



# THE NORTHERN

ISSUE 5  
SUMMER 2021

A  
**BOLD**  
*NEW*  
SOUND



A photograph of two men in a professional setting. The man on the left is bald and smiling broadly, showing his teeth. The man on the right has brown hair and a beard, also smiling. They appear to be in a meeting or networking event. The background is slightly blurred, showing other people and large windows.

# RNCM CONNECT

**Networking, mentoring,  
jobs and more!**

[rncmconnect.com](http://rncmconnect.com)

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WELCOME TO THE LATEST EDITION OF *THE NORTHERN*! WE HOPE YOU'RE ALL KEEPING WELL AS WE CONTINUE TO NAVIGATE THE UNCERTAINTIES OF THE PANDEMIC, BUT WITH HOPE FOR BETTER TIMES AHEAD.

Throughout the last year we've been acutely aware of the significant challenges our community has faced, and we've tried our best to unite our family of alumni, students, staff and professional partners; working together to strengthen relationships, and supporting our most recent graduates every way we can. You can learn more about *RNCM Connect*, our exciting new space to offer ongoing support, connections and opportunities, at [rncm.ac.uk/rncm-connect](https://rncm.ac.uk/rncm-connect). And as restrictions ease, we look forward to celebrating special milestones with our alumni over the coming year, especially our Northern School of Music centenary celebration in October (see page 14), and our Class of 2020 and 2021 graduation ceremonies in December.

We're incredibly proud of the ways our alumni have come together during the year to keep in touch, to create beautiful and uplifting online performances, to contribute to local efforts by volunteering on the front line, to support current students with invaluable donations, advice and expertise, and to inspire them through mentoring, virtual lessons and masterclasses. You're a source of encouragement, inspiration and hope, demonstrating how creative and adaptable our community is, through such a difficult time.

So, a huge thank you for helping us to keep music playing with your wonderful performances, and for sharing your stories with us. We've loved hearing from you.

Take care, stay safe and we hope to see you soon.

*Lisa Pring*

**LISA PRING** | Alumni Relations Manager

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# RNCM REMOTE

2020

**19 MARCH**

**#RNCMREMOTE**  
CAMPAIGN LAUNCHES,  
ASKING STAFF,  
STUDENTS AND ALUMNI  
TO SHARE THEIR  
LOCKDOWN STORIES.



*'The role that live music plays  
in fostering connections and  
healing the soul in troubled times  
is undeniable and to imagine a  
world without it, if only for a short  
while, is devastating.'*

**PROFESSOR LINDA MERRICK, PRINCIPAL**

**18 MARCH**

THE RNCM OFFICIALLY CLOSES  
TO STAFF, STUDENTS AND THE  
PUBLIC, INITIALLY UNTIL  
14 APRIL.

**21 MARCH**

**#KEEPMUSICPLAYING** APPEAL  
LAUNCHES, HELPING TO CONNECT  
THE RNCM COMMUNITY AND  
RAISE MONEY FOR THE STUDENT  
HARDSHIP FUND.



### 23 MARCH

PRIME MINISTER BORIS JOHNSON ANNOUNCES FIRST NATIONAL LOCKDOWN.

KEYBOARD STUDENT BRIAN LOW PERFORMS THE FIRST RNCM REMOTE LUNCHTIME CONCERT, LIVE FROM SIR CHARLES GROVES HALL OF RESIDENCE.

*'From this evening I must give the British people a very simple instruction – you must stay at home.'*

**BORIS JOHNSON**

*'...while we may have more still to endure, better days will return: we will be with our friends again; we will be with our families again; we will meet again.'*

**RNCM PATRON,  
HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN**

### 22 APRIL

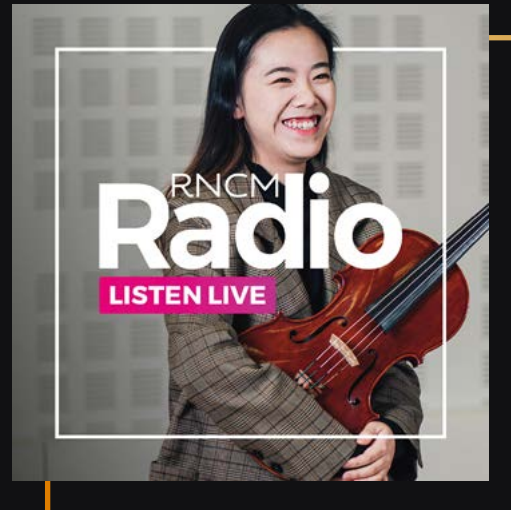
THE RNCM (IN COLLABORATION WITH THE ROYAL CENTRAL SCHOOL OF SPEECH AND DRAMA AND UNIVERSITY OF THE ARTS LONDON) IS AWARDED OVER £900,000 BY THE OFFICE FOR STUDENTS AND RESEARCH ENGLAND TO DEVELOP THE START ENTREPRENEURSHIP PROJECT SUPPORTING STUDENTS' PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT.

### 27 MARCH

RNCM RADIO LAUNCHES.

ALL TEACHING AND LEARNING ACTIVITY FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE ACADEMIC YEAR MOVES ONLINE.

THE RNCM WILL REMAIN CLOSED TO THE PUBLIC UNTIL SEPTEMBER.



### 20 APRIL

THE RNCM BEGINS ITS ONLINE SUMMER TERM.

**28 APRIL**

VIOLINIST NICOLA  
BENEDETTI  
PRESENTS THE  
FIRST IN A NEW  
SERIES OF ONLINE  
MASTERCLASSES  
AND Q&AS.



