



THE RNCM

Celebrating 40 years

RNCM
ANNIVERSARY



“

Our music colleges need to present a public face, for it is obvious that the training of performers cannot be done in purdah, but few are as successful as the Royal Northern College of Music in creating a year-round schedule of events available to all. Without the RNCM, Manchester's musical life would be drastically curtailed: it ranks with Bridgewater Hall as the city's classical performance centre. No college has such a role in London...

”

Paul Driver *The Sunday Times*

Thomas Pitfield, Professor of Harmony and Counterpoint
at the RMCM and for the first year at the RNCM,
wrote at the laying of the foundation stone:

Two die, and one is born,

Hail and farewell;

Let mourning organ swell

And heralding trumpets play:

The best Tomorrow has its roots

In Yesterday.



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MUSICAL FUSION

A History of the RNCM

by Michael Kennedy

MICHAEL KENNEDY, FORMER CHIEF MUSIC CRITIC AND NORTHERN EDITOR OF THE DAILY TELEGRAPH, HAS BEEN PART OF THE FABRIC OF THE RNCM SINCE ITS INAUGURATION FOUR DECADES AGO. TO THIS DAY, TOGETHER WITH HIS WIFE JOYCE, HE CONTINUES TO BE ONE OF THE COLLEGE'S GREATEST SUPPORTERS AND ADVOCATES.



The Northern College of Music, Manchester, was its name when it was officially opened by its President, The Duchess of Kent, on 28 June 1973. But it had been open for teaching since the previous autumn. On 17 July 1973 the title of 'Royal' was approved by The Queen. The College was an amalgamation – or, more accurately, a fusion – of the existing music colleges in Manchester – the Royal Manchester College of Music (RMCM), which opened in 1893 with the city's most illustrious musical benefactor, Sir Charles Hallé, as Principal; and the Northern School of Music, founded in 1920 with Hilda Collens as Principal. The latter moved to premises on Oxford Road in 1934. The RMCM's premises were nearby, off Oxford Road, in Ducie Street. They were built as a club but never used and were, in most respects, unsuitable for their new purpose. But

the large central hall, seating over 400 people, was its principal asset. Hallé died in 1895 and was succeeded by the violinist Adolph Brodsky, who had come to Manchester as the leader of Hallé's orchestra. Hallé had recruited a luminous teaching staff, particularly for pianists and violinists. The first 'star' was the violinist Arthur Catterall, a child prodigy who at the age of 10, won a special dispensation from Hallé and his wife (the violinist Wilma Norman-Neruda) which excused him from all classes except the violin. After studying with Brodsky he played in the Bayreuth Festival Orchestra in 1902, led Sir Henry Wood's Queen's Hall Orchestra from 1905 to 1914, formed his own quartet in 1911 and returned to the RMCM in 1913 as violin professor. He was leader of the Hallé under Hamilton Harty from 1913 until 1925 and leader of the BBC Symphony Orchestra from 1930 to 1936. The first RMCM choirmaster was Dr Henry Watson, whose collection of books on music (about 5000 volumes) he bequeathed to the city when he died in

1911. Thousands of students must have spent hours in the Henry Watson Music Library in the Central Library without perhaps knowing anything about the man after whom it was named.

Brodsky was Principal until his death in 1929, when his successor was R J Forbes, a first-rate musician as conductor and pianist but he was hardly known outside Manchester. Nevertheless he proved to be a good administrator. He was Principal for 24 years until his death in 1953. He was followed by Frederic Cox, who had been Professor of Singing since 1949. Cox resigned as Principal in 1970 but returned in 1975 to teach singing at the new college.

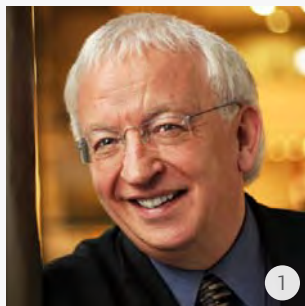
Talk of a merger between the RMCM and the NSM had been first aired in 1955 but ceased with Hilda Collens' death in 1956. Her successor, Ida Carroll, was not in favour of the merger. But this idea would not go away. To cut a very long story short, local authorities



took an interest in the merger, decided to go ahead and formed an interim governing body which first met in November 1962 and decided to form an interim joint committee with 31 members. A site on Oxford Road was reserved for a new building. The Chairman of the new committee was Sir Maurice Pariser, but his early death in 1968 resulted in Alderman Mrs Kathleen Ollerenshaw becoming Chairman and she saw the scheme through to fruition

after many crises and personality clashes spread over a decade. It had long been assumed that neither of the incumbent Principals, Cox and Carroll, would be Principal of the new college. This crucial appointment went to Sir John Manduell, the South African-born Director of Music at Lancaster University and a former holder of several posts with the BBC. He accepted the post as from 1 September 1971. The drive and energy which he brought to his work inspired the staff and students from the start as did his determination that only the best would do for the College. This, of course, led to local authority protests about extravagance. The purchase of 24 Steinway pianos was challenged, as had been the installation of an Austrian-made organ in the Concert Hall.

During its first 40 years there have been many changes to the college building. One has to work in a new building to discover its faults and virtues. A Hall of Residence has been built, and anyone

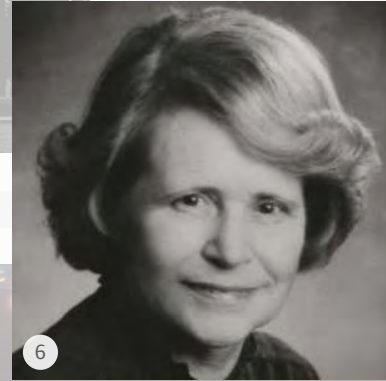


who knew the layout of the College in 1972 would soon lose their way today. But so far as the Manchester public was concerned, the College was a marvellous addition to the city's musical life – the arts centre it had never had. Its Concert Hall, holding over 400 people, was a splendid venue for orchestral concerts, chamber concerts, recitals and events such as the annual Congregation of Awards. There was also the Opera Theatre, superbly equipped, which opened in February 1973.

Both the RMCM and the NSM had rich traditions of distinguished teachers and of pupils who made their names nationally and internationally. Chosen at random, these include the composers Sir Harrison Birtwistle, Sir Peter Maxwell Davies, David Ellis, Anthony Gilbert, Alexander Goehr and Thomas Pitfield; the instrumentalists Raymond Cohen, Iso Elinson, John Ogdon, William Waterhouse and John Wilson; the singers Betty Bannerman, Alison Hargan, Elizabeth Harwood, Alfreda

Hodgson, Ena Mitchell, John Rawnsley, John Tomlinson and Irene Wilde.

A new four-year undergraduate course was introduced and such subjects as jazz, film music and electronic music were added to the curriculum. Both colleges had before 1970 formed links with other features of Manchester's music. The Hallé's conductor, Sir John Barbirolli, conducted the RMCM orchestra, rehearsing the young players as rigorously as if they were professionals. Barbirolli's successors as Hallé conductor all continued these links – James Loughran, Kent Nagano, and Sir Mark Elder. Manduell, knighted in 1989, retired in 1996 and was succeeded by the composer Professor Edward Gregson, whose 12-year tenure was to coincide with the ardour and complications of a heavy building programme. Less charismatic than Manduell, he nevertheless believed firmly in the College's importance and its place in the life of the city. The Principal since January 2013 is Professor Linda



Merrick, a distinguished clarinettist. She is a firm believer that nothing less than the highest musical standards are good enough for the RNCM. In this she continues the tradition established by Sir John Manduell.

In a short article one cannot hope to give a full and fair account of all that the College does and stands for. In 2008 The Duchess of Kent retired from the

Presidency after 35 years in which she had won the hearts and affection of all who encountered her. Her successor is the bass Sir Willard White. I am only too aware that I have mentioned only a few of the illustrious teachers and students who have worked and studied in the RNCM. My apologies to those I have omitted. But one in particular must be mentioned. The 40th anniversary of the RNCM happily coincides with

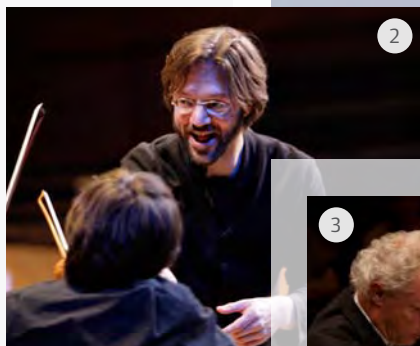
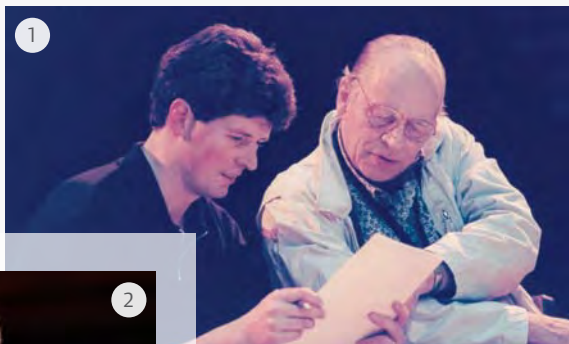
the 100th birthday of Dame Kathleen Ollerenshaw. After 28 years, she retired as Chairman of the Board of Governors in 1986. No one has more pride in, and love of the RNCM than Dame Kathleen, who has continued to attend events with the eagerness of her youth. She is one of only eight Companions of the RNCM – on whom have been confirmed the College's highest honour. None has deserved it more – nor likely will.

