



RNCM NEWS

Winter 2013

**YOUR**  
RNCM

**Your RNCM Champions**

Meet the big names supporting *Your RNCM*

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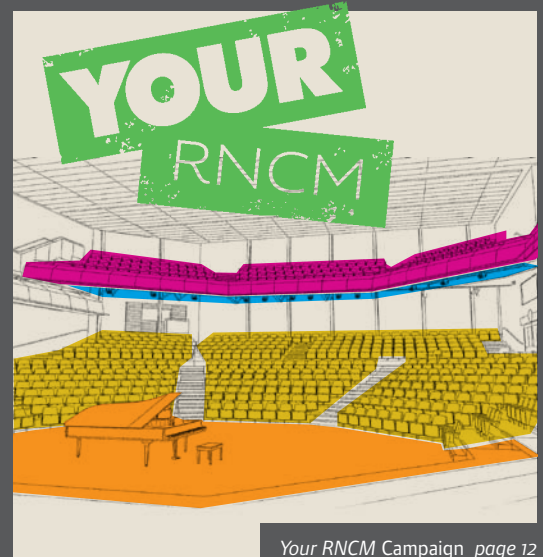
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## RNCM TOP PLACE FOR MUSIC STUDENTS

The RNCM has been recognised as the highest scoring UK music college in the 2013 National Student Survey (NSS) for overall student satisfaction.

The results, published in August, gave the College an overall satisfaction score of 91%, placing it above all other music colleges and conservatoires involved in this annual exercise, and placing it 12th for overall student satisfaction in the main league table for higher education institutions across the UK. The result also meant the RNCM maintained its position as the highest scoring education

establishment in Manchester for overall student satisfaction. RNCM Principal, **Professor Linda Merrick**, said: *'The NSS is a very important survey for the higher education sector as it provides vital information from students on the quality of teaching and learning they receive. We are delighted with this year's results, which confirm the College's commitment to providing a world-class experience for its students.'*

Conducted annually since 2005, the NSS is a national initiative running across all publicly funded Higher Education Institutions in England, Wales, Northern Ireland and the majority in Scotland. Through a series of 22 questions (scored 1 to 5), final year undergraduates are asked to provide feedback on seven areas of their degree programme: teaching, assessment and feedback, academic support, organisation and management, learning

resources, personal development, and overall satisfaction.

At the RNCM, results were gathered for both the BMus (Hons) Degree and Foundation Degree in Popular Music Practice (now a full BA (Hons) Degree in Popular Music Performance), which received over 90% for five of the seven areas. The overall result showed the College was also well above the Higher Education Council for England's (HEFCE) benchmark of 80%.

## COLLEGE WELCOMES NEW ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

In August the RNCM welcomed **Dr Michelle Castelletti** as its new Artistic Director.

Michelle joined the College from her role as Festival Manager of the Sounds New Contemporary Festival in Canterbury, where she was pivotal in extending its international reputation, creating important partnerships with leading orchestras, ensembles and composers, arts and broadcasting organisations, cultural institutions and embassies. She was also responsible for developing a number of large-scale projects, including a three year EU-funded

International Composer Pyramid which attracted over 1400 new compositions, and The Universe of Sound, an interactive education project with the Philharmonia Orchestra. Under her artistic management, the Festival won a prestigious Destination Canterbury Award for bringing the most national and international recognition to the city.

Talking of her new position, Michelle, who was born in



Dr Michelle Castelletti

Malta and studied music at the University of Malta and conducting at Canterbury Christ Church University, said: *'I am thrilled to be joining the RNCM as its new Artistic Director at what is a very exciting time for the College. The RNCM is a vibrant, energetic hub and I am totally committed to upholding, sustaining and growing all that this inspiring conservatoire has achieved so far.'*

## 2013 FELLOWS AND HONORARY MEMBERS

The RNCM's Congregation of Awards took place on Tuesday 3 December.

This year, the College was pleased to award **Professor Jonathan Freeman-Attwood** (Principal of the Royal Academy of Music) and **Dr Paul Goodey** (the RNCM's Director of Performance) with Fellowships, and **Dr Ursula Jones** and **Dr Joyce Kennedy**, two loyal supporters and advocates of the RNCM, with Honorary Memberships. Pianist **Andrés Schiff** was also awarded a Fellowship, presented on the occasion of his performance at the College in November.

## APOSTLES WINS GRAMOPHONE AWARD



4 NEWS

A recent recording of Elgar's *The Apostles* featuring a specially recruited semi-chorus of young RNCM singers has won a 2013 Gramophone Award.

Tenors **Sean Boyes, Thomas Kelly, Timothy Langston** and **Adam Player**, and basses **Stefan Berkietta, Matthew Kellett, Graham McCusker** and **Daniel Shelvey**, joined the Hallé Orchestra, Choir and Youth Choir for a special performance of the work led by Sir Mark Elder at The Bridgewater Hall last year.

The new recording, which won the Choral category of the 2013 Awards and also featured RNCM alumni **Alice Coote** and **David Kempster**, is possibly the first to incorporate the composer's own intentions after Elder spent time researching a proof copy of the vocal score preserved at the composer's Birthplace Museum at Broadheath, Worcester.

Gramophone's review of the recording said: 'Elder has also gone to considerable lengths to fulfil the composer's specific request for an 'Apostolic Choir', namely a semi-chorus comprising nine male voices to complement the regular soloists assigned the parts of John, Peter and Judas; all are young singers studying either at the RNCM or Manchester University and their contribution is a most eloquent one.'

# ROMANIAN PREMIÈRE FOR ANYA17

RNCM vocal students **Amy Webber, Andrea Tweedale** and **Thomas Hopkinson** travelled to Romania in October to re-stage the award-winning *Anya17* on the eve of European Anti-Trafficking Day.

Written by **Professor Adam Gorb** (Head of the School of Composition at the RNCM) and librettist **Ben Kaye**, *Anya17* exposes the desperate plight of the estimated 700,000 women and young girls who are trafficked into the EU every year. The Romanian première, which took place at the Philmonic Hall, Timișoara on Thursday 17 October, was directed by **Caroline Clegg**, RNCM Tutor in Stagecraft, and conducted by Mihaela Sylvia Roșca.

Talking of the experience, Amy, the RNCM's SU President who sang the role of Elena, said: '*Performing Anya17 in Romania, where more women and children are trafficked than any other country, was extremely poignant. For me it brought a deeper level of emotional engagement, and I found the whole experience very powerful. The Hall was full of anti-human trafficking supporters and charities, so*

*Anya17* premières in Romania



*everyone who was there, both on and off stage, was fighting for the same thing. The applause at the end said more than just 'what a great performance'; it said 'let us continue to fight.' What more of a thrill could a performer want: to be involved in something that is an art form and a campaign for change?'*

Human trafficking is a secretive £20 billion industry, second only in scope to the drugs trade. It is believed that Romania provides

a higher percentage of human trafficking victims to the EU than any other country. Last year, *Anya17* was awarded a Human Trafficking Foundation Media Award for Best Stage or Film Production Dealing with Human Trafficking. It is supported by 11 national and international NGOs and bodies, including The United Nations, and was made possible thanks to awards from Arts Council England/British Council and the RNCM.

## CENTRE STAGE FOR LANG LANG

Three undergraduate pianists had the chance to participate in a masterclass with **Lang Lang** in November. **Dominic Degavino, Rabiga Dyumssembayeva**, and **Ugnius Pauliukonis** all took inspiration from the international star during the sell-out event at the RNCM Theatre.

Lang Lang with masterclass participants



# DRUMMER JOE IS STUDENT OF THE YEAR

Drummer **Joe Luckin** was announced as the RNCM Popular Music Performance Degree Student of the Year at the 2013 British Music Students Awards.

Hosted by Access to Music and presented by BBC Radio 1's Edith Bowman, the Awards, which took place at Birmingham's o2 Academy in July, celebrated the achievements of music students across the UK. Over 30 awards were presented throughout the evening to students from all Access to Music centres and their partner colleges.

Talking of his win, 20-year-old Joe said: *'I've progressed massively in my two years at the RNCM in both my playing ability and general musicianship. This is due to the excellent one-to-one tuition I receive and also the opportunity to perform regularly with students from across the College. The skills I've acquired have also allowed me to become a regular gigging and touring musician.'*

Course Director **Andy Stott**, who presented Joe with his award, added: *'Joe has been a consistently excellent student and performer. His work across the programme is always of a high standard and he has developed into a first-class drummer with a model professional approach to his playing.'*

The event also provided a great opportunity for the **RNCM Session Orchestra** to showcase its talent, performing live for each award that was presented, in addition to supporting original artists in performances of their prize-winning songs.



Joe Luckin with Andy Stott and Edith Bowman

## JRNCM STUDENT IS BBC YOUNG COMPOSER

Junior RNCM celebrated success during the summer when 18-year-old **Grace Evangeline Mason** won the BBC Proms Inspire Young Composers' Competition for her composition *Convergence*.

