



RNCM NEWS

Spring 2013

THE  

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PLATFORM

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# PROFESSOR LINDA MERRICK APPOINTED NEW RNCM PRINCIPAL

In January we were delighted to announce that **Professor Linda Merrick** was appointed as the RNCM's new Principal following an extensive international search.



Professor Linda Merrick

As an accomplished clarinettist with an international profile as a soloist and recording artist, Linda brings to the role credibility as a

performer, and a well-established and proven track record as an academic and as a strategic leader in the management of change, all of which position her well to be a persuasive advocate and ambassador for the RNCM in an increasingly difficult and complex external environment. She is passionate about instilling amongst staff and students of the College the sense of ownership of the institution's destiny, and especially to provide students with the best possible experience whilst at the RNCM, preparing them with all the skills and confidence they will need to take advantage of the vast array of opportunities now offered by the music profession.

*'I have always regarded the RNCM as a very special place,'* said Linda, who joined the College in 2001 as Director of Performance Studies and Senior Tutor in Clarinet before

becoming Vice-Principal in 2006 and Acting Principal in 2012. *'Recognised as one of the world's leading conservatoires, and one of the busiest and most forward-looking public arts venues in the UK, it holds a unique position in the cultural life of the City of Manchester and the wider North West region. I am delighted to be taking on the role of Principal as the College celebrates its 40th anniversary, and look forward to leading the institution into the next phase of its development.'*

Speaking on behalf of the RNCM Board of Governors, the Chairman, **Nick Prettejohn**, commented: *'The College will join me and the Board in our excitement at Linda's appointment. Her musicality, leadership and energy provide just the right qualities to consolidate and grow our position as one of the world's leading conservatoires.'*

## MICHAEL BERKELEY AWARDED LIFE PEERAGE



Michael Berkeley

Congratulations also to composer and RNCM Fellow, **Michael Berkeley**, who has been awarded a life peerage. He will serve in the House of Lords as a cross-bench, non-party political peer.

Michael studied composition with Sir Richard Rodney Bennett and was awarded the CBE last year. He has also presented Radio 3's *Private Passions* for more than 15 years. Talking of the peerage, he said he was *'very honoured to be appointed'* and *'particularly pleased that the Appointments Commission was keen to increase representation in the field of music and the arts.'*

Roger Wright, controller of BBC Radio 3 and an RNCM Honorary Member, added: *'Michael is not only an accomplished composer but also an expert communicator, not least reflected in his ability to have engaging and insightful conversations with his guests. This recognition of his place in our society is hugely deserved.'*

## LESLIE BOOSEY AWARD FOR SALLY GROVES

Congratulations to **Sally Groves** who has been awarded the Leslie Boosey Award for *'her outstanding contribution to the furthering of contemporary music in Britain'*.

The biennial award, inaugurated in memory of the Boosey & Hawkes co-founder, is given to behind-the-scenes staff rather than performers. Previous winners

include Amelia Freedman, Colin Matthews and Gillian Moore.

Sally, an Honorary Member of the RNCM, is creative director of the London branch of Schott Music and has, for 35 years, been responsible for its *Music of Our Time* catalogue. She was presented with the award by Sir Colin Davis at the Barbican, London on 12 April.



Sally Groves

# RNCM APPOINTS PIERO LOMBARDI IGLESIAS AND MARCO BELLASI AS JUNIOR FELLOWS IN CONDUCTING

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**Piero Lombardi Iglesias** and **Marco Bellasi** have been announced as the RNCM's new Junior Fellows in Conducting. Both placements, Piero's for two years and Marco's for one, will commence in September.

Piero and Marco were two of 12 candidates who attended the live auditions, selected from over 120 applications. Three candidates made it through to the final round conducting the RNCM Symphony Orchestra, following four rounds featuring chamber ensemble, opera, contemporary and chamber orchestra repertoire. They will now receive tuition from Sir Mark Elder, Clark Rundell, Mark Shanahan and visiting conductors, as well as conduct the RNCM Symphony and Chamber Orchestras and benefit from the RNCM's strong links with the Hallé, BBC Philharmonic, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic and Manchester Camerata.

Piero, who is currently completing his studies at the

ZHdK in Zurich, said: *'Winning the auditions for the Junior Fellow in Conducting is an amazing feeling; a big honour!'*

*'The placement represents the perfect transition from student to professional conductor, offering me the chance to develop my skills alongside a fantastic team of teachers and different orchestras.'*

*'I'm really looking forward to working with Sir Mark Elder, Clark Rundell, Mark Heron and Mark Shanahan and to learning as much as possible from them. This is one of the most prestigious positions for a young conductor in Europe and one of the best opportunities I could imagine gaining.'*

Piero Lombardi Iglesias



Marco Bellasi



On his one-year placement Italian conductor Marco, who has completed an MMus in Conducting at the College, added: *'Winning the Fellowship was such great news for me.'*

*'I've wanted to work with RNCM students because their level of playing is so high. I got to know*

*many of them well during my Master's studies, and their readiness to collaborate is equal to their musical skills.'*

*'Watching Sir Mark Elder working with them was inspiring and I'm thrilled to be able to study with him and to continue to gain new knowledge.'*

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## CARLOS DEL CUETO WINS BBC PERFORMING ARTS MUSIC FELLOWSHIP

**Carlos del Cueto**, the RNCM's Junior Fellow in Conducting, has won a BBC Performing Arts Fund Music Fellowship to work as Assistant Conductor with English Touring Opera.

Provided by the BBC Performing Arts Fund, a total of £190,000 - funded through phone votes from BBC 1's talent show *The Voice* - has been awarded to 19 music organisations across the UK, all of which will host a Fellow, offering an opportunity for motivated individuals to work under the guidance of professional mentors to develop their skills, showcase their

work and experience the reality of working in the music industry across a wide range of genres.

Carlos said: *'I'm delighted to receive this award to work with English Touring Opera for the duration of 2013. It's an incredible opportunity to learn about the craft of conducting opera in a professional setting and with high-calibre artists. That I'll get to know six operas intimately and actually conduct performances of most of them on tour is a tremendous learning opportunity and a great step in my career.'*

Successful organisations were able to demonstrate that a Fellowship placement with them would offer significant professional development opportunities for a Fellow, that their placement would be realistic and achievable, and that the selection process they went through to identify the Fellow was fair and transparent.

**Miriam O'Keeffe**, Director of the Fund, said: *'We are delighted that the money raised through the phone voting on The Voice will be used to support the next generation of musical talent. Working with some of the most*



Carlos del Cueto

*well respected arts and music organisations in the UK will not only nurture this talent, but will give the Fellows the experience and confidence to pursue their musical ambitions.'*



JaeKyung Yoo (right) with Martha Argerich

## INTERNATIONAL PRIZE FOR RNCM PIANIST

The RNCM is delighted to announce that South Korean pianist **JaeKyung Yoo** has won Second Prize in the 6th Bösendorfer and Yamaha USASU International Piano Competition, which took place in the Tempe, Arizona, in January.

JaeKyung, who is currently studying for an International Artist Diploma (the highest award the RNCM offers for solo performance) with Graham Scott, was one of 28 pianists to be selected from 146 applications. She impressed judges, including world-renowned pianists **Martha Argerich** and **Sergei Babayan**, with her Final Round performance of Brahms' Concerto No 2 in B flat major Op 83 alongside the Phoenix Symphony Orchestra.

Speaking of the competition, JaeKyung, who won \$10,000, the Silver Medal and the \$1000 prize for the most outstanding performance of a virtuoso work, said: *'This particular competition was special because the legendary pianist Martha Argerich was on the jury, and what made it even more memorable was that she gave me compliments on my First Round performance of Ravel's Scarbo. Argerich's recording of Scarbo has*

*been my favourite since I was little, so I was incredibly happy to hear her comments.'*

She added: *'I enjoyed the experience of performing on stage at every round, and winning the prize was a reaffirmation of the fact that I love performing, which is what I hope I'll continue doing. I also feel thankful for everybody who has been supportive, especially my tutor at the RNCM, Graham Scott.'*

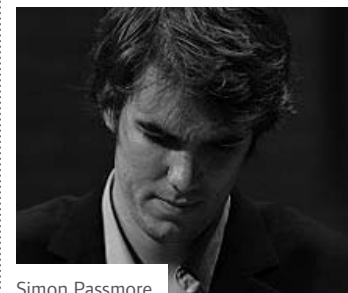
The Bösendorfer and Yamaha USASU International Piano Competition is an annual competition hosted by the ASU School of Music in collaboration with the Phoenix Symphony Orchestra, the Arizona Young Artist Committee, Bösendorfer, Yamaha, and the Arizona Piano Gallery. First Prize was awarded to the USA's Eric Zuber, a graduate of the Juilliard School, and Third Prize went to fellow American Lindsay Garritson, a graduate of Yale University.

