

THE NORTHERN

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Contact us:
Lisa Pring, Alumni Relations Manager
RNCM, 124 Oxford Road, Manchester M13 9RD

T +44 (0) 161 907 5377
E alumni@rncm.ac.uk
www.rncm.ac.uk/alumni

COMPOSER AMIR WRITES SCORE FOR OSCAR-WINNING FILM

Huge congratulations to PhD composer Amir Konjani, who wrote the soundtrack to the Oscar-winning film *The Silent Child*.

The film, which centres around Libby, a profoundly deaf four-year-old girl who lives in silence until a caring social worker teaches her the gift of sign language, was nominated in the Live Action Short Film category of the 90th Academy Awards. It was written by, and stars, former Hollyoaks actress Rachel Shenton, who drew on her own experiences as the child of a parent who became deaf.

Amir composed and harmonised music for the film using the Braille writing system, assigning the name of the characters and lines in the script to the Braille code and then transferring the dots to sounds.



CONGRATULATIONS...

...to everyone involved in RNCM Young Company's production of *Singin' in the Rain*, winner of the 2018 Manchester Theatre Youth Panel Award.

Announced at a ceremony in March, the production was up against performances by Contact Young Company and the Oldham Theatre Workshop. Our December production of Massenet's *Cinderella* was also nominated for an MTA (Best Opera), but lost out to our professional partner, Opera North.

Congratulations also go to our Principal, Professor Linda Merrick, selected to join Northern Power Women's 2018 Power List.



HEFCE SUPPORTS DIGITAL PROJECT WITH £1.05M GRANT

Last year we received £1.05 million from the Higher Education Funding Council for England's Catalyst Fund to establish a digital project linking the RNCM with university music departments and professional partners across England.

Ensemble+ will see us connect to the Universities of Leeds, Liverpool, Newcastle, Nottingham, Sheffield and York to share teaching (including research and student and professional artistic products such as performance and composition) via a number of digital initiatives.

The project aims to enhance student employability, widen participation in the Higher Education sector, and develop new teaching approaches, and will be supported by the BBC and SSR.

MAYOR OF GREATER MANCHESTER SUPPORTS POPULAR MUSIC EDUCATION

We welcomed Andy Burnham to a special event in December, highlighting the importance of popular music education in Manchester.

Describing the city as '*the music capital of the UK*', the Mayor of Greater Manchester spoke openly about the need to inspire and support future talent, and credited us for establishing a '*unique and pioneering*' Popular Music Degree programme.

Referring to Greater Manchester's rich musical history, he said: '*There is a risk that you trade on past glories, constantly talking about the past rather than using it to inspire what comes next. As Mayor with a passion for music and in a city that lives and breathes it, it seems to me it's my job to support what comes next, to bring on the next generation of Manchester music...*'



Captions, from left:
composer Amir Konjani; Caroline Clegg, Fiona Stuart
and Lizz Clark at the Manchester Theatre Awards;
the RNCM's Manus Carey, Professor Linda Merrick,
Andy Stott and Suzie Thompson with Mayor of
Greater Manchester, Andy Burnham (centre)

PARIS-MANCHESTER 1918:

A WARTIME TALE OF TWO CITIES

Our collaboration with the Paris Conservatoire hit its peak in March, with a fantastic series of events and the launch of an online exhibition.

Students from both conservatoires performed side by side for three orchestral concerts in Manchester (RNCM Concert Hall, left), London (Cadogan Hall) and Paris (Théâtre du Conservatoire National Supérieur d'Art Dramatique, below), each programme taking its inspiration from music

performed during 1918. Complementing these was our new online exhibition, drawing together research from Manchester and Paris at this time.

Presented in English and French, *Paris-Manchester 1918: Conservatoires in time of war* offers the opportunity to learn about the lives of the musicians behind the concert programmes, creating a lasting memorial in celebration of those who fought or made music during the extraordinary years of the First World War.

View the exhibition at www.rncm.ac.uk/paris-manchester-1918

NEWS

JUNIOR FELLOW IN CONDUCTING

In February we announced **Rebecca Tong** as our new Junior Fellow in Conducting, commencing in September.