“

The RNCM was absolutely pivotal in my life. Not only was I awarded a postgraduate place, but I was allocated the most brilliant and gifted singing teacher, Robert Alderson, furnished with my first experiences singing lead operatic roles, supported during my initial forays into the professional world and, as if that were not sufficient, introduced to my husband, Crispin Woodhead, all within its walls. Three cheers for the RNCM. ”

Christine Rice *mezzo-soprano, 1998*





THE RNCM

40 Years of Memories

by Robert Beale



ROBERT BEALE HAS FOLLOWED CLASSICAL MUSIC IN THE NORTH OF ENGLAND SINCE THE DAYS OF SIR JOHN BARBIROLI AND WAS MUSIC AND OPERA CRITIC FOR THE YORKSHIRE EVENING PRESS BEFORE JOINING THE DAILY TELEGRAPH IN MANCHESTER. SINCE THE 1970S HE CONTRIBUTED REVIEWS AND ARTICLES ON MUSIC, OPERA AND DANCE TO THE MANCHESTER EVENING NEWS, BECOMING MUSIC AND OPERA CRITIC IN 1994. HE ALSO WRITES FOR CLASSICAL MUSIC, MUSICAL OPINION, OPERA NOW, INTERNATIONAL PIANO AND THE STRAD.

Forty years of the RNCM – they’ve spanned precisely the time I’ve lived here, and provided a gallery of glorious memories. A few come tumbling out, more or less at random. Festivals, concerts, recitals – there are too many to mention.

And personalities. Chris Rowland, who came in 1984 and was the founder of the annual Chamber Music Festival, is one we were all the richer for knowing – and those January gatherings have brought something special to the beginning of each year’s music-making in Manchester, with an atmosphere all of their own.

As did the cello festivals in their day, too – begun by Ralph Kirshbaum in the late 1980s, they brought the greatest players in the world to Manchester, on performance bills that seem almost unbelievable: Mischa Maisky, Yo-Yo Ma, Frans Helmerson, Colin Carr, Natalia Gutman, Raphael Wallfisch, David Geringas ... the list goes on and on.

The brass festivals have been significant occasions, too, with the College bridging the gap between the worlds of the great bands and the classical mainstream – never very wide in the North of England anyway. Bands such as Black Dyke, Grimethorpe Colliery, Leyland, Cory and Foden’s have been regular guests, and we’ve heard the International Staff Band of the Salvation Army and (in 2011) the Venezuelan Brass Ensemble – a branch of the original El Sistema.

More recently the College’s extraordinary roll-call of pianists has been enhanced by the James Mottram International Piano Competition, and soloists such as violinists Ami Oike and Sophie Rosa, pianists Slava Sidorenko (whose playing I found an eye-opener) and Kiryl Keduk, have been awarded the International Artist Diploma for achievement at the highest level.

It wasn’t the RNCM at first, of course. I came to Manchester in 1972, just before the new Northern College of Music was given its ‘Royal’ handle. At The Daily

Telegraph Manchester office (Northern Editor, Mr Michael Kennedy) it was important we got these things right!

After moving to the Manchester Evening News, I was sent by music critic John Robert-Blunn to an RNCM Symphony Orchestra concert with advice to look out for a young man playing the timps, called Peter Donohoe. He was pencil-slim, with a good head of blond hair – and a reputation as an up-and-coming pianist. Oh, and he played the timps pretty well, too. No doubt that stood him in good stead in his early days in the profession – before winning joint Second Prize (and there was no First) in the Moscow Tchaikovsky Competition in 1982 – there’s nothing like having a portfolio career.

The first Principal was the young and energetic Sir John Manduell, dapper and fashionable in his pin-striped flares, fiercely intelligent and hugely ambitious for the new college.



‘I left quietly after the “shattered” Barber Adagio, having found the whole event very moving and just needing to be alone....for me the emotional and spiritual heart of the evening was the truly inspired performance of the Strauss *Metamorphosen* - I have not heard a better performance.’

Audience member
Shattered Sounds, 2007

The incident that will stick in my mind as a symbol of his sheer force of character was one from some years later. We were in the Concert Hall, and at the interval a drunk had somehow evaded the front-of-house staff and positioned himself in the middle of the auditorium, proclaiming his opinions even before the music re-started.

His presence was clearly going to ruin the rest of the concert, but no one seemed to know what to do. Sir John Manduell – only recently returned to active duty after heart surgery – said, ‘*Come on, old chap, off you go*’ and single-handedly escorted him from the premises. A principal who can double as a bouncer is someone you respect.

His farewell in 1996 was a whole day of music-making, beginning with Alfred Brendel, continuing with duets by Stephen Hough and Ronan O’Hora and music by orchestras, soloists and chorus, including Joan Rodgers, Ralph Kirshbaum, and conductors

Sian Edwards, Edward Warren, Michel Brandt and Timothy Reynish. The final opera gala, with Sir Edward Downes conducting scenes from *Der Rosenkavalier* and *Die Meistersinger*, was utterly wonderful.

Eddie Gregson, successor to Sir John as Principal, had a great send-off, too, in 2008’s end-of-year concert at The Bridgewater Hall. Pascal Rophé conducted Messiaen’s *Turangalila-Symphonie*, and Clark Rundell took up the baton for Gregson’s own *The Dance, Forever The Dance*, with chorus, mezzo-soprano soloist (Anna Burford) and orchestra. It was music for the young-at-heart, in honour of a man who’s always remained just that.

Those were the big occasions, but there were other performances, sometimes attended by meagre numbers, but unforgettable nonetheless, of young artists who you realised would soon be making their mark. One was another slim young



pianist, called Graham Scott. His graduation recital (June 1991) was mesmerising and I interviewed him soon afterwards. It was a pleasure to be able to resume our chat 15 years later, when he returned as Head of the School of Keyboard Studies.

The RNCM Symphony Orchestra's concerts have given many moments of joy and satisfaction, and I can't leave reminiscing without a mention of Timothy Reynish, who conducted many of the ones I remember most vividly. There were Mahler symphonies, delivered with expertise and magnificence, and others, too, such as his Sibelius and Ravel programme in October 1994, which prompted the reflection that, with a stable of such young thoroughbreds at his command, he had the three vital qualities to get the best from them – a cool head, a clear beat and a warm heart.

For me, that represents many of the virtues of the RNCM. His great contribution to the College, and music


generally, has been in the work of the Wind Orchestra and the wind festivals that began at the College in 1998. My hearing took a little time to recover from hearing Messiaen's *Et Exspecto Resurrectionem Mortuorum* in the Concert Hall, in December 1992, but it was an extraordinary experience. And those festival concerts were crammed with premières, including brilliant and striking new works by both Eddie Gregson and Adam Gorb – the latter now Head of the School of Composition in succession to Anthony Gilbert. The College's line of distinguished composers is an aspect of its achievement that should not be ignored.

And Tim Reynish made me laugh. His Prom'n'Aid charity concerts at The Bridgewater Hall (not strictly RNCM events, but very much inspired by its people) shortly before Christmas were fun, and none more so than in 1997,

when he decided to perform the *1812 Overture* with the audience supplying 'cannon' effects by bursting blown-up paper bags – an effect whose ignition he said he would signal, to various sections of the hall, at the right moment. He found the 5,000 bags he needed by scouring local fish and chip shops, had them handed out and carefully explained the order of battle ('Wait for the Russian imperial anthem: *bah, bah-bah, dee, dee-dee...*').

One thing he hadn't said was that conductors often signal 'watch me' with their left index finger before actually cuing performers in.

When the time came, his 'get ready' signals were taken to mean 'go for it' ... and he, like a whirling dervish, was trying to silence unwanted explosions, cue in correct ones and conduct the final bars all at the same time. Happy days.



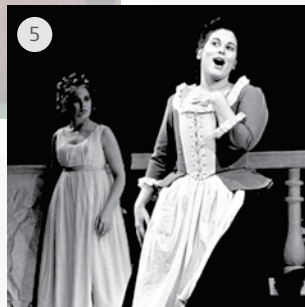
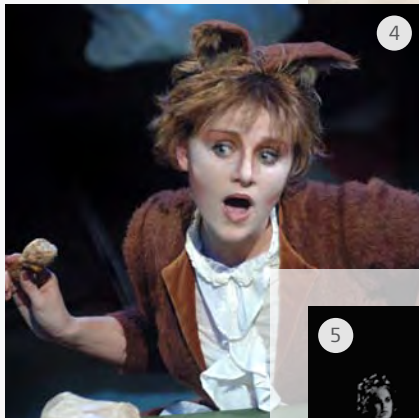
“The RNCM transformed me from someone
who just made music to someone who can
call themselves a composer.”

Matthew Sergeant *composition, 2006*

“ I loved the RNCM so much. Without all of the help
and support I wouldn't be where I am today. ”

Alexandra Dariescu *piano, 2008*





RNCM ON SONG

40 Years of Opera

by Michael Kennedy

AS BOTH CRITIC AND AUDIENCE MEMBER, MICHAEL KENNEDY WAS ENJOYING OPERA IN MANCHESTER LONG BEFORE THE RNCM CAME TO FRUITION. BUT IT'S THE NUMEROUS PRODUCTIONS HE'S SEEN IN THE COLLEGE THEATRE OVER THE PAST 40 YEARS THAT REMAIN FIRMLY FIXED IN HIS MIND. FROM AMANDA ROOCROFT AND KATHRYN RUDGE, TO SIR JOHN TOMLINSON AND SIMON KEENLYSIDE, MICHAEL HAS WITNESSED SOME OF THE UK'S BEST-LOVED SINGERS STEP OUT ON OUR STAGE FOR THE FIRST TIME.