**12 JUNE**

A NEW PARTNERSHIP WITH NKODA  
IS ANNOUNCED, PROVIDING STAFF  
AND STUDENTS WITH ONLINE  
ACCESS TO 500 YEARS OF  
SHEET MUSIC.

**25 JUNE**

THE RNCM CHAMBER  
CHOIR PRESENTS  
*DISPLACED: CHORAL  
REFLECTIONS FROM  
ACROSS THE WORLD.*

**15 MAY**

RAVI GUPTA IS  
APPOINTED RNCM  
CHAIR OF GOVERNORS,  
COMMENCING  
JANUARY 2021.

**2 JUNE**

THE RNCM SUPPORTS  
#BLACKLIVESMATTER,  
TAKING A STAND AGAINST  
RACISM AND STANDING  
WITH THOSE FIGHTING  
FOR JUSTICE AND RACIAL  
EQUALITY.

INDUSTRY LEGEND  
PETE WATERMAN HOSTS THE  
RNCM GREAT BIG CHARITY  
MUSIC QUIZ, RAISING MONEY  
FOR THE COLLEGE AND THE  
MANCHESTER FOUNDATION  
TRUST CHARITY.

**23 JUNE**

THE RNCM HOSTS ITS FIRST  
ONLINE OPEN DAY.





## 29 JUNE

THE FINAL OF THE RNCM  
ENTREPRENEURSHIP AWARDS  
TAKES PLACE ONLINE.

## 28 SEPTEMBER

THE NEW ACADEMIC  
YEAR STARTS WITH A  
SMALL NUMBER OF  
STUDENTS RETURNING  
TO THE RNCM FOR  
BLENDED LEARNING.

*RNCM CONNECT*, A  
NEW MENTORING AND  
NETWORKING PLATFORM  
FOR ALUMNI, LAUNCHES.



## 1 OCTOBER

*LIVE FROM THE RNCM* LAUNCHES  
WITH ITS FIRST *THURSDAY LATES*  
CONCERT, BROADCAST LIVE FROM  
THE RNCM CONCERT HALL TO  
AUDIENCES AROUND THE WORLD.

## 14 JULY

APPLICATIONS FOR  
2022 ENTRY OPEN WITH  
ALL AUDITIONS TAKING  
PLACE VIA RECORDING.

## 11 AUGUST

THE RNCM IS LIT RED  
IN SUPPORT OF THE  
**#WEMAKEEVENTS**  
CAMPAIGN, HIGHLIGHTING  
THE DEVASTATING EFFECT  
THE PANDEMIC HAS  
HAD ON THE EVENTS  
INDUSTRY.



## 5 OCTOBER

INDUSTRY LEGENDS NILE RODGERS AND MERCK MERCURIADIS ARE AWARDED RNCM HONORARY PROFESSORSHIPS FOLLOWING AN ONLINE MASTERCLASS WITH POPULAR MUSIC STUDENTS.

*'It's very special for us to be honoured by the Royal Northern College of Music with professorships for our work in music. Music means everything to both of us, it's central to our bond and our lives, and to be able to assist the Royal Northern College of Music with the terrific work that they do in preparing future generations of music creators and executives is a privilege and responsibility that we take very seriously.'*



**NILE RODGERS AND MERCK MERCURIADIS**

## 20 OCTOBER

MANCHESTER LOCKDOWN RESTRICTIONS RISE TO TIER 3.

## 28 OCTOBER

THE RNCM'S SECOND ONLINE OPEN DAY TAKES PLACE.

## 5 NOVEMBER

A SECOND NATIONAL LOCKDOWN COMES INTO FORCE IN ENGLAND.

A RECORDING OF ELO'S UPLIFTING HIT MR BLUE SKY, FEATURING 80 CLASSICAL AND POPULAR MUSIC STUDENTS, IS RELEASED.





**2 - 7 DECEMBER**

RNCM OPERA PRESENTS A COVID-SAFE PRODUCTION, WITHOUT AUDIENCE, OF JANÁČEK'S THE CUNNING LITTLE VIXEN.



**11 NOVEMBER**

THE GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCES A STUDENT TRAVEL WINDOW FOR THOSE PLANNING TO RETURN HOME FOR CHRISTMAS.

**27 NOVEMBER**

THE RNCM WINS THE TIMES HIGHER EDUCATION AWARD FOR WIDENING PARTICIPATION OR OUTREACH INITIATIVE OF THE YEAR.

**19 NOVEMBER**

THE RNCM WINS THE SILVER HEIST AWARD FOR BEST POSTGRADUATE OR SPECIALIST PROSPECTUS.

**31 DECEMBER**

THE GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCES THAT FACE-TO-FACE TEACHING SHOULD BE PAUSED UNTIL AT LEAST 25 JANUARY.

# CAROL JARVIS A DIFFERENT NORMALITY

AS ONE OF BRITAIN'S MOST IN-DEMAND TROMBONISTS, CAROL JARVIS HAS ACHIEVED ENORMOUS SUCCESS SINCE GRADUATING IN 2001. SHE'S TOURED THE WORLD WITH THE LIKES OF STING AND SEAL, PERFORMED WITH THE UK'S LEADING ORCHESTRAS, AND PRESENTED MASTERCLASSES TO ASPIRING YOUNG MUSICIANS ACROSS THE GLOBE. BUT IN 2004, CAROL WAS DEALT A DEVASTATING BLOW WHEN SHE WAS DIAGNOSED WITH HODGKIN'S LYMPHOMA. SHE SHARES HER STORY WITH HALLAM FULCHER.

Sixteen years ago, Carol Jarvis was well on her way to becoming one of the UK's most successful and versatile trombonists. Performing with leading orchestras – including the Hallé, BBC Philharmonic and Orchestra of Opera North – since joining the RNCM in 1996, her career was fast developing to include session music, orchestration and arranging.

