

Summer
2026



at the RNCM

RNCM
ROYAL NORTHERN
COLLEGE OF MUSIC

Cover: XL Poncho
Photographer: Hannah Walker



RNCM Symphony Orchestra
Photographer: Robin Clewley

Welcome to the RNCM



Book Online

Our Summer season always offers great insight into what makes the RNCM both exciting and unique. Whether that's in the quality of the visiting artists and events, or in the emerging talent we celebrate through our series of prize-giving concerts, the programme speaks to our commitment to supporting every stage of an artist's journey and to championing excellence.

It's a privilege to welcome back **Manchester Jazz Festival** (see pages 4-5) as well as our ensembles-in-residence **Manchester Collective** (Thu 23 Apr and Sat 9 May) and **BBC Philharmonic Orchestra** (Fri 1 May), and to collaborate again with more than 200 young people and local community members on our original productions **RNCM Children's Opera** and **RNCM Community Opera** (see pages 6-7). Summer 2026 also has two very special performances outside of the building – both in iconic Manchester venues: our much-lauded **RNCM Symphony Orchestra** will perform Rachmaninov and Tchaikovsky at the **Bridgewater Hall** (see our Deep Dive on pages 16-17), and our immersive one-night-only takeover will lead audiences on a musical adventure around the **People's History Museum** (Sat 4 Jul).

But we're also proud to spotlight the next generation of musicians and composers with a series of concerts dedicated to voice (Tue 9 Jun), popular music (Sat 13 Jun), chamber ensembles (Mon 15 Jun), composition (Wed 17 Jun) and classical (Thu 18 Jun).

We hope you're able to experience with us this rich mix of established and emerging musicians.

Jazz at the RNCM

Cassie Kinoshi's seed.

Sat 16 May
7.30pm
RNCM Theatre

Legacy: Coltrane and Cannonball, Tony Kofi & Denys Baptiste Quintet

Sat 23 May
7.30pm
RNCM Theatre

RNCM Big Band with Zoe Rahman (piano)

Thu 25 Jun
7.30pm
RNCM Theatre

Manchester Jazz Festival returns to the RNCM this summer with two highlights from its 10-day calendar. Award-winning contemporary ensemble **seed.**, featuring composer and alto-saxophonist **Cassie Kinoshi**, brings its sonic experience to the RNCM in the festival's opening weekend (Sat 16 May), followed in the closing weekend by a tender tribute to a legendary jazz partnership – performed by two timeless names on the modern scene, **Legacy: Coltrane and Cannonball, Tony Kofi & Denys Baptiste Quintet** (Sat 23 May).

Hot on the heels of the festival, the **RNCM Big Band** is joined by multi-award-winning pianist **Zoe Rahman** for a spectacular side-by-side jazz performance (Thu 25 Jun). A key College ensemble since the 1980s, the RNCM Big Band brings students together with today's innovative musicians and composers and helps them to develop their versatility in live improvisation.

RNCM Head of Jazz and Instrumentation, Steve Berry, explains: *'Improvisation is a core element of study for every RNCM student, through years 1 and 2, and beyond that every student has the option to pursue it more fully – the MIUAWGA Ensemble being a prime vehicle for this. Though we don't currently offer a degree in jazz study, the students we attract tend to have a wide range of interests, including jazz, so for them we offer the RNCM Big Band along with a range of support, from ground up familiarisation for the curious, right up to in-depth lessons and classes for those who develop a deeper interest along the way.'*



Cassie Kinoshi
Photographer: Aurore Fouchez



RNCM in the Community

RNCM Children's Opera: The Green Knight †

Thu 30 Apr
2pm and 7pm
RNCM Theatre

RNCM Young Explorers: Musical Theatre Magic

Sun 14 Jun
2pm
RNCM Theatre

RNCM Community Opera: The Water Mark

Wed 1 – Thu 2 Jul
7.30pm
RNCM Theatre

Every year, the RNCM works with schools and community groups from across Greater Manchester to create fresh productions – and in 2026, that means two brand new operas.

First up, and now in its 16th year, is the **RNCM Children's Opera** (Thu 30 Apr) which brings together 120 primary school children to script, compose, and choreograph an original opera. Created with director/composer Kate Pearson and designer Lara Booth, the production also includes 140 RNCM musicians in the orchestra and on stage, plus several student composers. The pupils from schools in Denton, Ancoats, Longsight, and Swinton have tapped into the RNCM's *Legends and Lore* theme and reimagined the historical tale of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* – a story about trust, love, loyalty, friendship, and forgiveness – with each school presenting their own section of the final production before coming together for the musical grand finale (this year's is a real tearjerker!).