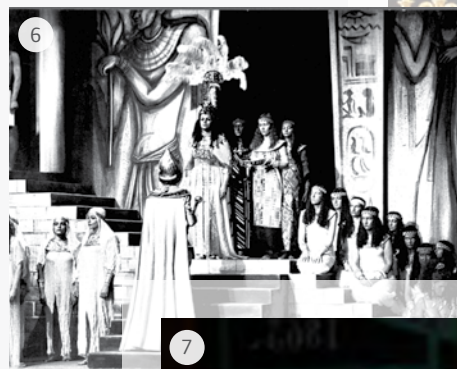


Even though the old RCM had nowhere of its own in which to stage operas, its relationship with Manchester University enabled it to borrow the University's Arthur Worthington Hall. The Hall had very basic facilities, but nevertheless nearly 50 operas were staged there between 1896 and 1972 and I have vivid memories of several. These included Wagner's *Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre*, *Parsifal* and *Die Meistersinger*; *Peter Grimes*; *Pelléas et Mélisande*; and *Otello*. Among the singers at this period were Caroline Crawshaw, Ryland Davies, Elizabeth Harwood, Gwynne Howell, Anne Howells, Patrick McGuigan, Ann Murray, Rosalind Plowright, Barbara Robotham, Avril Roebuck (an unforgettable *Butterfly*), Honor Shepherd, Kathleen Smales, Vivien Townley, Marjorie Thomas, Joseph Ward, and Catherine Wilson. Familiar from the NSM are Alison Hargan, Alfreda Hodgson, John Rawnsley and John Tomlinson. Many of these names will be familiar to present-day students as international performers or as teachers at the RNCM.



The RNCM's Opera Theatre was inaugurated on 20 February 1973 with a performance of the dramatic cantata *Belshazzar's Feast* by the Lancashire-born William Walton. This was a means of showing off the merits of the splendid chorus. The rest of the evening was occupied by a double-bill of Walton's *The Bear* and Gordon Crosse's *Purgatory*. The first full-scale opera production was of Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in May 1973, produced by Joseph Ward and conducted by Sir Charles Groves. Next came Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress*, an apt choice because Stravinsky's favourite singer of Tom Rakewell was Alexander Young, the College's first Head of School of Vocal Studies.

The College's 40th anniversary coincides with anniversaries of three great opera composers – Verdi and Wagner, both born 200 years ago, and Benjamin Britten whose birth centenary is in November. In 1987 Stefan Janski joined the School of Vocal Studies and



in December 1989 was producer of a memorable four-act version of Verdi's *Don Carlos*, for which the Royal Opera lent costumes from its Visconti staging. The star performance was the Eboli of the mezzo-soprano Sara Fulgoni. In *The Financial Times* Andrew Clements wrote of a 'glorious evening' and the production won the Manchester Evening News Award for Best Opera of that year. *Rigoletto* received five performances in 1998 with Bruno Caproni in the title-role. *Falstaff* (with Darren Jeffrey in the title-role and Rebecca von Lipinski as Alice Ford) won the MEN Opera Award. *Ernani* had been performed in 1982 as a joint venture with Welsh National Opera. Edward Downes conducted. *Aida* in 1974, with two casts and over 250 performers, had seen the opera début of the conductor Richard Hickox.

The College's Britten performances have been among its best. Joseph Ward twice produced *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1973 and 1990) and it was again performed in 1993 in a production



by Geoffrey Saunders. In 1994 Ward produced *Billy Budd* with superb designs by Michael Holt. A critic said that it surpassed the previous College achievements and this verdict remains valid. David Lloyd-Jones conducted, Mark Tinkler sang Billy and Clive Bayley launched a brilliant career singing Claggart.

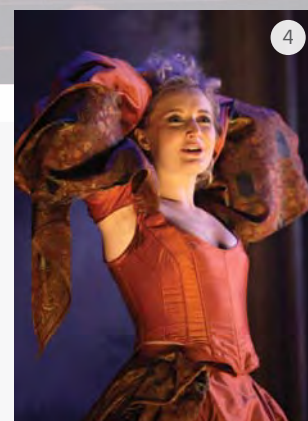
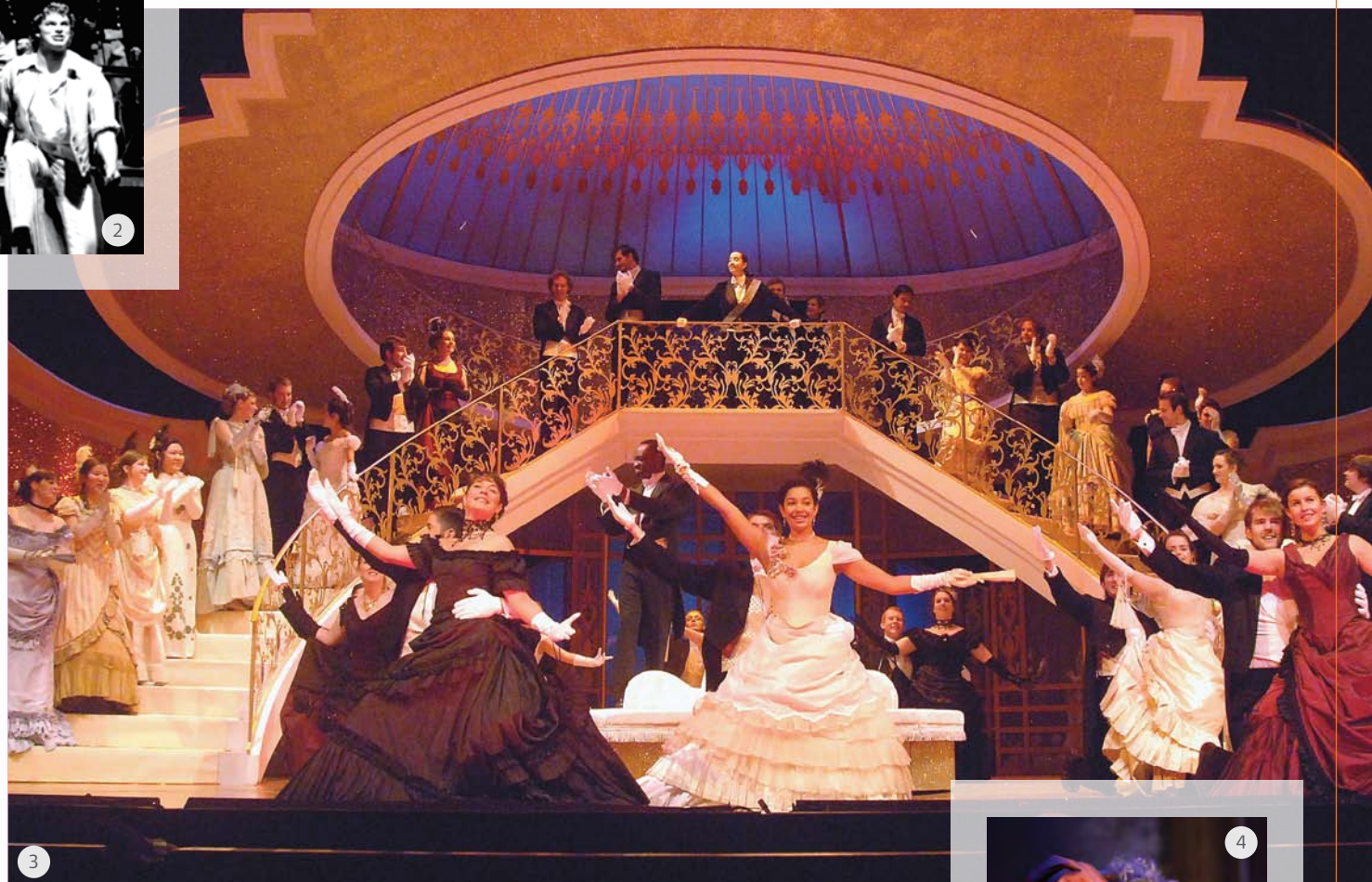
As early as December 1983, in Britten's 70th birthday year, *Gloriana* was conducted by Anthony Hose in David Penn's production designed by Deirdre Clancy. Deborah Stuart-Roberts sang the title-role. Earlier in the year she had been the Female Chorus with Nicholas Buxton as the Male Chorus in *The Rape of Lucretia* conducted by David Jordan and produced by Malcolm Fraser with contemporary allusions to the anti-war women's camp at Greenham Common. Lucretia was sung by Yvonne Howard (and by Christine Rice in the 1996 production, with Roland Wood as Collatinus). *The Turn of the Screw* in 1993 was produced by Sally Day and conducted

by Timothy Reynish. The Governess was Marianne Joseph. The City Life Award for Best Opera was won in 1997 by a superb production of *Albert Herring*.

Only brief mention can be made of the many other RNCM opera productions. The period 1980-95 was especially rich in student talent. We had Sian Edwards conducting and the baritone Simon Keenlyside who sang Des Grieux in Massenet's *Manon* in 1987. Sally Harrison sang Manon. The producer was the then little-known Richard Jones (later producer of a controversial Covent Garden *Ring Cycle*). Later that year Sian Edwards conducted Menotti's *The Consul* in which the consul's secretary was sung by a newcomer, a soprano pupil of Barbara Robotham. Her name was Amanda Roocroft. The following March she sang Fiordiligi in Ward's production of Mozart's *Così fan tutte*. 'For sheer potential at this stage in her development', a critic wrote in Opera magazine, 'I have not heard her equal.' She won equal praise from the

same source in March 1989 for her performance in the title-role of Handel's *Alcina*. Only Joan Rodgers, first heard as Despina in an earlier *Così* (December 1980, the RNCM's first Mozart opera) aroused similar critical enthusiasm. Her Pamina in *Die Zauberflöte* in 1982 was the launching-pad of her international career.

Joseph Ward's 1992 production of Vaughan Williams' *The Pilgrim's Progress* 'massively vindicated a neglected work', as David Fallows wrote in The Times. Stefan Janski's staging of *Madama Butterfly* a year later prompted Fallows to declare that this and the Vaughan Williams were 'awesome testimony to the present powers of the RNCM.' Massenet's *Cendrillon* in 1993 was another success for Stefan Janski and Sara Fulgoni. Janski's productions have been notable for their fidelity to the composer's intentions, while always having an individuality which allows for new perspectives. The ball scene in Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin*, with its



glittering splendour, took the audience's breath away. Its Tatyana was another extra-promising soprano, Nadine Livingston, who had shown her mettle as Susanna in Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro*. The College had already staged a Tchaikovsky opera – *The Maid of Orleans* in 1994 with Jane Irwin as Joan of Arc. Both Irwin and Livingston went on to successful professional careers, as has the versatile mezzo Kathryn Rudge (Cherubino in *Figaro*, Erika in Barber's *Vanessa*). She shone as Annio in Mozart's

La Clemenza di Tito and in the title role in *Carmen*. In both of these we also heard outstanding performances by the tenor Siphso Fubesi – as Tito and as Don Juan.