But while things were flying high for the then 26-year-old, life quickly put a halt to plans when she was **diagnosed with stage 2a Hodgkin's Lymphoma**.

*'I battled cancer for nine-and-a-half years,'* says Carol, who returned to the RNCM in 2019 as a Tutor in Trombone.

*'I hadn't been out of college long and my prognosis was really bad. I was resistant to chemotherapy and all of the treatments I tried failed consistently, over and over and over again.'*







To increase her chance of survival, Carol was advised to accept any new clinical trial that came her way. And, after three weeks of intensive and invasive radiotherapy, she became one of just 22 people worldwide to be offered Medarex, a new experimental antibody drug to fight the disease.

Medarex marked the first of three trials Carol would undertake, the second of which involved nine days in a lead-lined isolation room due to the drug's radioactive iodine content. Success – in the form of metabolic remission – finally came with trial number three, SGN-35 (or Adectris as it's now known), and the search for a bone marrow transplant began.

Thanks to the Anthony Nolan Bone Marrow Register, a match was found in a 43-year-old man in Berlin, and since receiving his cells on 21 September 2011 and undertaking over two years of regular blood transfusions, Carol's been happy, healthy and cancer free. But remarkably, despite over nine years of gruelling treatment, the musician rarely stopped working.

*'I carried on touring,' she laughs. 'I was touring the world and the UK in between treatments – I think that carrying on was my escape from it all. If you get diagnosed with something like that it can be completely all-encompassing, and whenever someone asks me now for a bit of advice, that's one of the first things I say: keep some normality going. And my music definitely was my normality.'*

In fact, following treatment, specialists were quick to credit some of Carol's recovery to her trombone playing. *'The tumour was between my lungs and the specialists looked at me before radiotherapy and said I would lose about 20 per cent of my lung capacity,'*

*she explains. 'I was like 'wait, wait, wait, I'm a trombone player' and they said 'this is your life we're dealing with', so I had to put my career aside and get things in the right order.'*

Shortly after treatment Carol was performing Holst's *The Planets* and remembers struggling to keep up. *'My lungs were nowhere near what they used to be,' she recalls. 'But fast forward a few years and I had to have a lung function test to make sure I was strong enough to get through the transplant – which is a massive ordeal – and my lungs were actually working at 102%. I'd regained what I'd lost, which they put down to playing the trombone.'*

During treatment, Carol used her talent to raise funds for a new haematology and transplant unit at the Christie Hospital in Manchester. She regularly performs at hospital events, and has collaborated with a range of cancer charities, including Lymphoma Action, to raise money and awareness. *'It was experimental drugs that got me to remission in the end, and these are extremely expensive,'* says Carol, who was awarded a Beacon of Hope Award from Lymphoma Action in 2016. *'So I've continued supporting cancer charities and spoken to MPs about government policies at the Houses of Parliament, trying to improve the way cancer is treated.'*

Since gaining the all clear, Carol's built an enviable portfolio career. She's toured with a whole host of stars like Sting – a *'stand-out experience'* – six years round and round the world with Seal, recorded extensively (both keys and trombone) with the likes of Rod Stewart, Queen, Amy Winehouse, Bon Jovi, Paloma Faith, Michael Bublé, Ellie Goulding, Harry Connick Jr, MUSE and Taylor Swift, featured



on soundtracks to feature films, performed in the West End, and appeared as Guest Principal Trombone with the UK's leading orchestras. Her arrangements and orchestrations have featured on chart-topping, Grammy-winning albums, recorded at Capitol Studios in Hollywood and played at The Academy Awards Ceremony.

She's also a past President of the British Trombone Society and currently President of the International Trombone Festival. And, for the past 3 years, a Tutor in Trombone at the RNCM. *'It's nice to be back as a more permanent fixture; I feel like I'm following in the footsteps of my teachers,'* says Carol, who graduated with the highest grades possible and received scholarships to study in the UK and America. *'I'd been back several times over the years, tutoring on the Popular Music programme and giving some lectures, but it's really nice to be here on a regular basis.'*

From her student days, Carol recalls the one-to-one training as being 'phenomenal', and learnt a lot about contemporary music and 'all those crazy rhythms' from ensemble playing. She performed in almost all of the College's orchestras and ensembles and established her own quartet, Bones Apart, which won the chamber music category of the Royal Over-Seas League, leading to tours of Europe, America and the Caribbean.

*'I have brilliant memories of studying at the RNCM; we had a lot of fun,' she laughs. 'It was hard work as well. I started freelancing in my first year with the Hallé, BBC Philharmonic and Opera North. I was forever trying to juggle things – trying to build a career while still doing my undergraduate degree – but it was a fantastic experience.'*

Never one to shy away from new challenges, Carol also served as RNCM SU President during her studies, embracing new skills such as book-keeping and even helping with building design.

*'As President I was involved in the design of the new Hall of Residence, attending a lot of meetings and sharing the thoughts of students,' she says, 'It was the same when the Library Building was built... It was a fun year and I learnt a lot that helped with my career development.'*

But it's not just the building that's changed since Carol's time. 'Everyone here thinks outside the box a lot more now,' she explains. 'You have to be so versatile out in the big wide world these days, and the RNCM is definitely geared up for that now; it's preparing students for the profession in a different way.'

Over the past year, as we navigate through the global pandemic, preparing for the profession has never been more prominent and for Carol, the importance of a portfolio career and diverse skill set is particularly apparent. Due to her health battles she's been shielding and largely housebound, but despite the many cancelled performances and tours, she's found herself busier than ever before.