## RNCM PIANIST WINS EPTA UK

Third year pianist **Simon Passmore** has won the 2013 EPTA UK Piano competition, held at Chetham's School of Music in March.

A total of 112 pianists travelled from across Britain to take part in the annual competition, broken down into categories according to age and ability. Simon, who is taught by **Murray McLachlan**, was announced the overall winner by the adjudicating panel after he won the Advanced IV section.

Talking of his success, Simon said: *'I'm really delighted to have won the competition and extremely happy that my teacher's dedication and commitment has paid off.'*



Simon Passmore

## INTENSE COMPETITION FOR JMIPC

The Concerto Finals of the **RNCM James Mottram International Piano Competition (JMIPC)** took place between Friday 30 November and Saturday 1 December, concluding what proved to be an exceptional and highly competitive week at the College.

In the Senior Category (19-25), nothing separated **Victoria Vassilenko** and **Hin Yat Tsang**, who were both awarded Joint Second Prize of £5000 in a stimulating competition presented by Classic FM's **Jamie Crick**. Victoria, who is studying at Madrid's Queen Sofia College of Music, performed Beethoven's Piano Concerto No 3 in C minor

Op 37, and Hin Yat, a student at the Hong Kong Academy of Performing Arts, opted for Mozart's Piano Concerto No 20 in D minor K466. **Lee Dionne**, who studies at Yale University, secured the £2500 Third Prize with a performance of Beethoven's Piano Concerto No 5 in E flat major Op 73.

In the under 19s Junior Category, which featured three Chinese pianists, First Prize of £4000 and a performance opportunity with the Liverpool Philharmonic Youth Orchestra went to **YeLei Hao**, who also performed Beethoven's Piano Concerto No 5. The £2000 Second Prize was awarded to **Hao Zi Yoh**, who performed Chopin's

Piano Concerto No 1 in E minor Op 11, and the £1000 Third Prize went to **ZiHui Song** for his performance of Mozart's Piano Concerto in B flat major K595.

All finalists were accompanied by the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Hannu Lintu, and the competition had the support of media partner **Classic FM**, which broadcasted the Senior Concerto Final in December.

Speaking of the competition, **Graham Scott**, Head of the School of Keyboard Studies and Chairman of the Jury, said: *'The JMIPC is now in its third year and we have had a most*

*rewarding week of performances and masterclasses. In the Senior Category, the decision was made not to award a First Prize but two Second Prizes to Victoria Vassilenko and Hin Yat Tsang, but this did not deter from a most impressive level of playing that filled both the initial rounds and the Final. The standard in the Junior Category was also very strong this year, with YeLei Hao proving a worthy winner.'*

This year's JMIPC attracted a total of 90 applications from around the world and was judged by an international panel of eight world-renowned pianists and teachers, all of whom also gave public masterclasses during the week.

RNCM STUDENTS  
PERFORM WITH  
TIM BURGESS

# TEMPEST WINS ROSL ENSEMBLE AWARD

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The **Cassia String Quartet** shared the stage with The Charlatans' front man **Tim Burgess** in February when he performed a solo gig at the RNCM to promote his latest album, *Oh No I Love You*.

Comprising violinists **Amy Welch** and **Tory Clarke**, violist **Laurie Dempsey** and cellist **Joshua Lynch**, the Quartet performed string arrangements by composer **Joe Duddell**, who, in 2011, invited 11 RNCM students to perform on *Ghosts of Gone Birds*; his collaboration with Doves' Jimi Goodwin. Joe has also worked with artists such as Nero and James, and conducted Elbow and the Hallé during the 2009 Manchester International Festival.

The good news continued for Cassia that month when they were crowned winners of the College's 2013 **Nossek Prize**.



Cassia String Quartet

The **Tempest Flute Trio** has won the Royal Over-Seas League ARTS (ROSL ARTS) Ensemble Award, incorporating £10,000 and a performance opportunity at Queen Elizabeth Hall.

The Trio, comprising RNCM Gold Medal winners **Sarah Bennett**, **Holly Melia** (who is supported by the Oglesby Charitable Trust) and **Helen Wilson**, were one of four wind, brass and percussion ensembles competing in the Ensemble B category at Princess Alexandra Hall in March.

Commenting on behalf of Tempest, Helen said: *'I can't even explain how ecstatic we are to have won such a major competition as the ROSL. It is so brilliant to have confirmation that the hard work really pays off and that we are heading in the right direction.'*

*'We would also like to thank the RNCM and in particular Paul Goodey and our teachers Richard Davis, Wissam Boustany, Anders Ljungar-Chapelon and Katherine Baker for their continuous support and encouragement. We are a very happy Tempest!'*

The Trio's win is even more exciting as it comes just 12 months after the College's Aurora Percussion Duo (comprising students Le Yu and Delia Stevens) won the same category. This achievement marked the first time a percussion ensemble had walked away with the prize since Simone Rebello (RNCM Head of Percussion) and BackBeat 15 years earlier.

**Melinda Maxwell**, an RNCM woodwind consultant who coached the Trio when they initially formed, added: *'This news is really*



Tempest Flute Trio

*fabulous. To have two in as many years is excellent and so good for our department. ROSL is one of the best competitions because you get such good exposure from it so it's fantastic that Tempest have been heard. It should do a lot of good for their career as a trio.'*

Renowned for their innovative performances of classical and contemporary music, Tempest performed their own arrangement of Debussy's *Syrinx*, Mark Simpson's Flute Trio (a Tempest commission supported by the Fidelio Trust), a movement from a Bach sonata and *Salt of the Earth* by Andy Stott (arranged by Helen) during the Final, and were judged by RNCM alumni **Carol Jarvis** (trombone, 2001) and **Les Neish** (tuba, 2005), together with Chris de Souza and Stuart King.

Melinda continued: *'When I coached them in the early stages*

*I did say to them that they should commission new works and arrange their own pieces. Because they were so enthusiastic as a group it encouraged me to ask them to think outside the box. I think this has really made them expand the repertoire. A lot is from memory so they are great performers as well. I'm so excited and proud for them.'*

Celebrating its 61st anniversary, the ROSL ARTS, the arts division of the Royal Over-Seas League, has developed a diverse portfolio of arts activities in music, visual arts and literature. It is devoted to the career development of talented young professional artists and musicians from the UK and the Commonwealth, and also presents readings and literary events at its central London Headquarters.

# OPERA NOMINATED FOR TOP MUSIC AWARD

Hot on the heels of its recent Best Stage or Film Production Media Award win at The House of Commons, **Any17**, a challenging opera reflecting the terrible reality of sex trafficking in the EU, has been nominated for a **Royal Philharmonic Society (RPS) Music Award**.

Adam Gorb, Caroline Clegg and Ben Kaye



Noted as the highest recognition for live classical music-making in the UK, the RPS Awards were set up in 1989 to celebrate the outstanding musical achievements of British and International musicians.

**Adam Gorb**, *Any17* composer and Head of Composition at the RNCM, commented: 'This is an extremely exciting time for *Any17*, with performances in both Germany and Romania scheduled for later this year. To have been informed of this award nomination, particularly an RPS Award, is wonderful news and a great honour in itself.'

Librettist **Ben Kaye** continued: 'In terms of classical music in the UK, this is equivalent in scale to an Oscar nomination. The news is a terrific validation of

*the inspiration, skill, dedication and very hard work put in by everyone involved in Any17. Whether we stand there on the podium on the day or not, this is a great opportunity to raise awareness of human trafficking.'*

Director **Caroline Clegg** added: 'I am delighted to learn of this prestigious nomination and that through the power of music we can continue to give voice to those who cannot speak for themselves. Conductor **Clark Rundell**, together with *Ensemble 10/10*, the cast and our fantastic volunteers should all feel very proud of what they have already achieved, and what we will continue to achieve in shining a bright light on this vile, hidden 'trade', which by its very nature can only flourish in the darkness.'

Human trafficking is a secretive £20m industry which is second only in scope to the drugs trade. *Any17* was written to raise awareness of the estimated 700,000 women and young girls trafficked into the EU every year. It is officially supported by 11 national and international NGOs and bodies including the United Nations.

Each RPS Award is decided by an eminent jury from the music profession and the list of winners since 1989 reads as a roll call of the finest living composers and musicians. One of the world's oldest music societies, the RPS celebrates its 200th anniversary this year.

The Awards will be presented on 14 May at a dinner at the Dorchester Hotel, London.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

**Professor Linda Merrick** was the guest of Suzy Klein on BBC Radio 3's *In Tune* in February, together with alumna **Sophie Rosa** (violin, 2012). Both Linda (accompanied by **Harvey Davies**) and Sophie (accompanied by **Simon Parkin**) performed live on the programme.