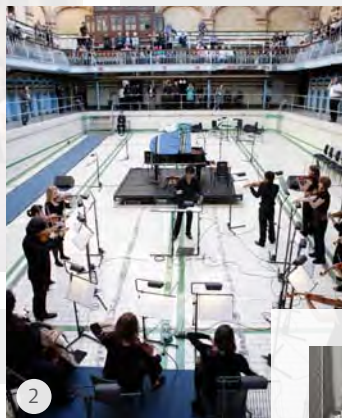
An exciting aspect in attending opera at the RNCM is the game of talent-spotting. The satisfaction one receives when, as happens so often, a talent we spotted receives rave notices at a major opera house or concert hall is immense. It is always pleasant to be able to say 'I told you so.'



“

Since leaving the RNCM it has been a very exciting and challenging time for me. I have performed four principal opera roles with English National Opera, Glyndebourne and Opera North and in recitals at Wigmore Hall. The vocal tuition, support and performance opportunities I received during my studies were great preparation for meeting the demands of the professional world. ”

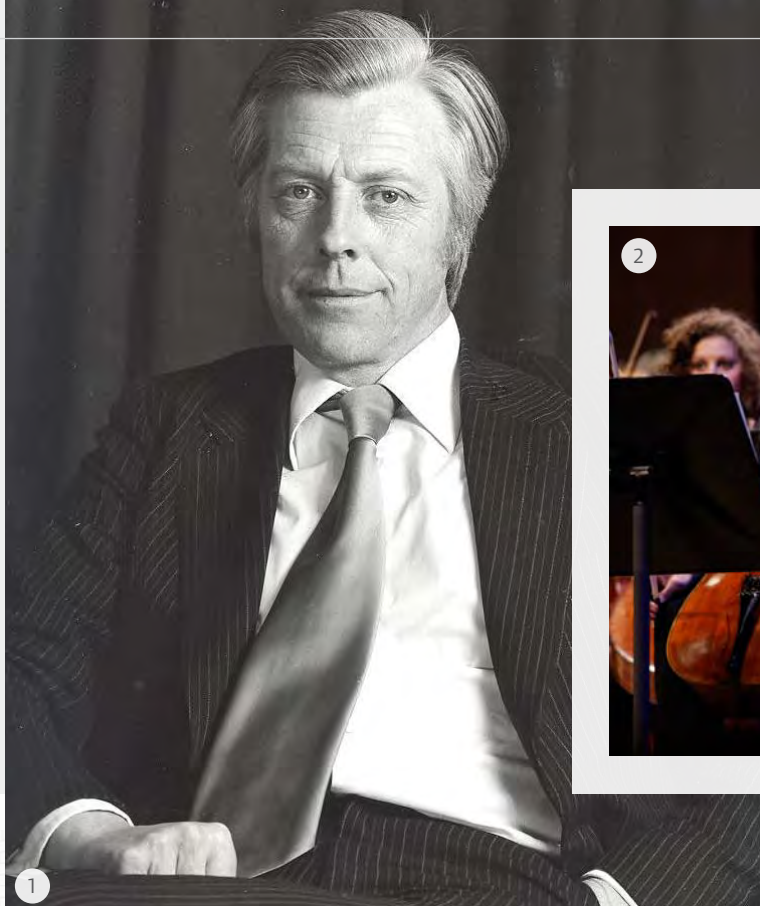
Kathryn Rudge *mezzo-soprano, 2011*



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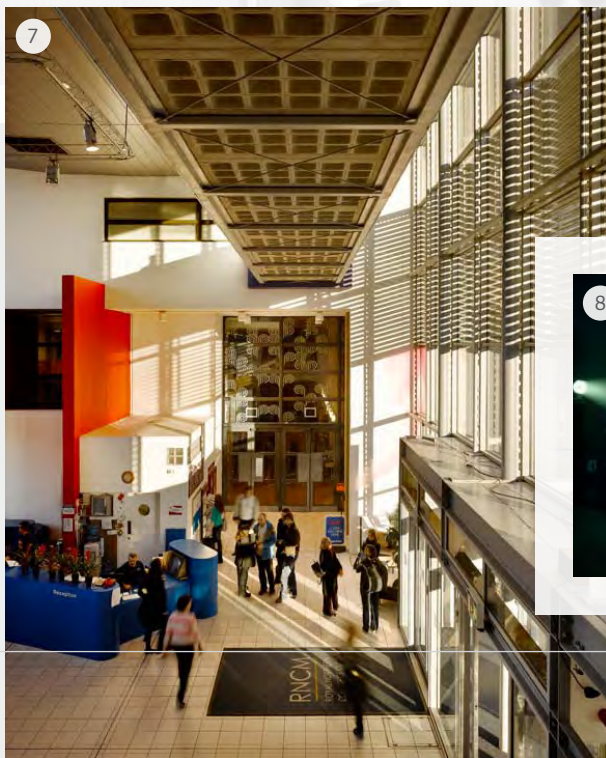
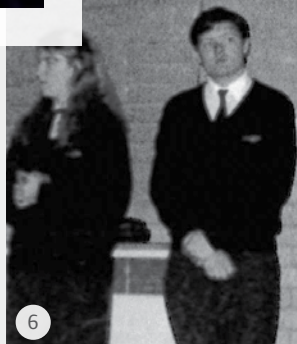
Delve into the archives as we enjoy
40 years of RNCM photography



The Daily Telegraph Theatre

Seat Nos. 1-19 ↓

⊘ This is a no smoking area



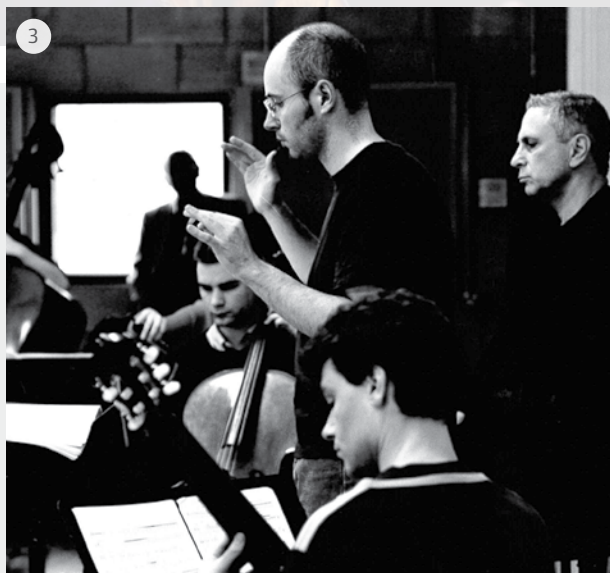
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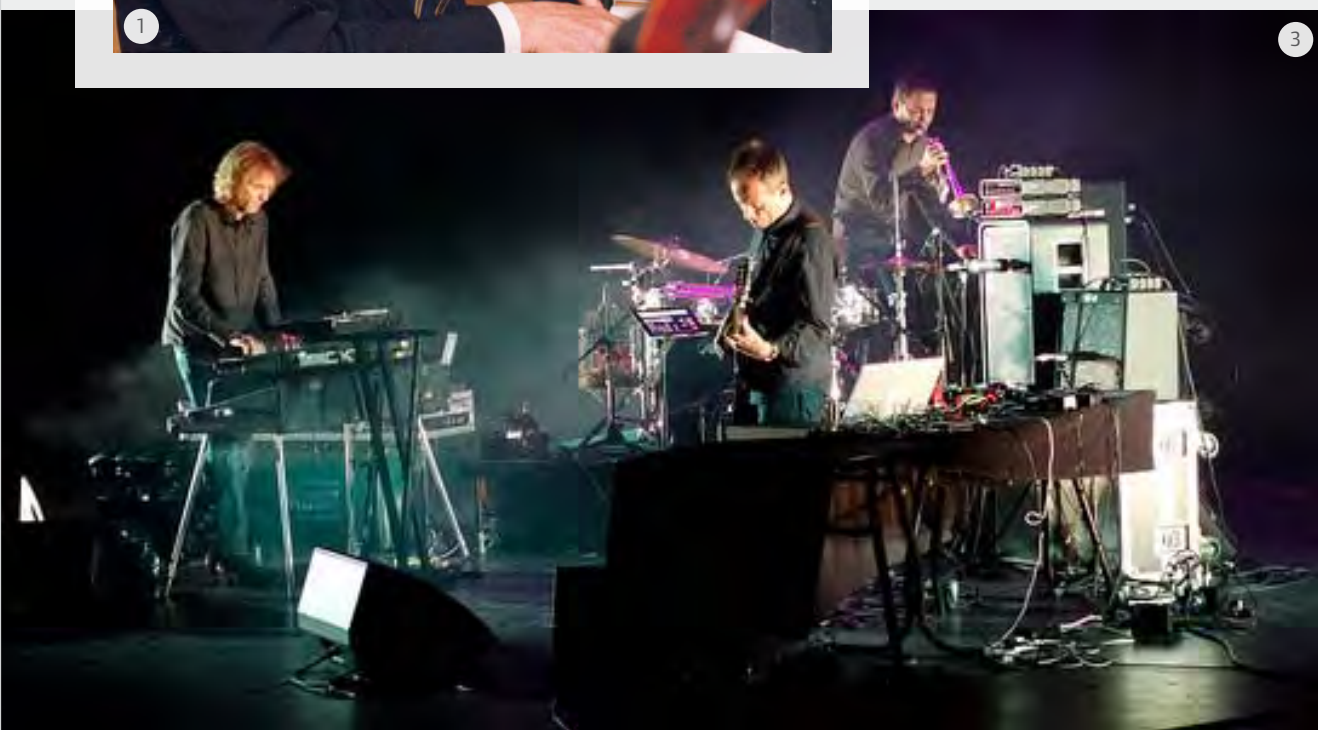
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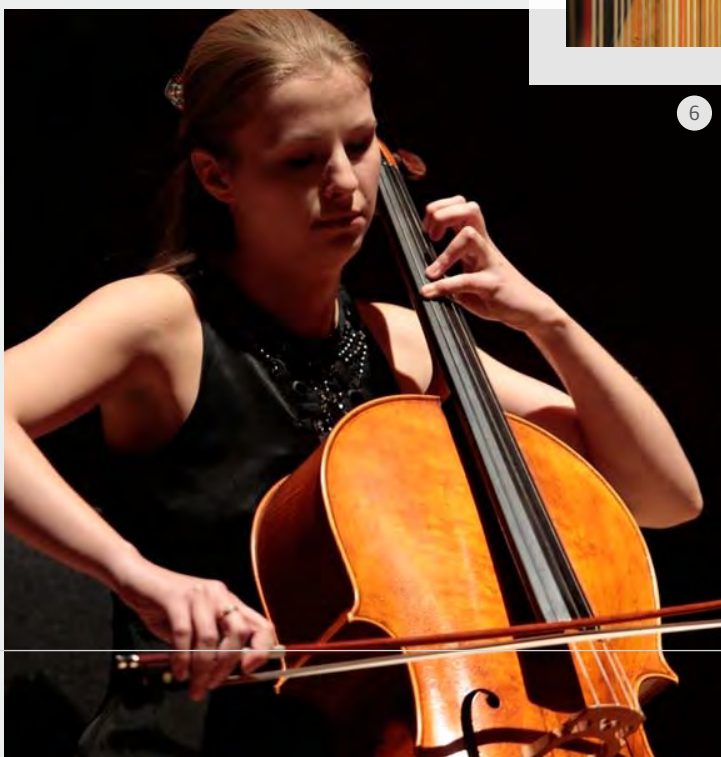


