holds six drop-in surgeries each year. Student consultation was a major component of the BMus Review in 2020, with regular student meetings, surveys, and close collaboration between the Head of Undergraduate Programmes and the Students' Union president. The College also gathers student views annually through module feedback (informal and formal) and the annual BMus survey, an online questionnaire for BMus 1, 2 and 3 students which covers all aspects of the RCM student experience.

Despite this College-wide work, Student Voice stands out as the area of our TEF dashboard where we are significantly below the sector benchmark. We have discussed this in depth with consecutive

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SU Presidents, who have also experienced challenges engaging students in the feedback process. In response to SU Committee feedback, RCM Directorate approved the restructure of the SU Committee for 2022-23 to help strengthen links with the student body. It is too early to assess whether this has had a positive impact on student voice.

We recognise that the intensity of the programme, students' focus on their own artistic development, and the individualised curriculum can lead some students to disconnect from RCM community activities. We will continue to explore creative ways to engage with all students and raise awareness of the myriad different ways they can provide feedback and shape the student experience. We also note that our student voice results improved significantly (to 88% above the benchmark) in the year where an SU President was in their second term and therefore more confident and experienced in the role. Most SU Presidents only take on the position for one academic year, so we will reflect on whether this limited period (and steep learning curve) enables them to have maximum impact in their role.

Case-study: Co-creation of Guidance on Student Opportunities

In response to student and NSS feedback about the allocation of performance opportunities, during 2021-22 the Students' Union worked with RCM Directors, Heads of Faculties and Performance & Programming staff to produce a new guidance document outlining what performance opportunities are available to students, how opportunities are assigned, and who students can speak to if they have questions about their allocations. The wording was agreed through an iterative process involving extensive staff and student consultation and dialogue. This guidance now acts as an important reference point to explain the allocations process for students and promote good practice among staff.

8. Student Outcomes (SO1-6)

As evidenced in the TEF dashboard data, the RCM consistently performs above the benchmarks across all areas of continuation, completion, and progression. This reflects our highly motivated students who are passionate about achieving their very best. The results also reflect our personalised approach to providing comprehensive student support spanning musical, academic, personal, and professional development, as well as musicians' health and wellbeing.

Historically a high proportion of BMus students graduate from the RCM with either a first-class or upper second class honours degree, between 84% to 92% (see [RCM Degree Outcomes Statement 2022](#)). As a highly selective institution that attracts some of the finest young musicians internationally, it is unsurprising that a high proportion of RCM students achieve excellent or very good degree outcomes. Furthermore, the intensive teaching environment and support from outstanding resources and teachers enable our students to achieve their full potential as musicians.

A very high proportion of RCM BMus graduates, around 40% (GO 2018/19), progress to postgraduate study at the RCM and other conservatoires and universities in the UK and internationally.

It should be noted that the 'Year 2' data for completion exhibits an anomaly. During 2020-21, in response to the Covid-19 spring lockdown we decided to delay our final year recitals to late August. This enabled our students to experience in-person examinations in a professional venue,

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albeit not to a public audience. It also provided students will additional time to prepare for these examinations, after experiencing significant disruption to their practical studies. As a result, this cohort received their award late, outside the HESA reporting period. This delay was logged with OfS and has resulted in a lack of data for that cycle.

Despite the severe impact of the pandemic on practice-led teaching and the performing arts industries more generally, we are pleased to see that our NSS results were resilient during this time, and our student outcomes remain extremely strong.

8.1 The Creative Careers Centre

The RCM's renowned Creative Careers Centre provides an unparalleled service. Recognised internationally for its innovative approach to supporting young musicians, it offers resources and guidance, bespoke career advice, workshops and presentations by industry specialists, plus a broad range of professional opportunities, including performances and teaching work. For RCM's students, the Creative Careers Centre helps pave the way to a successful lifelong career in music.

The dedicated Creative Careers Centre team partners with leading consultants, reputable arts organisations and local communities, delivering unique career-building opportunities and a direct route to the music industry. They are committed to supporting RCM musicians to discover their professional identity, gain hands-on experience and new skills, develop an entrepreneurial mind-set and build a fulfilling professional portfolio.

The service is available to graduates up to five years after graduating. In addition to offering bespoke student support and extra-curricular opportunities, the Creative Careers team has extensive involvement in the delivery of professional skills and music business modules in the BMus curriculum.

8.2 Employability and Enterprise

The Creative Careers Centre manages a thriving Professional Engagements Service. Musicians are hired by organisations and members of the public to perform at events, work as freelance orchestral and session players, accompanists, répétiteurs, chorus members, and composers. Fees and contracts are negotiated by the team to ensure they fall in line with industry standards. In 2021-22 118 opportunities were offered to RCM musicians registered on the service and a total of £129,300 in fees were collectively earned. Through this scheme, during 2021-22 students were hired to perform in some of London's most prestigious venues and landmarks including the Royal Albert Hall, The Ritz, Kensington Palace, and Cadogan Hall.

The Creative Careers Centre also coordinates the RCM Teaching Service, which matches external requests for music tuition with student and recent graduate teachers. Instrumental, vocal, composition, and theory teaching is available for adults and children living in London. Students may be added to the register of RCM approved teachers following a rigorous internal application and review process. Post-pandemic the service now extends to online teaching services, in doing so opening up the service to a global client base. In 2021-22, 92 opportunities were secured for those registered on the service. In addition to London-based teaching, locations for online teaching included Texas, USA; Kyoto, Japan; Chiba, Japan; and California, USA.