In February, **Graham Scott** (Head of School of Keyboard Studies) conducted RNCM auditions in New York for the first time at Steinway Hall. He also conducted auditions at the Hong Kong Academy of Performing Arts and in Shanghai.

RNCM's 2012 spring opera, **Xerxes**, was nominated for Best Opera at the Manchester Theatre Awards.

**Mike Hall** (Tutor in Saxophone), in collaboration with his music partner **Debbie Rogers**, has received a commission from the Manchester Jazz Festival to write and perform a collection of works for this summer's programme. The project will be based on the idea of fusing and juxtaposing contemporary jazz with renaissance music.

The **RNCM Chamber Choir** took part in the Hallé's recent performance of Act III of Wagner's *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, conducted by Sir Mark Elder.

Postgraduate flautist **Holly Melia** (who is supported by the Oglesby Charitable Trust) performed in the wind final of the Royal Over-Seas League competition.

Postgraduate composer **Jae-Moon Lee** (who is supported by the Waverley Fund) was awarded First Prize in the Valentino Bucchi International Composition Competition in Rome for his work *Two Dreams*. The piece will be published in Italy next year.

First year pianist **Tyler Hay** performed Ravel's *Concerto for the Left Hand* at the Queen Elizabeth Hall in March.

## MUSIC MATTERS MARKED 40TH ANNIVERSARY

The RNCM's 40th anniversary was the focus of BBC Radio 3's **Music Matters** in January. For the special feature, presenter Tom Service interviewed RNCM Principal **Professor Linda Merrick**, Head of Opera **Stefan Janski**, alumnus and Principal flute with the BBC Philharmonic **Richard Davies** and percussion students **Le Yu** and **Delia Stevens**. The programme also included music recorded at the College's Manchester Town Hall concert in November, the first in the RNCM in the City series.



Stefan Janski

The RNCM's Head of Vocal Studies, **Lynne Dawson**, recently saw her recording of Robert Schumann's *Myrten* with pianist Julius Drake announced as first choice in BBC Radio 3's CD review programme, *Building a Library*.



Lynne Dawson



Bryony Williams

The annual competition, open to fourth year and postgraduate singers, was established by Joyce and Michael Kennedy 13 years ago with the intention of encouraging students to explore Strauss's Lieder and incorporate it into their repertoire.

**Dame Felicity Lott**, who adjudicated the competition alongside Michael Kennedy and Thomas Schulze, RNCM Tutor in Vocal Studies, said: *'The standard was very high and we were impressed with several singers. They had all worked extremely hard and their presentation was excellent. Some of the singing was absolutely outstanding and it was difficult to choose but we thought that on the night Bryony sang Strauss beautifully with a lovely creamy voice. She looked super and also made the audience relax, which is one of the most important things. It was stunning.'*

When the Award was established the winner's prize was £750. This year, thanks to the continuous generosity of many donors, Bryony – a Leverhulme Scholar – walked away with £5000, which will aid her studies during 2013/14 when she works towards an RNCM International Artist Diploma, the highest award offered by the College for solo performance.

On winning, Bryony, who sang *An die Nacht* Op 68 No 1, *Epheu* Op 22 No 3, *Allerseelen* Op 10 No 8 and *O wie gerne*

# SOPRANO WINS STRAUSS PRIZE

Postgraduate soprano **Bryony Williams** has won the 2013 **Joyce and Michael Kennedy Award for the Singing of Strauss**.



Left to right: Stefan Berkiet, Rosanna Harris, Heather Lowe, Bryony Williams, Michaela Parry and Timothy Langston

*blieb ich bei dir* from the opera *Daphne* Op 82, said: *'I'm totally thrilled to be named this year's winner of the Strauss Award; I'm still waiting for it to sink in! It was a wonderful experience singing for Dame Felicity, Thomas and Michael, and for such a supportive and esteemed audience. It's fantastic being part of an evening that focuses on the beautiful music of Strauss. Joyce and Michael Kennedy have created a very special competition for the RNCM and I am so grateful for their support.'*

Dame Felicity added: *'Financially, awards like these are vital for students; when I was studying we were so lucky in that things didn't cost quite so much. This competition in particular focuses on the Lieder repertoire and it was lovely to see so many students in the audience. It was super – everyone would learn*

*from it. The department is very happy and flourishing and I was best impressed with it.'*

The day proved even more special for the School of Vocal Studies and Opera as another Dame, **Dame Felicity Palmer**, was also at the RNCM, presenting performance classes and giving vocal coaching to students.

**Lynne Dawson**, Head of Vocal Studies, said: *'We were delighted to welcome two British Dames into the RNCM on the same day; Dame Felicity Lott and Dame Felicity Palmer. We ask our students to work at the highest possible level for their age and experience and to have such wonderful guests working with them is something for which we are extremely grateful. Our aim is to develop generous, affecting, professional singers who are also wonderful musicians (and have fun too) and the students could have no finer examples.'*



# DOUBLE WIN FOR HANNA-LIISA

Hanna-Liisa Kirchin has won the 2013 Elizabeth Harwood Memorial Prize just weeks after winning the Miriam Licette Scholarship.



Hanna-Liisa Kirchin as Masha in *Paradise Moscow*

The postgraduate mezzo-soprano, who starred as Masha in the RNCM's spring production of Shostakovich's *Paradise Moscow*, performed pieces by Handel, Mozart, Jonathan Dove, Richard Strauss and Rachmaninoff and was accompanied by Robin Humphreys.

She said: *'I am so proud to be the recipient of the prize this year. I have watched this competition since I was an undergraduate, and always hoped I would be fortunate enough to be in the final one day! It was such a wonderful evening, and I am so grateful to the panel and the trust for their decision and generosity. The prize will be an invaluable help to me next year, and I am so thrilled to be associated with it.'*

Talking about the annual competition (administered by the Elizabeth Harwood Memorial Trust in accordance with the will of the late Elizabeth Harwood to enable students to continue their studies after leaving the College), RNCM Tutor in Vocal Studies **Deborah Rees**, who was on the adjudicating panel alongside Robert Dean and Isobel Flinn, said: *'Hanna-Liisa gave the most poised and professional performance. Her singing was musical, technically assured and at times very touching. We*

*also felt that sense which Hanna-Liisa created of 'tingles up the spine': a sure indication of quality.'*

**Susan Roper**, Deputy Head of Vocal Studies and Opera, added: *'On behalf of the College I must thank the Elizabeth Harwood Memorial Trust for their generosity and support; it was so appreciated and the whole evening was a big success.'*

*'College competitions are hugely important because it gives students the opportunity to put into practice all they have learnt in the classroom. It's a real situation for them with a real audience.'*

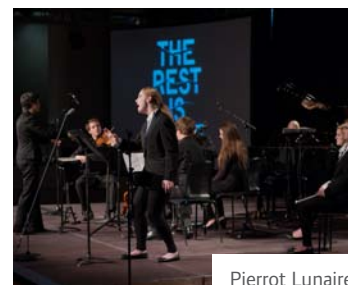
For Hanna-Liisa, who has performed in 15 RNCM operas since joining the College seven years ago, and who is set to join ENO's Opera Works Programme, the win came just weeks after she competed against students from all UK conservatoires at the Royal Opera House for the Miriam Licette Scholarship.

Administered by the Musicians Benevolent Fund and judged by a prestigious panel, which this year included David Syrus, Susan Bickley, Simon Lepper and Valerie Masterson, the Scholarship is awarded for the Singing of French Song.

On winning, Hanna-Liisa said: *'I am delighted to have been awarded this scholarship and proud for both myself and the College's vocal department. I could not have achieved this without pianist Ewan Gilford, and the support of my tutor, Susan Roper, and Lynne Dawson, Head of Vocal Studies. It has been such a thrill to be able to showcase such a beautiful song repertoire, and I'm pleased to be able to have represented the College in such a prestigious competition.'*

Soprano Miriam Licette was the first English singer to study with Mathilde Marchesi in Paris. With fond memories of her time there, she requested that the residue of her estate be used to create an annual scholarship for advanced study in Paris.

## PRAISE FOR RNCM CHAMBER ENSEMBLE



Pierrot Lunaire

An RNCM Chamber Ensemble gave two performances of Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire* at the Southbank Centre, London, in January.

The performances described in the *New Statesman* as *'staggeringly good'*, formed part of the venue's year-long festival *The Rest is Noise – The Soundtrack of the 20th Century* and included students from five Schools who were coached by Clark Rundell. They were: **Victoria Barton** (soprano), **Leanne Cody** (piano), **Jonathan Guy** (clarinet), **Yoon-Jee Kim** (conducting), **Rosie Middleton** (mezzo-soprano), **Samuel Parker** (violin), **Yibin Seow** (conducting), **Emma Stannard** (mezzo-soprano), **Adam Szabo** (cello) and **Helen Wilson** (flute).



