



The Purcell School  
*for young musicians*

# Annual Report

2019/20



## **ROYAL PATRON**

HRH The Prince of Wales

## **PATRONS**

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## **LEADERSHIP TEAM**

**Principal:** Paul Bambrough

**Bursar:** Adam Wroblewski

**Deputy Principal:** Christine Rayfield

**Interim Deputy Principal:** Thomas Burns

**Director of Music:** Paul Hoskins

**Head of Boarding:** Jane Malan

**Head of Sixth Form and DSL:** Ziggi Szafranski

Listed as at September 2020, for a full list of teaching staff, please visit [www.purcell-school.org/about-us/staff-list](http://www.purcell-school.org/about-us/staff-list)

# Principals' Statement

One of the most striking and defining characteristics of The Purcell School is its creativity which applies equally to its artistic and musical work, its approach to developing the whole student and the way it engages with the wider community, both near and far. I suspect there has never been a year in which this creativity was more needed and so beneficial!

It would be all too easy to allow the challenges posed by Covid-19 and the subsequent lockdown to dominate our memory of the past academic year, but that would be a mistake. As you will discover later in this report, the scale, ambition, quantity and scope of our music making in the first half of the year was without parallel and it seemed that no matter how high we raised the bar, our students jumped to meet it. And this was true at all levels: be that a lunchtime concert in school or on the stage of the Wigmore Hall. Our events are appropriately tailored to each student's stage of development which allows them to build their confidence in performance (or composition) without experiencing undue or unmanageable pressure. It is a

matter of great pride that we are able to successfully support every individual's personal journey in this way.

At the onset of lockdown, we (like all schools) were faced with having to move all academic teaching and pastoral care online but, unlike other schools, we also had to meet the challenge of providing a full programme of one-to-one instrumental, composition and voice teaching and performance opportunities, totally almost 500 hours of tuition each week. The School's staff demonstrated an incredible flexibility, ingenuity and innovation in rising to this challenge, the result of which was a full programme of academic classes, musical activity and pastoral support delivered remotely. Families with little or no access to IT were provided with the necessary equipment to enable them to access their work. Not only did we enjoy a huge amount of remarkable music making via the magic of the internet, but we presented a phenomenal art exhibition and Head Boy, Hugo Max, conceived and curated "Waves": a literary

and multi-media publication showcasing the poetry, prose, art work (and more) of a huge number of student and staff contributors. It was a remarkable achievement, especially under the circumstances.

As you will also read in this Review, against this background our students managed to achieve some extremely impressive examination results at both GCSE and A Level (or equivalent) and our leavers secured coveted places at the most prestigious conservatoires and universities.

Thanks to the talent, creativity and resilience of the whole school community, we were able to turn a difficult and unprecedented situation into an opportunity which saw significant achievements across the school combined with an increased national (and international) reach. I cannot help but be proud of this!



**Paul Bambrough**  
Principal

# Academic Accomplishments

At The Purcell School we recognize the importance of providing an outstanding all-round educational experience so that our students can leave with the skills they need to meet the challenges of an ever changing and complex world. We therefore strive to deliver an integrated curriculum in which music, academic, pastoral and social provision are treated equally.

Our 2019/2020 leavers achieved a characteristically strong profile of entry to top conservatoires. Of the 37 students in the year group, 21 went to conservatoires in the United Kingdom, 16 of whom were in receipt of scholarships, and 18 of the 21 went to one of the four London conservatoires – 6 to the Royal Academy of Music, 10 to the Royal College of Music and 2 to Guildhall School of Music. Destinations beyond London included the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland (Glasgow) and Leeds College of Music.

2019/20 also saw leavers travel further afield to the Royal Conservatoire in The Hague, the Conservatorium van Amsterdam, The University of Music Franz Liszt Weimar and the Music and Arts University of the City of Vienna. Of those students who went on to university, places were taken up at the University of Edinburgh (Structural Engineering, English

Language), King's College (Music, Philosophy), Oxford University (Fine Art, Biomedical Science), Aberdeen University (Law), the University of Glasgow (Psychology/Theology), Imperial College (Engineering) and the University of Missouri, Kansas City.