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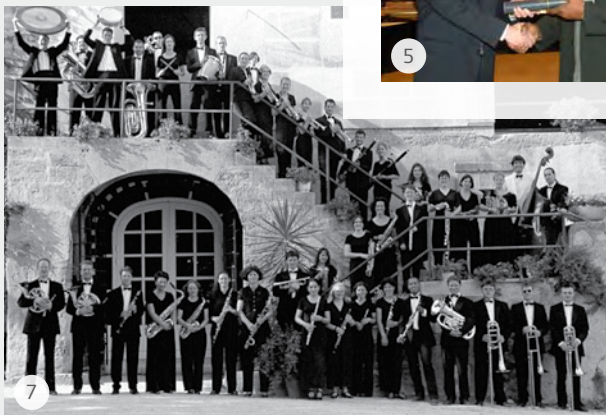
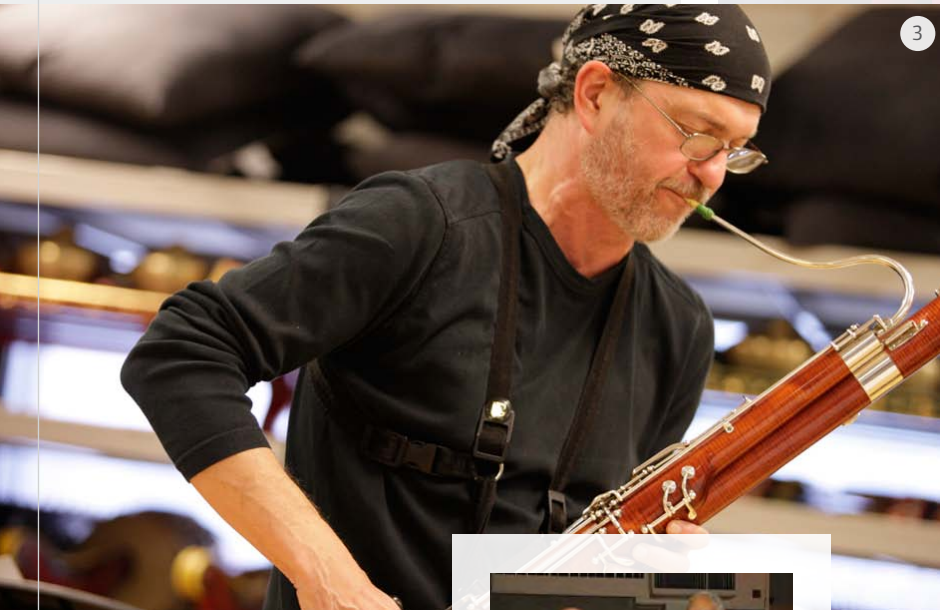
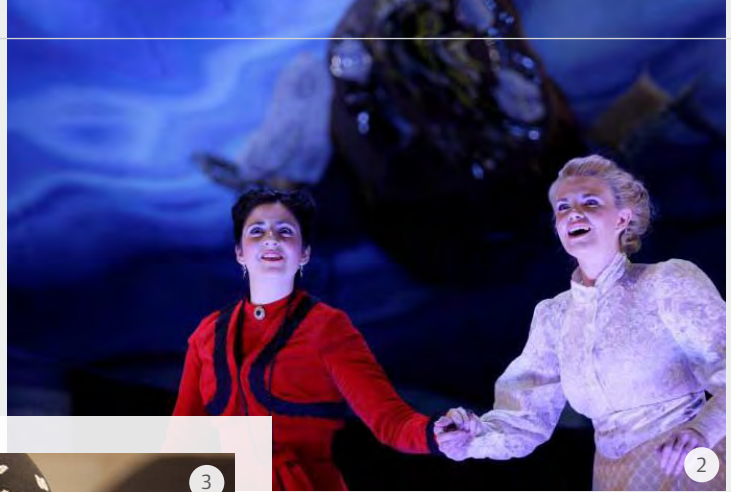
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RNCM - truly enjoyable, memorable and fruitful time of my life that gave a great start to my conducting career. ”

Ewa Strusinska *conducting, 2007*



“The highlight of my time at RNCM was being involved in the opera productions, which led to a lifelong fascination with opera. I also had the opportunity to write pieces for different occasions, recitals, etc, and to participate in all sorts of masterclasses as accompanist. There was always so much going on. My violin and viola lessons with Bronislaw Gimpel, Patrick Ireland and Atar Arad were wonderfully stimulating - and then there was all the other stuff, which has shaped my career has a composer.”

Sally Beamish *viola, 1978*



TOP OF THE PROPS

Louise Morgan takes us into the weird and wonderful world of RNCM props



LOUISE OR 'LADY' MORGAN, AS SHE'S AFFECTIONATELY KNOWN, HAS BEEN THE RNCM'S ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER FOR ALMOST 10 YEARS. SUPPLYING BITS AND PIECES FOR OVER 15 OPERAS AND OPERA SCENES, HERE SHE EXPLAINS WHY SHE'S TOP OF THE PROPS!

'I have to let you know what a total triumph tonight was. Every single aria was outstanding and the standard of singing unbelievable.

I have not enjoyed an evening out as much as tonight in a very long time'

Bob McCluckie

Audience member
RNCM Opera Gala, 2013

What's the most unusual prop you have ever bought for the RNCM?

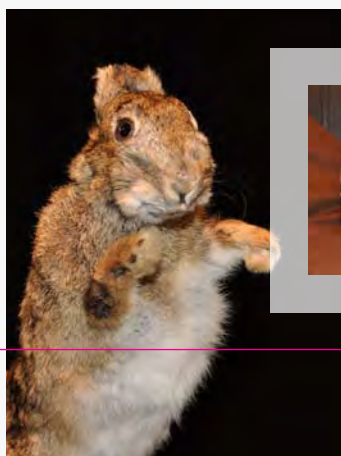
This has to be Baby Bright Eyes, a taxidermy rabbit who now lives in the prop store and was used in *The Cunning Little Vixen*.

They were hard to come by and expensive from taxidermy websites, so I set up an eBay search and luckily one came up for sale. I won him for around £30, but I remember the postman looked at me very oddly when he delivered him. I got the package inside and realised the bottom of the plastic mail bag had come open and his two furry back legs were poking out of the bottom!

We also needed a Great Auk for *The Rake's Progress*. I searched fruitlessly for a taxidermy version until I discovered it had become extinct in the mid-19th century. In fact, a stuffed specimen was bought in 1971 by the Icelandic Museum of Natural History for £9,000, placing it in the *Guinness Book of Records* as the most expensive stuffed bird ever sold. Needless to say, we had one made.

How difficult is it to keep to your budget?

It can be easy if the director and designer keep to the original props list, but that's rarely the case! A prop list evolves throughout





rehearsals, with additional items added on a daily basis, from something as small as a fob watch to an expensive and ornate baroque-style room divider the designer has spotted online and would like to add to the set.

It's my job to then research and offer a cheaper alternative if necessary, but I'm the queen of car boot sales, antiques fairs and charity shops so I'll always search for the cheapest option where I can. I'm proud to say I've never gone over budget, though my biggest challenge was *Carmen*, where I was limited due to a more expensive set.

How imaginative do you have to be?

Imagination and alternative/peripheral thinking are extremely important, as many props can't be purchased ready-made from a shop. And I often have to consider the practicalities of a prop. For example, the idea of popping 24 champagne corks on the set of *Paradise Moscow* may sound impressive, but in reality I couldn't be left with lots of

sticky liquid on the stage nor could I have lots of corks flying around the place. I also couldn't justify buying 24 bottles for each performance.