The BBC Proms Inspire scheme is for budding composers aged 12 to 18 who want to write their own music. It provides them with a friendly environment to share ideas, participate in workshops, meet other young composers and develop their creativity. The Young Composers' Competition offers winners an unrivalled opportunity to have their music played by professional musicians at the BBC Proms and broadcast on BBC Radio 3. Each composer also receives a BBC commission.

Grace, who was one of three winners in the Senior Category (17 to 18 years), said: *'I feel elated and privileged to be a BBC Young Composer and I'm so thankful for the fantastic opportunity to hear my piece*

*played as part of this year's Proms! I also appreciate the excellent tuition I have received from the Junior RNCM this past year as it has really encouraged me to strive for such a competition as this.'*

**Karen Humphreys**, Head of Junior RNCM, added: *'Grace's win is excellent news, both for her as an aspiring young composer and JRNCM as it marks the fifth time a Junior student has won the competition in eight years – that's a great achievement.'*

*Convergence* was performed by the Aurora Orchestra in a BBC Proms concert conducted by Nicholas Collon in August.

## NEW DEGREE PROVING POPULAR

The RNCM's new BA (Hons) Degree in Popular Music Performance started in September, attracting a record number of applicants.

Over 70 students are now studying on the three year course, which replaced the two year Foundation Degree in Popular Music.

The design of the degree is similar to that of the BMus, with units in Principal Study, Ensemble Performance, Musicianship and Professional Development, and the programme follows the same academic regulations for consistency and parity for students across the College. Final year students also have the opportunity to select academic electives, and students from both programmes will be studying together for the first time.



RNCM Session Orchestra

## BEETHOVEN TURNS HEADS FOR FESTIVAL FINALE



Beethoven makes an appearance

Beethoven himself made an appearance at The Bridgewater Hall in June to witness the end of a year-long festival dedicated to his music.

An audience of over 1300 absorbed the spirit of the occasion, wearing Beethoven masks to pose for a celebratory picture ahead of a memorable night in which the RNCM Symphony Orchestra and Chorus performed the composer's Ninth Symphony.

Conducted by **Mark Shanahan** and featuring alumni **Linda Richardson, Ann Taylor, Barry Banks** and **Andrew Greenan** the concert – which also included Tim Garland's Double Concerto for cello and saxophone – drew to a close the College's *Ludwig van* festival, which had formed an integral part of the RNCM's 40th anniversary year.

# TRIUMPH RESOUNDS FOR LONDON PROJECT

Over 200 students travelled to London in July to celebrate the end of the RNCM's 40th anniversary with *Sound Histories: An evening of live music for the British Museum Collection*.

Inspired by the objects and galleries of the Museum and featuring approximately 120 scores, including 60 world premières by student composers, *Sound Histories* marked the latest in a series of large-scale projects produced by the College. Previously, students have performed at Manchester's Victoria Baths, Piccadilly Train Station, the Whitworth Art Gallery and Imperial War Museum North. For this unique event young musicians took over the ground floor of the iconic London landmark, allowing the public to create its own musical journey through almost two million years of human history.

The pieces chosen for *Sound Histories* spanned over 600 years, from the 14th century to the present day, and animated collections from Ancient Egypt, Assyria, Ancient Greece, Africa, North America, Mexico, China and South Asia. Highlights included music from the early 19th century (including works by Handel, Mozart, Beethoven and Mendelssohn) in the Enlightenment Gallery, reflecting the music familiar to the Museum's founders at the time the room was completed in 1828; music for the Parthenon Gallery that told the stories of the complex history of the Parthenon, built nearly

2500 years ago as a temple to the goddess Athena; and a large-scale performance in the Great Court featuring all 200 musicians directed by double bassist and composer Steve Berry.

Witnessing the event, a British Museum staff member said: '*Sound Histories* was beyond praise. I was bowled over by the scale, imagination, execution and stylishness of the whole event... I am so glad I caught it and do hope it can be repeated now and again. It was a stroke of genius which must have taken huge organisational skill to pull off.'



Sound Histories at the British Museum

## PANFILOV WINS BRANT PRIZE



Alexander Panfilov

Postgraduate pianist and Leverhulme Scholar, **Alexander Panfilov**, has won First Prize in the 2013 Robert William and Florence Amy Brant Piano Competition, held in Birmingham in June. The annual event was founded by Gladys Brant in memory of her parents, and later her brother who was killed in action during the Second World War. It is open to pianists aged 18 to

28 residing in Great Britain. Alexander, who also won the 2013 Arcangelo Speranzo International Piano Competition in Italy and is supported by Liberty Living, performed Beethoven's Fantasy in G minor Op 77, Rachmaninov's Etude Tableaux Op 39 No 2 in A minor and No 9 in D minor, and Stravinsky's Three Movements from Petroushka to secure the £3000 Prize.

# GOLD MEDAL FOR PAULIUKONIS

Lithuanian pianist **Ugnius Pauliukonis** was the only student to be awarded the prestigious Gold Medal during the RNCM's 2013 Gold Medal Weekend.



Ugnius Pauliukonis (third left)

The three day event, held in June, featured 11 of the College's finest students (three of whom performed works written by RNCM student composers) and was judged by **Professor Linda Merrick**, RNCM Principal, journalist and music critic **Edward Seckerson**, and **Gavin Reid**, Director of the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra.

Ugnius, aged 22 whose fourth year studies are supported by the Dorothy Stone Scholarship, said: *'I am really pleased to be the winner of this prestigious award. This was an amazing opportunity to show my personality and to share the music I like to perform the most. I would like to say thank you to all the friends and family who supported me, and to my piano teacher Graham Scott for helping me to achieve such a big success.'*

Edward added: *'The Gold Medal Weekend was a most stimulating and satisfying experience for me. I was honestly in awe of the talent on display - the individuality and*

*diversity of it was so gratifying. What really struck home was the imagination students put into their programming, sometimes over-zealously but with an audacity and imagination that will one day serve them well. Of course, this is work in progress for most of these students but when an artist like Ugnius Pauliukonis steps up to the piano and the magic descends within moments of him starting to play you realise that for the chosen few the progress can be pretty meteoric. He is an astonishing talent and a clear winner and had I happened upon his recital in the course of my professional week I would be asking where he had been all my life. Stardom beckons.'*

## INTERNATIONAL PRIZE FOR RNCM PIANIST

South Korean pianist and Yamaha Scholar **Jaekyung Yoo** won First Prize in the 40th International Piano Competition 'Palma D'Oro', which took place in Finale Ligure, Italy in August.

Jaekyung, who recently completed the RNCM's International Artist Diploma and is now studying for a Postgraduate Diploma in Solo Performance, performed works by Scarlatti, Granados and Liszt to secure the top prize of 4500 euros.

A spokesperson for the competition said: *'First Prize went to Jaekyung Yoo who left everyone - jury and audience - open-mouthed by her incredible ability to communicate through music.'*

Having won numerous international competitions, Jaekyung is acknowledged by critics as one of the *'future leaders of the Korean music scene.'* Her recent success came just weeks after she won \$15,000, the Silver Medal and performance opportunities at the 2013 Dranoff International Two Piano Competition with pianist **Yoon-Jee Kim**, a postgraduate conductor supported by the Stanley Picker Trust.



Jaekyung Yoo

## NEWS IN BRIEF

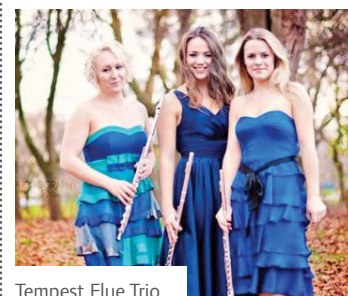
First year pianist **Dominic Degavino** has won the Orpheus Musicians of the Year competition, held in London in October. The prize included £1000 and a performance opportunity with the Orpheus Sinfonia.

RNCM representatives were present at **The Music Show**, held at Manchester Central in November. The new exhibition promoted the benefits of music-making and showcased the latest products and services available in the industry.

In November, 16 postgraduate singers participated in a new mentoring scheme with **Opera North**, which saw them work alongside and learn from a selection of the company's professional singers during their production of *Peter Grimes* at The Lowry.

The **271 Harp Duo** (Chloe Roberts and Rhian Dyer), won the Harp Ensemble prize at the 2013 Cerdd Dant Festival in Wales. Chloe also won Third Prize in the Open Harp category.

The **Tempest Flue Trio** (Sarah Bennett, Holly Melia and Helen Wilson) won Second Prize in the 15th International Kuhlau Flute Trio Competition.



Tempest Flue Trio

Over 10 RNCM students and alumni took part in this summer's Arran Singing School, participating in singing lessons, coaching sessions and masterclasses with an established team of music staff including **Peter Alexander Wilson, Alec Crowe** and **John Fisher**.

## CAPUÇON JOINS RNCM



Renaud Capuçon

French violinist **Renaud Capuçon** joined the RNCM in September as an International Chair in Violin.

Born in Chambéry in 1976, Renaud studied at both the Paris Conservatoire and Berlin Academy of Arts, where his teachers were Thomas Brandis and Isaac Stern. Since then he has gained an international reputation as one of the most eminent violinists of his generation, both as an educator and performer.