Kate also directs the **RNCM Community Opera** (Wed 1 – Thu 2 Jul) in collaboration with the 50-strong adult Community Chorus, which works with Musical Director David Cane throughout the year. Inspired by the history of Manchester's lost waterways, *The Water Mark* follows the story of a troubled young woman who discovers that cleaning up a local river – and the historical people and stories from the city's past she encounters along the way (including the legendary Suffragettes) – is the key that unlocks her writer's block.

The College's big family concert, **RNCM Young Explorers** (Sun 14 Jun), rounds off the summer and offers children the chance to experience live orchestral music in a casual and relaxed atmosphere, with performances specially designed to keep everyone engaged and entertained.

SAT 11 – SUN 12 APR | VARIOUS TIMES
CH AND T | FULL: £10

National Concert Band Festival

The UK's largest Wind Band and Big Band Festival, promoted by NCBF

SAT 18 APR | 6PM | CH | FULL: £19

The National Youth Brass Band of Great Britain Easter Concert

Over 90 young musicians from the UK's leading brass band charity perform, promoted by NYBBGB

MON 20 APR | 7.30PM | CNRR
FULL: £13

William Bracken (piano)

The last of our four International Artist Diploma recitals

THU 23 APR | 1.15PM | CH
FREE, WITH TICKET

Thursday Lunchtimes

Cardinal Quintet and Lucian Amette Crosby (piano)

THU 23 APR | 7.30PM | CH | FULL: £18

RNCM x Manchester Collective Studio: Hidden Realms+

Five exceptional postgraduate string players team up with the Collective for radical music-making beyond the orchestra

Pre-show concert:

Spotlight: A Choral Bedtime Story

6.30PM | CNRR | FREE

FRI 24 APR | 7.30PM | CH | FULL: £18

The KNDS Fairey Band and RNCM Brass Ensemble+

A side-by-side performance of Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition* with visuals

Pre-show concert:

Spotlight: Britten's On This Island

6.30PM | CNRR | FREE

SAT 25 APR | 7PM | T | FULL: £18

RNCM Gospel Choir

Wayne Ellington directs an inspirational evening of music

TUE 28 APR | 6PM | CNRR
FREE, NO TICKET REQUIRED

Spotlight: Piano Duo Adélie

The duo performs the music of Rachmaninov

TUE 28 – WED 29 APR
CNRR & CH | FREE, WITH TICKET

David Fennessy In Focus

Including:

The first thing, the last thing and everything in between

TUE 28 APR | 7PM | CH

Music and Conversation

WED 29 APR | 6PM | CNRR

Manchester Contemporary Orchestra

WED 29 APR | 7.30PM | CH

Celebrating the music of the Irish composer, performer, and teacher

THU 30 APR | 2PM AND 7PM | T
FREE, WITH TICKET

RNCM Children's Opera: The Green Knight †

Composer Kate Pearson directs a cast of local school children and RNCM musicians in an original opera production (see pages 6-7)

LISTINGS | MAY

FRI 1 MAY | 8PM | CH | FULL: £22

BBC Philharmonic Orchestra: Grand Pianola Music

John Storgårds conducts music by Igor Stravinsky and John Adams with pianist Tamara Stefanovich, promoted by BBC Philharmonic Orchestra

Pre-show concert:

**Spotlight: Paddington Trio –
Ravel's Piano Trio in A minor**
7PM | CNRR | FREE



Tamara Stefanovich
Photographer: Sihoo Kim

SAT 2 MAY | 7.30PM | T
FULL, FROM: £28.50

London Bollywood Orchestra: Sounds of Mumbai

Award-winning vocalists Navin Kundra and Rekha perform timeless hits from the 1940s to today, promoted by London Bollywood Orchestra

SAT 9 MAY | 8PM | T | FULL: £22

Manchester Collective x Thick & Tight: Papillons*

A collaborative performance of Kaija Saariaho's *Sept Papillons* with dance duo Thick & Tight, plus new work by CHAINES

SAT 16 MAY | 7.30PM | T | FULL: £27.50

Cassie Kinoshi's seed.