To make it work, I sourced a champagne popper percussion instrument to make the sound effect and used empty dark green glass bottles so the lack of liquid couldn't be seen. For each performance every bottle was dressed with a new gold tear-foil, which I bought online, and the students would tear the tags and pretend to eject a non-existent cork while the percussion popper provided the sound. Of course, I still had to buy 24 matching bottles of champagne, which would have incurred a reasonable cost, but I managed to find 'Charmaine' champagne at Quality Save for 99p a bottle! Needless to say it tasted



awful. I was tempted to get 24 bottles of Prosecco so I could drink them in the name of prop acquisition, but the budget's more important!

Do you ever make your own props?

Yes, we do a lot of prop making. Mel Purves, our Stage Manager, is the star of paper props and loves nothing better than getting out her quill and teabag-dipped paper to create the perfect scroll! And Tina Blatt, Assistant Technician, is also very ingenious and creative and made a number of fake food props for *Albert Herring* as we had to fill a five metre long table with cakes and jellies etc. Her fake sandwiches are legendary and, although she made them for *Albert Herring*, I've reused them a number of times since, including the last opera, *Paradise Moscow*.



Is there anything you can't use?

I always have to check for food allergies if I'm using practical food props. For example, for one opera the designer asked for a basket of nuts to be paraded onstage and sold in a market scene. I had to use fake ones because some singers had nut allergies. Fake food is rather expensive, so I used shallow baskets and padded them with calico, with just a thin layer of fake nuts spread across the top.

Do you ever stop looking for props?

No! Wherever I go, I'm always looking out for them. If I'm in a pub having a drink I always notice the display of antiques and curios on the shelves, especially if they're weird and wonderful, as I might try and borrow them at a later date! In addition I love going to see plays and shows and always make a mental note of the props

and furniture used so I can approach the company if any items I've seen come up on our props list.

When I first started sourcing props the internet wasn't widely available and I had to do a lot more trawling around shops. One time, I struggled to find a double-seated Victorian school desk so I put an advert in Loot. A gentleman saw it and rang me as he owned a small tea-shop in Stalybridge. He had some bits and pieces in the cellar and one of them was a Victorian double desk!

I love the props-sourcing aspect of my job, though it can be time-consuming and extremely challenging when faced with myriad props and tight deadlines, but I doubt many people can say their job involves getting paid to go shopping!



A WORLD APART

Chamber Music at the RNCM





‘The Royal Northern College of Music’s chamber music festival is a fixture of the aftermath of Christmas that brings a concentration of pleasure in the dull time of the year, and retains a fervent audience from Manchester and across the country.’

Paul Driver

The Independent, 2009

Fifteen years ago Christopher Rowland, the RNCM’s then Director of Chamber Music, envisaged an event in which all of Haydn’s String Quartets would be performed. Understandably, it was a huge success, and from then on the RNCM Chamber Music Festival has grown from strength to strength. Here, current Artistic Director Petr Prause shares his thoughts about the annual event and just what it is that makes it so special.

Why was the RNCM Chamber Music Festival established?

The late Chris Rowland started the process 15 years ago, but originally it wasn’t intended to be a festival. He wanted to have all of Haydn’s String Quartets performed, which is what he did in 1999. The following year he developed it further to incorporate quartets from Haydn right through to contemporary art. Since then it’s just grown and grown to become the three day festival we all know and love.

When did you take over as Artistic Director?

My first festival was 2011, which was the chamber music of Russia and America. At this time the reputation of the Festival was already very strong and had established a great following. Knowing what Chris had started all those years ago meant it was a big responsibility for me to maintain the high standard and ensure that the Festival remained attractive and fresh.

Do you have any personal favourites?

Not in terms of performances or specific festivals. For me, what’s so special is that through Chris’ strong tradition we have a community of people who come to the RNCM every year. The satisfaction for me is seeing their eyes blazing with happiness. They may have seen up to 30 hours of music, but they are still excited about it all. Chamber music is very good music, and I think it’s even more attractive to people because of the intimate nature of performance here.

How important are festivals like this for aspiring musicians?

What the Festival offers is the chance for students to perform with and learn from the very best chamber musicians. It’s a phenomenal opportunity and it’s this mixture of the professional world meeting the aspiring world that makes it so successful.

What does the future of the RNCM Chamber Music Festival look like?

I think the future is very strong. Chamber music at the RNCM is unusually attractive, which is why so many students want to study it here. It’s unparalleled in the UK, and possibly the rest of Europe.

“Our time at the RNCM gave us the best possible start to our career and was the perfect mix of fun, inspiration and excitement. The masterclasses and lessons with such a variety of world-class teachers and performers have inspired us for life. The numerous opportunities to perform and compete gave us invaluable experience, the perfect springboard into the world of professional music. If it were not for the visionary teaching of RNCM staff like the late Dr Chris Rowland I do not believe we would have pursued quartet playing with such an inspiration that has fuelled us for the past 10 years.”

Navarra Quartet





“

My time at the RNCM set me up perfectly for my career; from the musicianship classes, arranging and transcribing, to conducting classes, lessons and ensembles and even my year out as SU President. I was lucky enough to get offered professional work from my tutors at the RNCM in my first year there and haven't looked back since.

”

Carol Jarvis *trombone, 2001*



AT ITS BEST

Paul Hindmarsh on the
RNCM's Festival of Brass



In 1990 the Manchester Festival of Brass was established by the BBC studio. Nine years later, in 1999, it took up residency at the College, becoming the hugely popular RNCM Festival of Brass. Here, Artistic Director Paul Hindmarsh shares his thoughts about the past, present and future of one of Europe's most successful brass events.

'What an important event for brass bands the RNCM Festival of Brass is! Having just returned from Manchester and reflecting upon a weekend during which knowledgeable, appreciative and healthy-sized audiences attended concerts, workshops and seminars given by the best bands playing serious music, I felt musically uplifted.'

Philip Harper

Brass Band World, 2011

When and why was the RNCM Festival of Brass launched?

I began this unique festival of brass band music in 1990 as a BBC studio series for Radio 3. At that time I was a producer for the radio station and based in Manchester. The objective then was to celebrate the creativity of the finest works composed for the medium throughout the 20th century and to explore new creative avenues in performances featuring the best brass bands and soloists. When that Radio series came to an end in 1997 the then Principal of the RNCM, Edward Gregson, who, like me, shares a lifelong commitment to the medium and who is one of its finest contributing composers, indicated that he would like to take the idea into the RNCM. From there the event has grown, gaining international recognition for its enterprise and innovation within the brass medium.

Did you ever envisage it would be so popular with both performers and audiences alike?

Not really. The brass band community is small, self-contained and in some respects rather traditional in its outlook. However, there is a strong following worldwide for a more serious and creatively-focused approach to the repertoire. I believe that it has made a significant contribution to the breadth and originality of the repertoire over the past 23 years. It is highly regarded by composers, decision makers and those that appreciate the artistic level that can be attained. It is also now achieving regular exposure on the BBC.

Venezuelan Brass at The Bridgewater Hall will be forever remembered as a Festival highlight for many people. Do you have any personal favourite moments?

That concert was the Festival's finest moment so far, and it wasn't a British brass band but a South American ensemble. Other memorable occasions for me have also involved visitors from abroad: the concert by the Norwegian band Eikanger a number of years ago being a highlight. The concert by the Black Dyke Band in January 2013 was certainly its finest ever at the RNCM Festival of Brass for the quality and intensity of the performance and the range of repertoire. And whenever Bramwell Tovey or James Gourlay conduct Foden's Band the results have been truly memorable.



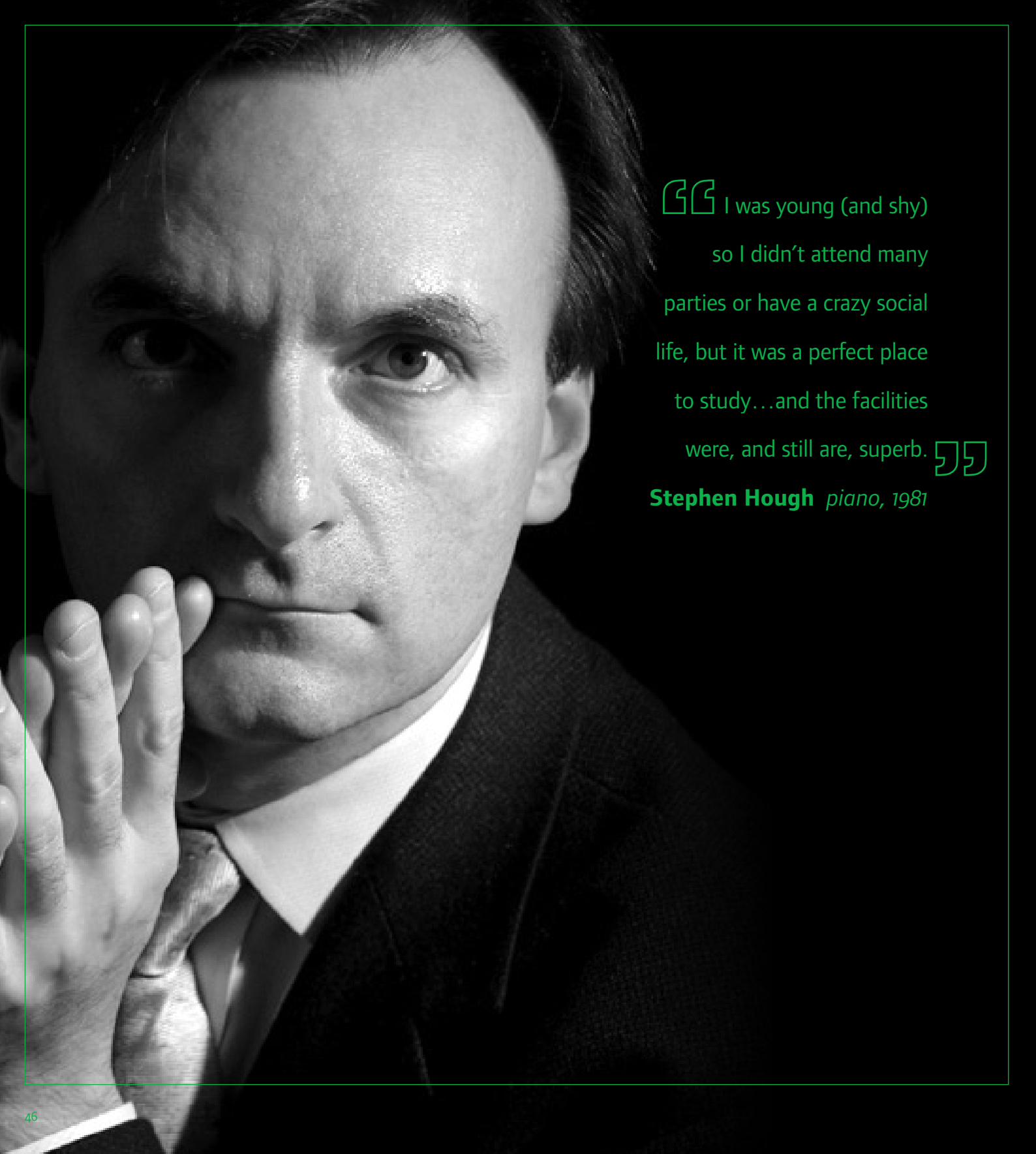
How important are festivals such as this for aspiring young brass musicians?

