

# Crescendo

The Official Magazine of The Purcell School for Young Musicians

March 2019



## INSIDE PURCELL: LET'S TALK KEYS

We sat down for an interview with William Fong, Head of Keyboard here at Purcell

## SUMMER TERM EVENTS GUIDE

Don't miss out on our fantastic concerts and events!  
Download [\(ADD LINK\)](#)

## CADOGAN HALL SYMPHONIC DANCES

Jane to add three lines of text as an intro for article



## INSIDE PURCELL: LET'S TALK KEYS

We sat down with William Fong, Head of Keyboard, and discussed everything from his favourite music, to life at Purcell, to his favourite show on Netflix!

With over 15 specialist instrumental teachers, the Keyboard Department is the largest in the School. Driving the department since 2002 is none other than soloist, recitalist and chamber musician; William Fong.

William began playing piano at only 4 years of age, a passion that was predominantly sparked by the influence of his father. However, regarding his reasons for continuing with music and forging a (successful) career as a pianist, he said **“music has always been such a powerful motivator for me, in my mind, music says everything you need to know about the human condition”**. As a young boy, growing up in Durham, he would often enjoy attending

The Tyne Theatre and Opera House in Newcastle, watching many great performances of Mozart operas but unfortunately would usually fall asleep before Don Giovanni got dragged to hell!

William was later awarded scholarships to study piano and composition at Chetham's School of Music, where he furthered his studies with the Polish pianist, Ryszard Bakst. He was then accepted to the Royal Northern College of Music, where he also won several scholarships.

After graduating with honours, he studied privately with Ronald Smith for which he received major awards from the Countess of Munster Musical Trust, the Ludgate

Trust and the Martin Musical Scholarship Fund.

William's international career was launched in 1984 when he won the First Prize, gold medal and Rosa Sabater Prize at the Concurso Internacional de Piano in Jaén, Spain. His concerto début at St. John's Smith Square with the Philharmonia Orchestra followed soon after.

He subsequently added successes in the Busoni, Cleveland, Iturbi, and Scottish International Competitions. Under the auspices of the Sviatoslav Richter Foundation, performances in New York, Moscow, St Petersburg and in Europe have drawn critical acclaim and enthusiastic audiences.

Invited to China, supported by Arts Council England, William has performed and given master classes in Shanghai, he has also performed in Australia at the invitation of the Chair of the Australian Piano Pedagogy Conference and was the keynote speaker, giving a recital and master classes, at the Institute of Registered Music Teachers of New Zealand conference in Auckland.

As a musician of wide interests, William has performed with ensembles such as the Brodsky Quartet and members of Guildhall Strings. He has also collaborated with singers Steve Davislim and James Rutherford and has recorded some fascinating and little known repertoire in the chamber music field. William has performed at all of London's major venues with concerts being broadcast on BBC Radio 3, Classic FM, and BBC television.

What might seem surprising, is that William is a fan of many genres of music outside of classical. When asked about

his taste of music, a few of the artists and inspirations that came to mind included Big Joe Turner, Stevie Wonder, George Michael, Frank Sinatra and Ella Fitzgerald. **“There shouldn't be any boundaries to someone's appreciation of good music”**.

Outside of music, William is an avid cyclist. Almost every year he takes part in the L'Étape du Tour, an event that allows amateur cyclists to race over the same route as one of the stages of the Tour de France. Around 10,000 riders participate each year with William usually placing in the top third! William participates in the race on behalf of Centrepoint; the UK's leading youth homeless charity providing accommodation and support to homeless people aged 16-25. It is thanks to individuals such as William, that the charity is able support more than 10,000 homeless young people each year!

When he isn't cycling through the mountains of France, William is a self-proclaimed

'foodie' and claims to make **“the best roast potatoes and Yorkshire puddings you have ever tasted”**! Having been raised in a household with both French and Chinese culture, William enjoys creating recipes blending the two together as well as bringing influences from British cuisine. We look forward to putting his culinary skills to the test and seeing if he can perform in the kitchen as well as he does on stage!

At present, William maintains a busy schedule of recitals, master classes, teaching and lecturing both in the UK and abroad, as well as regular commitments to some of the finest international piano summer schools.