The 11-piece ensemble is led by composer and alto-saxophonist Cassie Kinoshi, co-promoted by Manchester Jazz Festival (see pages 4-5)

SAT 23 MAY | 7.30PM | T | FULL: £27.50

Legacy: Coltrane and Cannonball, Tony Kofi & Denys Baptiste Quintet

Two of London's premier saxophonists celebrate a legendary partnership, co-promoted by Manchester Jazz Festival (see pages 4-5)

SAT 30 MAY | 8PM | T
FULL, FROM: £36.30

Rickie Lee Jones

The soulful singer-songwriter performs her classics and favourites, promoted by Senbla

LISTINGS | JUNE

THU 4 JUN | 6PM | T
FREE, WITH TICKET

RNCM Opera Scenes

Vocal and conducting students present some of opera's greatest moments

Also:

TUE 9 JUN | 6PM

THU 18 JUN | 6PM

SAT 6 JUN | 7.30PM | T | FULL: £38.50

Music of the Mystics: Sufi Qawwali night with Fanna-Fi-Allah

An ensemble of tabla, harmonium, and choral vocals led by Tahir Qawwal, promoted by Fanna-Fi-Allah



Fanna-Fi-Allah
Photographer: Image courtesy
of Fanna-Fi-Allah

TUE 9 JUN | 7PM | CH | FULL: £13

The Joyce and Michael Kennedy Award for the Singing of Strauss

Finalists from the School of Vocal Studies and Opera perform selections from Strauss' repertoire

FRI 12 JUN | 7PM | CH | FULL: £18

RNCM Brass Band and RNCM Wind Orchestra with Julian Bliss (clarinet)+

An evening of music including John Mackey's *Divine Mischief* with renowned British clarinetist Julian Bliss

SAT 13 JUN | 7PM | T | FULL: £13

RNCM Artist of the Year: Pop Final

Celebrating outstanding artistry and excellence in our Popular Music department, performed with the RNCM Session Ensemble

SUN 14 JUN | 2PM | T | FULL: £13

RNCM Young Explorers: Musical Theatre Magic

The Untold Orchestra's interactive family show returns with songs from the West End, plus karaoke for kids

MON 15 JUN | 7PM | CH | FULL: £13

RNCM Christopher Rowland Chamber Ensemble of the Year

An annual prize in honour of the architect of our chamber music department

Pre-show concert:

Spotlight: The Gorgi-Stewart Quintet – Notes on Separation and Leaving

6PM | CNRR | FREE

TUE 16 JUN | 2PM | PHILHARMONIC STUDIO, MEDIACITY | FULL: £6.20

BBC Philharmonic Orchestra

Our International Artist Diploma students and postgraduate conductors perform with the acclaimed orchestra

Also:

WED 24 JUN | 2PM



BBC Philharmonic Orchestra
Photographer: Drew Forsyth

TUE 16 JUN | 7.30PM | CH | FULL: £22

Timothy Ridout (viola) and James Baillieu (piano)*

A programme of Schumann, Brahms, and Shostakovich

Pre-show concert:

Spotlight: Solaris Brass – Triton, Messenger of the Sea+

6.30PM | CNRR | FREE



Timothy Ridout
Photographer: Kaupo Kikkas

WED 17 JUN | 7PM | VAR | FULL: £13

RNCM Artist of the Year: Composer Final

Celebrating outstanding artistry and excellence in composition

THU 18 JUN | 7PM | CH | FULL: £13

RNCM Artist of the Year: Classical Final

Celebrating outstanding artistry and excellence in solo performance

Pre-show concert:

Spotlight: Aidan Bryson – Music for Jazz Quartet and String Quartet

6PM | CNRR | FREE

SUN 21 JUN | FROM 12PM
FREE, WITH TICKET

BBC Introducing @ RNCM

After a decade of quietly developing into a cornerstone of the new music scene in Manchester, the RNCM's Popular Music department is finally taking over the venue for a full-on showcase of the next generation of musicians set to explode this summer.

BBC Introducing @ RNCM pulls in tastemakers from the BBC's top platform for discovering early stage artists to co-curate a day packed with some of the most hotly tipped musicians coming out of RNCM Pop (recent graduates include West Side Cowboy, Jack Critchlow, and Dove Ellis).

Eleven artists (including our cover stars XL Poncho) have been hand-selected for the BBC Introducing Stage in the RNCM Theatre – a space that has played host to everyone from Steve Reich to FKA Twigs and Adele. Rather unconventionally, though, both artist and audience will 'tread the boards' of the enormous opera stage in a unique reconfiguration of the space. A second RNCM Presents Stage expands the line-up with even more emerging artists, plus a closing DJ set from Tommy Villiers (Toast Club,

Siri & Tommy, See Thru Hands, Porij). BBC Introducing's Will Wolstenholme and DJ Roesh will host the main stage and Will says he's excited to get behind the festival. *'BBC Introducing is proud to be a platform that supports, nurtures, and spotlights unsigned and under-the-radar UK music talent, and we're excited to be hosting this new showcase at the RNCM of incredible musicians poised to become your favourite songwriters, bands, and DJs.'*