*'I know I'm lucky in that respect. I'm involved in many different avenues of the industry, so I've kept busy with music arranging and music video editing commissions, giving masterclasses over Zoom to various universities and music schools, alongside my own projects and ideas I'm developing.'*

Carol's **voiceover work** has also become extremely busy, with a few TV adverts under her belt, and she's now narrating a nature documentary series. In addition, she recently secured Arts Council and Help Musicians funding to record a new album.

*'Quite a few media composers have called on me for various projects that they needed trombone on. And I was also successful in the RNCM Teaching Awards Scheme to set up a pilot of an interactive music platform, which is now moving onto the next development stage.'*

Carol can also see the positive side of the pandemic, recognising that in such uncertain times it's enabled musicians to think more laterally than ever before.

*'And I've saved a lot on commuting time!' she laughs. 'Even though teaching over Zoom isn't perfect, it does give me flexibility in terms of being able to dash from my teaching,*

*to a meeting with a trumpet player in New York about a commission, and then give a masterclass to students at Colburn School in Los Angeles all in one day!' she explains.*

For the rest of 2021, Carol's most excited that gigs, shows and tours are beginning to tentatively land in the diary again. 'I hope that none of us forget this past year though, even if it's been difficult for many,' she muses. 'I hope that it will have taught us all that we can get through difficult times, especially if we work together.' ■

**[caroljarvis.com](http://caroljarvis.com)**



WHERE  
ARE  
THEY  
NOW?



# CELEBRATING **100 YEARS** OF THE NORTHERN SCHOOL OF MUSIC



THE NORTHERN SCHOOL OF MUSIC IS MARKING ITS CENTENARY AND WE'D LIKE AS MANY OF YOU AS POSSIBLE TO JOIN OUR CELEBRATIONS.

If you studied at the Northern School of Music, or if you're able to share the names of your classmates, some of whom you may still be in contact with, we'd love to hear from you!

Get in touch by emailing [alumni@rncm.ac.uk](mailto:alumni@rncm.ac.uk) and we'd be happy to include your memories in the next edition of *The Northern* or on our alumni webpages.

**SAVE THE DATE...**  
**SUNDAY 31 OCTOBER 2021**

We'd like to invite you to join us in marking the centenary of the Northern School of Music, one of our founding institutions, with a day of reminiscing, nostalgia and celebration of its incredible legacy.

To find out more and request an invitation, contact [alumni@rncm.ac.uk](mailto:alumni@rncm.ac.uk) or call **0161 907 5377**.

**NORTH  
ERN**

*HIGH  
LIGHTS*



## WINTER'S TALE

In October 2020, ***Silver Lining*** by **Sebastian Winter** (composition, 2020, pictured above right) received its world première by postgraduate pianist Jason Lam and Adam Swayne, our Deputy Head of Keyboard Studies.

The performance formed part of our innovative *Live from the RNCM* series of online events, broadcast to homes around the world from our Concert Hall.

After completing his degree with us, Sebastian relocated to New York to study as a postgraduate at Juilliard. He's currently working on a special symphony project in collaboration with the architects of the city's World Trade Centre site, focussing on its redevelopment.

[sebastianwinter.co.uk](http://sebastianwinter.co.uk)

## VOICE FOR CHANGE

Congratulations to **Janet Fischer** (soprano, 2008, pictured below), appointed Chief Executive of **Live Music Now**.

Transforming lives through music, Live Music Now uses interactive music programmes to improve the health and wellbeing of vulnerable and disadvantaged groups. It currently reaches 85,000 children and older people annually in over 500 schools, hospitals, care homes and hospices, believing that those who most need the benefits of live music are those who have least opportunity to experience it.

*She said: 'I am thrilled to be joining Live Music Now at such an important time in its history. LMN has an incredible team, working at the forefront of transformative musical experiences. This has been a difficult period for many and the need for our life changing services is growing across the UK. I'm looking forward to ensuring that as many people as possible have access to our work, whilst ensuring that LMN continues to create deeply meaningful experiences for both our musicians and participants, and is a national voice for change.'*







## ALUMNI LEADING THE WAY

We're proud to share the news that violinists **Caroline Pether** (2014, pictured above centre) and **Katie Stillman** (2005, pictured above left) have been appointed Leader and Associate Leader of **Manchester Camerata**.

Caroline, who's Leader of the **Sinfonia Cymru** and a former Leader of the award-winning Zelkova Quartet, said: *'I'm delighted and honoured to take up the Leader position at Manchester Camerata. I've already enjoyed eight years of inspiring music-making with Gábor and the wonderful musicians of this orchestra, and I look forward to many more.'*