Cellist **Chris Hoyle**, the RNCM's new Head of the School of Strings, said: *'It's fantastic for the RNCM and the School of Strings that we are able to welcome Renaud as a new International Chair. I was very happy to follow up requests from our violin students that we might involve Renaud at the RNCM. He is one of the world's most inspiring violinists, and I believe that our aspiring students will learn a tremendous amount from him.'*

Renaud's yearlong tenure with the College means that the RNCM will benefit from the experience of two world-class International Chairs in Violin, the other being Israeli violinist **Yair Kless**.

## PIANISTS SUCCESS IN SUSSEX

The RNCM had a strong presence at the 2013 Sussex International Piano Competition, with postgraduate pianist **Rabiga Dyussebayeva** winning Second Prize and alumna **Olga Paliy** Third.



Olga Paliy

The biennial competition, founded in 2010 by the Worthing Symphony Orchestra's Artistic Director John Gibbons, took place at the Assembly Hall, Worthing, where the

three finalists, including overall winner Poom Prommachart of Thailand, were asked to perform a concerto accompanied the WSO and judged by an international panel.

Rabiga, from Kazakhstan whose studies are supported by a Waverley Fund Scholarship, played Prokofiev's Third Piano Concerto in C major to secure her prize of £2000, while Ukrainian pianist Olga, who graduated in 2010, opted for Brahms' Second Piano Concerto in B flat major. In addition to winning the £1000 Third Prize, Olga also won the Audience Prize.

Writing in *The Argus*, critic James Simister said that Rabiga was *'able to demonstrate not only her impressive virtuosity but also a more gentle poetry and expansive vitality,'* while stating that Olga gave a *'fine performance... revealing the subtler details while making the most of Brahms' dramatic and complex rhythms.'*

## PRINCIPALS PERFORM TOGETHER

The current and founding Principals, **Professor Linda Merrick** and **Sir John Manduell**, performed together in September for the launch of *Mixed Doubles*, a CD of double concertos by Sir John and Gordon Crosse.

Taking place at the International Anthony Burgess Centre, Linda played *Sir John's Prayers from the Ark* for solo clarinet as he recited poems. Featuring a selection of works by both composers, *Mixed Doubles* includes performances by Michael Cox (flute), Matthew

Jones (viola), Richard Simpson (oboe/oboe d'amore), Alison Teale (cor anglais), and John Turner (recorder), alongside the Manchester Sinfonia and conductor **Timothy Reynish**, former Head of the School of Wind, Brass and Percussion.

Writing his review, Douglas Jarman said: *'The performances throughout are uniformly excellent... and the whole is led as skilfully and sympathetically as always by the indefatigable Tim Reynish.'* **Douglas Jarman**, CD review

Linda (left) with Sir John (seated)







Professor John Miller

# RNCM TO LAUNCH NEW CENTRE FOR BRASS

The RNCM recently announced plans to establish a brand new centre for brass offering exceptional tuition and performance opportunities to students.

Named after the College's first Head of the School of Wind, Brass and Percussion, the **Philip Jones Centre for Brass** will launch in September 2014 under the direction of the department's current Head, **Professor John Miller**.

An exceptional musician and one of the leading tutors of his generation, Philip Jones aimed to elevate brass playing to new and sophisticated levels. As a result, the RNCM's Centre will continue this vision, ensuring that new and current students receive the very best learning and performance opportunities available anywhere in the world.

Talking of the development, John said: *'The RNCM has long enjoyed a unique position in the world of brass, and has produced outstanding alumni in all spheres of activity. The Philip Jones Centre for Brass will bring everything and everybody together and fulfil a vision, providing the very best opportunities in performance, study and research.'*

In addition to performances with numerous RNCM orchestras and ensembles across all genres, students will benefit from the vast knowledge and talent of our world-class tutors, visiting artists and International Chairs. With the launch of the Centre,

the RNCM is pleased to welcome esteemed soloists and brass band directors **Dr James Gourlay** as the Besson International Chair, and **Professor David King** as the Yamaha International Chair in the School of Wind, Brass and Percussion. Both James and David now join a roster of recent visiting brass staff

including **Håkan Hardenberger**, **Frøydis Ree Wekre** and **Kristian Steenstrup**. The Centre will also provide opportunities for students to collaborate with the College's professional partners, including the **Black Dyke Band** and **Foden's**, and to work alongside students from the RNCM's School of Composition.



Brass at the RNCM

## PLATFORM PARTNERS VISIT THE RNCM

### THE PLATFORM



Chamber  
Orchestra of  
Europe



opera  
north

Following the launch of **The Platform** earlier this year, the RNCM was delighted to welcome the **Academy of Ancient Music**, **Chamber Orchestra of Europe**, and **Netherlands Wind Ensemble** over an eight day period in October, followed by the **Orchestra of Opera North** in November.

Numerous students worked with a range of musicians from all organisations, with several being

chosen to join the Chamber Orchestra of Europe and Netherlands Wind Ensemble on European projects in 2014.

Following their visit, Nick Thompson of the Chamber Orchestra of Europe said: *'I enjoyed the two day project immensely and I could not have wished for even any small detail to have been taken care of more wonderfully. The students were extremely attentive and*

*enthusiastic and I felt that they really engaged with what we were hoping to convey.'*

The School of Vocal Studies and Opera also embraced The Platform this term, with four students taking part in the College's inaugural engagement with KorVest, the ensemble of Bergen Opera and the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra. Sopranos **Catriona Hewitson** and **Catrin Woodruff**, and

baritones **Graham McCusker** and **Steven Griffin** all travelled to Norway in October and November for rehearsals and performances of the Bach Motet *Jesu meine Freude* and Mozart's *Requiem*. Additionally, alumnus **Matthew Moss** (tenor, 2010) was awarded a chorus contract for the Bergen Opera production of Beethoven's *Fidelio*, and baritone **Stuart Orme** participated in a composers' weekend with Judith Weir.



Barbara Robotham

# BARBARA ROBOTHAM: TRIBUTE TO A LEGEND

January 15 1936 – July 1 2013

It is with great sadness that we announce the death of **Barbara Robotham**, internationally-renowned vocal teacher at the RNCM, who made such an incredible contribution to the College over so many years.

Barbara joined the staff in 1979 when she was engaged as a part-time senior tutor by Alexander Young, then Head of the School of Vocal Studies. In January 1992, she was offered a full-time post as Senior Lecturer and was promoted to Principal Lecturer in 1995. Although she retired from her full-time role in August 1999, Barbara continued teaching at the College, providing huge support to staff and students alike. She was made a Fellow of the RNCM in 1992, and given a long service award in recognition of her invaluable contribution to the institution in 2006.

Barbara studied at the Royal Manchester College of Music, where she gained both Teachers

and Performers Diplomas with Distinction. She was awarded the Imperial League of Opera Prize and the prestigious Curtis Gold Medal for Singing, an award which 30 years later was presented to her distinguished pupil, Amanda Roocroft. At the end of her College course, Barbara won the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Society International Singers Competition and, the following year, the Silver Medal in the Concours de Genève.

A busy international singing career followed, with regular visits to most European countries for concerts and opera appearances. At home, Barbara was much in demand by the country's major orchestras and choral societies and made many broadcast with a number of eminent conductors, including Sir David Willcocks. Recordings included Stravinsky's *Cantata on Old English Texts* for Supraphon and Walton's *Gloria* for EMI, which won the prize for the most outstanding record made for the Queen's Silver Jubilee.

Barbara's life-long passion for teaching began at the College when she assisted her mentor, Elsie Thurston. She then became Professor of Voice at Lancaster University in 1974 before taking up her position at the RNCM. Among Barbara's many eminent alumni are the singers Jeffrey Lloyd-

Roberts, Amanda Roocroft and Jane Irwin. Barbara made regular appearances on television, including three Granada Celebration programmes, a Channel 4 documentary on the pitfalls facing young artists, and the BBC 2 *Late Show*. She recorded a programme for Welsh Television with one of her students who represented Wales in the 1996 Cardiff Singer of the World. In 1977, she was invited to represent Great Britain on the jury of the Concours de Genève; one of the world's most distinguished and long established music competitions.

Roderick Barrand (RNCM staff accompanist), who worked with Barbara for over three decades, wrote this personal tribute to his long-term colleague, collaborator and friend: *'After more than 30 years playing for Barbara, I can only say that they were years of constant inspiration. Her philosophy of care over every detail, of technique, drama and interpretation of music and text helped me to approach my own work as a piano accompanist. Indeed the way she paced her students in the course of their studies so that they were never forced to learn and perform anything that they did not totally own, is such a maxim for all instrumentalists as well as singers. Her deep appreciation of English literature, especially Shakespeare and Austen, gave her incredible insight into English poetry, something she passed on to me, making me go deeper into poetic appreciation of the text in order to colour my own playing. All I can say is that she will continue to be an icon of all that is great in singing and the highest collaboration of instrumentalists and singers.'*

In conclusion, Barbara was an inspirational teacher – demanding, professional, disciplined, totally committed to her students, and extremely hard-working, with a minuscule attention to detail in all aspects of preparation, presentation and performance, be it on the recital platform or on the opera stage. She was a role model to all staff at the RNCM, and also a much-loved friend and colleague. Barbara will be sadly missed, both here at the College, and in the wider music profession.