Althea, Lula Gold, and Harry Lines

SAT 20 JUN | 8PM | THE MONASTERY,
MANCHESTER | PWYC, FROM £11

**Kantos Chamber Choir:
Hope on Earth**

The ensemble celebrates 10 years alongside chamber choirs from the RNCM and University of Manchester, promoted by Kantos Chamber Choir

MON 22 JUN | 7.30PM | CH | FULL: £18

**Ursula Oppens with
RNCM Pianists:
The People United**

Oppens performs music by Frederic Rzewski, Meredith Monk, and Lisa Kaplan with our staff and students

Pre-show concert:

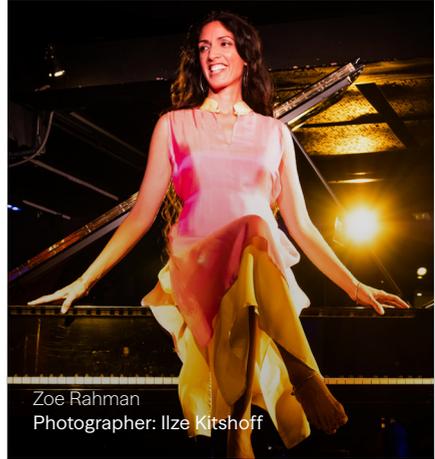
**Spotlight: The Carnival of
the Animals**

6.30PM | CNRR | FREE

WED 24 JUN | 7.30PM | CNRR
FULL: £13

RNCM Guitars

Director of Guitar, Craig Ogden, curates a showcase from our guitar students



THU 25 JUN | 7.30PM | T | FULL: £18

**RNCM Big Band with
Zoe Rahman (piano)**

The multi award-winning jazz pianist performs her original music with our students (see pages 4-5)

Pre-show concert:

**Spotlight: The Rebirth
of Language**

6.30PM | CNRR | FREE

FRI 26 JUN | 7.30PM
BRIDGEWATER HALL | FULL: £19

**Tchaikovsky Symphony
No 6: RNCM Symphony
Orchestra+**

Clemens Schuldt conducts works by Rachmaninov and Tchaikovsky, with Liana Storey (piano)

Pre-show concert:

RNCM Symphony Chorus

6.30PM | BRIDGEWATER HALL | FREE TO
7.30PM TICKET HOLDERS

WED 1 – THU 2 JUL | 7.30PM | T
FULL: £10

RNCM Community Opera: The Water Mark

The 50-strong adult Community Chorus performs an original opera inspired by Manchester's lost waterways (see pages 6-7)



RNCM Community Opera
Photographer: Robin Clewley

SAT 4 JUL | ENTRY AT 6.30PM & 8PM
PEOPLE'S HISTORY MUSEUM
FULL: £13

Amplified: Music of Protest +

RNCM musicians transform the People History's Museum into a living soundscape of protest, premiering powerful new music inspired by the museum's collections

BOOK ONLINE

Buy tickets on our website 24/7, or via 0161 907 5555 on Mondays and Thursdays, 2-5pm (exc. bank holidays and the Christmas period).

ACCESS

Accessible seating (with Essential Companion) is available in all venues. For more information about access, visit rncm.ac.uk/access.

MEMBERSHIP

As an RNCM Member, you can enjoy unparalleled performances by our students, alumni, artists-in-residence, and partners from across the globe. For **just £35 a year**, RNCM Members get access to half price and discounted tickets, 15% off in our Café Bar, invitations to exclusive events, and more.



Join Today

DISCOUNTED TICKETS

Group, Multibuy, and Student/Under 26 discounted tickets are available for some shows – see individual listings online.

Our *Inspirational Artists* series is kindly supported by the Haworth Trust.

RNCM On the Road

RNCM On the Road is a series of free, walk-in concerts around the region performed by student musicians, bringing the music closer to you.