We recognize that intellectual curiosity and social empathy are vital components of being a great musician, but that it is imperative to develop the whole person for them to be truly happy and healthy. The variety and strength of our leavers' destinations goes some way to demonstrate this. For the majority of our students that next stage is a musical one but we also support, enable and empower those who decide to pursue an educational path on leaving The Purcell School.

There were some incredibly promising examination results from Purcell students in Summer 2020 both at GCSE and A-Level. Overall, 96% of all GCSE's

(including iGCSE's) were awarded B – A\* (5-9) and 79% of all A-Levels (including Pre-U) were awarded B – A\*. For iGCSE Music (which our students take early in Year 10), every student received between A – A\* (7-9), and every student received between B – A\* for Pre-U Music. Further strong results at GCSE included 87% of students receiving A – A\* (7-9) in English Literature, 77% achieving A – A\* (7-9) in Double Science, and 94% of students attaining A – A\* (7-9) in Modern Languages (French and German). Across A-Levels, we also saw particularly strong results in English Literature with 80% of students receiving B – A\* and 83% receiving B – A\* in French.

# 1:4

Teacher to  
student ratio

# 100%

Students received  
A\* or A in IGCSE Music

# 100%

Students achieved  
B – A\* for Pre-U Music

# 49%

Purcell leavers went to  
4 London conservatoires

# 64%

Purcell leavers were  
awarded music scholarships

# 87%

Students gained A – A\* in  
GCSE English Literature



# 127

Performances  
in 2019/20\*

# 5080

People attended  
a performance in 2019/20\*



\*Pre-lockdown 2020



# Music Excellence

2019/20 was a strange year. It started with a formidable number of concerts and masterclasses, with nearly two terms of sustained musical activity of exceptional quality; it ended with lockdown, and the School rising creatively to the challenge of remote working, and planning for the safe re-opening in September 2020.

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The first two terms sought to combine an improvement on many good Purcell traditions, with some innovations introduced by Paul Bambrough and Paul Hoskins, the Principal and Director of Music now in their second year. High-quality musical experiences for the students were the guiding principle, and in the first term alone we counted 95 concerts and events.

In school, the daily lunchtime concerts were programmed in year groups, with audience attendance registered; together with regular performance classes and evening performance

platforms, these provide the vital experience of informal recital playing for all students. We introduced a Rush Hour recital and lecture series that gave students an opportunity to hear staff perform, including Jianing Kong (who is also an alumnus) playing a series of the complete Beethoven piano sonatas. Alumni continued to feature with Noah Max bringing members of his Echo Ensemble to perform with Purcell students in memory of Alex Ross. Live at lunchtime was another new series of student concerts that streamed live, with a good response from the many families who live too far away to attend in person.

The students' instrumental studies were supported with a revamped schedule of targeted musicianship classes, which aim to give them an appropriate range of aural, theory, harmony, keyboard skills and chamber music classes within the academic timetable. Some year groups can also elect to have

taster classes in music technology, advanced aural, 'jazz for classical', soul band, choral conducting and others.

The orchestral playing enjoyed a renewed focus, with a chamber orchestra, a middle school orchestra, a symphony orchestra, a baroque ensemble and some other student-led groups. Two unashamedly ambitious symphonic programmes at the Watford Colosseum and the Queen Elizabeth Hall included thrilling performances of works by Knussen, Stravinsky, Steven Stucky and Lutoslawski as well as more familiar repertoire.

1st March 2020 at the Southbank Centre was a highlight in the school calendar, with most of the school involved in four concerts in one day in memory of Oliver Knussen. The concerts, programmed to feature new music, chamber music, the piano department and the orchestra were all professionally filmed.

Little did we know that three weeks later the music world would close down for a long time; subsequently these films launched a new YouTube channel platform Purcell Online that would become the home of all our public work in the summer term and beyond.

The chamber orchestras performed at St John's Smith Square (with Purcell alumna and teacher Nafis Umerkulova playing the Beethoven 4th Piano Concerto), Hatfield House (4 concerts to primary school children including Carnival of the Animals both with student pianists and with Charles Owen and Katya Apekisheva), and the Purcell Room (middle school students, unconducted).