“Barbara was an inspirational teacher – demanding, professional, disciplined, totally committed to her students, and extremely hard-working...”

# REMEMBERING PHILIP L EDWARDS

18 July 1944 – 26 May 2013

**Stefan Janski, the RNCM's Head of Opera, pays tribute to lighting designer Philip L Edwards, who died on Sunday 26 May at the age of 68.**

Philip was RNCM Lighting Manager and Lighting Designer for numerous opera and performance projects at the College and on tour, from *Purgatory* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in 1973 to, most recently, *Kiss Me Kate* in April 2013: 40 years of dedicated service to the students of the RNCM.

I had the privilege to meet and work closely with Phil in the RNCM Theatre since my arrival in January 1986

as a temporary substitute for my predecessor, Malcolm Fraser, to direct a series of opera excerpts. Together we collaborated on over 500 performances of opera excerpts, plays, workshops, trade shows, outreach performance projects, galas and award-winning main stage opera productions.

It was Phil who took technical control and initiated the first RNCM opera surtitles produced on slides for Janáček's opera *From the House of the Dead* presented in the original Czechoslovakian language in March 1989 and much appreciated by the audiences.

Phil was generous, kind, collegiate, creative, positive, patient, calm and always consistent in his passion for supporting and enhancing student performances. On his beloved motorbike wearing his bright yellow safety clothes, he would travel from Glossop and park outside the Theatre dock doors at 8am to open up and raise the safety curtain, often being the last out after 11pm when he had completed refocusing lanterns up and down the tallscope on stage. Fifteen hour days are not unusual in the theatre.

Nothing was too much trouble for Phil. His enthusiasm was boundless in support of staff and student initiatives to perform outside of the Theatre in the Lord Rhodes Room, the Concert Hall, the Roof Garden, the upper and lower concourses and, from December 2001, for *Tamerlano*, the opening production in the new Studio Theatre which was

"Phil was generous, kind, collegiate, creative, positive, patient, calm and always consistent in his passion for supporting and enhancing student performances..."



Philip L Edwards (left) with Stefan Janski

directed by Jennifer Hamilton and won a Manchester Evening News Award for Best Opera. Phil took ownership of the Studio, created the technical gallery and installed the lighting rig which have since continued to support student performances from across all schools of study.

Phil travelled with the RNCM students on tour to Los Angeles for performances in the Bing Theatre USC, and courtyard presentations in Aix en Provence and monasteries in Southern France. He also supported students and lit numerous productions that they appeared in for British Youth Opera and Clonter Opera.

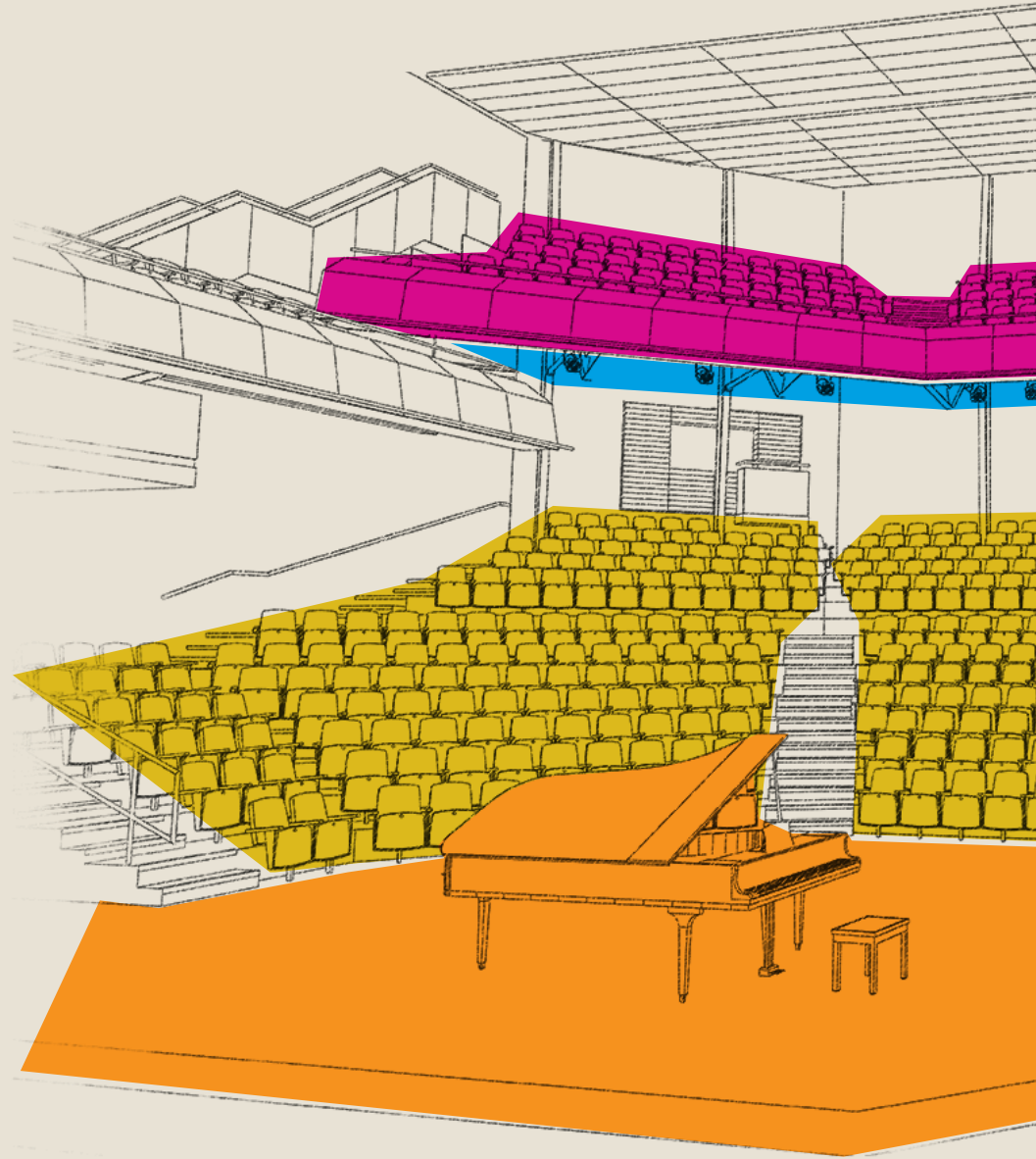
Phil was a consummate professional and committed educationalist. I presented Phil for his Honorary Membership of the RNCM in December 2002, well deserved in recognition of his distinguished service to the College.

Phil will always be respected and remain in the minds and thoughts of all who met and worked with him. He leaves a dedicated wife Christine and two sons, Glyn and Gareth.

May he now be pain free and rest in peace. With great fondness, respect, admiration and love. God Bless.

# COLLEGE LAUNCHES £3 MILLION REDEVELOPMENT CAMPAIGN

This autumn the College launched *Your RNCM*, an exciting £3 million campaign to transform the Concert Hall into a state-of-the-art venue.



Commencing in January, plans for the 10-month project include everything from a new balcony and raised floor area to advanced technical facilities and lighting. The result will provide Manchester with a much-needed mid-sized venue, and enable the RNCM to maintain its worldwide reputation and unique position in the North of England.

Take a closer look...