Rebecca was one of 14 candidates chosen to attend the live auditions, selected from 140 applications worldwide. Over the course of three days, candidates conducted works by Dvořák, Copland, Debussy and Beethoven as well as a new piece by composition student Fenton Hutson. This year's panel was Sir Mark Elder CH CBE (Music Director of the Hallé and our International Chair in Conducting), Clark Rundell (Head of Conducting) and Mark Heron (Tutor in Conducting).



FOND FAREWELL

Last term we said a sad farewell to Lois Fitch, Head of Undergraduate Programmes, who headed north to take up the position of Deputy Principal at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, and to Kate Buchanan, who retired from her role as Head of Creative and Professional Practice after 12 years with us. We wish them both the very best with their future endeavours.

RNCM PATHFINDER

RNCM Pathfinder is a three-year initiative to help aspiring young musicians within Greater Manchester progress their musical talent.

In collaboration with the Greater Manchester Music Hub, One Education Music and the BBC Philharmonic, we will work to increase opportunities for children and young people to access musical activities and support them in overcoming any barriers they face to their musical progression and development.



CELEBRATING A CENTURY

PhD composition student, **Lucy Pankhurst**, has written a choral work to mark 100 years since women won the right to vote.

Commissioned by the BBC, Lucy, a distant relative of the famous family, worked alongside Emmeline's great-granddaughter, the writer and women's rights campaigner Helen Pankhurst, to create the *Pankhurst Anthem*. The piece premiered on BBC Radio 3 on 6 February and is available as a free download from the programme's website.

A WARM WELCOME TO...

Kevin Gowland, Director of Woodwind (Deputy Head of School of Wind, Brass and Percussion),



and **Michèle Holden**, who joins us in June as Director of Finance and Strategic Planning.

CONGRATULATIONS TO...

A4 Brass Quartet (IAD), winners of the Royal Over-Seas League Mixed Ensemble Award;

Jess Gillam (UG2), signed by Harrison Parrott and Polyarts for worldwide general management, nominated in The Sound of Classical Poll at the 2018 Classical BRIT Awards, and chosen to perform at the Last Night of the Proms;

Brian Low (UG2), on winning two prizes at the Future Stars International Piano Competition;

Jack Sheen (Junior Fellow in Conducting), one of six young composers to feature on a new album, *Next Wave 2*, by NMC Recordings;

Rhain Taylor (PG), awarded a Vocal Scholarship from Independent Opera at Sadler's Wells;

and **Riti Walia** (UG1), awarded our first Popular Music Scholarship, sponsored by The Holroyd Foundation.

A very special congratulations also goes to **Neil Bohanna**, our Head of Operations, who was awarded an MBE in the Queen's New Year's Honours for services to higher education.

BEN COOLEY

Fighting for freedom

By Hallam Fulcher

Ben Cooley has led an extraordinary life since graduating from the RNCM in 2005. After co-founding the charity Hope for Justice, he has become one of the UK's leading figures in the fight against human trafficking and modern-day slavery. Now operating in 23 locations around the world, the organisation continues to be guided by its overarching motto of **'Change lives. End slavery.'**





‘I don’t want to be that person who sits back and lets evil prevail... I want to feel like I made a difference.’



Meeting Ben at the headquarters of Hope for Justice in central Manchester, he quickly pointed out a wall adorned with hundreds of padlocks – each inscribed with a name and year. Ben explained that every padlock represents a person the charity has rescued from slavery in the UK: *‘Originally we opened a bottle of champagne to celebrate each rescue, but when we started getting 10 rescues a day we realised something needed to change. We couldn’t sustain this. It was starting to take a toll on our health and work,’* he said with a laugh.

After taking a seat in his office, Ben recounted the catalyst for him forming *Hope for Justice*: an event in Manchester Town Hall in 2007 commemorating the 200th anniversary of the abolition of the slave trade. Here he first heard about the 24.9 million people enslaved around the world, and the 1.2 million children traded each year. As a new father, Ben was strongly affected by these statistics. After discussing with his wife, actress Debbie Cooley, he decided he wanted to help raise awareness by putting on a large-scale

show at the NEC Arena in Birmingham. The event was an overwhelming success, attracting a crowd of 5,884 people and was broadcast live on television in the United States.

