

ROYAL NORTHERN COLLEGE OF MUSIC

PUBLIC BENEFIT STATEMENT

Charitable Objectives

The RNCM is an exempt charity under the terms of the Charity Act 2006.

In setting and reviewing the College's objectives and activities, the Board of Governors has had due regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on the reporting of public benefit.

Beneficiaries

The key beneficiaries of the RNCM's activities are its students who develop and refine their musical skills and aspiration throughout their time with the College. Other beneficiaries include; children and young people, by offering them experiences of, and training in, music at the College and in their own schools; and the general public, in access to the wide variety of musical activity and in accessing the professional standard facilities and performance venues available to arts based SMEs, musical groups and societies. Arts groups using College facilities enrich the cultural environment of the Region and by coming to the College, audiences are able to experience a much wider range of musical activity and genres than would be available to them without the College's facilities.

Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging

The promotion of equity, diversity, inclusion and belonging is central to the mission and vision of the College. The College recognises that it has a leading role to play in the City and region by promoting the benefits of this vision. It seeks to achieve this strategic objective through the activities of an inclusive and diverse community of staff and students that possesses specialist knowledge and blend of skills. We see diversity as a strength and value the rich variety of backgrounds, identities and experiences our staff and students bring to the College. We are committed to taking a proactive approach to advancing equality and inclusion for all our students, staff and stakeholders, regardless of age, background, disability, race/ethnicity, national origin, gender identity, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity/paternity, religion or belief/non-belief, sex or sexual orientation. This takes place through our teaching, performance opportunities and research and by enabling all our students to develop the skills they need as citizens in a global society. We are committed to creating and maintaining an inclusive learning and working environment, where all members of the College's community can flourish and reach their full potential, where we engage with and learn from our community, and where we affect positive change within the College, our city and wider society.

Our annual Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan sets out we put these values into practice from Board level through to the College's staff, students and stakeholders. The Plan is monitored by the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Forum; the work of which is underpinned by the College's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.

Student Admissions and Access and Participation

The College is committed to having a student population that is balanced and diverse in terms of background and experience, with all the educational and cultural benefits that this brings. The College welcomes applications from all those who have the potential, motivation and academic and musical ability to develop, thrive and succeed in the specialist setting of a music conservatoire, whatever their background.

The College provides over £1m per annum in the form of bursaries, scholarships and awards from its Endowment Funds for the benefit of those students who may not otherwise be able to

attend the institution. The development of a musician from the point of first encountering an instrument to reaching the standard required for entry to a conservatoire can take over 10 years. In order to widen participation and access to College programmes, it is important that talent is identified and nurtured from an early stage. Whereas pupils with private means can seek and fund quality tuition outside the state education sector, and buy good quality instruments, those without private means depend heavily on the input of music education hubs and trusts, many of which are vulnerable financially. These pupils will require access to high quality and inspiring teaching, which is arguably being compromised by the year-on-year reduction in the number of teacher training places made available, and the removal of associated training bursaries, both of which were acting as an incentive for talented conservatoire graduates to consider teaching as a future career path. In addition, regional differences in the level of provision of high quality music education, exacerbated by changes in school curricula and, following the pandemic, policy initiatives that prioritise closing the attainment gap in English and Mathematics, leave young people in particular geographical areas with little or no opportunity to learn music.

The College's strategy for the recruitment of UK students is designed to enhance access and participation, including activities such as: regional 'mini tours' by staff and students; employing RNCM alumni as agents/ambassadors; using research to target specific schools and FE colleges in deprived areas where there is the potential to develop musical activity; running conferences to support teachers; hosting incoming and supporting outgoing visits; targeting young musicians and teachers attending events at the College; and maximising full- and part-time staff contacts and networks; working in partnership with national, regional and local organisations to develop progression routes; offer bespoke education and training to young people experiencing significant barriers. These initiatives all serve to raise awareness of the College, raise aspirations among young musicians, break down perceived barriers, support teachers, and encourage pupils from poorer backgrounds to consider studying at the College as a viable option.

The College seeks to engage with all its neighbouring communities in Greater Manchester, but recognises that in some of those communities there is little access to music and quality music teaching. With limited resources, the College therefore seeks to focus its creative energies on markets where there is genuine potential to make a difference.

The College's engagement initiative, RNCM Engage, has the dual aim of supporting young learners in the North and bringing the RNCM closer to its community. This is enacted through music education work and creative engagement. The creative engagement programme provides opportunities for engagement with music for people of all ages and musical tastes, bringing together students, professional artists, and community and business leaders to exchange and develop ideas, and to reach out to new and increasingly diverse audiences.

The College's music education work offers high quality tuition and support to young musicians either at minimal cost, or free of charge. Young Projects, Young Programmes, such as Young Strings and Young Artists, and Summer Schools provide learning opportunities at different levels of study, and the Pathfinder programme supports those who experience significant barriers in developing the social, emotional and musical skills needed to succeed in advanced musical learning. Pathfinder also provides a progression route into the College's centre for advanced training, Junior RNCM. These activities raise aspiration, enhance the provision music services can make available within limited funds, and enable those with talent to develop the skills and confidence they need to succeed at audition should they wish to progress their studies at higher education level.

Research

The RNCM has a growing number of staff who are engaged in internationally leading research and advanced scholarship that makes direct and positive contributions to health and wellbeing; music education policy; creativity, culture and society; and creative responses to some of the

major challenges of our time, such as the climate emergency and equality, diversity and inclusivity. The College's venue and digital infrastructure enables it to communicate its findings to diverse audiences and communities, locally, nationally and internationally.