When discussing The Purcell School, William expressed **“we are just the right size to do things imaginatively and creatively and to be able to look after our students the best we can, we are able to encourage independent thinking and teach students to be single-minded for their**



**passion but not narrow-minded in their outlook”.**

William also spoke very highly of his fellow members of the Keyboard Department; **“I am lucky to work with such a fantastic faculty, all of whom have experience of teaching adult musicians at conservatoire level and are able to transpose that in the most appropriate way to suit our students”.**

Newest members of the department include William’s life-long friend and renowned pianist Justas Dvarionas and one of Britain’s best known pianists; Stephen Coombs. **“Yustas is extremely well read, you can talk to him about anything. He also has an incredibly refreshing holistic view on life. Similarly, Stephen has an encyclopaedic knowledge of music, there is no question he can’t answer. Our students are very lucky to be able to work with them both!”**

The high praise of teaching from staff old and new, comes as no surprise considering the many incredible musicians who have studied with the department. The list of achievements from Purcell Alumni is outstanding and even in recent years we have seen students reach tremendous success.

In 2010, pianist Martin James Bartlett joined The Purcell School and whilst studying here, won the coveted BBC Young Musician of the Year. Just a few short months after leaving the School, Martin took part in the recording of the charity single ‘God Only Knows’ for BBC Children in Need, collaborating with Nicola Benedetti, Stevie Wonder, Sam Smith, One Direction, Elton John, Jools Holland, Brian May, and Dave Grohl. The official music video reached over 11 million views on YouTube and acted as the launch for BBC Music. Since graduating in 2014, Martin has gone on to study at the Royal

College of Music and most recently signed a recording contract with Warner Classics ahead of his debut album due to be released in May this year!

Just before Martin’s time at Purcell we saw Teo Gheorghiu study with William from 2001 to 2010. Teo began playing piano at only 5 years old and during his time at The Purcell School, starred in ‘Vitus’ as the lead character; a young gifted pianist. The film was released in 2006 under Sony Pictures and earned Teo an Undine Award in Baden, Austria for the ‘Best Male Debut’ in 2007 with the film picking up the ‘Best Film’ Award at the Swiss Film Awards in 2006. Since leaving the School, Teo went on to study at the Curtis Institute of Music (USA) and the Royal College of Music.

William also taught British pianist Alexander Ullman from 2001 to 2009. Following Alexander’s time at Purcell, like Teo, he went on to study at the Curtis Institute and the Royal

College of Music. He also went on to achieve international attention in 2011 after winning the Franz Liszt International Piano Competition in Budapest. Most recently Alexander made his debut with the Moscow State Symphony Orchestra, Beijing’s NCPA Orchestra and the Barcelona Symphony Orchestra.

When thinking back on past students, William said **“I taught both Teo and Alex personally at the same time. Both exceptional in very different ways and a great counterbalance to each other. The thing they both had in common was a very perceptive and fast intellect with an instinctive understanding for the syntax of the musical language”.**

William credits the success not only to the hard work of the students and staff but also all of the generous supporters of the department with particular mention of Terry Lewis, Managing Director of Jaques Samuel Pianos who are the UK’s sole supplier of Fazioli Pianos. **“Terry has been fundamental in bringing more opportunities to the students, one of the most anticipated trips is that to the Fazioli factory in Italy which we are fortunate enough to be invited to every other summer”.**

The School is incredibly fortunate enough to be able to put on many great events for students during the school year. This past term has seen two renowned pianists; Jun Kanno and Gabriel Kwok, visit the School offering Masterclasses

to students. Jun Kanno has played with the Munich Symphony Orchestra, the Chamber Orchestra of Berlin, the National Orchestra of Cracow, the Chamber Orchestra of Salzburg, the Chamber Orchestra of Prague, the NHK Symphony Orchestra, the Japan Philharmonic, and the Korean National Orchestra. Gabriel Kwok was born in Hong Kong and studied at the Royal Academy of Music with Guy Jonson and later with Louis Kentner in London. He has been Head of Keyboard Studies at The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts since 1989.

There are also three upcoming Piano Masterclasses in the Summer Term. The School will be playing host to John Rink (Monday 14th May), Barbara Szcepanka (Thursday 23rd May) and Anna Sagalova (Saturday 29th June). John Rink is Professor of Musical Performance Studies in the Cambridge Faculty of Music, and Fellow and Director of Studies in Music at St John’s College. He is a leading expert on the evolution of tonal structure in Chopin’s early music and its relation to improvisation. Barbara Szcepanka has been a piano professor since 1989 at the Robert Schumann Hochschule in Düsseldorf, where she also was Vice-Rector in the period from 1999 to 2008. She has trained many successful pianists who have achieved several prizes in national and international competitions. Finally, Anna Sagalova is a Senior Lecturer in the Specialist Piano Department at the Kharkiv National

Kotlyarevsky University of Arts; one of the leading creative centres for musical and theatrical education in Ukraine.