Pierrot Lunaire

## YAMAHA SCHOLARSHIP FOR RNCM PERCUSSIONIST

IAD percussionist **Le Yu** has won a Yamaha Music Foundation European (YMFE) Scholarship Award following a closely fought contest in London earlier this year.

A total of seven finalists took part in the competition at the Royal Academy's Duke's Hall, including fellow RNCM student Jack Stone, and three scholarships were awarded in total.

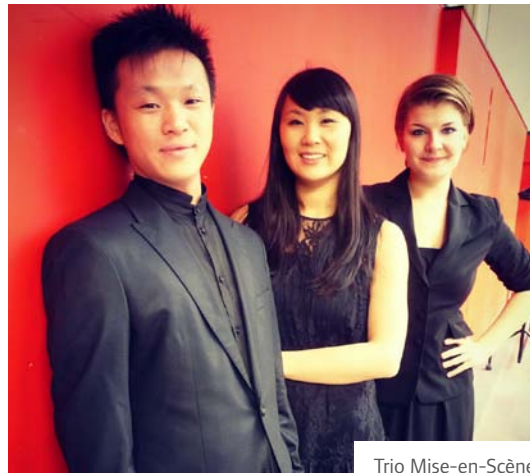
Since 1990, YMFE has awarded scholarships worth more than €1m in total to over 850 outstanding young musicians all over Europe. Past RNCM recipients include mezzo-soprano Kathryn Rudge, who graduated in 2011, pianist Eduard Kunz, who graduated in 2006, and postgraduate cellist Mikhail Nemtsov. During 2012/13 a total of 43 Scholarships in 29 countries will be awarded to full-time students.



Le Yu

## THE TRIO MISE-EN-SCÈNE HAS BEEN CROWNED THIS YEAR'S WINNER OF THE WEIL PRIZE.

Comprising fourth year violinist **Bing Xiang**, postgraduate cellist **Michelle So** and third year pianist **Yulia Vershinina**, the Trio performed Haydn's Piano Trio in G major and 'Winter' from Astor Piazzolla's *The Four Seasons of Buenos Aires* to great praise during March's final.



Trio Mise-en-Scène

*'We are so happy to have been awarded the Weil Prize this year,' said Michelle. 'It's a lovely encouragement following several intense and wonderful months working together as a trio. We felt terrific after playing our final, having brought together all of the learning and experience into a performance we were proud of.'*

*'It's exciting to make music in this way and we are grateful to have such passionate, illuminating guidance from our coaches at the College. We're really looking forward to our next performances and to continuing to push on with our development.'*

The Weil Prize is open to any String Quartet, String Quintet, String Trio, Piano Trio or Piano Quartet and is one of four chamber music prizes awarded at the College throughout the year, the others being the **Nossek Prize** (won by the Cassia Quartet), **Hirsch Prize** (won by the Pether Trio) and, most recently, **Cross School Prize** (won by the Messiaen Quartet).

Talking about chamber music competitions at the College, **Petr Praus**, the RNCM's International Chamber Music Studio Artistic Director, said: *'All of these internal competitions are great for students because they enable them to focus on a set date and prepare for a set programme. Competitions inspire musicians to play even better, and that's what you need for professional life.'*

*'The RNCM is the best place to study chamber music in the UK for the simple reason that the emphasis on it, in addition to principal study instruments, is so strong. We offer regularity to our students, which is heightened by the fact that we are based in Manchester. There is an open market in the North and because we are the only major conservatoire in the region the concert opportunities are absolutely amazing for them; something which is almost impossible to achieve in London.'*

## JRNCM'S WONDERFUL PERFORMANCE ON RADIO 4

A brass quartet from **Junior RNCM** performed live on BBC Radio 4's *Front Row* in December as **Danny Boyle** switched on a bright neon sign spelling the word 'Wonder'.

**Adam Neild** (cornet), **Lizzy Tonge** (cornet), **Lewis Bettles** (trombone) and **Harry Cunningham** (tuba) played a selection of Christmas carols, accompanied by the BBC North Staff Choir, during a special edition at MediaCity, Salford, in which presenter Mark Lawson interviewed the film and TV director about his work.

The invitation to be involved in the programme followed a very successful live performance by a JRNCM brass quintet in December 2011 to celebrate *Front Row's* first broadcast from its new home in the North.



The 'Wonder' sign

# RESOUNDING SUCCESS FOR SHOSTAKOVICH

The RNCM's spring production of Shostakovich's *Moscow, Cheryomushki* (*Paradise Moscow*) received great reviews from the critics.



Adam Player (Sergei) and Daniel Shelvey (Boris) in *Paradise Moscow*

Writing in *The Observer*, Fiona Maddocks commented that 'Only the highest praise can be heaped on its scintillating staging of *Cheryomushki*, or *Paradise Moscow*. . . With some of the best dancing you'll see on a UK opera stage, a uniformly excellent cast (you want names? OK, look out for 23-year-old baritone Benjamin Lewis) stylishly conducted by Alexandre Bloch and directed by Stefan Janski, I'd happily have sat through it again.'

*Moscow, Cheryomushki* was the second of two operas to be presented during the College's 40th anniversary, the first being Monteverdi's *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria* (*The Return of Ulysses*). It was directed by **Stefan Janski** with set and costume design by **David Cockayne** and lighting design by Arnim Friess. The production was double cast, with **Clark Rundell** conducting Cast A and **Alexandre Bloch** (Sir John Zochonis Junior Fellow in Conducting), Cast B.

## IN TRIBUTE

It is with sadness and regret that we announce the deaths of Sir Denis Forman and Ava June.

**Sir Denis Forman** (13 October 1917 to 24 February 2013) and **Ava June** (23 July 1931 to 22 February 2013)

Former chairman of Granada TV and deputy chairman of the Royal Opera House, Sir Denis Forman was a member of the first 'Council' of the RNCM, which held its inaugural meeting in November 1975, its responsibility being the academic work of the College and its day-to-day running.

He was made an Honorary Member in 1980 and in 1993 was presented by Sir Simon Towneley and made a Companion of the College.

Born in 1931, Ava was an international soprano and highly respected voice teacher and drama coach at the RNCM. She studied in London with Joan Cross, Clive Carey, Eva Turner and Denis Dowling before joining the chorus at Sadler's Wells in 1953 as a mezzo. After three years she switched to soprano, quickly graduating to solo roles in the lyric soprano field.



Sir Denis Forman



Ava June

Ava appeared regularly at Covent Garden from 1958 in roles such as First Lady in *Die Zauberflöte*, Freia and Gerhilde in the *Ring* and Marzelline in *Fidelio*. She sang Ellen Orford with Opera North and Donna Elvira with Scottish Opera. She also created roles in several new works, including Frau Schomberg in *Victory* by Bennett (Covent Garden, 1970) and Madame de Libertat and Grande Blanche in Blake's *Toussaint* (ENO, 1977).

Elsewhere, she appeared widely abroad, including Belgium, France and Germany. She retired from singing in 1984, teaching in many institutions in Britain and abroad, including the RNCM from 1985-1999. Her recordings included extracts from the Sadler's Wells productions of *La Traviata* and *The Bartered Bride* and a complete recording of *The Turn of the Screw*.

# RNCM LAUNCHES THE PLATFORM:

## 12 EXCITING PARTNERSHIPS OFFERING UNPARALLELED OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS

The RNCM has announced a brand new international centre for ensemble and vocal training that will provide unparalleled opportunities for students.

Featuring eight world-class orchestras and ensembles in the UK and continental Europe, two of the UK's top brass bands, an internationally-renowned opera company and the European Chamber Music Academy, **The Platform** will enable 200 students to participate in auditions, education projects and public performances. In short, it will offer an unrivalled breadth and depth of immersive learning experiences that will develop the skills needed to become a professional musician.

Over the past decade, the RNCM has established strong partnerships with the **Hallé**, **BBC Philharmonic** and **Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestras**, **Manchester Camerata**, the **Black Dyke Band** and **Opera North**. Now the College is proud to add the **Academy of Ancient Music**, **Chamber Orchestra of Europe**, **European Chamber Academy**, **Foden's Band**, **Mahler Chamber Orchestra**, **Netherlands Wind Ensemble** and the **Orchestra of Opera North** to the list making **The Platform** one of the most sought-after schemes offered by a conservatoire.

**Dr Paul Goodey**, Head of the School of Wind, Brass and Percussion and Dean of Performance Studies at the RNCM, has been integral in the development of the new scheme. He said: *'Three years ago we began reviewing our partnerships. We already had four fantastic partnerships with leading orchestras and*

*my desire was to grow this number, to add new dimensions to our students' training whilst also strengthening our existing schemes.'*

As part of the RNCM's ongoing Professional Experience Schemes, students already have the opportunity to take part in a wide range of internal and external projects with the RNCM's existing partners. However, with such substantial additions **The Platform** opens up an extensive list of possibilities that will include participation in rehearsals led by teams of orchestral principals; projects focusing on historical performance; large-scale off-site events around Manchester; recording projects; overseas tours with a number of ensembles; and attending seminars led by international tutors which focus on professionally-relevant topics. It will also enrich European studies at the College as well as develop its relationship with wind ensembles, historical performance and orchestral opera repertoire.