Performance

The RNCM has a dual function as both a Conservatoire for training musicians for the profession, and a public performance venue, with over 400 self-promoted and hired events and performances each year given by students, professional, amateurs and young people. Whilst the majority of these events take place in the RNCM's own facilities, a number of performances are also held in external venues around the City of Manchester, regionally, nationally and internationally. Events include concerts given by the College's students, featuring solo performers, chamber ensembles, large ensembles; including the Wind Orchestra, Brass Band and Session Orchestra, full symphony orchestras, as well as fully staged operas. In addition, there are regular performances and masterclasses by international visiting artists and groups, as well as lectures and talks to accompany certain aspects of the performance programme. A number of these events are free. The RNCM public programme includes all musical genres and includes cultural, social and special interest events, as well as conferences and business gatherings.

The breadth of the RNCM performance offer is significant, taking in early music, classical repertoire, contemporary classical music and jazz, popular, folk and world musics. The diversity of the programme ensures that the College's performance spaces and other public facilities are made available to a wide public who are entertained, educated and inspired by the range of music genres that the College presents. The RNCM has been awarded Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF) funding in recognition of the scale, diversity, accessibility and economic and social benefit to the wider community, of its performance programme, research and related knowledge exchange.

Partnerships

Partnership working is a key part of the College's RNCM Engage Strategy. The RNCM has established strong partnerships with local Music Education Hubs, in particular the two local hubs, One Education and the Greater Manchester Music Education Hub, as well as the Cheshire East Music Education Hub, 'Love Music Trust', the Northamptonshire and Derbyshire Music Education Hubs and the Isle of Man Music Service.

The College has developed other partnerships with a wide range of organisations in the North that enhance the student experience and employability, whilst bringing reciprocal benefits to the external partners. Key partnerships include The University of Manchester, Manchester Metropolitan University, Manchester Camerata, the Hallé, the BBC Philharmonic, the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, Opera North, Central Manchester University Hospitals Trust Chetham's School of Music, Psappha and Manchester Collective.

Looking beyond Greater Manchester, the College's many partnerships with public and private sector music education organisations, such as the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music, Artis (a dynamic training organisation developing much sought after artist-practitioners to work with primary school children), Brighter Sound (a community popular music provider), Nordoff-Robbins (one of the world's leading music therapy organisations) and the National Children's Orchestra offer wide-ranging opportunities for Widening Participation and access initiatives on a regional and national scale.

The College has exciting partnerships with leading conservatoires in mainland Europe and internationally, facilitating the sharing of best practice, project-based work and staff and student mobility. Such partnerships not only provide opportunities for student placement/experience

schemes, but also reinforce the College's role as an important UK arts centre, attracting top international artists to the institution.

Board of Governors

The College's Board of Governors has collective responsibility for overseeing the College's educational character, mission and values, determining its future direction, and fostering an inclusive environment in which the full potential of all students and staff can be realised. Governors of the College are expected to act honestly, diligently and protect the College's reputation and the trust and confidence of those with whom it deals. A key role of the Board is to promote a positive culture which supports ethical behaviour, equality, diversity and inclusivity across the College, including in the Board's own operation and composition. This includes ensuring under-representation and differences in student outcomes are challenged and, where practicable, assertive or proactive steps are taken to ensure a fair and equitable experience and inclusive environment for all.

Employees

The College has an internationally regarded body of teaching staff; a number of whom are also internationally recognised as researchers, and a highly experienced team of professional staff, passionate to help talented musicians realise their fullest potential and professional aspirations. As an employer of choice, with the latest staff satisfaction survey showing an overall staff satisfaction level of 98%, the College is able to attract staff from around the world, all experts in their chosen field. Most teaching staff are also high profile professional musicians who contribute to the breath of musical diversity in the City and wider region. The College offers blended working to encourage increased diversity, support individual's work-life balance, and to attract and retain the highest quality staff.

Students

The RNCM Students' Union is closely engaged in the governance of the College through representation on most College committees including the Academic Board, Student Experience Forum and the Board of Governors and through regular more informal consultative arrangements and focus groups. The President of the Students' Union meets regularly with the Principal, as do members of the College's and Students' Union Executive Teams.

Involving College students in creative engagement projects, group workshops, and mentored teaching placements in access and participation settings is a powerful and visible way in which the College supports young musicians. The Bachelor of Music (Honours) curriculum ensures that all undergraduate students undertake these activities in years 3 and/or 4, meaning that in the region of c. 200 students will be undertaking project and placement activities with younger pupils in the Greater Manchester area. The Year 4 Bachelor of Music (Honours) Popular Music students undertake an extensive work placement within industry or other settings.

Estates and Facilities

The College has developed an ambitious infrastructure framework focused on recreating our physical space to inspire future generations. The plan includes a new student and audience social space, new performance and practice studios and an ambitious digital strategy. This will transform the student experience, provide highly novel teaching spaces and opportunities, and open new opportunities for the RNCM to work in closer partnership with music education hubs, schools and community organisations.

As part of the RNCM's digital ambitions, development and adaptation of new (and yet to be discovered) innovative technologies will play a key role in stimulating, enhancing and enriching

learning, teaching, research, performance, business support, and communication activities. The first phase of the digital transformation is complete with a broadcast-standard digital network, control rooms and new technology-rich studio. This supports Ensemble+, the RNCM's network of higher education and professional partnerships to share and exchange learning and teaching with a focus on high-tech remote communication.

The College acknowledges a responsibility for, and a commitment to, the protection of the environment at all levels and has joined other Greater Manchester Manchester organisations in setting a 100% energy decarbonisation target for 2025 and will seek to improve its environmental performance particularly in the areas of infrastructure, operations, communications and facilities. A major grant from SALIX, in conjunction with the Greater Manchester Combined Authority, has made a transformational change to the College's carbon footprint and provides for green energy generation for the first time in the College's history.