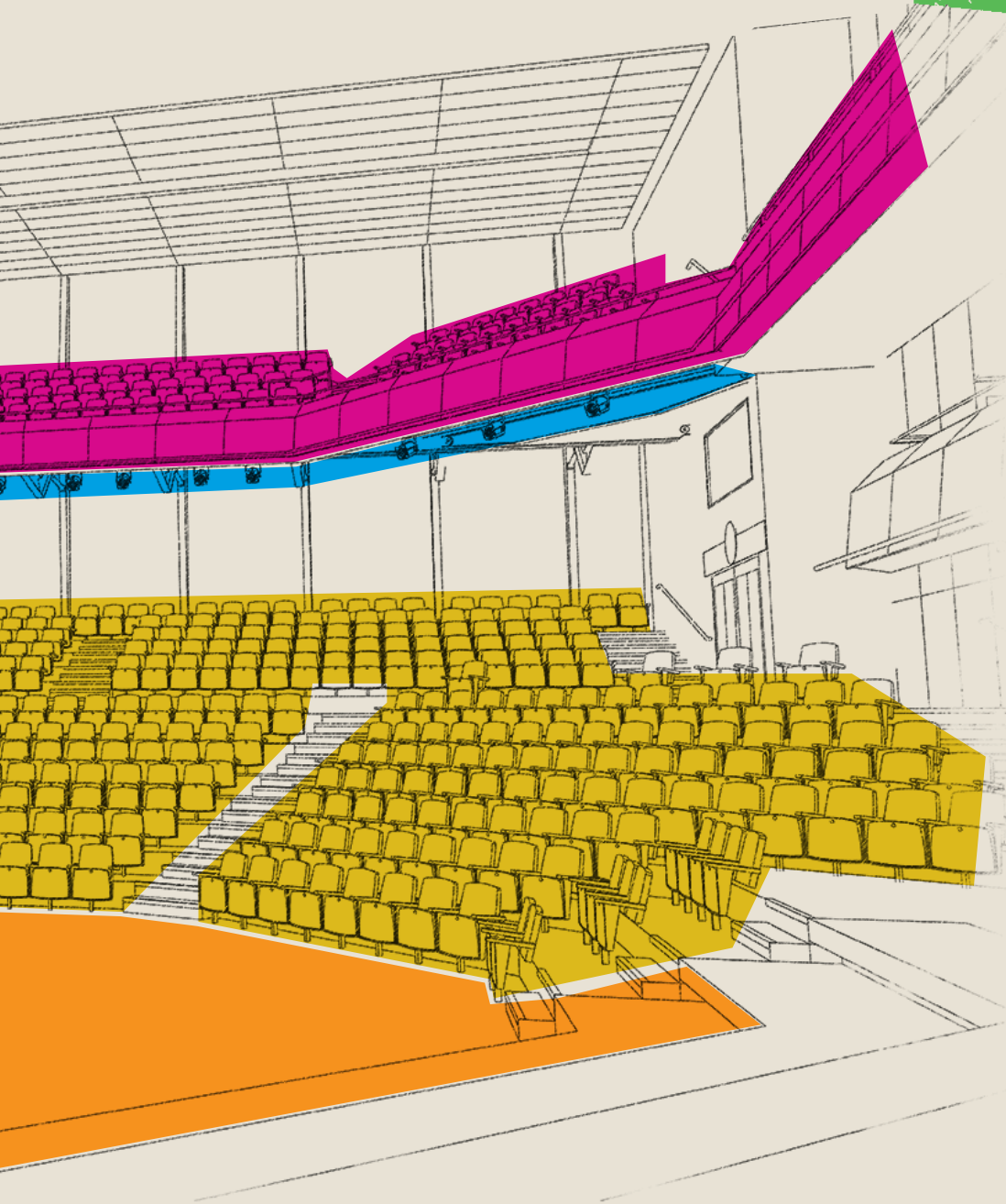
### Balcony and Flexible Seating:

The new Concert Hall will be fitted with a fantastic balcony and will incorporate flexible seating. These changes will provide the city with a unique 750 seat venue, allowing larger audiences to enjoy exceptional performances by visiting artists and students, while maintaining the Hall's current atmosphere and acoustics.

### On and Off-stage:

Much work is needed both on and off-stage to ensure the new Concert Hall adheres to the requirements of a state-of-the-art venue, and maintains its position as one of the UK's leading performance spaces.

# YOUR RNCM



## **Technical Facilities and Lighting:**

Although the Concert Hall was built in 1973 with the best equipment available, it is now in need of a serious 21st century revamp. The transformation will upgrade the Hall, offering state-of-the-art technical facilities to both students and visiting artists, and enable the College to maintain a diverse programme of events throughout the year.

## **Air-conditioning, Seating and Flooring:**

Similarly to the technical facilities and lighting, the Concert Hall air-conditioning system also needs updating, as does the seating and flooring, to ensure audiences are as comfortable as possible.

*Your RNCM* is part of a bigger £6 million project being undertaken by the College to further enhance the student experience and broaden its artistic offering. In September, the Higher Education Funding Council of England's Catalyst Fund awarded the RNCM £2.8 million to aid the work, which includes the reconfiguration of old, and creation of new, spaces to accommodate the diverse teaching, study, rehearsal and performance activities now required.

Chris Millward, Associate Director at HEFCE, said at the time: *'We are delighted to support this step change in the RNCM's development, which will enhance both the student experience at the College and its broader contribution to the vibrant creative and cultural economy in the North West.'*

# WORLD-CLASS MUSICIANS AND TOP PERSONALITIES CHAMPION YOUR RNCM

The RNCM is proud to say that international musicians **Lang Lang**, **Alison Balsom** and **Sarah Connolly**, popular physicist **Professor Brian Cox**, and TV and radio presenters **Stuart Maconie** and **John Suchet**, are among the supporters of *Your RNCM*. Here is what they had to say:



*'I was lucky enough to be at the Royal Northern [College of Music] holding a most enjoyable and rewarding masterclass. The students are of a truly exceptional standard and in my experience of teaching internationally, the RNCM is simply one of the best music conservatoires in the world. It being so centrally located in Manchester, surely it is ripe for a first class concert hall? I support you all the way!'*

**Alison Balsom**

Award-winning international trumpeter



*'I am proud to feel part of Manchester's rich cultural landscape and I love the RNCM building; it is an inspiration to both visitors and students. The transformation planned for the Concert Hall is very exciting and I am delighted to support the Your RNCM campaign.'*

**Professor Brian Cox**

Physicist and BBC science presenter



*'A beautiful concert hall with superb acoustics gives performers a chance to experiment with the sound of their voices and instruments. It is vital that musicians discover for themselves the interplay between the conscious and unconscious; nothing will happen without conscious effort but then something extraordinary might happen - a transfiguration.'*

**Sarah Connolly**

World-renowned mezzo-soprano



*'It's been a joy presenting Beethoven at the RNCM twice in the last year. Students past and present are an inspiration to work with. It's good to know that the future of classical music is safe in their hands. I wish the RNCM the very best of luck with the development of the Concert Hall, and look forward to talking Beethoven again in the fabulous new Hall.'*

**John Suchet**

Classic FM presenter and broadcast journalist

# YOUR RNCM

## SIR WILLARD RAISES THE ROOF FOR YOUR RNCM

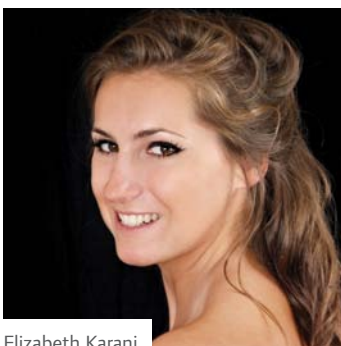
The President of the RNCM, the world-famous bass-baritone **Sir Willard White**, presented *An Enchanted Evening of Song* at The Bridgewater Hall in June, marking the College's 40th anniversary and raising in excess of £20,000 for *Your RNCM*.



*'The RNCM is at the very heart of the heady cultural mix that makes Manchester such a dynamic and vibrant city. It is one of my favourite places in town to enjoy great music and mix with fellow music lovers and students in a landmark venue that will only be improved by the renovation programme. I look forward to spending many more exciting evenings in the transformed RNCM Concert Hall.'*

**Stuart Maconie**

BBC 6 Music presenter



Elizabeth Karani



Kathryn Rudge

The guest of honour was **Katharine, Duchess of Kent**, who was the College's first President, serving for 35 years before Sir Willard's appointment in 2008.

The concert, recommended by Classic FM, was the highlight of a season of celebratory events presented by the RNCM in Manchester and London. Sir Willard was joined by four recent alumnae **Elizabeth Karani** (soprano, 2012), **Kathryn Rudge** (mezzo-soprano, 2011), **Jennifer Rust** (soprano, 2012) and **Helen Sherman** (mezzo-soprano, 2010), who are now in great demand by opera companies in the UK and Europe.

At an exclusive post-concert Reception, RNCM Principal, **Professor Linda Merrick**, paid tribute to Katharine Kent's dedication to music and the College, confirming her appointment as Emeritus President at the RNCM. Professor Merrick also took the opportunity to announce the RNCM's ambitious future building plans and thanked those who attended for their support.



Following his sell-out masterclass at the RNCM in November, pianist Lang Lang generously offered to name a seat in the new Concert Hall on behalf of the Lang Lang International Foundation. For details on how you can name a seat, even the one next to Lang Lang's, please see page 16.

**Lang Lang**

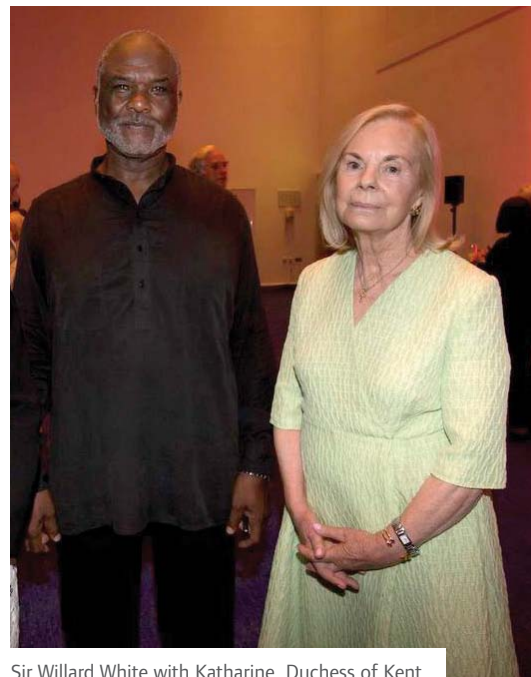
Acclaimed pianist



Jennifer Rust



Helen Sherman



Sir Willard White with Katharine, Duchess of Kent

There are lots of different ways to support *Your RNCM*, from naming a seat in the new Concert Hall to sponsoring a bar of music at the Gala Opening in October 2014. Once transformed, the venue will be a huge asset to Manchester, used by local community groups, students and visiting artists from all over the world for the enjoyment of audiences across the North West.