Paul added: *'We now have some of the best ensembles in the world working regularly with our students. What the students will learn from these partnerships, not only musically but also culturally, will be invaluable.'*

Talking of the RNCM's new partnership with the Mahler Chamber Orchestra, trombonist and MCO founder **Mark Hampson** said: *'The MCO Academy has started a wonderful new collaboration with the talented students from the RNCM, our only partner in the UK. With this new addition to our international network, students from Manchester will now be able to play alongside both MCO musicians from more than 18 countries worldwide, and get to know other young instrumentalists from within Europe and as far afield as Melbourne, Australia.'*

RNCM students also have the opportunity to work with international conductors, such as **Sir Mark**

**"We now have some of the best ensembles in the world working regularly with our students."**

**Dr Paul Goodey**

# THE PLATFORM



**Elder**, Music Director of the Hallé, who recently conducted the RNCM Symphony Orchestra in its performance of Benjamin Britten's *The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra* for a new app celebrating the composer's centenary. Sir Mark said: 'I always enjoy working with the RNCM orchestras, but the orchestra that I had for the recording of Britten's *Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra* was exceptional. The ability of these young players to rise to the challenge of this orchestral showpiece and to deal with the demands of the recording studio was very impressive.'

Conductor **Douglas Boyd**, who is Artistic Director of Garsington Opera and was a founding member of the Chamber Orchestra of Europe, also recently worked with RNCM students when he conducted the College's Chamber Orchestra in a special programme which recreated Beethoven's marathon Akademie concert of 22 December 1922. He said: 'Orchestral training is a vital part of the value of being at a top conservatoire like the RNCM. Learning orchestral technique - the art of listening and watching and team work - at its best is a skill which will last a lifetime in the profession. From a conductor's point of view, we have a duty to inspire young musicians and give them a passion for the greatest music which hopefully will remain with them always. I am delighted to work in such a remarkably talented and positive environment as the RNCM.'

Paul concluded: 'To have this number of partnerships, engaging over 200 students a year, I feel, gives us something that is unrivalled in the UK and possibly in Europe.'

For more information about The Platform visit [www.rncm.ac.uk/theplatform](http://www.rncm.ac.uk/theplatform)

## WHAT THE STUDENTS SAY:

*'I am currently on the Hallé and BBC Philharmonic Professional Experience Schemes, which provide excellent opportunities to play with amazing and established orchestras. I have been able to gain greater insight into how professional orchestras work and have learned so much about good orchestral playing; there are very subtle skills to playing in an orchestra, and taking part in the schemes have really helped me further these skills, and also draw attention to new ones that I need to develop.'*

**Henry Clay**  
GRNCM/MusB, oboe

*'Working with the Mahler Chamber Orchestra in a completely professional environment gave us all insight into the requirements and standard needed to join and work with an orchestra like this. It was also fantastic to travel to Germany because they have a different musical approach, which was very interesting to learn about.'*

**Delia Stevens**  
third year undergraduate, percussion

*'I took part in the Hallé Professional Engagement Scheme and it was a fantastic opportunity to sit in and listen and to play in the rehearsals. It gave me the chance to learn new repertoire and also helped give me a real insight into the daily life of an orchestral musician.'*

**Katharine Curlett**  
first year postgraduate, trumpet

## FOCUS ON RESEARCH

# MUSICAL IMPACT

## A study of the effects of music-making on musicians' health and wellbeing

A new £1m project will see the RNCM join forces with all of the UK's top conservatoires to lead the world's largest ever study into the health and wellbeing of performing musicians.

Starting in September, *Musical Impact* is a four-year research project that promises to generate new knowledge of the physical and mental demands of music-making, to contribute new insight into chronic and acute health problems and their impact over time, and to examine effective strategies for health promotion. While musicians typically have a long history of self-sufficiency in managing the challenges of performing, *Musical Impact* aims to complement musicians' own ingenuity by providing comprehensive, evidence-led resources to help maximise educational and professional opportunities.

The project will be led by Conservatoires UK (CUK) – the organisation which represents nine major UK conservatoires – and will also involve

researchers from Cardiff University and Cardiff Metropolitan University. Crucially, these centres of learning will be working with employers and employees (the Association of British Orchestras (ABO) and the

Musicians' Union) as well as medical practitioners, the British Association for Performing Arts Medicine (BAPAM) and the International Health Humanities Network.

Underpinned by a major £800,000 grant from the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), with the remaining £200,000 coming from the participating institutions, *Musical Impact* has three core strands of research. These are:

- **A longitudinal study of musicians' physical and mental fitness for performance**

Led by Aaron Williamon of the Royal College of Music (with RCM's Rosie Perkins, Helen



Musicians feeling good

Reid of the Guildhall School of Music and Drama and Cardiff Metropolitan University's David Wasley) this strand will investigate the incidence and extent of injuries and ill-health among musicians working in Britain, as well as the physical, psychological, environmental and musical factors that determine musicians' health and wellbeing.

- **The physical and mental demands of practice and performance**

This strand, led by Emma Redding of Trinity Laban with Cardiff University's Alan Watson, will study the physical and mental demands of music-making and training using cutting edge physiological monitoring equipment.

- **Health promotion in music education and the profession**

The RNCM's Associate Dean of Research and Enterprise, **Professor Jane Ginsborg** (with Stephen Broad of the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland) will lead this strand of research, which will examine current approaches to promoting health, adapting, applying and evaluating them across music educational and professional contexts.

“Health and wellbeing are fundamental to music-making at all levels...”

Professor Jane Ginsborg

Talking of the project, Jane said: *'Health and wellbeing are fundamental to music-making at all levels. I am looking forward enormously to collaborating with conservatoire-, university- and industry-based colleagues on a project that has such potential for effecting change.'*

**Professor Colin Lawson**, Chair of the CUK Research Forum and Director of the Royal College of Music, added: *'Nothing is more important to the members of CUK than the health and wellbeing of our students. We are delighted to be working together on a project that promises to make such a positive difference to their lives.'*

CUK is the umbrella organisation which currently represents the collective views of, and lobbies on behalf of, music education and training across nine major UK conservatoires:

Birmingham Conservatoire

Leeds College of Music

Royal College of Music

Royal Northern College of Music

Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance

Guildhall School of Music and Drama

Royal Academy of Music

Royal Conservatoire of Scotland

Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama

## FEELING SOUND

By Robert Fulford, PhD Music Psychology



Robert Fulford

Can feeling the vibrations of sound really help us understand music? This was a key question for the AHRC-funded project *Interactive Performance for Musicians with Hearing Impairments* which is now in its final year. We started by asking musicians with hearing impairments how and why they make music together. Findings were published in *Music Education Research* (2011, 13(4) 447-464) which showed that deafness need be no barrier to music

and highlighted the importance of visual and physical cues between performers. Experiments in collaboration with the Acoustics Research Unit in Liverpool revealed that there remains great potential for the use of vibrotactile technology in music: we can distinguish between notes only a tone apart using vibrations. Results have been published about the relationship between eye contact and players' movements in performance (ICMPC-ESCOM 2012, Greece), how profound deafness affects communication in rehearsal (SEMPRE 2012, London) and the development of musical and deaf identities (in press 2013, Ashgate). Our final conference at the RNCM on 30 May will include Q&A sessions and performances with deaf musicians, talks about vibrotactile perception and technology demonstrations.

For full articles please see <http://rncm.academia.edu/RobertFulford> or follow @musicndeafness.

# BRITTEN'S GUIDE ENTERS THE DIGITAL AGE

The **RNCM Symphony Orchestra** recently recorded Benjamin Britten's *The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra* with **Sir Mark Elder**, Music Director of the Hallé, for a new free digital app in celebration of the composer's centenary.

Instigated by the Britten Pears Foundation in partnership with the RNCM, and developed by Daniel Jackson and Tina Spear of digital arts company AVCO, *The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra* app is a fun and creative learning tool using Britten's famous score to introduce children to the orchestra. It is primarily aimed at young people aged eight to 12, but the material will also be available as a web resource for schools and music hubs, as well as parents and carers.

Initially commissioned by the Crown Film Unit, *The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra* was written in 1946 for use in an educational documentary

film called *The Instruments of the Orchestra*, directed by Muir Mathieson and performed by the London Symphony Orchestra and Sir Malcolm Sargent. With a vision to inspire children as both concertgoers and music-makers, the finished product was circulated to schools throughout Britain with accompanying teachers' notes.