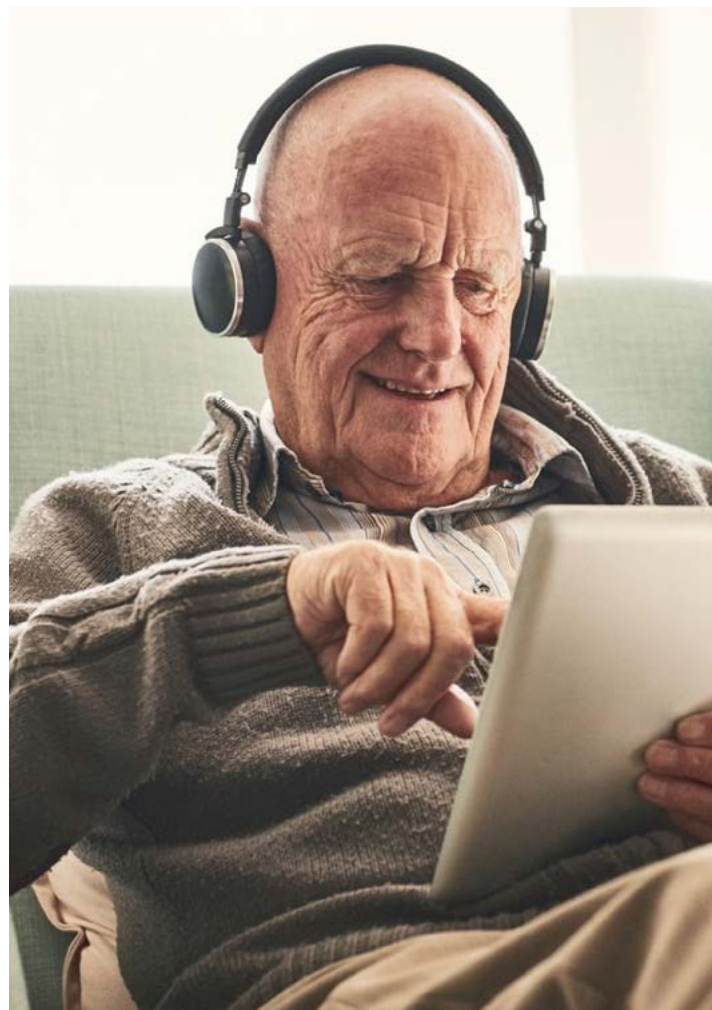
Alongside her role with Camerata, Katie recently joined the **Villiers Quartet** which has developed a reputation as exceptional interpreters of British composers. She was a founding member of the Barbirolli Quartet and teaches violin and chamber music at Chetham's School of Music, and pedagogy at the RNCM.

She said: *'I love the energy and commitment of my colleagues at Manchester Camerata and am looking forward to working closely with the wonderful Caroline Pether. I can't wait for some more music making!'*

## CONNECTING STARS

**Constella OperaBallet**, founded by **Leo Geyer** (composition, 2014) in 2011, was recently described by **Gramophone Magazine** as *'one of the inspiring organisations keeping music alive'*.

During the pandemic, the organisation launched **Connecting Stars**, a live and interactive virtual performance for care homes. Thanks to public donations, **Arts Council** funding and support from former RNCM President **Sir Willard White**, over 200 performances took place during the year, providing much-needed culture and wellbeing support for residents across the UK.





## CONDUCTOR'S SPECIAL YEAR

It's been a momentous year for **Alpesh Chauhan** (cello, 2012, and conducting, 2014, pictured above).

Following his appointment as Music Director of **Birmingham Opera Company** in June 2020, the 31-year-old became Associate Conductor with the **BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra** in August and Principal Guest Conductor with the **Düsseldorf Symphoniker** in March. The latter is particularly special for us as Alpesh replaces fellow alumnus **Alexander Bloch**, who leaves the position after six successful years.

## CONGRATULATIONS TO...

**Sir Graham Vick** (International Chair in Opera and RCM alum), knighted in the 2021 New Year Honours list.

**Alexandra Dariescu** (piano, 2007), awarded the Order 'Cultural Merit' in the rank of Knight by the Romanian President.

**Marcus Norman** (clarinet, 2015), appointed General Manager of the **New Zealand String Quartet**.

**Sarah Gilford** (soprano, 2015), representing Wales in the 2021 Cardiff Singer of the World finals.

**Edd Leech** (tuba, 2009) and **Tom Thorp** (saxophone, 2012), announced as new members of the **Paraorchestra** alongside third-year composition student **Xia Leon Sloane**.

**Solem Quartet**, awarded Live Work Fund support of £20,000 from **Jerwood Arts**.

**Caitlin Laing** (saxophone, 2019), selected as one of only two artists to be mentored by MOBO award-winning artist **Andrea Triana**.

**Iain Henderson** (tenor, 2018), set to make his début with **Opera Australia** as Don Jose in their national tour of *Carmen*.

**Chloé van Soeterstède** (conducting, 2017), selected by **Wittenberg artists** for representation in North America.

**Abel Selaocoe** (cello, 2018) and **Daniel Kidane** (composition, 2012), two of 20 music creators selected by the **PRS Foundation's** Power Up Participation Programme, devised to address anti-Black racism and racial disparities in the music sector.

**Thomas Goff** (conducting, 2017), shortlisted in the 2021 **Donatella Flick LSO Conducting Competition**.

**Rebecca Tong** (conducting, 2020), who recently joined the main roster at **Askonas Holt**.

# THEN AND NOW

RNCM Then and Now



FOR THIS ISSUE,  
WE'VE CHOSEN  
THE **FORMAN**  
**LECTURE**  
**THEATRE.**



FONDLY REMEMBERED BY MANY AS SIMPLY THE LECTURE THEATRE, THIS FANTASTIC SPACE WAS RENOVATED AS PART OF OUR 2013/14 £7.1MILLION REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT AND RENAMED IN HONOUR OF SIR DENIS FORMAN FOLLOWING A GRANT FROM THE GRANADA FOUNDATION.

Over the past 12 months, as we adapt to Covid-19 restrictions, additional alterations have been made to ensure the area is geared up for both in-person and remote teaching. These include the removal of the front two rows of seating, allowing the performance area to be raised and increased in size, new HD recording and streaming equipment, and enhanced performance lighting options. Interactive video conference and teaching facilities will be installed over the summer.

**Do these pictures bring back memories of your College lectures?** If so, we'd love to hear from you. Visit page 3 for full contact details, and please note that we'll return any hard copy photographs you send our way.