Buoyed by this initial triumph, Ben was motivated to officially launch Hope for Justice in 2009. He began employing investigators from an ex-law enforcement background to identify and rescue victims of sex trafficking and slavery in the Manchester area. One of those identified was Sarah, a white English girl from the

North West sold at the age of 14 by her mother into the sex slave trade in Eastern Europe. What followed was five years of indescribable horror, with Sarah forced to ‘service’ sometimes hundreds of men a day. Eventually, Sarah had been trafficked back to Manchester where she was reported to Hope for Justice through an anonymous tip-off.

Ben recounted the time he first met Sarah in a hotel lobby, shortly after she had been rescued. Once assured she was finally safe from danger, Sarah looked directly into Ben’s

eyes and said: *‘You can call me Emma. No one’s called me Emma since this all began.’*

Experiences such as these bolstered Ben’s commitment to his work, and he expanded Hope for Justice to Bradford in 2013. In the first year the charity rescued 110 victims of human trafficking and slavery in West Yorkshire, before training 4800 police officers over a period of four months on how to correctly identify victims. This, Ben explained, was important because successfully recognising victims can be very challenging: *‘Victims make unreliable*

witnesses because they’ve been through so much trauma. They don’t know what is truth, or what’s happened to them because they’re in a permanent state of shock,’ he said. *‘But working with police and teaching them how to spot the signs of abuse made a huge difference.’*

Hope for Justice continued to expand throughout the UK, and in September 2014 incorporated two other charities working against modern-day slavery – the US-based Abolition International and Cambodia-based Transitions Global.

Today, Hope for Justice employs 300 staff members, and is operational in the UK, US, Cambodia, Norway, Vietnam, Ethiopia, Malawi, Uganda and Zimbabwe. Internationally, activities include rescue centres for victims, short and long-term residential treatment centres, a full-time school and re-integration projects. A high-profile board of trustees includes Peter Elson, a current Chief Operating Officer of a FTSE 250 company.

'I've not compromised on our recruitment,' said Ben. 'I'm a firm believer that you're a by-product of your environment, so I've intentionally surrounded myself with exceptional people.'

While Ben is hugely passionate about his work, he admits that being the CEO of a global organisation is not without its challenges. He travels for much of the year and has been the recipient of death threats. *'We've disrupted millions of pounds, so the death threats are hardly surprising,'* he said. *'But for me, I'm not risking my life for profit – to get a bigger house or better car. I'm risking it because I don't want to be that person who sits back and lets evil prevail... I want to feel like I made a difference.'*

Last year Ben also became an author, penning *Impossible is a Dare: Fighting for a World Free from Slavery*. Published by SPCK Publishing, the book was a critical success, garnering favourable attention from the likes of Theresa May and Stephen Fry.



'The whole ethos of the book is a position that I take on life and it goes back to when someone dared me to be an opera singer. They said it was impossible,' Ben explained. *'I became an opera singer and it's not that impossible, is it?'*

Ben's journey into the world of opera began at the age of 17, when he began travelling two hours from his hometown of Yarm in North Yorkshire to attend Junior RNCM each Saturday. At the age of 19 he enrolled on the undergraduate opera course, relocated to Manchester and began his music studies full-time.

'I absolutely loved studying at the RNCM. I made some great friendships and got on really well with the staff. Being surrounded by other like-minded people was just an amazing atmosphere to be in,' he said.

Ben also spoke of valuable skills he learned at the College that he applies to his work today, one of which he attributes to the practice room:

'As a musician you learn skills of self-critique and dissecting things in meticulous detail. That sort of frenzied discipline I've brought to Hope for Justice. Whether it's our media, or a business plan or a presentation style, I am very particular,' he explained.

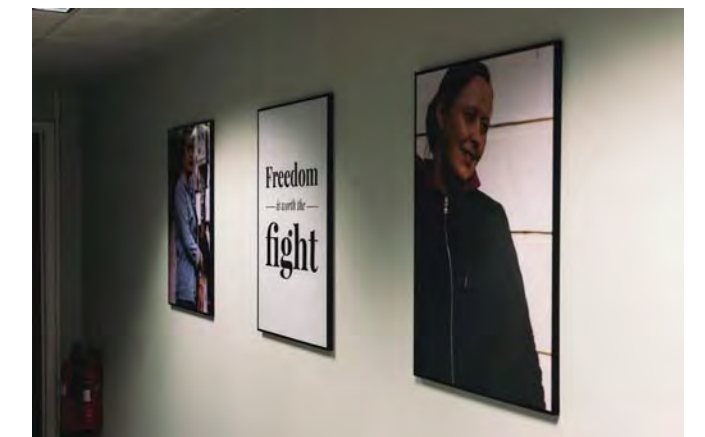


Ben also sees clear parallels in the skills of showmanship and performing to an audience: *'If I compare myself to how I was at the RNCM, I was able to stand on a platform and entertain people. Now I can stand on a platform and mobilise people. I'm still performing and using my voice, just for a different reason.'*