### Sponsor a Bar of Music:

Play your part in the 2014 Gala Opening by sponsoring a bar of music, or a few bars, from the programme for just £5.

The opening concert, on Friday 31 October, will be a truly special event, celebrating the newly transformed Hall, and welcoming students and audiences back into what promises to be one of the North West's most exciting venues.

### Take Your Seat

Naming a seat in our transformed Hall is a great way to mark a special occasion such as an anniversary or birthday, or to remember a loved one.

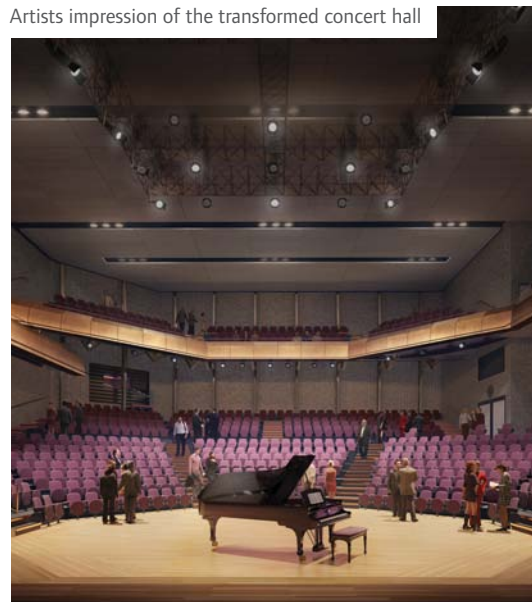
As well as having a personalised plaque, you will also receive an exclusive invitation to be the first person to sit in your seat at the re-opening in October.

### Available seats:

- **Front Block Seats** £600  
or 12 monthly payments of £50
- **Middle Audience Seats** £450  
or 12 monthly payments of £37.50
- **Balcony Seats** £300  
or 12 monthly payments of £25

For more information on sponsoring a bar of music and/or naming a seat, contact **Tom Bevan** in the Development Office on **0161 907 5270** or email [tom.bevan@rncm.ac.uk](mailto:tom.bevan@rncm.ac.uk).

Artists impression of the transformed concert hall



### Donate

You can help to bring our Concert Hall plans to life and donate to *Your RNCM* in a number of ways:

**Online:** Make a donation online at [www.rncm.ac.uk/yourrncm](http://www.rncm.ac.uk/yourrncm)

**By text:** Text **RNCM01** and your amount (e.g. RNCM01 £5) to **70070**

**By phone:** Ring **0161 907 5338** and have your payment details to hand.

## RECORD BREAKERS

New Year, new record. In January, 16 students will attempt to break the world record for the most musicians to play the same piano simultaneously.

In aid of *Your RNCM*, the students will perform a five-minute work for 32 hands by postgraduate composer **Tom Harrold**, aiming to beat the current world record, set by 15 musicians

in Vallouise, France on 13 June 2004. The performance will take place on **Thursday 23 January** as part of the RNCM Brand New Day. Visit [www.rncm.ac.uk](http://www.rncm.ac.uk) for more information.



## FOCUS ON RESEARCH

# INSPIRING PROJECT SHORTLISTED FOR EDUCATION AWARD

A research project undertaken by the RNCM and University of Liverpool has been shortlisted for a Times Higher Education Award.

Funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council of England and led by **Dr Carl Hopkins** (Reader in Acoustics and Head of the Acoustic Research Unit at the University of Liverpool) and **Professor Jane Ginsborg** (Associate Dean of Research and Enterprise and Programme Leader for Research Degrees at the RNCM) in partnership with Music and the Deaf, 'Interactive performance for musicians with a hearing impairment' will compete for the title of 2013 Research Project of the Year.

The three-year project, which culminated in a successful one-day conference at the RNCM in May, was originally inspired by deaf musician Dame Evelyn Glennie who describes feeling and using vibration when playing percussion instruments. The aim of the research was to investigate the potential for vibrotactile feedback to facilitate interactive group performance for musicians with hearing impairments who otherwise rely primarily on visual cues. The intention was to open up new opportunities for deaf people, young and old, to enjoy making music together.

Jane said: 'This is a huge accolade for the whole of the research team: not only Carl and myself,

but Dr Gary Seiffert, the Principal Experimental Officer and Saül Matê-Cid, the Postgraduate Research Assistant at Liverpool, and Robert Fulford, the PhD student at the RNCM. The project itself represents an interdisciplinary as well as an inter-institutional collaboration, combining music and science, psychology and acoustics. We were incredibly privileged to be able to work with Music and the Deaf, who introduced us to so many amazing deaf musicians and their families and teachers. The findings of the research not only add to our theoretical understanding of vibrotactile perception and interactive musical performance (both separately and together) but will also be of real value to musicians with and without hearing impairments.'

The Times Higher Education Awards were established to recognise and celebrate the creativity and quality of teaching and research undertaken in higher education institutions throughout the UK.

At the time of going to print the results of the Awards were not yet available. Visit [www.timeshighereducation.co.uk](http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk) for more information.



Professor Jane Ginsborg

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## RNCM AND MMU AWARD FIRST JOINT PHD

**Danielle Sirek** and **Robert Fulford** are the first RNCM students to be awarded a PhD under the RNCM-MMU joint doctoral programme.

Danielle, who moved to the UK from Ontario, Canada, to complete the three year course, researched 'Music and Identity Construction in Grenada: A Music Education Perspective' spanning the fields of music education and ethnomusicology. She

was supervised by Dr Felicity Laurence and Dr Byron Dueck. Robert's research, the first to be funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, was entitled 'Interactive performance for musicians with a hearing impairment', supervised by Professor Jane

Ginsborg and Professor Juliet Goldbart.

Sixteen students, including Danielle and Robert, are currently registered on the RNCM's Postgraduate Research Degree programme, which launched in 2009/10.



# ALUMNI CELEBRATE 40 YEARS

Friday 28 June was a memorable day for the RNCM. Not only did it mark the end of the College's 40th anniversary celebrations with a rousing concert at The Bridgewater Hall, but it also saw over 200 former students return for a special **Alumni Reunion**.

The event, which welcomed graduates from the RNCM, Royal Manchester College of Music, and Northern School of Music, incorporated a lunchtime concert featuring pianist and alumnus **Graham Scott**, tours of the building, a photo gallery of images tracing the College's 40 year journey, and provided opportunities to catch up with old friends over lunch and afternoon tea.

18 *'thank you to all concerned for arranging such a splendid 40th anniversary celebration'*  
**Jean Blundell, NSM**

*'It really was a special celebration and a lovely opportunity to meet up with old friends'*  
**Gladys Williams, NSM**



*'Please say a big thank you to EVERYONE for a most wonderful memorable day.'*  
**Cynthia Norris (née Campbell), NSM**

*'There were tears in several ex-students' eyes after that magnificent concert at The Bridgewater Hall'*  
**Andrew Bennett, RNCM 1988**



*'I felt thoroughly honoured by the excellent reception and personalised treatment we received whilst sharing in the 40th reunion celebrations'*  
**Pamela Shaw, NSM**



*'thank you for a fantastic reunion...I thoroughly enjoyed it and had a super day with five close friends from College days'*  
**Anne Windsor, RNCM 1974**



# RETURN TO OZ

Australian conductor **Matthew Wood** was an RNCM Junior Fellow in Conducting between 2005 and 2007. Recently, after working extensively with UK orchestras including the Bournemouth Symphony, he returned to his homeland as the newly appointed Artistic Director and Chief Conductor of the Darwin Symphony Orchestra. Here is what he had to say about his incredible journey...

**Congratulations on your new position with the Darwin Symphony Orchestra (DSO). Why did this orchestra appeal to you?**

The last few years as a freelance conductor have been amazing, but after long and wonderful relationships with organisations such as the RNCM and Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra I started to miss that sense of belonging. I had always intended to return to Australia, it was just a question of ‘for what?’

When the position with the DSO opened I felt my question had been answered. I was struck by the vibrancy and enthusiasm of not only the members of the orchestra but of the people of Darwin too. It felt like a place of great opportunity and diversity.

**You conducted the DSO in the world’s first ever concert at Uluru in October. This must have been exciting?**

The DSO is all about taking classical music to the people. We exemplified this with our tour to Uluru and Alice Springs, where we were the first orchestra to perform at the iconic Aussie landmark. It was an enormous undertaking - the Northern Territory is six times the size of the UK - but music has always been itinerant. Uluru was one of the most exciting concerts I have ever conducted.

**How did you feel about returning to Australia?**

Australia is an amazing place and Darwin is stunning. However, I do love the UK and really feel as though



Matthew Wood conducts at Uluru

I had found my home here. I am very lucky to have worked with orchestras that will continue to invite me back to conduct, mainly the Royal Ballet, Covent Garden, so my life over the next few years will be a balance between Australia and the UK.