# FINDING HER VOICE

ROSIE MIDDLETON  
(MEZZO-SOPRANO, 2013) HAS  
LAUNCHED A SERIES OF NEWLY  
COMMISSIONED WORKS FOR  
VOICE, ELECTRONICS AND  
MOVEMENT, EXPLORING VOICE  
LOSS, VOICELESSNESS AND  
COMMUNICATION.

The one-woman ***voice(less)*** project is conceived and performed by Rosie with adventurous new works by **Mira Calix**, **Esin Gunduz** and **Laura Bowler**, an RNCM Tutor in Composition and fellow graduate.

Inspired by experiences deeply connected to trauma – such as the inability to speak about life-altering events – through to the near-universal sudden, shy inability to speak in the presence of others, or the all-pervading fear of voice loss from a singer's perspective – it uses voice, improvisation, electronics and movement to provoke and examine new perspectives on what it means to both speak and be heard today. *Voice(less)* was devised and developed at **Snape Maltings** and **The Banff Centre** in 2019, funded by **Arts Council England**.



# IN TRIBUTE LUCY HALE



IT IS WITH DEEP SADNESS THAT WE REPORT THE UNTIMELY DEATH OF COMPOSER LUCY HALE, ON MONDAY 11 JANUARY AT THE AGE OF 26.

Lucy joined the RNCM as an undergraduate student of Adam Gorb and David Horne in 2013, furthering her studies as a postgraduate with Emily Howard and Gary Carpenter before graduating with distinction in 2019.

Lucy achieved so much both during and after her studies, never letting her challenging personal circumstances stand in the way of her musical aspirations. Last year she was awarded a place on the RPS Composers programme and was set to write a new work for performance at Wigmore Hall as the 2020/21 Rosie Johnson RPS/Wigmore Hall Apprentice Composer. She also delivered workshops with young disabled people in Liverpool as an Associate Musician with Drake Music, and made history as Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra Rebound's inaugural Young Composer-in-Association and Orchestras for All's first Composer-in-Residence.

Professor Linda Merrick, Principal, said: *'Everyone in the RNCM community viewed Lucy as a remarkable and extraordinary young woman with whom it was a pleasure and privilege to work. She balanced her talent and determination to pursue her chosen career path with humility and was committed to make the most of every opportunity available to her. She was also a powerful role model for her peers.'*

*'We were extremely proud to see Lucy flourish in her studies at the RNCM and go on to build the career she had so desperately wanted. She touched the hearts of everyone who was fortunate enough to know and work with her. Her music will live on, as will she in all our memories.'*





A  
**BOLD**  
**NEW**  
SOUND





MEETING AS FIRST YEARS IN 2015, CHARLIE SINCLAIR (GUITAR; VOCALS), ASHLEY GARROD (BASS), PHILIPPOS ROUSIAMANIS (VIOLIN; KEYBOARDS) AND PETE LEAVER (DRUMS) HAD A VISION TO CARVE OUT THEIR OWN SOUNDSCAPE AND MAKE MUSIC THEY BELIEVED IN.

FAST FORWARD TO 2020 AND THE FIVE-PIECE ART-ROCK BAND SYLVETTE – WITH NEW MEMBER, GUITARIST JACK MARCH – WERE SET TO RELEASE THEIR SECOND SINGLE, LAUNCH THEIR SECOND ALBUM, AND EMBARK ON A SIX-DATE TOUR OF THE UK WHEN COVID HIT.

HERE THEY REVEAL THEIR STORY SO FAR AND HOW THEY’VE ADAPTED DURING AN UNPRECEDENTED YEAR.



***How did it feel to make that transition from being a student to carving out a career in music?***

**Ashley:** I didn't really have time to register it happening as straight after I graduated I had a 16-date tour with another band. But once things settled down, I got a chance to look back on all that I personally accomplished and what we'd done as a band and it was incredibly rewarding.

**Charlie:** I would say it was a fairly smooth transition as I did a lot of the same work that I'd been accumulating in the last couple years of College. Sylvette's always been the focus of my time and that's not changed!

***Did you always want to be musicians?***

**Ashley:** I wanted to be a vet until I got a bass for Christmas in 2011 and fell in love with music. I ended up in multiple bands gigging every chance I got, but I didn't really consider being a professional musician until my friend told me about the RNCM just before an Open Day. My brother drove me up from Taunton at five in the morning and the rest is history.

**Charlie:** I wanted to be an actor until I was 12. I've loved performing since a young age; I come from a theatrical family, so it runs in the blood. I picked up a guitar and fell in love with it instantly – becoming obsessed with Radiohead's Jonny Greenwood, Jimi Hendrix and Gary Moore. I soon got writing and channelled all my energy from theatrical performance into that form of self-expression, and that's when I knew I wanted to write and play music for a living.

***How did studying at a conservatoire help you develop your craft and what are your RNCM highlights?***

**Ashley:** Being at the RNCM changed the way I view being a musician. I met so many talented players and artists from different walks of life and learnt so much from them. I discovered new favourite artists and saw wonderful gigs at the suggestion of new friends.

Supporting the Session Orchestra with the Ollie West Band, as well as playing our song, ***Memories***, with the Session Orchestra were particular highlights, but constantly getting challenged to play and write different kinds of music really helped me craft my musicianship.

**Charlie:** I experienced a lot of artistic maturity at College. My appreciation for the nuance involved in writing simple but beautiful parts and songs has grown significantly, as has my general pool of listening. One highlight has to be getting the chance to tour with New Order as part of a keyboard orchestra – touring multiple countries with influential artists was an opportunity I wouldn't have got otherwise. It's how I met Phil Cunningham, who's now a great friend and the producer for our second album.