We aimed to expand our profile in the real world by touring to venues near and far. Students love to perform away from school. New venues included South Hill Park, Bracknell, St Mary's, Standon, Leicester International Music Festival (at the invitation of Nicholas Daniel), Moscow International Festival (at the invitation of the Spivakov Foundation), a Piano Department exchange with the Dresden Landesgymnasium, including

masterclasses with Martin Helmchen and Mirjana Rajic, and our senior string quartet was invited to perform in a Beethoven series at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. Existing relationships continued with concerts in local churches and music societies, the Wigmore Hall, Milton Court and St Martin-in-the-Fields, Leeds International Concert Series, and the Piano Festival at the RCS in Glasgow.

Lockdown meant that this packed programme stopped in its tracks, and it is currently difficult to wrestle with how to replace just how much we have lost.

The summer time happened entirely online, and we managed to deliver over 400 hours of one-to-one lessons every week on zoom. Students and teachers were extraordinarily creative in responding to the new situation, and a small selection of all the work that was done is preserved online.

The composition and jazz departments excelled throughout the year, with each of the senior composition students leading their own project, and curating a concert. These skills became essential in isolation, and many

students developed technical abilities in recording, filming, editing and publishing. Academic music was taught through a mixture of Google Classroom, Zoom, online lectures and email, and all our exam students did well, securing their places at university (in a wide range of subjects) and top conservatoires in the UK and abroad.

We must pay tribute to the extraordinary commitment and skill of our teachers in making both halves of 2020-21 such a success. Most of the summer holiday was spent preparing for 2020-21, in the determination to bring students back to face-to-face teaching, and playing music with each other and to real-life audiences again.









# Purcell Online - space for student sounds

On 7th May 2020, in the midst of the United Kingdom's first lockdown, we launched a brand new area on our YouTube channel called *Purcell Online* – space for student sounds.

On 7th May 2020, in the midst of the United Kingdom's first lockdown, we launched a brand new area on our YouTube channel called *Purcell Online* – space for student sounds. The area provided a platform to showcase the work of our incredible students in isolation, and has proved to be a great success. With a host of exciting student performances, inventive collaborations and debuts of original works and arrangements, *Purcell Online* received in excess of 50,000 views and more than doubled the School's number of YouTube subscribers.

The first student submission was from Zara Williams (Sixth Form) in

collaboration with 17 other Purcell students. Zara's arrangement of Billie Eilish's *When the Party's Over/Lovely* garnered views of over 10,000 across the School's social media accounts, and each subsequent submission was met with similar praise.

The platform continued to grow throughout 2020, with content expanding to include a variety of lectures, masterclasses, interviews and performances.

*Purcell Online* also provided an opportunity for students to compete in an audio ident competition. First-study composer Sasha Scott (Sixth Form) triumphed with a beautifully

composed piece of music which now opens each *Purcell Online* video.

The full *Purcell Online* is available here: [www.youtube.com/user/ThePurcellSchool](https://www.youtube.com/user/ThePurcellSchool).

# Individual Highlights

Our students, past and present, enjoy frequent success in competitions locally, nationally and internationally, and 2019/20 was no exception.

## STUDENT TRIUMPHS

### Golden Classical Music Awards

Pianist Phoebe Papandrea won First Prize and the Exceptional Young Musician Special Prize in the 2019 Golden Classical Music Awards International Competition. Phoebe also performed in the prize winner's concert at Weill Recital Hall, Carnegie Hall, New York.

### International Music Competition 'Vienna'

Pianist Phoebe Papandrea was awarded First Prize in the 2019 International Music Competition 'Vienna' Grand Prize Virtuoso.

### International Music Competition 'Brussels'

Pianist Yazdi Madon was awarded First Prize in the 2019 International Music Competition 'Brussels' Grand Prize Virtuoso.

### Young Pianist of the North International Competition

Pianist Phoebe Papandrea received First Prize in the 12th edition of the Young Pianist of the North International Competition 2019.

### Feuerwerk Einbeck International Winter Piano Academy

Pianist Zara Williams was selected

to attend the invitation-only 4th Feuerwerk Einbeck International Winter Piano Academy.

### Robinson Award

Alex Rowsell Ryan received the Robinson Award for Future Talent for the French horn.

### Nottingham Young Musician of the Year

Harpist Bethany Caswell was named Nottingham Young Musician of the Year.