Vital for players and composers, as it gives both a platform and a measure of where they are and to whom they should aspire. I have always endeavoured to feature sessions that focus on young performers (both from the RNCM and elsewhere) and to present a showcase for young composers.

What does the future of the RNCM Festival of Brass look like?

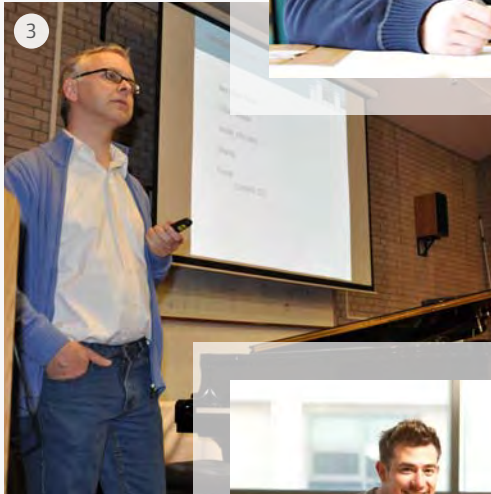
Positive, as long as it keeps reinventing itself and responding to new trends and developments, and sets the agenda for the future in terms of artistic ambition.





“ I was young (and shy)
so I didn’t attend many
parties or have a crazy social
life, but it was a perfect place
to study...and the facilities
were, and still are, superb.”

Stephen Hough *piano, 1981*



RESEARCH REFLECTIONS

Charting Eight Pioneering Years

Centre for Music Performance Research

(CMPR, initially the Research Centre for the Vocational Training of Musicians) opens as part of the RNCM Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL), staffed by three Research Fellows.

CMPR is now directed by Professor Jane Ginsborg; its members, PhD students and affiliates undertake research in music psychology and cognate disciplines including music education and music pedagogy.

2005

Postgraduate Research Degree

programme established, offering MPhil and PhD degrees validated and awarded by Manchester Metropolitan University in four principal areas: composition, musicology, music psychology/ pedagogy and performance.

Restructuring of academic management team includes the appointment of a Dean (Professor Richard Wistreich) and Associate Dean of Research and Enterprise (Professor Jane Ginsborg); a Knowledge Transfer Manager and Research Administrator.

2009

2006

CMPR launches international peer-reviewed online journal, **Music Performance Research**, hosted by RNCM.
Founding Editor:
Gunter Kreutz
Managing Editor:
Professor Jane Ginsborg

2010

Re-launch of weekly **Research Forum** (formerly Teaching, Learning and Performing Music/ Talking About Music) presenting research in a variety of formats including formal papers, talks illustrated with live music, roundtables, and panel interviews with eminent musicians, as well as informal events involving peer-learning exchanges.

RNCM awarded **Block Grant Partnership** – Capacity Building status by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), in recognition of its research degrees programme, providing four fully-funded Master's and two doctoral studentships.

Publication of first **Research Bulletin**, with details of grants and awards available to and won by staff and postgraduate research students, publications, performances, broadcasts and conference presentations.

Dr Lois Fitch awarded an **AHRC Early Career Fellowship** for research on the British composer Brian Ferneyhough, resulting in a book due to be published in November 2013 (Intellect Books).

2011

RNCM hosts first **Conservatoires UK (CUK) Postgraduate Research Forum**.

Robbie Fulford and **Danielle Sirek** become first two students to complete their PhD research. Funded by an AHRC grant, Robbie has found out how musicians with and without hearing impairments access, rehearse and perform music together, while Danielle has studied the construction of music and identity in Grenada, West Indies.

2013

RNCM now has **17 postgraduate research students** in all four strands of the programme. They present their work at conferences throughout the UK, Europe and in the USA and Canada.

RNCM bids for **further studentships** through the AHRC Block Grant Partnership 2 scheme in collaboration with other conservatoires and universities.

Professor Jane Ginsborg is a lead investigator in the CUK's c. £1m, four-year project '**Musical Impacts**', which will be the largest ever study of performing musicians' health and well-being.

THE FUTURE

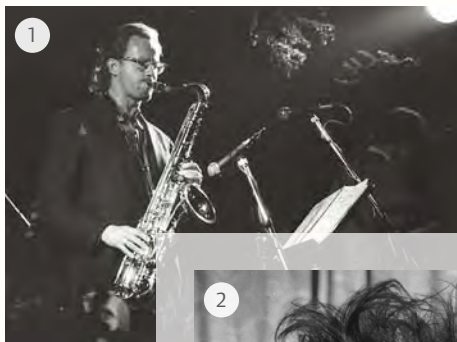
Research is now working towards future successes, supporting staff and students in a wide range of activities that will enable the College's research profile to grow. It is also expanding its collaborative research with other organisations including all CUK conservatoires, Opera North, Universities in the North West (Manchester, Manchester Metropolitan, Keele, Liverpool, Lancaster, Salford), the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra and Manchester Camerata. In August 2015, the RNCM will host the European Society for the Cognitive Sciences of Music (ESCOM) Ninth Triennial Conference.

“

Learning from world-class educators and making great friends along the way, the RNCM was the perfect place to start my musical career. Travelling around the world as a musician is a wonderful thing and I am so grateful that the RNCM helped me to realise this ambition.”

Les Neish *tuba, 2005*





40 GOLDEN GREATS

The RNCM's countdown
of its most memorable moments

40 Location, Location, Location!



The RNCM has popped up regularly as a filming location – we’ve featured on *Question Time*, *BBC Songs of Praise*, Channel 4’s music show *Transmission*, *Waterloo Road*, *Britannia High*, *Hidden Talent* and the 1988 TV series *Game, Set and Match* with Ian Holm (pictured).

39 Demon Damon and Co

RNCM strings students played with Gorillaz in their *Demon Days* live shows at Manchester Opera House – a 2005 pre-festival commission by Manchester International Festival.

38 The Adventure of a Lifetime

In 2010, graduate Li Lu learnt that you can live by art alone when she travelled 1753 miles from Athens to the Edinburgh Festival with nothing but her cello for Sky Arts reality show *The Art of Survival*.

37 Bold as Brass

While studying at the RNCM, David Childs broke new ground at the 2000 BBC Young Musician of the Year competition by becoming the first euphonium soloist to win the brass final.

36 Pistol Shots in the Concert Hall

On the 7 March 1973, several pistol shots were fired in an empty and full Concert Hall for the acoustic testing of the new venue.

35 RNCM in the City



We’ve staged a series of major off-site musical events at Manchester/Salford landmarks including the Imperial War Museum North, Whitworth Art Gallery, Piccadilly Train Station and Victoria Baths.

34 Shaun’s Sax Appeal

Happy Mondays and Black Grape frontman Shaun Ryder took sax lessons at the RNCM with Manchester Camerata musician Lynn Racz in preparation for an appearance on Sky TV’s *First Love* to fulfil his childhood ambition of playing the saxophone.

33 It’s Only Rock and Roll but I Like it!

The RNCM isn’t just home to classical music; we also train aspiring session musicians. We are excited to be the first UK conservatoire to offer a bachelor’s degree in Popular Music Performance in association with Access to Music.

32 Music for Her Majesty



The RNCM's Music for Health team joined forces with arts and health organisation LIME and patients at the Royal Manchester Children's Hospital to create *Diamonds, feathers and saxophones*, a new composition performed for The Queen during her visit to the city in March 2012.

31 RNCM Makes Top 10

2012 saw the RNCM finish 7th in PRS for Music's list of the UK's 100 best live music venues, making it the only Manchester venue in the top 10!

30 Backstage Banter

Hundreds of props are used each year for RNCM productions by our backstage team. For Puccini's *La Rondine*, our technical crew glued 50,000 red rose petals to various bits of scenery - by hand!

29 Me and Mr Jones

Synth-pop musician, singer and songwriter Howard Jones studied classical piano at the RNCM in the 1970s. He returned in 2009 to perform songs from his new album *Ordinary Heroes*.

28 Universal Memories

Did you know the late great Sir Bernard Lovell, founder of the Jodrell Bank Observatory, was an Honorary Member of the RNCM? The avid music-lover played the organ for over 40 years and was present for the first performance of our own Concert Hall organ back in 1973.

27 Forty Years of Opera

The RNCM has staged over 100 operas since 1972, including everything from Britten's *Albert Herring* to Sondheim's *Into the Woods*.

26 Running Away to Join the Circus

In 2011, RNCM percussion graduate, David Insua-Cao, ran away to join Giffords Circus, performing for the likes of Tim Burton, Helena Bonham Carter and David Dimbleby.