November 2018 marks Hope for Justice's 10-year anniversary. In celebration, Ben will be taking part in a fundraising bike ride, and is planning a concert in Cheshire. He will be singing for guests and hopes to include performances from current RNCM students.

In the meantime, he is always looking to get more people involved in the work of Hope for Justice: *'If you run a business we can help you address whether slavery exists in your supply chains. If you are a performer, there is the opportunity to perform on behalf of Hope for Justice at fundraising or awareness events. It's about using your profile to make change, and every piece of support puts us one step closer to ending slavery forever,'* he said.

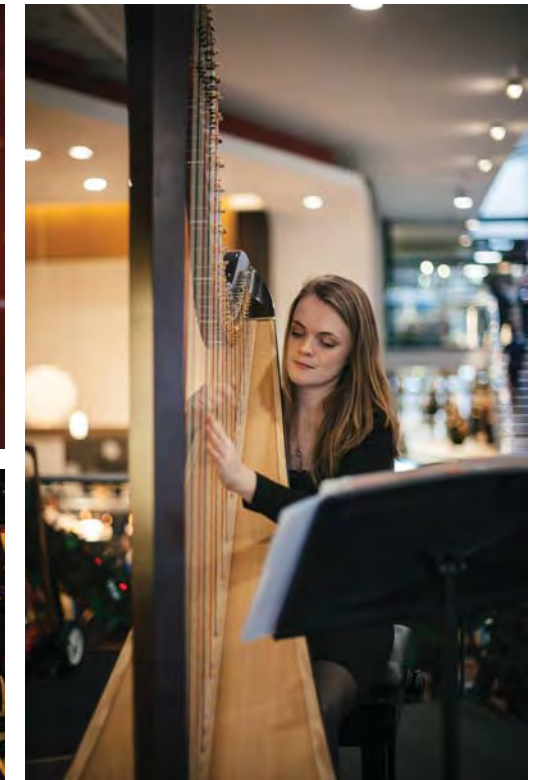
www.hopeforjustice.org



On Tuesday 5 December we celebrated the graduation of our Class of 2017.

Newly-appointed President Sir John Tomlinson – himself a member of our alumni family – joined us for his first Congregation ceremony, presenting awards and offering congratulations to over 200 graduands.

In addition, Sir John also bestowed Honorary Memberships on international artist manager and RNCM Governor Jonathan Groves, entrepreneur and philanthropist Carole Nash OBE, actress Dame Patricia Routledge, and writer and RNCM Governor Martin Vander Weyer. And while they were unable to join us on the day, Honorary Fellowships were awarded to marimba virtuoso Keiko Abe, pianist Jean-Efflam Bavouzet, and violinist Henning Kraggerud during their recent visits for concerts and masterclasses.

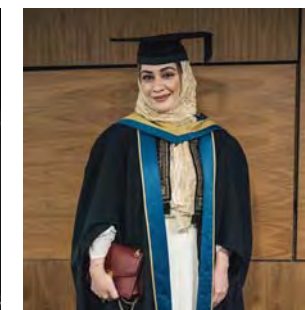


CONGRATULATIONS CLASS OF '17

Congratulations to all our 2017 graduates and welcome to the RNCM Alumni network!

Here are just a few images from the day. You can view the full gallery on the RNCM Facebook page.

We'd love to hear your memories of past Congregation of Awards. Email alumni@rncm.ac.uk with your graduation stories.



NORTHERN

LEADING LIGHTS

We were thrilled to hear at the end of last year that Manoj Kamps had been signed by IMG Artists for general management, just months after graduating as our Junior Fellow in Conducting.

He will be managed by Jennifer Spencer, in association with Jennifer Spencer Consultancy from IMG's London office, who said: 'I first heard about Manoj from Iván Fischer when he assisted on Mahler Symphony No 5 with the Berlin Konzerthausorchester a few months ago. Manoj already has the strong backing of several major figures within the industry and I am truly excited about working for him.'