### Leicester MusicFest

Rocco Dal Cin won the Leicester MusicFest 2020 Guitar Award.

### National Youth Orchestra

Chelsea Becker was appointed a National Youth Orchestra composer.

## ALUMNI HONOURS

### GRAMMY Awards

Composer and multi-instrumentalist Jacob Collier won two GRAMMYS at the 62nd Annual GRAMMY Awards. Collier was awarded Best Arrangement, Instrumental or A Cappella for Moon River, and Best Arrangement, Instruments and Vocals for All Night Long. He is now a four-time GRAMMY recipient, earning at least one

award for every album he has released to date.

### BBC Radio 2 Folk Awards

Harpist Catrin Finch and her collaborator Seckou Keita won Best Duo/Group at the BBC Radio 2 Folk Awards.

### Concours Long Thibaud Crespín International Piano Competition

Pianist Kenji Miura thrived in the Concours Long Thibaud Crespín International Piano Competition 2019, taking the First Grand Prix.

### Young Concert Artists International Auditions

Pianist Martin James Bartlett triumphed in the Young Concert Artists International Auditions 2019, and was one of four First Prize winners invited to join the Young Concert Artist's roster.

### Royal Academy of Music

Violinist Jack Liebeck was made a distinguished 'named professor' at the Royal Academy of Music. The prestigious new role, 'Émile Sauret Professor of Violin', was created especially for Liebeck and is named after violinist and composer Sauret, who taught at the Academy in the 19th century and is recognised as one of the most significant figures in the development of violin instruction.

# Securing the Future for Young Musicians

It is a true privilege for The Purcell School to be able to support our young musicians in these particularly challenging times. We take pride in our work and throughout the past 6 months have worked hard to implement new initiatives to support our students and their families navigate the current economic climate.

The School successfully continued to operate throughout the duration of lockdown offering a full range of academic, musical, and pastoral provision. We ensured the continuity of provision by introducing the online Google platform and by supplying computers to these who needed them most. We also significantly upgraded the school network to enable us to present ambitious projects such as online concerts and live streaming.

Despite the loss of our usual annual lettings, we seized the opportunity of empty building to deliver a wide range of school-wide improvement projects whilst the building was empty. These include a new ICT suite, creating a designated Sixth Form centre and refurbishment of the main dining hall. Each and every academic classroom was renovated from ceiling to the floor and a number of other specialist rooms were completely refreshed. The response of the students upon

their return made all the hard work worth it!

The Purcell School would not be able to exist in its current form without the financial support of the Department for Education's Music and Dance Scheme (MDS). It is a very generous scheme which allows all gifted musicians to join us regardless of their financial circumstances. We also run our own in-house fundraising activity to support those young musicians who are ineligible the MDS scheme (usually international students) and you can read about this in the next section.



Notwithstanding all the positive changes we have made this year and despite significant financial challenges, it is clear that the only way to secure the future of our talented musicians is to develop

a comprehensive and exciting strategic plan. We are confident that we are well positioned to so utilizing in-house expertise and the support of an experienced Governing body.

# Fundraising & Development

It has been an unusually challenging year for the Fundraising & Development department. However, as always, the priority of the department remains the same - to raise vital funds for bursaries so that every young musician can attend The Purcell School based on their musical talent, rather than their ability to pay. As the demand for Bursary places rise in line with increasing levels of financial hardship, experienced by more students than ever during the pandemic, raising funds for the school's Bursaries has never been more crucial.

Although we receive funding for places from the Government's Music and Dance Scheme, this does not cover all students who wish to study at Purcell. Each year, the school relies on the generosity of Trusts, Individual Donors and Friends of the school, who all share our passion for developing musical talent in young people. Additionally, each year we proactively approach various Trusts, Organisations and Individuals to develop new support and partnerships for the school.

We were delighted to be able to welcome our Friends and donors to concerts taking place between September 2019 and March 2020, including those at the Wigmore Hall, Milton Court and our annual Friends Concert at the school. We were also fortunate to be able to host a marvellous day of musical performance and concerts at

Southbank, dedicated to the late alumnus and composer Oliver Knussen, just prior to the March lockdown.