***You studied different degree paths: Charlie, Pete and Ashley on the popular music programme and Philip as a composer on the classical route. How did you get together?***

**Charlie:** Me and Pete were in the same first year ensemble project and we quickly started fleshing out songs I had from before the RNCM. We got Ashley involved about two weeks' later, just before our first gig, and we haven't stopped playing

music together since. I was a huge admirer of Philip's compositions and we found that we had a very similar artistic philosophy, so I eventually asked if he'd be interested in joining Sylvette. He was a perfect fit and his compositional training has brought so much to the band, forcing us to challenge ourselves in the compositional process.

***What advice would you give the 'first year you', just starting out on your RNCM journey?***

**Ashley:** My advice would be to make the most of it. Have fun, be confident in yourself and what you have to offer and don't be afraid to embarrass yourself and make mistakes. There's so much to enjoy on this journey so relax and love every day – there's always a way around every obstacle so don't let anything stop you.

**Charlie:** Focus on your personal musical journey, limit the time you spend comparing yourself to other people as much as possible and nurture what makes you feel like you. You have an entirely different musical identity to everyone else and you should work on developing that – allow others to inspire you, music is not a competition!



**The band is named after artist Sylvette Lydia David. How did she inspire you?**

**Charlie:** To be honest, I was just struggling to find a band name that felt right and started looking at paintings for inspiration. I saw several of **Picasso's paintings of Sylvette**, who was one of his muses, and found them particularly striking. I didn't think too much about it at the time, it just felt right so we named the band Sylvette. About a year later I discovered that she was still alive and living in England. I got in touch, told her about our band and we became friends. She's an incredible artist and kindly let us use one of her paintings for our debut album cover. We then played several songs from the album at her exhibition at the Mall Gallery in London.

**How would you describe your sound?**

**Charlie:** We go by the genre art rock. We take inspiration from a variety of different styles and artists including Björk, Nine Inch Nails, Radiohead, James Blake and Neutral Milk Hotel. Every time we write an idea that feels new to us or is exciting we know we're onto something worth following and that's what we thrive on. We've slowly gained confidence to be bold and uncompromising and this allows us to create what we feel are original compositions.

**You've been together for five years. What are the highlights so far?**

**Ashley:** Supporting Arthur Brown at Factory. He was incredible and his dancer was a real inspiration to us. Other highlights include our album launch at Ruby Lounge before it closed, our single launch at Band on the Wall, and the album release tour. It was so much fun – playing to a full room in the city I started properly gigging in (Bristol) was a wonderful experience.

**Pete:** Definitely the **Panel of Glass** single launch at Band on the Wall. The immense energy both on stage and from the crowd made it an unforgettable experience. And working with Jake Evans and Phil Cunningham in the studio (and the trips to the pub afterwards) were everything I love about music – constantly bettering yourself artistically whilst having a great time with lovely people.

**You were about to launch an album and tour when Covid struck. How did that affect your plans, and how have you managed to keep your motivation and creativity flowing over the past year?**

**Charlie:** The pandemic hugely affected our plans for last year. All our incomes from live music were stopped dead so we had to get other jobs just to tide us through. It was very difficult not being able to rehearse together but we were able to write an album remotely. It was the main thing that kept us going, knowing that we still had exciting music to work on and we now feel so grateful to have all this new music to work with going forward. We've also had to re-arrange our tour for the fourth time but hopefully this time it will happen!

**Jack joined Sylvette just before lockdown. How did the dynamic of the band cope with a new member during a time of physical separation and online music-making?**

**Charlie:** Jack joined about six months before lockdown, but all of the work we'd done with him pre-Covid was just gigging and recording sessions. It was strange that the first time we collaborated on a song was in lockdown but it actually turned out well. Jack's an incredible producer and is very creative about using unusual and interesting sounds in songs

so having time to himself allowed him to develop these ideas before presenting them to the band. Through this process we've become so fond of Jack's production style that we're going to produce the entire next album ourselves with Jack mixing it.

**What does the future hold for Sylvette as we move towards live events again?**

**Charlie:** We just released a single called **Blanket of Dust** that we're very excited about, and then we'll focus on finishing the recording of the third album and finally getting out on tour again in August/September! ■

**[sylvette.co.uk](http://sylvette.co.uk)**

# RNCM REMOTE

2021

## 6 JANUARY

THE UK ENTERS  
ITS THIRD  
NATIONAL  
LOCKDOWN.

## 31 JANUARY

*RNCM BRASS BAND  
FESTIVAL –  
AN ONLINE TRIBUTE  
TAKES PLACE.*

## 7 FEBRUARY

*RNCM DAY OF  
PERCUSSION –  
VIRTUAL EDITION  
TAKES PLACE.*

## 4 FEBRUARY

THE RNCM  
LEARNS THAT  
IN-PERSON  
TEACHING WILL  
RECOMMENCE  
ON 8 MARCH.



## 17 FEBRUARY

THE ANDREW LLOYD WEBBER FOUNDATION EXPANDS ITS SUPPORT, PLEDGING £30,000 TO INCLUDE POSTGRADUATE VOCAL SCHOLARSHIPS AND A GRANT TOWARDS THE RNCM'S AWARD-WINNING PATHFINDER PROGRAMME.

*'The pandemic has had such a detrimental impact on music education across the UK. The support from the Andrew Lloyd Webber Foundation means that we are now in a position to help even more young musicians via RNCM Pathfinder and open up opportunities for music training and performance at this challenging time.'*

DR JENNIE HENLEY,  
DIRECTOR OF PROGRAMMES

## 8 MARCH

OVER 200 STUDENTS RETURN TO THE RNCM FOR SMALL ONSITE PRACTICAL ACTIVITIES.