And the good news for our conducting alumni continued into the New Year when Dane Lam (2011) was nominated for an International Opera Award, appearing in the Best Newcomer Category, and Gergely Madaras (2012) was appointed Music Director Designate of the Orchestre Philharmonique Royal de Liège (OPRL), commencing in September.



HIGHLIGHTS

KEY TO SUCCESS

Alexander Panfilov won a fantastic \$30,000 at the inaugural International Music Competition Harbin (IMCH).

Held at the Harbin Conservatory of Music and Harbin Concert Hall in January, the 2016 alumnus was awarded second prize in the keyboard category after no first prize was given.

Co-hosted by the Conservatory and the Harbin Municipal Government, the competition is divided into three sections: piano, violin and voice. For 2018, 23 violinists, 24 pianists, and 37 singers were selected from 352 submissions from more than 31 countries. The judging panel for the keyboard category included RNCM alum Peter Donohoe (1976), Arnaldo Cohen and Dang Thai.



NORTHERN HIGHLIGHTS

DUO'S *Début*

Saxophonist Gillian Blair and harpist Elinor Nicholson have recorded their début album as the Polaris Duo.

Illuminate was produced by fellow alum Rob Buckland (saxophone, 1989), our Deputy Head of Chamber Music, and was released on 19 April at the International Anthony Burgess Foundation.

Gillian said: 'Elinor and I have been performing together since our first year at the RNCM, so we're really excited to be showcasing the repertoire we've developed for our unusual pairing of instruments over the last seven years! The music has strong links with our time at College and includes works by fellow alumni Andy Scott, Rob Buckland and Melissa Douglas alongside arrangements of works by Saint-Saëns and Bach. It's been a long time coming, and we're so pleased to finally share this music with everyone!'

Gillian and Elinor, who both graduated in 2016, formed the Polaris Duo in 2011. Learn more at www.polarisduo.com

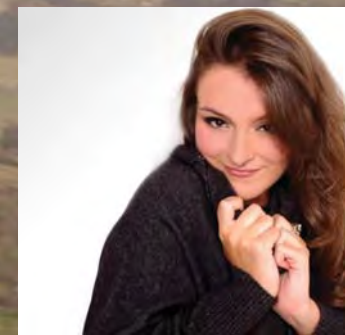


PIANIST PENS FIRST NOVEL

Pianist Stephen Hough (1980) has written his first novel, published in February by Sylph Editions.

The Final Retreat tells the story of middle-aged Catholic priest, Joseph Flynn, who finds himself, at his bishop's behest, on an eight-day silent retreat. The fusty, stale environment has little to offer but a desk, pen and paper, and ample time to make use of them. Beset by doubts and hounded by a looming disaster, Joseph seizes upon them like a starving man, finding in the act of writing both a release and a stimulation that has eluded him in his life as a priest.

Learn more at sylpheditions.com



SOPRANO SUCCESS

Katie Lowe (2016) had great success last year, winning the Elizabeth Connell Prize for Aspiring Dramatic Sopranos.

Established in memory of the late South African singer, the competition was open to professional and non-professional sopranos of all nationalities between the ages of 25 and 34.

Katie, who was recently signed to IMG Artists for general management, was one of five singers to make it through to the final. Her win included 30,000 AUD (approx. £18,000) and an audition at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden.

ADÈS AND ALUMNI

The stellar cast of Thomas Adès' new opera, *The Exterminating Angel*, featured a host of familiar names from the RNCM.

To mark its American première, the much-anticipated opera was broadcast live in HD from the Met in November to cinemas around the world – including one in Manchester. Among the cast was RNCM President Sir John Tomlinson (bass, 1970s), Alice Coote (soprano, 1993), Christine Rice (mezzo-soprano, 1998) and Amanda Echalaz (soprano, 1999).

Inspired by the classic Luis Buñuel film of the same name, the opera is a surreal fantasy about a dinner party from which the guests can't escape.

CON- GRAT- ULA- TIONS TO...