This year, as we celebrate the centenary of Britten's birth, this exciting new project aims to build on that original vision. Using specially devised educational approaches, a digitally produced recording and newly commissioned illustrations by award-winning artist Sara Fanelli, the app will provide a

new generation with access to this much-loved cornerstone of the orchestral repertoire.

The RNCM's recording of the work, which took place at the BBC Philharmonic Studio, MediaCity, Salford, was produced by composer Colin Matthews, who once worked as Britten's assistant. The interactive content was devised by creative learning consultant Rebecca Meitlis with significant input from RNCM staff and students, led by Outreach Manager **Fiona Stuart**, in collaboration with Beaver Road Primary School, Didsbury and Trinity High School, Manchester. It will be available for download this summer.

## THE CONTENT:

**Benjamin Britten:** archive footage, including photographs, recordings and manuscripts, give information about Britten's life and the genesis of the work.

**The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra:** a new multi-tracked recording of the work means material can be used with the interactive score, creative elements and quizzes.

**Interactive Score:** this gives users the chance to enjoy the patterns of the musical notation in relation to the sounds they are hearing, even if they do not read music. Options in this section include watching a video of the orchestra or reading the narrative.

**Discover the Instruments** and **Meet the Players:** interactive interviews with RNCM students.

**Aural Quiz:** carefully devised levels help participant become familiar with the instruments of the orchestra and the score, enabling them to develop their listening skills.

**Personality Quiz:** an enjoyable way to introduce the instruments by matching them to users' personalities. Be the Composer; Fugue and Variation Games: use elements of the score to make up your own compositions.



# RNCM IN THE CITY



In celebration of our 40th anniversary, students have been taking Manchester by storm thanks to **RNCM in the City**; our gift of 40 free concerts at 40 different venues.

Running until 16 June the series has, to date, included performances at the Town Hall, Christmas Markets, The Gaskell's House, Manchester Reform Synagogue, Royal Exchange Theatre, Britons Protection, MOSI, Manchester Arndale Centre and, amongst many others, Matt & Phred's.

**Abigail Collins**, RNCM in the City Project Manager, said: *'Now just over half way through, the series is being received and supported in a way in which we could only have hoped. A number of people have become regular attendees and it's wonderful to know they feel this is something in which they want to invest their time. I hope that we can reach even more of the community over the next few months and that once the series is over, people will be left feeling connected to the RNCM in some way.'*



Solem Quartet's at IWM North

*'Watching the reactions of people stumbling across live musical performances in places such as the Imperial War Museum North, MOSI and Manchester Arndale have been fantastic. The musicians have also had a wonderful time getting out into different spaces and playing in front of new*

*audiences. On a personal level, planning this series has made me get to know Manchester in greater depth and has reminded me just what a fantastic location it is for the College.'*

Over 10 concerts remain in the series, including a performance at Portico Library,



The Aurora Percussion Duo at Band on the Wall

The Deaf Institute, Castlefield Ampitheatre, Chetham's School of Music and Salford Lads Club, where students from the RNCM's Access to Music course will perform a 45 minute gig featuring tracks by The Smiths, Joy Division, Oasis and New Order. For a full list of events visit [www.rncm.ac.uk/inthecity](http://www.rncm.ac.uk/inthecity)



RNCM Opera at Manchester Arndale



ALUMNI NEWS  
IN BRIEF

**Emmet Byrne** (oboe, 2003) has been appointed Principal second oboe with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra.

**Amina Hussain** (flute, 1998) has been appointed Principal flute with Manchester Camerata.

Tenor **Bo Wang** (2011) successfully auditioned for an extra chorus contract with English National Opera.

**Elizabeth Llewellyn** (soprano, 1996) was nominated for The Times South Bank Breakthrough Award, part of the prestigious South Bank Sky Arts Awards. Elizabeth was also the focus of BBC Radio 4's Profile programme broadcast in April

**Richard Wiegold** (bass, 2002) was a soloist in the Hallé's recent performance of Act III of Wagner's *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, conducted by Sir Mark Elder.



Maya Irgalina

Pianist **Maya Irgalina** (2012) gave a recital at Wigmore Hall in February.

**Alexandra Dariescu** (piano, 2008) has been invited to perform Shostakovich's Piano Concerto No 2 with Vasily Petrenko and the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra at the Philharmonic Hall, Liverpool in July.

**Camila Ribero Souza** (soprano, 2011) has been awarded the Foerderpreis of the Das Meininger Theater, Germany, given annually to an actor or singer.

The **Navarra String Quartet** has been awarded the prestigious ChamberStudio Mentorship 2013. ChamberStudio is based at Kings Place, London, and this newly launched mentorship programme is generously supported by the Musicians Benevolent Fund.

## NAVARRA STRING QUARTET AWARDED PRESTIGIOUS CHAMBERSTUDIO MENTORSHIP



Navarra String Quartet

The ChamberStudio Mentorship provides the opportunity for one outstanding group to study in-depth for a year with their chosen mentor(s). The programme is heavily subsidised, tailor-made to each recipient, and allows the highest level of study. Other benefits include concert opportunities, a professional recording and business advice specific to running a chamber ensemble. The Navarra String Quartet, comprising alumni **Magnus Johnston** (violin, 2002), **Marije Ploemacher** (violin, 2007) and **Simone van der Giessen** (viola, 2008), and cellist **Brian O'Kane**, will be mentored by violinist Eberhard Feltz and cellist David Waterman.

On awarding the ChamberStudio Mentorship to the Navarra Quartet, Richard Ireland said: *'I first heard Magnus Johnston leading a quartet when*

*he was a student at the RNCM. Magnus has always been a deeply insightful and expressive player and he joins forces with three other outstanding musician colleagues in the Navarra Quartet. The four players together perform with rare sensitivity and emotional strength.'*

Cellist Brian O'Kane, speaking on the Quartet's behalf, acknowledged: *'The Navarra Quartet is extremely proud and honoured to be the inaugural quartet selected for the ChamberStudio Mentorship programme. ChamberStudio will effectively facilitate the Quartet's continued development by enabling us to study with the most distinguished musicians of today. We are thoroughly looking forward to continuing our relationship with Eberhard Feltz and David Waterman through this new scheme. A string quartet, by definition, is a constantly evolving group, and to have such mentors guiding us on our musical journey is an essential and wonderful thing.'*

Formed at the RNCM in 2002 by the late Dr Christopher Rowland and Alasdair Tait, the Navarra Quartet is Quartet in Association at the College. Between 2006 and 2011 it was selected for representation by the Young Concert Artists Trust, and in 2007 received a Borletti-Buitoni Trust Fellowship culminating in a highly acclaimed disc of Haydn's *Seven Last Words*.

## PRESIDENTIAL EVENING FOR ALUMNAE

Alumnae **Elizabeth Karani** (soprano, 2012), **Kathryn Rudge** (mezzo-soprano, 2011), **Jennifer Rust** (soprano, 2012) and **Helen Sherman** (mezzo-soprano, 2010) will join RNCM President, **Sir Willard White**, for a summer concert in aid of the College.

Recommended by Classic FM, An Enchanted Evening of Song will take place at The Bridgewater Hall on Wednesday 12 June and will include a selection of popular opera arias and musical theatre songs in celebration of the RNCM's 40th anniversary. To learn more about this event see page 20.



Elizabeth Karani



Emily Howard

## ALUMNA WINS COMPOSER AWARD

Alumna **Emily Howard** (2004) has won a British Composer Award alongside Royal Manchester College of Music graduate **Sir Harrison Birtwistle**, presented during a ceremony at Goldsmiths' Hall in December.

Emily, who graduated in 2003, was shortlisted for a Making Music Award for her composition *Mesmerism for Piano and Chamber Orchestra*, while Sir Harrison's Concerto for Violin and Orchestra won the Orchestral category.

Speaking of her win, Emily said: *'I'm absolutely delighted to have received the 2012 Making Music British Composer Award and particularly so for Mesmerism, commissioned by the Liverpool Mozart Orchestra (LMO) in its Diamond Jubilee year, with support from the PRS for Music Foundation.*

*'I've been lucky enough to be associated with the LMO since I was very young. My father was a cellist with the orchestra for 27 years and my mother has performed piano concertos with*

*them. I grew up listening to the LMO rehearse and attending their concerts and I'm certain that this experience helped to nurture my love for orchestral writing and for composition in general.*

*'The LMO has enriched Merseyside culturally for more than 60 years and continues to do so, with strong leadership from current Musical Director (and RNCM alumnus and staff) Mark Heron. It has been a particular pleasure to write for and to work closely with pianist and alumna Alexandra Dariescu and thanks must go to Mark for dreaming up the project in the first place.'*

A total of 39 composers were shortlisted by the British Academy of Songwriters, Composers and Authors (BASCA), including alumni **Gavin Higgins** (2005) and **Andy Scott** (1989).