Early in 2020, the Creative Careers Centre launched a new initiative entitled 'RCM PushFar' - in collaboration with an existing mentoring platform – "PushFar". This collaboration enables students

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to connect with RCM graduates, and others outside of the music industry, in order to discuss their career development. RCM PushFar is hosted via an online platform and matches students with suitable mentors through algorithmic calculations. So far, the scheme has attracted over 100 graduates from a diverse range of professional backgrounds to become mentors on a voluntary basis.

Over the last nine years, the Creative Careers Centre has developed a leading, successful administrative system among UK conservatoires, which has enabled students with Tier 4 visas to undertake work as entertainers in the UK. During the last year the Centre connected international students with 196 work placements with organisations including Glyndebourne Opera, Bristol Old Vic, Neville Holt Opera, and Arcola Theatre.

In March 2021 the Royal College of Music announced a new scheme to support graduating students launch their careers. RCM Accelerate, run by the RCM's Creative Careers Centre and also supported by violinist Nicola Benedetti and the Benedetti Foundation, is intended to support graduating students and help kick-start a new creative project, social enterprise, or business idea; or develop an existing initiative. The successful applicants received grant funding and will benefit from ongoing mentoring support to foster and encourage proactivity, creativity and an entrepreneurial mind-set. The funding received is already being used to commission new works, establish and promote new ventures and hire relevant industry professionals. To date a total of 16 grants have been awarded, ranging from £1,000 to £5,000 per person.

8.3 Student Outcomes and Case Studies

RCM students and graduates are some of the world's most talented, versatile, and employable musicians.

'Students at the RCM are among the finest performers at any HEI in the United Kingdom. The standard epitomised at graduation recitals is truly exceptional and paves the way for the next generation of musicians on the international performance circuit.'

BMus External Examiner, Report 2020-21

The outstanding musicianship of our students and graduates is evidenced by a high number of external competition successes across all faculties, for instance:

- RCM students and graduates have seen exceptional and continued success in the Royal Overseas League music competitions. In the last six years, they have won the Gold Medal twice twelve of the four yearly sectional prizes, including all four of the sectional prizes awarded in the current season, three accompanist prizes, two ensemble awards, and two overseas performer awards. RCM Woodwind students have performed notably well in this competition, winning the sectional award for each of the last three years.
- Since 2017, every year RCM students have won first and/or second prize in the Kathleen Ferrier Singing competition

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- In 2022 alone, the Vocal and Opera Department was represented by student or recent graduate prizewinners in seven international competitions, including first place in the Wigmore Hall International Song Competition (BMus graduate 2021)
- The triennial Leeds International Piano Competition, in the top rank of the world's most prestigious piano competitions. RCM students routinely reach the finals. In the most recent (2021) competition, RCM again won the first prize, BMus graduate was a runner-up. also the winner of the 2022 Sheepdrove Piano Competition.

'it is clear that musicians coming from the RCM are, without question, engaged, curious, flexible, brilliant and, above all else, fit for the profession of today and tomorrow. The excellence and rigour of student training is evident in their approach to applying for and engaging in the programme from which there is a steady flow of musicians join the BBCSO.'

General Manager, BBC Symphony Orchestra, 2022

The flexibility of the RCM BMus programme prepares graduates for a diverse range of careers, including portfolio careers spanning performance, composition, programming, business, education, health, and arts leadership. Examples of recent graduates include:

- (BMus piano, 2018), multi award-winning solo recording and international touring artist, signed to Warner Classics and represented by Intermusica.
- (BMus violin, 2018), Foyle Future First violinist with the LPO, currently on trial with the Ulster Orchestra, a 2022/23 Debut Horizon artist, and workshop leader delivering music workshops in SEN schools, groups for autistic young people, for adults with disabilities, homeless people, people living with dementia, mothers experiencing postnatal depression, and women and children who experienced abuse.
- (BMus clarinet, 2020), guest principal clarinettist for London Symphony Orchestra and appointed principal clarinet of the Orchestra of the Royal Opera House in 2021.
- (BMus violin, 2021), appointed concertmaster of the Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra commencing 2023.
- (BMus double bass, 2018), employed in the Philharmonia orchestra, following successfully gaining a place on the London Symphony Orchestra Strings Scheme.
- (BMus Harp, 2015), multidisciplinary creative working across the fields of music, visual arts, literature, technology, and business. Author, concert harpist, business strategist, art consultant, and founder of a boutique publisher of illustrated books.
- (BMus voice, 2020), winner in the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions 2021, finalist in the world opera competition 'Operalia' 2022 and currently a member of the Opera Studio at the Bavarian State Opera, Munich.

The RCM ethos of developing the individual through diverse professional experiences means our BMus graduates leave with the confidence to shape their musical career according to their own strengths and passions:

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The orchestral and chamber programmes at the RCM are unmatched and these countless experiences prepared me extremely well for my freelance career. I played in countless fantastic symphonic concerts, as well as having the opportunity to perform as a soloist with orchestra through the concerto competition. There are a large number of friendly faces from the college whom I'm still in contact with and I know I can go to for help and advice even as a graduate. The Enterprise and Innovation module inspired and help me kick start my publishing company and guided me how to promote myself well as a musician".

BMus graduate 2021, bassoonist, music arranger and publisher
/ Founder of Mayes Music (Ashby Mayes Publishing)

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