## 19 FEBRUARY

THE RNCM WINS THE EDUCATION LINKS AWARD AT THE 2021 GREATER CHINA AWARDS.



## 22 FEBRUARY

THE GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCES ROADMAP OUT OF LOCKDOWN.



**18 – 20 MARCH**  
RNCM PLAY,  
AN EXCITING  
ONLINE STUDENT  
SHOWCASE,  
TAKES PLACE .



*'I'm excited to start in this new role, and I'm looking forward to working closely with the students and staff at the RNCM over the next few years. I'm hoping that together, we will be able to centre students' voices and expand their ideas about what music education can look like for every individual.'*

**NATE HOLDER**

**22 MARCH**

**NATE HOLDER** JOINS THE RNCM  
AS INTERNATIONAL CHAIR IN  
MUSIC EDUCATION.

**23 MARCH**

THE **RNCM ARCHIVES**  
BECOMES A MEMBER  
OF HERITAGE OPEN  
DAYS' NEW WAVE  
YOUTH ENGAGEMENT  
PROGRAMME.



**20 APRIL**

VIOLINIST HENNING KRAGGERUD  
LAUNCHES THE RNCM'S SUMMER  
SEASON WITH AN ONLINE Q&A.

**17 MAY**

UNIVERSITY STUDENTS  
OF ALL SUBJECTS CAN  
RETURN TO ONSITE  
TEACHING.

**2 APRIL**

THE RNCM IS AWARDED A  
GRANT OF OVER £133,000  
AS PART OF ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND'S CULTURE  
RECOVERY FUND.

**13 APRIL**

DISCOVER RNCM, A 14-HOUR  
GLOBAL ONLINE EVENT  
FOR PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS,  
TAKES PLACE.



# THANK YOU FOR HELPING TO KEEP OUR MUSIC PLAYING

WHEN COVID FORCED US TO CLOSE OUR DOORS TO THE PUBLIC, RESULTING IN SIGNIFICANT FINANCIAL LOSSES, OUR AMAZING ALUMNI COMMUNITY STEPPED UP AND OFFERED TRULY IMPACTFUL SUPPORT TO THE COLLEGE AND OUR CURRENT GENERATION OF YOUNG MUSICIANS.

**Thanks to your help** we were able to raise over £300,000. Every single donation significantly helped our students and recent graduates, enabling us to:

Invest in technical infrastructure, ensuring we could continue training online, offer masterclasses with international artists and reach those students in lockdown across the globe

Support any student facing emotional or financial crisis with counselling, wellbeing sessions and emergency funding

Continue to run our Junior School and community education programmes virtually, supporting the pipeline of new talent

Offer additional support, mentoring and professional experience opportunities to our alumni

Broadcast online concerts and events to keep sharing our music with you all

It has really made a difference to know so many of our wonderful alumni have been helping us every step of the way.

However, as we're forced to remain closed to the public over the coming months, our financial situation sadly remains precarious. A regular modest monthly donation is a wonderful way to help us plan, rebuild our financial resilience and give our current students the assurance there are funds in place they can rely on.

Even the smallest donation can make a difference, and collectively your gifts will help to secure the future of the College and **support the next generation of talent**.

To enquire about setting up a regular gift, email **[development@rncm.ac.uk](mailto:development@rncm.ac.uk)**.

We look forward to keeping you updated with how our amazing alumni community is coming together to make a huge difference.

A photograph of a man and a woman looking at a laptop screen. The man, on the left, is wearing glasses and a dark blue patterned shirt. The woman, on the right, has long dark hair and is wearing a light-colored sweater. They are both looking down at the laptop screen, which is partially visible in the foreground. The background is a warm, textured brown.

*'The RNCM will always remain a special place...It's a privilege to play a part in maintaining this tradition for generations of young talent.'*

**RNCM ALUMNUS**

*'Music is the greatest thing to happen to me. As someone from a modest background in Oldham, knowing there are people who give musicians like me the chance to grow and take off into the world, is humbling.'*

**2020 COMPOSITION GRADUATE ELLIS HOWARTH, NOW STUDYING ON THE MASTER OF COMPOSITION PROGRAMME AT THE ROYAL CONSERVATORY OF THE HAGUE.**

*'I can't thank you enough for your kind and life changing donation. With your help I've been able to train at a College I have always dreamt of studying at.'*

**MATTHEW PEACOCK, MASTER'S GUITARIST AND RNCM POPULAR MUSIC AMBASSADOR**



# STAY IN TOUCH

## BEING PART OF THE RNCM FAMILY DOESN'T END AT GRADUATION.

Whichever path you choose, wherever in the world, remaining part of your life is important to us. Our alumni network is integral to our DNA and we're continually impressed by the amazing things you achieve.

Whether you're performing in venues throughout the world, inspiring a classroom of children, making an incredible difference in hospitals and care homes, or utilising your skills in a different industry, your stories define where we are today and inspire where we could be tomorrow.

**You're part of our story; let's share it together.**

There are lots of ways that you can get involved in RNCM life, to inspire, mentor and support the next generation of alumni. To learn more email [alumni@rncm.ac.uk](mailto:alumni@rncm.ac.uk), call **0161 907 5377**, or visit [rncm.ac.uk](http://rncm.ac.uk). Alternatively, join hundreds of alumni online at [rncmconnect.com](http://rncmconnect.com).

### PHOTO CREDITS

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# NSM100

**NORTHERN SCHOOL OF MUSIC CENTENARY**  
ALUMNI CELEBRATION

**SAVE THE DATE**  
SUNDAY 31 OCTOBER 2021

RNCM  
ROYAL NORTHERN  
COLLEGE of MUSIC