Anna Appleby (2016), one of five composers selected for the Royal Scottish National Orchestra's Composer Hub programme;

Lauren Fielder (soprano, 2014), one of 10 singers joining Pittsburgh Festival Opera's Young Professional Artists Programme;

Emily Howard (2003), awarded a 2017 British Composer Award for *Torus (Concerto for Orchestra)*;

David Openshaw (percussion, 1970), awarded an MBE in the Queen's New Year's Honours for services to music in Northern Ireland;

Gavin Reid (trumpet, 1990), elected Chair of the Association of British Orchestras (ABO);

Daniel Shelvey (baritone, 2013), selected to join the National Opera Studio;

and **Elgan Llŷr Thomas** (tenor 2013), one of four singers to join ENO's Harewood Artists programme.

Read about these successes and more at www.rncm.ac.uk/alumni



AN ENGLISHWOMAN IN NEW YORK





Within two weeks of graduating, violinist Jane Hunt left her home city of Manchester and boarded a plane to New York. The rest, as they say, is history.

Here, the 2005 alum talks about life in the Big Apple and gives us an insight into her American dream.

How did you make the decision to move from Manchester to America?

I attended a summer school at the Bowdoin Summer Music Festival in Maine when I was 18. The School was associated with Juilliard and I got friendly with some musicians who were studying there. They asked me to come and visit them in New York on my way home, and as I was flying back via there it was an easy choice. I always thought I'd like New York – I had pictures on my wall from the age of 12 – and as soon as I landed I just fell in love with the city.

When I was 21, just two months before graduating from the RNCM, I saw an advert online asking for violinists to audition to join a US-based string quartet called Neo Camerata. I took the plunge and got the job. It all happened really quickly, within two weeks. The group organised my visa, and through them I made new contacts and got an agent. All of a sudden I was touring and playing throughout America. I found an apartment on the Upper West Side near Central Park, and it was all a bit of a dream.

You've performed at some amazing places and for some high profile events. Do you have a particular favourite?

My dream was to play Carnegie Hall as it's such an iconic venue and, of course, it's in my favourite city in the world, so performing there for Glamour Magazine's Women of the Year Awards [in the presence of such names as Michelle Obama, Nicole Kidman and Natalie Portman] was definitely a highlight. But I also loved playing at the opening and closing ceremonies of the 2010, 2011 (pictured) and 2012 US Open tennis tournaments. I ended up writing my own piece for the occasion, and then they asked to use it as the soundtrack for the whole event. It was an electrifying experience to play in front of 22,000 people – the energy was incredible.

Composing is now a big part of your life. When did you decide to develop this area of your career?

Over the past few years I've discovered that I like writing as much as I like performing. I'd spent 10 years touring non-stop around the US and Europe and about three years ago, I decided to take a few months away from travelling to focus on composing in New York. That's when things went in a slightly different direction for me.



My aim wasn't to write a symphony, I don't sit down like Mozart or Beethoven, my aim was to write an intro piece for a TV show, a sport event, or marketing promos for brands.

You've written compositions for film and television. Where else might we hear your music?

Much of my music is played on channels in America; I get a lot of airplay on ESPN for sport events [alongside the US Open, Jane's music has also featured on the Australian Open golf championship] and on the History Channel. If you like the TV show *American Pickers* I get a lot of play on there. I've also worked on some independent movies; one was produced in the Philippines, called *Angel in June*.

What advice would you give to our current students and recent graduates as they embark on their professional careers?

I think that studying music, especially classical, teaches you to work hard and be patient. You can apply those skills to pretty much anything you choose to do in life. I found myself persistently working towards specific goals because of what I learned through music. It's good to know what you want to do in your career and focus on it. There will be ups and downs, that's life, and you have to roll with the punches, but if you give 100% you'll always learn and grow from what you do and look back with no regrets.

What are your plans for the future?

I'm writing for a company in LA who place my music on film and TV, and I'm creating original musical content for some branding of new apps. I'm also going to be working with another writer on two new Broadway shows as well as some touring in the US, so it's going to be pretty busy!

janehuntviolinist.com



We've delved into the archives for this issue's Where are they Now? as we look ahead to our 45th anniversary celebration.

Do you recognise anyone in this selection of pictures, taken from the 70s, 80s, 90s and 00s? Do you remember when and why they were taken? If so, we'd love to hear from you. Email alumni@rncm.ac.uk with your stories and we'd be happy to include them either in the next edition of The Northern or on our alumni webpages.