**You were a Junior Fellow at the RNCM. Why did you decide to study in England and how did your choice aid your development as a conductor?**

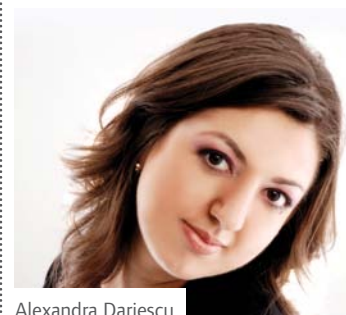
The RNCM’s Junior Fellowship in Conducting is renowned throughout the world as one of the best conductor training courses available. It is unique and extremely successful in providing students with the required training for successful entry into the profession. The quality of teaching is at the highest level, and paramount to the success of the course is the training that comes from highly regarded industry professionals such as Sir Mark Elder and Clark Rundell. This also offers students an important link to the industry as a whole, with close connections to organisations such as the Hallé, BBC Philharmonic and other leading ensembles.

Furthermore, the student is granted a large quantity of practical conducting time. Most institutions offering conducting are theory-based courses with little practical experience. The RNCM differs significantly, offering vast podium time and performance opportunities, and this makes the College a leader in its field.



Darwin Symphony Orchestra

## ALEXANDRA WINS WOMEN OF THE FUTURE AWARD



Alexandra Dariescu

Romanian pianist **Alexandra Dariescu** has won the 2013 Women of the Future award for Arts and Culture.

Alexandra, who graduated in 2008, was nominated earlier in the year alongside Anna Higgs, Head of Film4, Jessica Elliott, Managing Director of J’s Dance Factory, Tamara Ralph, Creative Director of Ralph and Russo, and music theatre artist Charlotte Wakefield.

The Women of the Future Awards, in association with Shell, are the platform for successful young women in Britain today. Now in their eighth year, they continue to unearth and recognise the inspirational stars of tomorrow across diverse sectors including Arts and Culture, Business, Media, and, among others, Science.

For Alexandra, the win comes just weeks after she made history by becoming the first Romanian female pianist to perform at the Royal Albert Hall.

## BRITISH COMPOSER NOMINATIONS

Seven composers with connections to the RNCM have been shortlisted for a 2013 **British Composer Award**, including alumni **Benjamin Wallfisch** and **Gavin Higgins**.

Benjamin, who graduated in 2001, has been shortlisted in the Chamber category for *Chopin's Waterloo*, while 2005 alumnus Gavin and current postgraduate **Lucy Pankhurst** feature in the Wind Band and Brass Band category for their collaboration, *After Benjamin Britten: Four Centenary Tributes for Brass Band*, alongside *Symphony in two movements* by former Principal, **Professor Edward Gregson**.



Benjamin Wallfisch

A total of 39 compositions were shortlisted for an award, including *Since it was the day of Preparation* by Honorary Member **James MacMillan**, *Songs to the North Sky* by Research Fellow **Tim Garland**, and *Gigue Machine* by RNCM graduate **Harrison Birtwistle**.

At the time of going to print, the results of the British Composer Awards, announced on 2 December, were not available. Visit [www.britishcomposerawards.com](http://www.britishcomposerawards.com) for a full list of winners.

# RPS PRIZES FOR RNCM COMPOSERS

RNCM alumni **Michael Cutting** and **Daniel Kidane** and current MMus student **Thomas Stewart** were three of five composers to win a 2013 Royal Philharmonic Society Composition Prize.

Michael Cutting



Daniel Kidane



Thomas Stewart



Open to composers under the age of 29 who study or have studied at any UK conservatoire or university, the RPS Composition Prize gives young writers the chance to compose a work for a prestigious professional performance.

Michael, who graduated in 2011 with an MMus in Composition, was one of three composers to win the top award and will now join the Philharmonia's Young Composer Academy (in partnership with the Royal Philharmonic Society), and will be commissioned to write a piece for members of the Philharmonia to be performed as part of the Music of Today Series. He will also attend regular workshops and seminars throughout the year.

Daniel, a 2012 MMus graduate, was awarded the RPS/Presteigne Festival Alan Horne Memorial

commission for a small work to be premièred in the Presteigne Festival, and Thomas, who is studying with Larry Goves, won the Susan Bradshaw Composers Fund Commission to write a chamber work for the Cheltenham Festival.

Speaking of this trio of successes, **Professor Adam Gorb**, Head of Composition at the RNCM, said: 'This great news reflects excellently on the opportunities afforded to composers in writing for large ensembles at the RNCM.'

Michael, Daniel and Thomas' prizes follow swiftly behind that of recent graduate **Jae-Moon Lee**, who was one of six composers to be selected for the London Symphony Orchestra's Discovery Panufnik Young Composers Scheme, which offers the opportunity to write for a world-class symphony orchestra.

## ALUMNA WRITES FOR SALE CHAMBER ORCHESTRA



Emily Wright

RNCM composition alumna **Emily Wright** was selected as Sale Chamber Orchestra's Composer in Residence for the 2012/13 season.

Emily, who graduated in 2012, worked extensively with the Orchestra and Musical Director Richard Howarth for over 10

months. The three movement piece, *Dance, weave and Spark*, received its première at St Paul's Church, Sale in November.

Emily's position with the Orchestra was made possible thanks to the Sale Mayoral Fund and the Ida Carroll Trust.

# INAUGURAL AWARD FOR RNCM MUSICIANS

Recent RNCM alumnus **Alastair Penman** (saxophone, 2013) and International Artist Diploma cellist and Howarth Scholar **Mikhail Nemtsov** have been selected for a City Music Foundation Inaugural Award.

Mikhail Nemtsov



Established in London as part of Boris Johnson's Lord Mayor's Appeal to aid young aspiring musicians at the start of their professional careers, the City Music Foundation supports soloists and small groups across the genres of classical, jazz and world music.

Over 50 nominations from UK conservatoires, arts organisations and venues were received, with six soloists and two groups being chosen by a panel of artists and music industry experts.

*'The City Music Foundation has been set up to support professional musicians during the transition period between education and career – arguably the most challenging time in a musician's life – through performance opportunities and mentoring,'* explained Managing Director Lizzie Allen.

*'The quality of the applicants for the inaugural awards was high, which made judging challenging, if very enjoyable. We are delighted to be awarding such a talented and eclectic group of musicians. We look forward to helping them build what I'm sure will be very successful careers in music.'*

## LEGENDARY VIOLIN DONATED TO RNCM

In November the RNCM was bequeathed a very special violin, used to accompany stars such as Frank Sinatra, Sammy Davis Junior and Shirley Bassey

The 1762 Nicolaus Gagliano instrument, worth an estimated £120,000, was donated to the College by **Christine Bradbury-Sullivan**, a graduate of the Royal Manchester College of Music, who died on 30 October at the age of 67.

A professional violinist with orchestras including the Hallé, Sydney Symphony, Adelaide Symphony and South Cheshire, Christine enjoyed a fantastic career, which included performing in some of the Gold Coast's top hotels with some of the world's biggest stars.

Her sister, Linda Higgins, who presented the wonderful instrument, together with three bows worth collectively in excess of £5000, to Chris

Hoyle, RNCM Head of the School of Strings, and Viola Tutor Alex Robertson, said: *'Christine lived in Australia for a while and she used to tell me how she would spend long days in front of the pool with her friends before heading to some of the Gold Coast's biggest hotels to perform for an hour with Frank Sinatra, Sammy Davis Junior and Shirley Bassey. I think it's fair to say the violin has seen a few things.'*

It was Christine's wish that the violin was donated to the RNCM and used by a student. Fourth year violinist **Frans van Schoonhoven**, who performed *Meditation* by Thais at her funeral at Southern Cemetery on Friday 15 November, has been chosen to use it on loan.

## ALUMNI NEWS IN BRIEF



Steven Osborne

**Steven Osborne** (piano, 1994) was awarded a 2013 Gramophone Instrumental Award for *Mussorgsky – Pictures from an Exhibition*. The recording also received recognition in BBC Music Magazine (Recording of the Month), and on BBC Radio 3's *CD Review*.

The Telegraph recently profiled **Helen Sherman** (mezzo-soprano, 2010) in its New Music section, promoting her role as Nero in ETO's autumn tour of Monteverdi's *The Coronation of Poppea*.

**Philip Higham** (cello, 2010) gave three performances of Tchaikovsky's *Variations on a Rococo Theme* with the Hallé and conductor **Eduardo Portal** (2010) in November.

**Lorna James** (soprano, 2010) will sing the role of Musetta in Opera North's forthcoming production of *La Bohème*.

RNCM Tutor and alumnus **David Thornton** (euphonium, 2001) won the best soloist title in the 2013 National Brass Band Championships held at the Royal Albert Hall in October.

In October, **Martin Roscoe** (RNCM) performed all five Beethoven Piano Concertos on one evening to raise funds for the Musicians Benevolent Fund.

**Hanna-Liisa Kirchin** (mezzo-soprano, 2013) is one of 18 recipients of an Opera Awards Foundation Bursary.

## ARCHIVES AND ARCHITECTS

RNCM Friends took a sneak peek at the plans for the Concert Hall, as well as a look behind-the-scenes at our practice rooms, studios, roof garden and plant room. Friends events are a great opportunity to find out about life at the RNCM, meet staff and students, support the work we do, and socialise with likeminded individuals.