ST ANN'S CHURCH

MANCHESTER CITY CENTRE

WED 6 MAY | 1PM

**Anastasia Gould (piano) |
InSlide Out Trombone Quartet**

WED 3 JUN | 1PM

**Candy Yuan (piano) |
RNCM Songsters**

WED 1 JUL | 1PM

**Maia Payne (piano) |
Sophie Combes (viola)
and Abigail Webb (cello)**

WHITWORTH ART GALLERY

OXFORD ROAD

SUN 10 MAY | 3PM

Yaxin Fang and Ana Nadais (harps)

SUN 7 JUN | 3PM

Cayuga Oboe Trio

EMMANUEL CHURCH

DIDSBURY

SAT 25 APR | 11AM

**William Poon (piano) | Yisheng
Yuan and Wengian Sou (pianos)**

SAT 2 MAY | 11AM

RNCM Harps | Osian Ensemble

SAT 16 MAY | 11AM

**Maya Tucker (cello) and
Helen Meng (piano) | Francis
Bamford (counter-tenor) and
Jenny Sykes (piano)**

SAT 23 MAY | 11AM

**Taisiia Holovko (saxophone)
and Julia Leszczyńska (piano) |
James Smith (piano)**

Deep Dive: RNCM Symphony Orchestra

The RNCM Symphony Orchestra is a flagship ensemble formed in 1973 with the opening of our world-class conservatoire that remains central to both our public performance programme and our training mission.

This June, in what has become a much-anticipated summer performance at the iconic Bridgewater Hall, our orchestra of 92 young musicians (including a soloist, conductor, and composer) presents a programme of music by Rachmaninov and Tchaikovsky conducted by the Music Director of Orchestre symphonique de Québec, Clemens Schuldt. The orchestra is joined by pianist Liana Storey, following her recent RNCM Concerto Competition win, and the 140-strong RNCM Symphony Chorus. Composition student Emily Dunbar also picks up this year's *Legends and Lore* theme with a new commission for orchestra and electronics.

Our RNCM Symphony Orchestra has appeared at several prestigious classical venues nationally, and members have trained alongside professional musicians from the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra, Manchester Camerata, and the Hallé. Since its foundation, the orchestra has performed a vast repertoire, blending historical masterpieces with bold contemporary composition in seamless and exciting ways.

Traditionally, its programmes explore the evolving lineage of orchestral music, inviting audiences to enjoy the diverse soundscape and dialogue between past and present, as well as the silences between the movements.

RNCM Symphony Orchestra

Fri 26 Jun
7.30pm
Bridgewater Hall



Book Online

Mel Bonis
Ophélie Op 165

Emily Dunbar
New work*

Sergei Rachmaninov
Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini
Op 43

Piotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky
Symphony No 6 in B minor Op 74
'Pathétique'



RNCM Symphony Orchestra
Photographer: Robin Clewley



RNCM Symphony Orchestra
Photographer: Robin Clewley

Discover **RNCM**

FOOD AND DRINK

Our fully accessible RNCM Café Bar serves freshly prepared breakfasts, lunches, and evening meals, as well as takeaway salads, sandwiches, wraps, cakes, and snacks. All our selections include vegan options, and we operate our service in a sustainable, environmentally responsible way.

For more information, including opening hours, visit rncm.ac.uk/foodanddrink.

Please note: the Café Bar is cashless.

STUDY HERE

Everyone within the RNCM's vibrant community plays an essential part in maintaining our status as one of the world's most exciting and forward-thinking conservatoires and destination of choice for talented young musicians.

To find out more, go to rncm.ac.uk/study-here.

SUPPORT US

As a charity (registered charity numbers 504949 and 504948), the RNCM relies on the generosity of individuals, companies, and charitable trusts to support our mission.

To find out more about supporting our work, visit rncm.ac.uk/support.

SUPPORT US: NAME A SEAT

Want to commemorate a significant moment or celebrate someone special? Personalising a seat plaque is the perfect way to leave a lasting mark on the RNCM, while supporting the next generation of musicians. Seat plaques are available in the RNCM Concert Hall and Theatre from £300.

Find out more at rncm.ac.uk/nameaseat.

HIRE OUR FACILITIES AND OUR MUSICIANS

Our wide selection of fully accessible, purpose-built spaces are available to hire for every type of event, performance, or conference. We have hosted everyone from Adele and Adam Buxton to Manchester International Festival and Question Time.

For more information, including availability and hire charges, visit rncm.ac.uk/hire.

If you're interested in booking RNCM musicians for your event, email artistagency@rncm.ac.uk.

RNCM

SAT 4 JUL | 2026 | ENTRY AT 6.30PM & 8PM

Amplified: Music of Protest

People's History Museum



Book Online

PART OF LEGENDS & LORE

Contact Us

Box.office@rncm.ac.uk | 0161 907 5555

Phone lines open Mondays and Thursdays
between 2pm and 5pm

rncm.ac.uk

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Registered charity numbers

RNCM Awards Fund 504948 | RNCM Endowment Fund 504949

Artists and programmes are correct at the time of going to press and we reserve the right to change artists and/or programmes without notice if necessary.