45th Anniversary Reunion Celebration

GET THE PARTY STARTED...

We hope you can join us for a very special reunion.

If you're a former student of the RNCM, NSM or RMCN, from any era, we'd love to welcome you back to Manchester to celebrate our 45th anniversary.

You'll get the chance to meet up with old friends and former tutors, share memories of your student days and stories of your journeys since you graduated, and lose yourself in nostalgia with a tour of your favourite College haunts and our archive exhibition.

12.30PM SATURDAY 30 JUNE 2018
Royal Northern College of Music, Manchester

Book online at www.rncm.ac.uk/alumni or contact Lisa Pring, Alumni Relations Manager, at alumni@rncm.ac.uk or on **0161 907 5377** for further information.

We look forward to welcoming you back!



DRAPERS' DECADE OF SUPPORT



The Drapers' Company has been a purely philanthropic organisation since the 17th century. It has a long tradition of supporting the musical education of young people, and today the Company provides a bursary to an outstanding British vocal student at the RNCM through the Baroness de Turckheim Music Fund, and further support through a Drapers' Music Scholarship. The Company also hosts the lavish Court Dinner for scholars every year in the impressive Drapers' Hall.

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the Drapers' Company's invaluable support of students at the College.

'The Drapers' Company has been delighted to support musicians at the RNCM for the past 10 years. Through the de Turckheim Scholarships, and more recently Drapers' Music Scholarships, the Company has supported talented postgraduate musicians to pursue their musical ambitions. The Company values the association with the College and its involvement in promoting high quality musical education and achievement.'

Andy Mellows, Head of Charities, The Drapers' Company

SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS:

Fleur Bray	2008-09
Matthew Moss	2009-10
Bradley Travis	2010-11
Sarah Richmond	2011-12
Anna Brigham	2011-12
Chloe Saywell	2011-12
Anthony Walker	2011-12
Louis Hurst	2012-13
Edward Horsey	2012-13
Hannah Padmore	2012-13
Michaela Parry	2013-14
Sarah Leonard	2013-14
Hannah Padmore	2013-14
Michaela Parry	2014-15
Emily Doan	2014-15
Daniella Meagher	2014-15
Michaela Parry	2015-16
Adam Davies	2015-16
Philip Sharp	2016-17
Eugene Dillon-Hooper	2016-17
John Ieuan Jones	2017-18
Francis Goodwin	2017-18

Fleur de Bray was the first RNCM singer to be awarded a Drapers' Scholarship when she joined the College as a postgraduate in 2006. Currently starring as Katherina Cavalieri in the acclaimed production of *Amadeus* at the National Theatre, the 34-year-old soprano has achieved a lot since graduating. Here's what she has to say about the support she received and her career to date:

How does it feel to be the very first Drapers' Company scholar?

I wasn't aware at the time that I was the very first scholar, but I am so proud to discover that I hold this title. I remember the day that Alec Crowe, then Head of Vocal and Opera Studies, told me that I had been awarded the Drapers' Company Baroness de Turckheim Vocal Scholarship – I was absolutely over the moon!

How did the Scholarship help?

It allowed me to study for a further two years at the College. Having previously graduated from Cardiff University with an academic music degree, it was a steep learning curve to then go straight into stage work and to performing in the RNCM Theatre. These extra years allowed me to sing roles such as Adele in *Die Fledermaus*, Le Feu in *L'enfant et les sortilèges*, Belinda in *Dido and Aeneas* and Cunegonde in *Candide*. The amount I learnt about performance, stagecraft and singing during this time was priceless.

Are you still in touch with the Drapers' Company?

Yes, absolutely. The Drapers' Company still take an interest in my career and recently, Colonel Richard Winstanley, Clerk of the Drapers' Company, came to see my performance in *Amadeus* at the National Theatre.

What are your highlights since graduating?

Top of my list has to be the role I'm currently singing: Katherina Cavalieri in *Amadeus*. I also loved singing Bottle/Victorian in Will Todd's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* at the Royal Opera House Linbury Theatre, and I was incredibly grateful to be a Christine Collins Young Artist at Opera Holland Park, singing the Governess in *The Turn of the Screw*. Other notable memories include performing The Queen of the Night's famous aria from *The Magic Flute* at the Royal Albert Hall and singing as soprano soloist in Handel's *Messiah* with the Orquesta de Valencia at the Palau de la Musica, Valencia, alongside the Philharmonia Chorus and the late, great conductor Stefan Bevier.