From March, the Covid-19 pandemic inevitably led to many of our scheduled events and concerts being cancelled. Cancellations included our Annual Fundraising Gala event, which was due to take place in November 2020. This Gala is always a highlight of the Purcell year and one that will be much missed, both in terms of highlighting the work of the students and school to new and current supporters, as well as the income it generated for the bursary fund.

During lockdown, fundraising activity continued, with Covid-safe practices implemented and despite a reduction in development staff placed on furlough. Changes included,

for the first time in the school's history, holding our hugely successful Annual Upper Sixth Form Leavers Award online.

We continue to increase our online streaming of concerts in order to maintain regular communication and stay connected with our Foundations, Trusts, Donors and Friends. It is testament to the generosity of our regular loyal supporters that they were able to provide some additional financial help, knowing the extra challenges and impact Covid-19 has placed upon the school.

# Our Benefactors & Donors

We are, as ever, indebted to the following Benefactors and Donors who have supported The Purcell School during the academic year 2019/20.

The Albert & Eugenie Frost Music Trust  
The Amar Family Charitable Trust  
Mrs J Arwas MBE  
Angus Allnatt Charitable Foundation  
The Austin and Hope Pilkington Trust  
C. Bechstein Pianos  
Bricket Wood Jewish Social Circle  
The John S Cohen Foundation  
Dunard Fund  
The Estates of the late Sir Charles and Lady Mackerras  
Mr & Mrs A Fenton  
The Friends of Clumber Studio  
The Friends of The Purcell School  
Mr & Mrs M Garner  
George Drexler Foundation  
Hadley Wood WI  
Mr & Mrs P Hardy  
Harrow, Mill Hill & Radlett U3A Organisations

The Helen Roll Charity  
The Hobson Charity  
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Jaques Samuel Pianos  
Miss B Jarman  
The Lawton Trust Limited  
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Mr G Meyer  
Mills Williams Foundation  
The Robert Fleming Hannay Memorial Trust  
The Alex Ross Bursary  
The Samuel Gardner Memorial Trust  
Mr M Saunders  
School leavers - parent donations  
The Taurus Foundation  
The Wall Trust  
Our anonymous supporters

We would also like to thank our Royal Patron, HRH The Prince of Wales, the patrons and Governors of The Purcell School for their ongoing support of young musicians.





# Supporting Young Musicians

There are numerous ways you can be involved in supporting young musicians at The Purcell School:

## Bursaries

Depending on the level of donation, a bursary could be to support a specific student for the duration of their time at the school, or it could be a contribution to the general Bursary Fund.

## Events & Activities

The school holds a series of concerts each year at various prestigious venues in London, as well as an Annual Fundraising Gala. We also carry out numerous outreach projects and other activities around the country. Sponsorship of these projects and events ensures we keep our costs to a minimum at the same time as maximising benefit for the students and for the communities in which we work.

## The Friends of The Purcell School

By becoming a Friend, you will support a different Friends' Scholar for each year of membership. Friends receive discounted tickets to school

events, an invitation to the exclusive annual Friends' concert and three newsletters per year.

## Capital Support

Being a relatively old building, much-needed improvements are always required around the School, to ensure facilities remain fit for purpose for our students and staff. We have ambitious aims to upgrade many areas of the site and provide additional rehearsal/performance space - investment from supporters is always welcomed to help these plans come to fruition.

## Corporate Support

In order to ensure we are able to direct the maximum amount of money to the students who need our support, there are opportunities for organisations to sponsor various aspects of the school calendar, including our showcase concerts and masterclasses throughout the year. Organisations or groups also have the opportunity to select The Purcell School as their preferred or nominated charity.

## Legacies

Making a will is a significant personal responsibility and the people and causes you remember in your will are a positive recognition of all that is important to you. We appreciate that the welfare and concern of those closest to you will be your first priority. Just as a will brings security to your family's future, a legacy to The Purcell School plays a crucial part in maintaining and developing the school for the benefit of future generations of young people.

## Online Fundraising

A straightforward method to raise money for The Purcell School is when shopping online, or even booking a holiday. Our charity, The Purcell School is registered on [www.easyfundraising.org.uk](http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk).

**For more information about Fundraising and Development or to discuss ways to support us, please contact The Development Department on 01923 331131 or [development@purcell-school.org](mailto:development@purcell-school.org)**



The Purcell School  
*for young musicians*

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