25 Lights, Camera, Action!



Graduate Benjamin Wallfisch has composed and arranged music for 37 films, including *Atonement*, *Miss Potter*, *Nanny McPhee* and *Eat, Pray, Love*. But he's not the only one with a talent for the big screen. Violinist Alice Zawadzki recently starred in Brit flick *Tortoise in Love*.

24 A Day to Remember

On 10 October 1999, longstanding RNCM supporters Michael and Joyce Kennedy got married at the College. The ceremony took place in our Concert Hall and witnesses included Ursula Vaughan Williams and Lady Barbirolli. Over 150 friends and family joined their celebrations.

23 A Game of Cat and Mouse

One of the slightly more unusual RNCM employees was a cat called Malcolm, whose official job title was 'Rodent Control Operative'. Unfortunately we had to let Malcolm go as he scratched the Steinway piano in Sir John Manduell's office.

22 All That Jazz!



All members of the Dankworth jazz dynasty (Sir John Dankworth, Dame Cleo Laine, Jacqui Dankworth and Alex Dankworth) have played at the RNCM.

21 A Treasure Trove

The RNCM is home to some fantastic historical instruments and artefacts, including, among others, a Tibetan trumpet made from human thigh bone.

20 RNCM on TV

In 2003, the RNCM beat Queen's College, Oxford and Corpus Christi, Cambridge to reach the quarter finals of *University Challenge*.

19 That's heavy!

Did you know that if the RNCM's 120 pianos were weighed together the total would be approximately 90,000lbs? That's the equivalent of 10 African elephants or 22 great white sharks.

18 RNCM at the Olympics

RNCM composers had a strong presence at this year's Olympics with Sally Beamish, Emily Howard and Gavin Higgins all writing for the New Music 20x12 project. Violinist Craig Owen also saw his piece, *Amor*, being used in a routine by Team GB rhythmic gymnast Francesca Jones.

17 On the Red Carpet



RNCM Opera is no stranger to the Manchester Evening News Theatre Awards. Since 1990, we have won seven Best Opera Production Awards and received three additional nominations in the same category.

16 Rumour Has It

Unlike the title of this song, Adele really did play a sell-out show at the RNCM. The following day she went to No 1 in the British charts with *Chasing Pavements*.

15 That's a First!

Despite all the planning, 40 years ago, the RNCM Concert Hall was not quite ready... and so the first concert given by the new college's First Orchestra was hastily relocated to Manchester Town Hall.

14 Christmas with Sting

In 2009, an RNCM orchestra played for a rehearsal for the filming of Sting's *If on a winter's Night* DVD at Durham Cathedral.

13 Flying High



In 2011, Doves' lead vocalist Jimi Goodwin and composer Joe Duddell created *The Bird Effect*; a new composition for the *Ghosts of Gone Birds* conservation project. Eleven RNCM students performed with them and the piece featured on BBC 6Music.

12 A Diamond Performance for Mandela



Back in 2009, graduate Samson Diamond had the unbelievable privilege of performing for Nelson Mandela as part of the Mandela Day celebrations. The violinist played *Meditation* by Jules Massenet.

11 YouTube Sensation

In 2011, cellists Luka Sulic and Stjepan Hauser created a YouTube sensation with their unique take on Michael Jackson's *Smooth Criminal*. So far, over six million people have viewed the clip, which became so popular our graduates even got calls from Ellen DeGeneres, Jay Leno and Elton John.

10 Here Come the Girls!

She might only be 24 but Amy Roberts is already making history. The award-winning saxophonist, who graduated in 2011, is the first woman to join the Chris Barber Band, the Aker Bilk Band and the Kenny Ball Band. And on a similar note, another graduate, cornet player Laura Hirst, is the first woman to join the Brighouse & Rastrick Band in its 130-year history.

9 Put Your Records On!

The RNCM has played a role in the production of Corinne Bailey Rae's forthcoming 2013 album, making it the second time staff and alumni have worked with the singer. On both occasions we recorded the orchestral strings, with players including several RNCM graduates. The sessions were orchestrated and directed by our Stage Manager, Mel Purves.

8 Top of the Class

It's official: RNCM students are the happiest in Manchester! The 2012 National Student Survey gave the RNCM 87% for overall student satisfaction. That makes us the highest scoring higher education institution in the city and the third in the list of UK conservatoires.

7 Back to Black



Back in 2003, a 19-year-old London girl by the name of Amy Winehouse performed at the RNCM. She was supporting jazz musician Jamie Cullum, presenting music from her first album, *Frank*.

6 Dame Kathleen Saves the Day

On Sunday 9 November 1969, Dame Kathleen Ollerenshaw drove her white Rover round and round the RNCM building site through the night to prevent it from being occupied by travellers. Her efforts ensured work could start at 8.30am Monday morning.

5 Va Va Vroooooom!

To mark our 10th anniversary and to raise funds for the College, we auctioned off a Ford Fiesta. Kindly donated by Ford Motor Company, the car was on display on the RNCM concourse after it was carefully manoeuvred into the building.

4 A Super Fact



Sax player John Helliwell left the massively successful band Supertramp to study at the RNCM.

3 All Over the World

We may be small but we're global! Since our foundation in 1973, over 5500 students have passed through the doors of the RNCM and across the graduation platform. Today we have 699 students hailing from 49 different countries.

2 Junior RNCM Get Festive

During Christmas 2011, a quintet from Junior RNCM performed on the balcony of MediaCity to celebrate the first broadcast of Radio 4's *Front Row* from its new studio in Salford.

1 How Tickled He Was!



In 1995, legendary comedian Ken Dodd swapped his feather duster for a little light music when he came to the RNCM to take singing lessons with Nick Powell.



My time at the RNCM proved invaluable to me in every stage of my development as a musician. Nowhere else could I have built such important artistic and professional foundations, both through my profoundly inspirational teachers and the unique, stimulating and sociable environment that this college continues to foster.



Philip Higham *cello, 2010*





The RNCM is a very special place. Essentially modern and cosmopolitan in outlook, it is rightly proud of the experience it provides for students, offering them the highest quality of tuition and unparalleled performance opportunities in a challenging but supportive and nurturing environment. I feel very privileged indeed to have the opportunity to lead the RNCM as it celebrates its 40th anniversary, and look forward to working with my colleagues, students and our many partners to take the College on the next stage of its exciting journey.



Professor Linda Merrick *RNCM Principal*

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1972

First concert by the new college's First Orchestra performed at Manchester Town Hall on 29 November

1973

Officially opened by HRH The Duchess of Kent on 28 June

Granted a Royal prefix on 17 July

Her Majesty The Queen becomes Patron and The Duchess of Kent, President



PRINCIPAL

SIR JOHN MANDEULL

1976

RNCM granted armorial bearings

HRH The Duchess of Kent becomes RNCM's first Companion

Hartley Hall (RNCM's first hall of residence) officially opened

1977

Completion of first four year undergraduate course

1979

First student admitted to read MusM degree in affiliation with the University of Manchester

School of Theory and Humanities renamed School of Academic Studies

1980

RNCM performs first Mozart opera: *Così fan tutte*

1981

Young soprano Joan Rodgers wins first Kathleen Ferrier Memorial Scholarship

Soprano Eva Turner gives part of her personal library to the College

RNCM hosts World Association of Symphonic Bands and Ensembles Conference

1983

10th anniversary

Junior Fellowships in the Faculty of Advanced Studies introduced

Verdi's *Requiem* performed in memory of Frederick Cox

Dame Kathleen Ollerenshaw retires from Chairmanship of the Court

1986

1988

Students perform in Paris, Moscow, Czechoslovakia, Holland, America, the Channel Islands and Isle of Man

Surprise concert held in celebration of John Manduell's 60th birthday

Ralph Kirshbaum organises first International Cello Festival

1990

Don Carlo wins 1990 Manchester Evening News Theatre Awards

1985

RNCM presents critically acclaimed *Billy Budd*

1989

John Manduell knighted in The Queen's Birthday Honours list

1992

Sir Charles Groves dies

RNCM string players take part in Hans Werner Henze Montepulciano Festival

Dr James G. replaces Sir Idwal Pugh as Chairman

1993

20th anniversary

RNCM has student

RNCM hosts International

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1995

RNCM Wind Orchestra tours Japan and Nantes, France, and takes part in Uster Festival, Switzerland

1996

Farewell concert for Sir John Manduell

RNCM Brass Band tours Norway

Professor Edward Gregson becomes RNCM Principal

The Rape of Lucretia wins 1996 Manchester Evening News Theatre Award

1999

RNCM Wind Orchestra takes part in Festival of Contemporary Music, Warsaw

RNCM launches its Festival of Brass and Chamber Music Festival

Joyce and Michael Kennedy marry at the RNCM

Awarded £4.5m by HEFCE to become recognised Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL)

RNCM Wind Orchestra takes part in World Music Contest in Kerkrade, Holland

Tamerlano wins 2002 Manchester Evening News Theatre Award

2002

2003

2005

2006

RNCM launches Gold Medal Weekend

JRNCM student Mark Simpson makes history winning both the BBC Young Musician and BBC Young Composer of the Year competitions

2007

RNCM granted taught degree-awarding powers

Oxford Road Wing opens

Professor Jonty Stockdale becomes RNCM Principal

2010

£1m conversion of Lord Rhodes Room to Carole Nash Recital Room

2012

RNCM launches its 40th anniversary on 15 November with a celebratory concert for Dame Kathleen Ollerenshaw

Ludwig van festival launches on 22 November

RNCM in the City launches on 29 November at Manchester's Town Hall

2013

Professor Linda Merrick becomes RNCM Principal

RNCM accepts its first students on the new BA Hons Degree in Popular music course

RNCM launches The Platform

2001

Falstaff wins 2001 Manchester Evening News Theatre Award

RNCM Studio Theatre opens



PRINCIPAL

PROFESSOR EDWARD GREGSON



PRINCIPAL

PROFESSOR JONTY STOCKDALE



PRINCIPAL

PROFESSOR LINDA MERRICK

2000

2010

2013