How does it feel to be part of such a successful production as *Amadeus*?

Singing at the National Theatre has been the most phenomenally incredible experience, especially being on the Olivier stage. The entire cast and orchestra have been an absolute joy to work with and we all have a huge amount of respect for each other's skill set. The reviews have been amazing and I am so honoured to have been given the opportunity to bring Katherina Cavalieri to life as a real live opera singer.

Do you still draw on the training you received at the RNCM and what was the most valuable piece of advice you received while studying?

I do very much draw on my training, especially the advice we received from our then opera director, Stefan Janski. Stefan always drummed into us the importance of arriving at rehearsals early so that we were ready to start on time. My teacher, Sandra Dugdale, also gave me many words of wisdom and I still remember to this day her saying to me *'never believe a job is certain until the contracts have been signed'*, which was very good business advice!

Read the full interview at rncm.ac.uk/alumni

THEN & NOW



2018



The RNCM has changed a lot over the years and what better way to illustrate this than a photographic tour through time.

For our second Then & Now feature, we revisit Hartley Hall in Whalley Range. A place of music and fun, Hartley Hall was home to so many of our students during their time in Manchester. Today, the building has two main uses: as Kassim Darwish Grammar School for Boys, and an independent hall of residence for new generations of university students.

View more pictures at rncm.ac.uk/alumni

Do these pictures bring back memories of your student days or do you have any of your own you'd like to share with us? If so, we'd love to hear from you. Visit page 2 for full contact details, and please note that we'll return any hard copies you send our way.

ALUMNI SURVEY: THE HEADLINES

We'd like to say a huge thank you to everyone who completed our Alumni Survey. We've received over 500 responses so far and still counting!

Your feedback is crucial to helping us build an alumni network that enables you to feel connected to the College and to current students, fellow graduates and former tutors. We'd like to offer you opportunities to rekindle friendships, and benefit from sharing knowledge and professional support, whatever your graduation year, and wherever you're living in the world.

YOU SAID:

YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE COLLEGE

**'My 3 years
at College
were a great
privilege.'**

61% are very proud to be an alum of the College

81% would recommend the College to prospective students

48% would consider mentoring students or alumni

66% said the College should focus its fundraising efforts on scholarships and bursaries

KEEPING IN TOUCH

43% are quite satisfied with the level of alumni communications

75% regularly use Facebook

44% would be interested in joining a password protected online alumni network

EVENTS AND BENEFITS

78% would attend an alumni event to reconnect with old classmates

49% would be most interested in masterclasses and workshops with guest musicians

33% said geographical distance would be the main reason for not attending alumni events

46% would like access to the RNCM Library

42% would like access to hotel and restaurant discounts

BUILDING A SUCCESSFUL RNCM ALUMNI NETWORK

'I'd welcome you setting up regional and international alumni hubs.'

'Any effort to strengthen the network is more than welcome.'

'I really like that the RNCM is pursuing an interest in this and their alumni. I have extremely fond memories of studying at the College and it brings lots of warmth and support to know that there is still that connection.'

...And congratulations to Ida Maria Turri (voice, 1987), winner of the £100 Flight Centre vouchers.

If you haven't yet had chance to complete the questionnaire, it's not too late! You can still access it online at www.rncm.ac.uk/alumni and we'll welcome your feedback and suggestions.

GET INVOLVED

REMAINING PART OF YOUR LIFE
AFTER GRADUATION IS REALLY
IMPORTANT TO US.

Whether you're an RNCM graduate or an alum of one of our two founding institutions (the Royal Manchester College of Music and the Northern School of Music), whatever you're doing, wherever in the world, we'd love to hear from you.

There are lots of ways that you can get involved with RNCM life, to inspire and support the next generation of students. To learn more email alumni@rncm.ac.uk, call **0161 907 5377**, or visit our webpages at www.rncm.ac.uk

YOUR DNA'S LEFT
ITS MARK ON US.
IT DEFINES WHO
WE ARE TODAY;
IT INSPIRES WHERE
WE COULD BE
TOMORROW – LET'S
TAKE THE JOURNEY
TOGETHER.

PHOTO CREDITS

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