## THANK YOU

Many organisations list the names of Friends and donors on their websites as a way of thanking them for their support. With the launch of the new RNCM website, we are planning to do the same. If you would prefer not to be named, please contact **Kate Findlay** on **0161 907 5338**.

## NEW SUPPORT

The College has been awarded a major new grant from **The Leverhulme Trust**. A total of £330,000 will be donated over the next three years to support Junior and postgraduate students, as well as those who are working with music education hubs in the North West.

We are also delighted to announce that **The Headley Trust** have pledged significant support towards postgraduate scholarships over the next two years.

Following its support of our 2013 Chamber Music Festival, the **Albert and Eugenie Frost Music Trust** will now support both our 2014 Festival and two of our postgraduate string players. Albert Frost was a highly influential and respected financial advisor who had a passion for violin and chamber music, generously supporting various music institutions during his lifetime. We are thrilled that through this support we can continue to reflect Albert's passion for music.

# THE FISHER LEGACY

**Sir John and Lady Maria Fisher's** story encompasses an escape from Nazi Germany, the rescue of thousands of soldiers at Dunkirk, and the unlikely union of a shipping and marine services company Chairman from Cumbria and a famous Austrian singer of stage and screen.

Sir John and Lady Maria Fisher



They were an extraordinary couple whose legacy lives on through the Sir John Fisher Foundation, and the RNCM benefits greatly from their support.

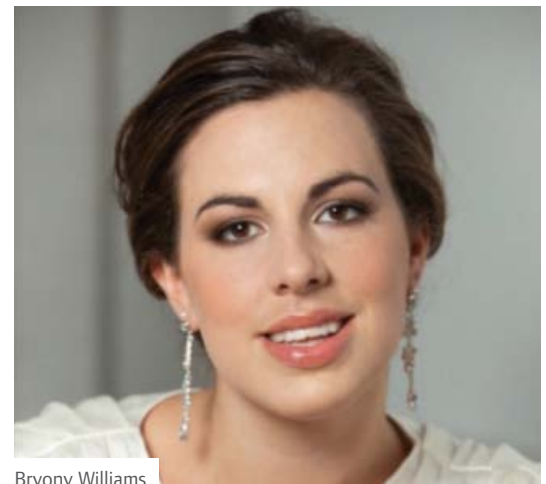
Sir John Fisher was Chairman of the Barrow-in-Furness-based James Fisher & Sons, one of the world's oldest shipping companies founded by his grandfather in 1847. In 1939, during the outbreak of the Second World War, Sir John was called to the Ministry of War as Director of the Coasting and Short Sea Trade Division. Here he played a pivotal role in the evacuation of Dunkirk and in the planning of the D Day Normandy landings, resulting in a knighthood in 1941.

Lady Maria (the great-niece of Sir Charles Hallé) spent her early career touring the major opera houses of Europe with Otto Van Klemperer, Fritz Busch, and Bruno Walter. In the early 1940s she settled in England and appeared regularly in the West End (including starring opposite Ivor Novello in the original production of *The Dancing Years*).

The couple met in 1942 and married – in secret – five years later. Lady Maria immediately became a firm favourite with the workers of the shipping company, and was actively involved in helping

Sir John with his work and business. The couple were inseparable for the almost 40 years of their marriage, living close to Lake Windermere in Sir John's native Cumbria. Ill health began to affect them both in the 1980s, and they died – in their house together – in November 1983.

Since 2011, the Sir John Fisher Foundation has supported the Sir John Fisher Junior Fellowship in Repetiteur Studies at the RNCM, and this year, thanks again to the Foundation, we have inaugurated the Lady Maria Fisher Opera Scholarship. Our current Junior Fellow (**Jonathan Santagada**) and Opera Scholar (soprano **Bryony Williams**) will perform together next year as part of the Ulverston International Musical Festival, organised by pianist Anthony Hewitt (whose parents were family friends of Sir John and Lady Fisher, with the Fishers attending many of Anthony's early concerts). The Foundation also very kindly donated a Steinway Boston piano to the College earlier this year, which has been gratefully received and added to our stock of instruments.



Bryony Williams

The relationship between the RNCM and the Foundation is one that, we hope, serves to ably commemorate the lives of these two extraordinary figures and their passion for music.

# GIVE THE GIFT OF MUSIC

Friends Membership makes an excellent gift for music lovers of all ages and provides vital support for the RNCM. Please consider a gift membership this Christmas for a friend or family member.

*'Receiving RNCM Friends membership was a wonderful surprise as a Christmas present! We have attended many of the events at RNCM over the years and have always been extremely impressed with the very high quality of performance by such talented students.'*

*'Friends membership is an ideal way of giving something more by way of appreciation to the College and its faculty. What was originally a gift will certainly become an annual renewal.'*

**Barry and Yolanta Buxton, RNCM Friends**

Friends' subscriptions play a vital part in supporting the RNCM, helping to assist students directly, and provide excellent learning and performance facilities. Joining the RNCM Friends is also a great way to play a part in *Your RNCM*, our £3 million campaign to transform the Concert Hall.



Friends archives visit



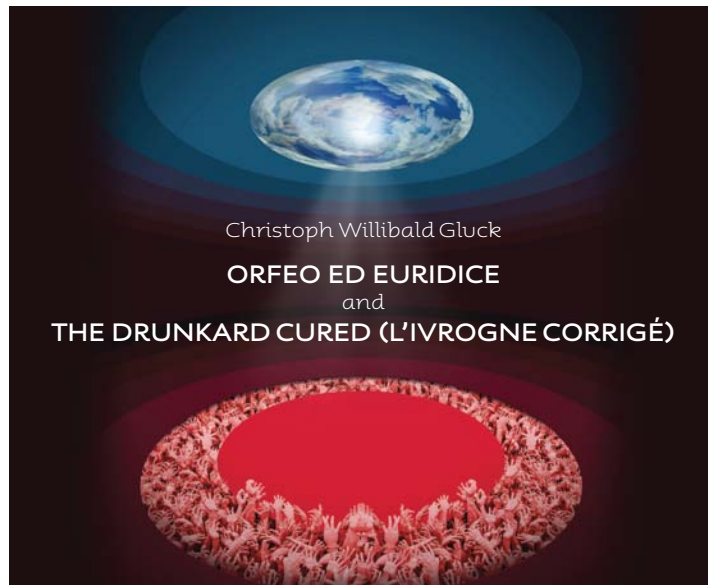
Friends backstage tour

For more information about purchasing a membership for yourself or as a gift, please contact **Kate Findlay**, Friends Administrator, on **0161 907 5338** or email **friends@rncm.ac.uk**.

Alternatively, visit **www.rncm.ac.uk/friends**. All membership forms received by 18 December will be processed in time for Christmas. **Benefits of being a Friend:**

- Save money with ticket and dining discounts at the Box Office and in Brodsky, the RNCM restaurant
- Get closer to RNCM life with invitations to exclusive events and opportunities to attend opera dress rehearsals
- Keep up-to-date with RNCM News and season events guides delivered to your door

# FORTHCOMING FRIENDS EVENTS



## **Molton Brown Pamper Session**

**Friday 10 January 12pm**  
Molton Brown, St Ann's Square, M2 7EF  
Start the *RNCM Chamber Music Festival* with a little relaxation at Molton Brown's store in St Ann's Square. Friends can enjoy a free treatment such as a hand and arm massage, together with a glass of bubbly and cupcakes, a goodie bag worth £20, and a £10 voucher to spend in store during your visit. **Tickets £15**

To book tickets contact the Box Office on **0161 907 5555** (please book before Thursday 2 January)

## **Meet the Artistic Director and her team**

**Sunday 16 February 5pm**  
*Carole Nash Mezzanine*  
**Michelle Castelletti** joined the RNCM in July 2013. As the RNCM's new Artistic Director, Michelle ensures the RNCM programmes diverse events that appeal to audiences across the UK.

This is your chance to find out more about how events are programmed, to ask questions, and to learn a little about Michelle and her team. **Tickets £4**

To book tickets contact the Box Office on **0161 907 5555**

## *Opera previews*

**Thursday 13 March 7pm**  
**Friday 14 March 7pm**  
Christoph Willibald Gluck  
**Orfeo ed Euridice** and **The Drunkard Cured (L'ivrogne corrigé)**  
**Roger Hamilton** *conductor*  
Be one of the first to see the RNCM's latest opera production. This term we present Gluck's beautiful *Orfeo ed Euridice* and *The Drunkard Cured* in the intimate settings of our Studio Theatre.

**Tickets £12.50 for Bronze members, free to Silver members and above**

To book tickets contact the Box Office on **0161 907 5555**


# RNCM

Wednesday 26 March 7.30pm, The Bridgewater Hall

## RNCM Symphony Orchestra Chorus & Chamber Choir

Olivier Messiaen *Et Exspecto Resurrectionem Mortuorum*  
Michael Tippett *A Child of Our Time*

Tickets from £14

 /rncmvoice  /rncmlive

Box Office 0161 907 5555

[www.rncm.ac.uk](http://www.rncm.ac.uk)