## PENGUINS A GOGO!

Following their début at Ronnie Scott's last autumn, **GoGo Penguin** have recorded a Maida Vale session for Jamie Cullum's BBC Radio 2 show (due to be broadcast on 7 May), supported Snarky Puppy at KoKo, and headlined a sell-out show at Pizza Express in London.



GoGo Penguin

The trio, comprising alumni **Chris Illingworth** (piano, 2007) and **Rob Turner** (percussion, 2005) and double bassist Nick Blacka, are due to record their second album in early April, followed by a performance at the Salon İKSV in Istanbul. The Times selected GoGo Penguin as one of their 'New Faces' in the arts to look out for in 2013. [www.gogopenguin.co.uk](http://www.gogopenguin.co.uk)

## COMPOSER MAKES ASIAN DÉBUT

Composer **Matthew Sergeant** made his Asian début in January when Australia's ELISION ensemble performed the première of *ymrehanne krisos* in Singapore.

Matthew, an RNCM alumnus and Tutor in Composition who graduated in 2007, wrote the piece as part of a larger cycle of related musical works he's been working on over the past 18 months for his PhD at the College.

Collectively entitled *the eleven churches of lalibela* (after the 11 rock-hewn churches found at the UNESCO world-heritage site in Lalibela, Ethiopia), the constituent parts of the cycle explore issues of corruption, erosion, distortion

and disorientation as compositional strategies.

Talking of the début, Matthew said: *'It's quite overwhelming, but it's certainly exciting to be taking my music overseas. It's always interesting to see how a different demographic responds to my ideas.*

*'Working with ELISION has been great because they are extremely committed to working closely with composers, so it's been an*

*exciting collaborative effort. This particular ensemble prides itself on this kind of relationship, and for me it really shows.'*

In addition to his postgraduate studies, Matthew was an undergraduate at the RNCM between 2002 and 2006, studying with David Horne. Recalling this time, he said: *'The RNCM transformed me from someone who just made music to someone who can call themselves a composer. I think the thing about*



Matthew Sergeant

*the RNCM that makes that transformation possible, is the absolute paramount importance the composition department puts on live performance, which has been absolutely crucial to everything I've done. Relating that back to my current position, it would be impossible for me to work on a project like this without having that training during my undergraduate studies.'*

SAVE THE DATE:  
FRIDAY 28  
JUNE 2013  
RNCM ALUMNI  
REUNION

Join us for a taste of nostalgia as we celebrate 40 fantastic years!

It's hard to believe it's been four decades since the Royal Manchester College of Music and Northern School of Music merged to create the Royal Northern College of Music, but as we continue to enjoy our 40th anniversary it's clear that the RNCM has developed into one of the most prominent and vibrant conservatoires in the world. And, as you have all played such a significant part in establishing our incredible history, we would like nothing more than for you to join us at the College on **Friday 28 June** for a special **Alumni Reunion** followed by a concert at **The Bridgewater Hall**.

More details about this event will follow over the coming weeks, but if you would like to get in touch please email [alumni@rncm.ac.uk](mailto:alumni@rncm.ac.uk) or call **0161 907 5377**. We look forward to welcoming you back!

**40**  
**RNCM**  
**REUNION**

# FROM BACH TO BOND

## RNCM pianist brings his virtuosity and creative programming to London via the North

Pianist and RNCM alumnus **Emmanuel 'Manny' Vass** (2008) made his London debut in April with a series of concerts at St Lawrence Jewry, Steinway Hall and St James's Piccadilly. The concerts came towards the end of a demanding recital tour which took Manny to eight venues across the north of England, from Hull to Liverpool. They also marked the release of his debut CD, *From Bach to Bond*.

Both the CD and recitals reflect Manny's imaginative programming and eclectic tastes, giving audiences a chance to witness his extraordinary virtuosity not only in music by Bach, Chopin, Debussy and Gershwin, but also in his own arrangements of contemporary classics such as *Bohemian Rhapsody* and the *James Bond* theme – already big hits on YouTube.

Manny, who completed his studies at the RNCM in 2011 as a Leverhulme Scholar, is a young artist on the brink of a brilliant career. Tangible recognition of his talents has come recently from Yamaha, who named him unsigned artist of the month, and BBC Radio 3, for which he took part in a masterclass with David Owen Norris.

Recent prestigious engagements have included performing alongside The Manfreds and Lulu for the Prince and Princess of Monaco as part of the

Manny Vass



Variety Club Jubilee Ball; a performance for Lord Levy and the Russian ambassador in the Golden Room, Kensington Palace Gardens; a recital for the French ambassador at The Lowry, Manchester; and a live BBC6 Music broadcast as part of an ensemble headed by Jimi Goodwin from the international award-winning band *Doves*.



Carol Jarvis

## BRIT AWARDS PERFORMANCE FOR RNCM TROMBONIST

Freelance trombonist **Carol Jarvis** performed with Muse at the 2013 BRIT Awards at the O2 Arena in February.

Carol, who will soon be performing with Seal in Monte Carlo and Sydney, graduated in 2001 and has since toured extensively on trombone, keyboards and vocals with Sting, Brian May, Bon Jovi and Michael Bolton in addition to working with many of the world's leading orchestras.

# RNCM CELLIST JOINS WORLD-RENOWNED QUARTET

South Korean cellist **Sunny Jungin Yang** is set to join the world-famous Kronos Quartet, replacing Jeffrey Ziegler who steps down in May after eight years.



Sunny Jungin Yang

*day I would be part of this fantastic and unique ensemble. I'm looking forward to creating and sharing exciting music with my new colleagues.'*

Kronos artistic director and violinist David Harrington added: *'Sunny Yang will bring incredible artistry and energy to Kronos as we continue our exploration of today's music. Each of our three line-ups over the past 35 years has had its own special character. I'm really excited to hear how our sound evolves with Sunny in the group.'*

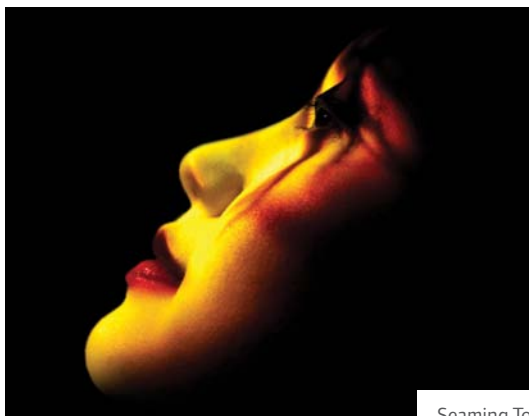
On 22 June the Quartet will officially launch its 40th anniversary season with a free concert at the International Festival of Arts and Ideas in New Haven, Connecticut. The season will continue with première performances of Kronos-commissioned works by Philip Glass, Aleksandra Vrebalov, Terry Riley, Karin Rehnqvist and Amon Tobin.

Sunny graduated from the RNCM in 2008 and studied with **Ralph Kirshbaum**. Speaking of her new appointment she said: *'I'm unbelievably thrilled to be joining Kronos. The quartet has always been an inspiration to me, and I never dreamt that one*

## SEAMING'S SENTIMENTAL SONGS

Soprano **Seaming To** recently undertook a five day tour across the UK with her mother, concert pianist Enloc Wu, to promote her new song cycle, *Songs For My Grandmother*.

Originally commissioned by the Chinese Arts Centre, *Songs for My Grandmother* was written by



Seaming To

Seaming, who graduated in 2000, as a tribute to her grandmother, Constance, one of the initial intakes at China's first conservatoire in Shanghai.

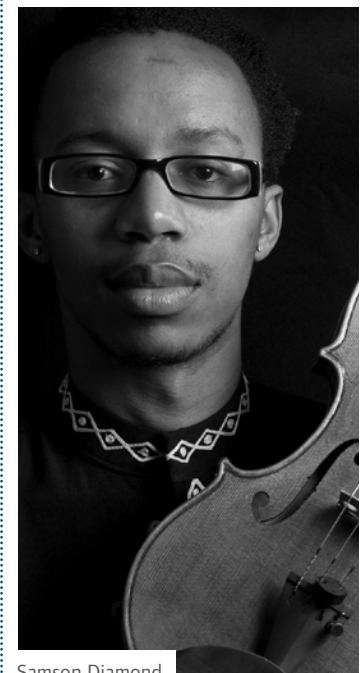
As Seaming explained: *'This song cycle does take me back to my family. The songs are based on conversations I had with my grandmother about her life in China, and have been composed for my mum to play. For me, this is an opportunity to find out about my past. I was born in London and though I look Chinese, I'm not, so it was a great opportunity to find out what went on. There's still so much I don't know much about - her fleeing to Hong Kong from the Red Army for instance - but it's been wonderful using that as material and seeing how different my life is.'*

## NEW ROLE FOR SAMSON

Violinist **Samson Diamond** (2007) took up the position of leader of the Odeion String Quartet in January 2013.