Along with these incredible Masterclasses, the Keyboard Department has three exciting upcoming concerts. Former Purcell student and winner of the prestigious Cliburn International Piano Competition; Alim Beiseimbayev will be giving a piano recital here at the School on Thursday 25th April. Also in April, five Purcell students will be performing at the Southbank Centre as part of the ‘Freddie Morgan Piano Recital’ concert. Lastly, on Thursday 20th June, the School is hosting ‘First Impressions: Composing for Piano with Florian Mitrea’. Romanian/British pianist Florian Mitrea was the winner of the 2018 Royal Overseas League Piano Competition and the top prize-winner at the New York International Piano Festival. The earlier part of the day will include a free workshop following by a performance featuring Purcell pianists and composers.

As you can tell, the Keyboard Department has an incredibly passionate and dedicated leader! With so much on his plate, it is a wonder where he finds the time for the simple pleasures in life such as watching ‘The Good Place’ on Netflix! The Purcell School is extremely grateful to William and the department for all the effort they put in to giving our students the best education possible.



# COMING UP

## ROSSETTI ENSEMBLE

Wednesday 24th April - 19:00  
The Purcell School, CP Hall  
Malcolm Medditer - Oboe  
Sara Trickleby - Violin  
Sarah-Jane Bradley - Viola  
Time Lowe - Cello  
John Lenehan - Piano  
£5 - £10; via Eventbrite and on the door

## ALIM BEISEMBAYEV PIANO RECITAL

Thursday 25th April - 19:00  
The Purcell School, CP Hall  
Alim Beisembayev is a former Purcell student and winner of the prestigious Cliburn International Junior Piano Competition (2016), Manchester International Concerto Competition (2017) and the Jaques Samuel Intercollegiate Piano Competition (2018)  
£5 - £10; via Eventbrite and on the door

## PURCELL CHAMBER SOLOISTS

Sunday 28th April - 15:00  
Stanborough Park Church,  
Watford, WD25 9JL  
*Liszt Mephisto Waltz No. 1, S.514;*  
*Brahms Cello Sonata No 1 Mvt (i);*  
*Elgar Piano Quintet A Minor (i);*  
*Schumann String quartet in F major (i);*  
*Piazzolla Libertango arranged for brass quintet*  
Admission is free

## PURCELL CHAMBER SOLOISTS

Monday 29th April - 13:00  
St Martin-in-the-Fields, Trafalgar Square, London, WC2N 4JJ  
*Brahms Cello Sonata No 1 Mvt I;*  
*Elgar Piano Quintet A Minor (i);*  
*Schumann String quartet in F major (i);*  
*Piazzolla Libertango arranged for brass quintet*  
Admission is free, suggested donation of £3.50

## FREDDY MORGAN PIANO RECITALS

Monday 29th April - 19:45  
Purcell Room, Queen Elizabeth Hall, Southbank Centre, Southbank Belvedere Road, London, SE1 8XX  
Joachim Lim, Chindanai Nukulvutthiopas, Bradley Ng, Carmen Sánchez Labrador, Yumeka Nakagawa - Piano  
Tickets: £10 - £15  
Booking fee: £3.00  
(No booking fee for members)  
Concessions 25% off (limited availability)  
southbankcentre.co.uk

For more details on our upcoming events, check our latest Summer Events Guide!  
[Click here to download](#)



**FREDDY MORGAN  
PIANO RECITALS**

The Purcell School  
for young musicians

Monday 29 April | 7:45pm  
Purcell Room, Southbank

Tickets: £10 - £15  
Booking fee: £3.00  
southbankcentre.co.uk

### GET IN TOUCH

General Enquiries - School Office  
01923 331 100  
schooloffice@purcell-school.org

Concert and Ticket Information  
concerts@purcell-school.org

PR & Communications / News  
publicity@purcell-school.org

### KEEP UP TO DATE

www.purcell-school.org

Facebook: @PurcellSchool

Twitter: @PurcellSchool

Instagram: the\_purcell\_school

YouTube: The Purcell School

### FIND US

The Purcell School  
Aldenham Road  
Bushey, Hertfordshire  
WD23 2TS

Nearest Stations:  
Watford (Met Line)  
Bushey (London Overground)  
Stanmore (Jubilee Line)