The Odeion is the resident string quartet of the University of the Free State, one of South Africa's oldest higher education institutions, and was formed in 1991. It remains the only resident string quartet within any South African University.

Samson, who performed with the South African Youth Orchestra for Nelson Mandela at the invitation of the Nelson Mandela Foundation in 2009, was also recently appointed concertmaster for the Free State Symphony Orchestra.



Samson Diamond

# BECOME A BENEFACTOR

**Jonathan and Heide Harwood** are RNCM Benefactors, making their own contribution to help with the current challenges faced by a large number of students who cannot afford to study music without some form of financial assistance.

*'Over the 40 years or so that we have lived in the Manchester area, we have attended concerts at the College on numerous occasions. Indeed, given our particular musical interests – 20th century music, new music and jazz – the College has probably been the principal focus of our concert-going. About three years ago we began to realise just how central the College has been to our musical life and concluded that we wanted to 'put something back'. After discussing the possibilities with Christine Henstock in the Development Office, we decided in the first instance to contribute for one year toward the expenses of a student on the master's course (a flautist from South Africa). The experience was a rewarding one for us, so the following year we supported a cellist from Poland, and this year we are helping a British saxophonist who is particularly committed to both jazz and new music. We have always felt very much at home in the College because of its relaxed and lively atmosphere, but the experience over the last three years – of being able to make a modest contribution toward maintaining the high standards of performance here – has, if anything, intensified our affection for the place.'*

There are two levels of support to the RNCM Benefactors' scheme and philanthropic gifts at these levels may aid a specific area of academic or capital need or an individual student with a bursary. To find out more please contact the Development Office on **0161 907 5338** or email **development@rncm.ac.uk**. Alternatively, visit **www.rncm.ac.uk/support/benefactors/**

## **Benefactors' Evening**

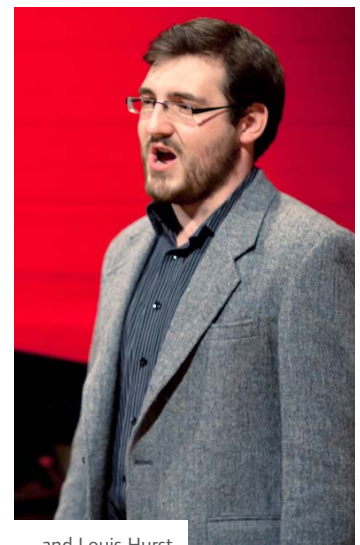
If you are a Silver, Gold or Platinum Friend, a Benefactor or Principal Benefactor you will have recently received your invitation to our exclusive Benefactors' Evening on Friday 7 June, between 6pm and 9pm. This private recital, hosted by **Professor Linda Merrick**, RNCM Principal, is a special thank you to show our sincere appreciation for your generous support.

The evening includes entertainment from a number of the College's top students, an opportunity to meet students and senior staff, and a drinks and canapés reception.

To let us know whether you are able to attend this special occasion, simply call us on **0161 907 5338** or email **development@rncm.ac.uk**.



Performing at the 2012 Benefactors' Evening; Catrin Woodruff, Katie Connor...



... and Louis Hurst

# FORTHCOMING FRIENDS EVENTS



Stephen Hough

## An Afternoon with Stephen Hough

Saturday 4 May, 3pm

World-leading concert pianist, RNCM International Chair of Keyboard Studies, alumnus and all-round friend of the RNCM, Stephen Hough returns to his alma mater to talk about his long and successful career, in conversation with Les Pratt from BBC Radio 3. This afternoon's entertainment promises to showcase Stephen's diverse range of expertise and wide popular appeal through conversation, questions from the audience, and whatever else he adds to the mix.

Tickets £10,

Concessions available  
RNCM Friends receive  
a 15% discount

+

Coffee with Stephen Hough –  
exclusive to RNCM Friends and  
Benefactors

4.30pm Carole Nash Recital  
Room Mezzanine

In this special opportunity for RNCM Friends and Benefactors only, come along after Stephen's talk for a coffee and chat. Free admission with event ticket and on presentation of your Friends Membership card.



Couture at the College

## Meet the students

Friday 31 May, 3.30pm

Meet at RNCM Reception

A exclusive opportunity for RNCM Friends and Benefactors to be entertained by a top vocal student in a programme including German Lieder, French chanson and Italian art song followed by Afternoon Tea in Brodsky and the chance to chat to some of the College's enthusiastic and talented students.

Tickets £8

## Couture at the College

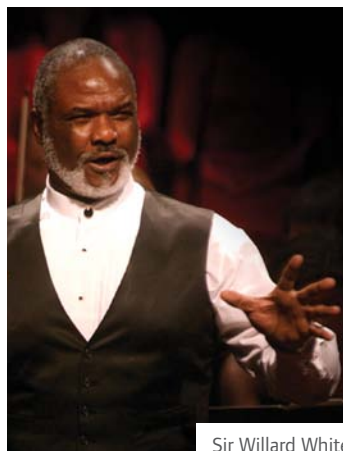
Tuesday 18 June, 4pm

Meet at RNCM Reception

If you've ever admired the splendid costumes of our opera productions, this event, with RNCM Wardrobe Manager Elaine Needham, will explain the processes that take innovative designs from their initial stages to the finished product, with a particular focus on the 50s-inspired theme of our recent production, *Paradise Moscow*.

Tickets £4

Please ring the Box Office on 0161 907 5555 to buy tickets for Friends events



Sir Willard White

## An Enchanted Evening of Song with Sir Willard White

Wednesday 12 June, 7.30pm

The Bridgewater Hall

For this Gala occasion, in aid of the RNCM, our President, Sir Willard White, presents a concert of his favourite arias and American popular songs in celebration of the College's 40th anniversary. Taking place at The Bridgewater Hall and recommended by Classic FM, he will be joined on stage by alumnae Elizabeth Karani, Kathryn Rudge, Jennifer Rust and Helen Sherman. Tickets £27.50, £22.50 and £17.50  
Box office: 0161 907 5555

## Post-Concert Reception with Special Guests

As part of the RNCM's 40th Birthday celebrations, you are invited to join us for an exclusive post-concert reception in the Barbirolli Room.

## Emeritus President HRH

The Duchess of Kent and Sir Willard White will meet and greet guests and drinks and a buffet will be served.

Tickets for the reception are £30 and can be booked on 0161 907 5555 or at [www.rncm.ac.uk](http://www.rncm.ac.uk)

## JOIN THE RNCM FRIENDS

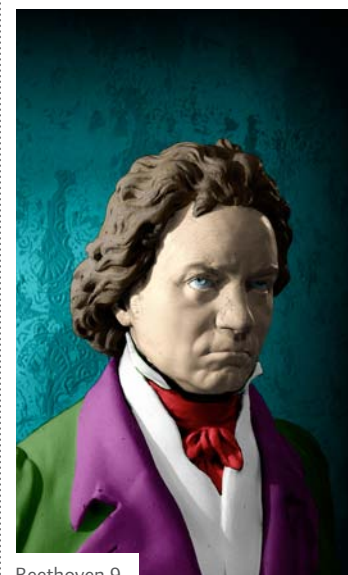
We need your help now more than ever to support musical talent. RNCM Friends subscriptions help with everything we do, including supporting our students with bursaries and travel grants, developing our artistic and academic programmes, reaching further with community work, improving facilities and much more.

RNCM Friends membership starts from as little as £2.50 a month. To find out more please call us on 0161 907 5338, email [friends@rncm.ac.uk](mailto:friends@rncm.ac.uk) or visit [www.rncm.ac.uk/friends](http://www.rncm.ac.uk/friends).

There are a number of ways to find out about joining the RNCM Friends. Please pick up a Friends leaflet, visit the Box Office, email [friends@rncm.ac.uk](mailto:friends@rncm.ac.uk) or ring 0161 907 5338 for more details.

## Special May Joining Offer:

Sign up as a new RNCM Friend before 31 May and as a joining offer you will receive one free ticket to the RNCM Symphony Orchestra's performance of Beethoven's Symphony No 9 at The Bridgewater Hall on Friday 28 June.



Beethoven 9

# RNCM



Wednesday 12 June 7.30pm  
The Bridgewater Hall

## An Enchanted Evening of Song with Sir Willard White and special guests

Sir Willard White presents an evening of his favourite arias and American popular songs in celebration of the RNCM's 40th anniversary.



RECOMMENDED BY

CLASSIC *f*M

**Tickets from £17.50**

[/rnvoice](#) [f/rncmlive](#)

Box Office 0161 907 5555

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



Promoted by RNCM in association with THE **bridgewater** HALL