

Crescendo

The Official Magazine of The Purcell School for Young Musicians

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WELCOME TO THE END OF YEAR ISSUE OF CRESCENDO

As the 2020/21 academic year ends, we look back on the Spring/Summer highlights

REBORN

Purcell's young composers and artists bring new life to old pianos

2020/21 PREFECT REFLECTIONS

This year's graduating Prefect Team discusses their time at Purcell

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STUDENT NEWS

Percussionist **Lewis** (Year 13) won the 2021 Young Percussion Composer of the Year Award with his quartet, 'Askew'. **Lewis'** winning piece will be performed and recorded by PERC'M and the Royal College of Music quartet, and published by Southern Percussion.

Sam (Year 11) received the title of Colleague of the Royal College of Organists (RCO). Sam is one of the youngest players to whom the Royal College of Organists has bestowed this title.

Rowena (Year 11) was one of six winners in the 2020 BBC Young Composer Competition, a triumph that she shared with alumna **Jasmine Morris**. Under the competition mentorship of renowned composer Dobrinka Tabakova, Rowena's score inspired by the theme of 'New Beginnings' will be played by BBC Concert Orchestra at the 2021 Proms.

Danya (Year 10) won her category (Intermediate) in the Junior Academy Viola Prize.

Luca (Year 6) and **Gabriella** (Year 7) both won First Prize in their categories at the Orbetello International Piano Competition in Italy.

First study composer **Edward** (Year 10) won First Prize at the North London Festival of Music, Speech & Drama for his string orchestra piece entitled *Glenealo*, while pianist **Gabriella** (Year 7) received the highest marks in her categories in the same competition.

April (Year 7) became the youngest finalist in the Junior Category of The Bromsgrove Young Musicians' Platform. She was Highly Commended.

Year 9 pianist **Phoebe** won Third Prize in the XIV International Volodymyr Kravinev Competition for Young Pianists 2021. She was also the recipient of The Special Prize for the competition's Best Performance of a Classical Piece.

Year 10 violinist **Dominic** triumphed as the 2021 Middle School Concerto Competition Winner with his performance of Prokofiev's *Concerto No. 2 in G Minor Op 63 I*. **Tianyu** (Year 10, piano) and **Grace** (Year 10, piano) were Runners Up, and **Yazdi** (Year 9, piano) was Highly Commended.

Lily (clarinet, Year 12) and **Yinong** (violin, Year 12) received joint First Prize in the Senior School Concerto Competition. **Jayden** (Year 13, cello) and **Magdalene** (Year 12, piano) were Runners

Up. Chi-chi Nwanoku OBE was the guest adjudicator. Performances from each of our Senior School finalists are available to watch on the School's YouTube channel - [Purcell Online](#).

Danya (Year 10, viola), **Ella** (Year 12, violin), **Catherine** (Year 13, viola), **Chelsea** (Year 13, oboe) and Head Girl **Eva** (Year 13, bassoon) took up places in the 2021 National Youth Orchestra (NYO) of Great Britain. **Ella** also became the recipient of the NYO's Take a Seat programme.

French horn player **Alex** (Year 9) joined the National Children's Orchestra 2021 intake.

Purcell's Maths Department received their strongest results to date (see below) in the 2021 UK Mathematics Trust Intermediate Maths Challenge. First Round:

- Gold – **JiHyo** (Year 9), **Benji** (Year 11), **Antonia** (Year 10), **Thomas** (Year 11)
- Silver – **Grace** (Year 10), **Henrietta** (Year 11), **Chloe** (Year 10)
- Bronze – **Christine** (Year 11), **Robyn** (Year 10), **Maddie** (Year 11), **Shlomo** (Year 11), **Ruize** (Year 10)

Pink & Grey Kangaroo Round:

- Merit – **JiHyo** (Year 9)
- Participation – **Benji** (Year 11), **Thomas** (Year 11)

ALUMNI NEWS

Multi-instrumentalist, composer, recording artist and alumnus **Jacob Collier** made music history by becoming the first British artist to win a Grammy with each of his first four albums, after winning Best Arrangement, Instruments and Vocals for *He Won't Hold You* (feat. Rapsody) at the 63rd Annual Grammy Awards. **Jacob** now holds five Grammy Awards from his seven nominations.

Flautist and alumna **Sofiia Matviienko** became the Gregynog Young Musician of the Year in the competition's first virtual incarnation. **Sofiia**, who now studies at the Royal Academy of Music, also won the Woodwind category for the

second consecutive year.

Sofiia further triumphed as The Bromsgrove Young Musicians Platform's Overall Winner, with alumnus and pianist **Nikita Lukinov** taking the Runner Up spot.

Celebrated pianist, composer, radio presenter and alumnus **Alexis Ffrench** launched a new scholarship for Black students at the Royal Academy of Music. Funded by Sony Music's Social Justice Fund, **Alexis** will personally mentor the successful scholars as part of his longstanding mission to diversify classical music and make it more accessible to all.

Singer, songwriter and alumna **Daisy Chute** won the Grand

Prize at the 2021 RootsTech Song Contest, sponsored by Kawai, for her piece *Music Is There*. **Daisy** also featured on the soundtrack of David Attenborough's latest BBC documentary *A Perfect Planet*.

Three Purcell alumni – **Alim Beisembayev**, **Tyler Hay** and **Thomas Kelly** – went through to the Second Round of The Leeds International Piano Competition. The Second Round and Semi-Finals will take place in September 2021.

Pianist and alumna **Mishka Rushdie Momen** became the classical music nominee for *The Times* Breakthrough Award 2021.

CHARITY PIANO RECITAL

Purcell student fundraises for Help Musicians UK

On Friday 25th June, Year 13 pianist and Purcell's Bechstein Scholar, Milda, hosted and performed a piano recital in aid of the charity Help Musicians UK.

The evening's programme included works from Scarlatti, Beethoven, Chopin and Stravinsky, with Milda playing exquisitely to a full and receptive audience.

As a young musician, who will continue her studies at the Royal Academy of Music, Help Musicians UK has a unique significance to Milda. It is particularly gratifying, therefore, that she has raised in excess of £800 to date.

Milda would like to thank all who have given so generously to the charity on her behalf, and has shared a recording of Stravinsky's *Three Movements from Petrushka* [here](#) for those who were unable to attend.

The recital's [donation page](#) is still open and any additional contributions are gratefully received.



REBORN

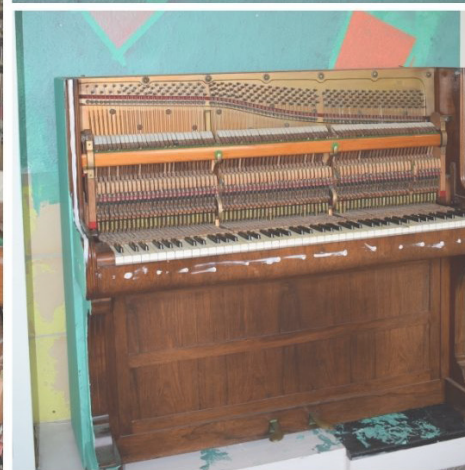
Purcell's young composers and artists bring new life to old pianos

The close of the academic year saw a host of outstanding student projects come to fruition. One such undertaking, which particularly stood out for its innovation and experimentation, was Year 13 first study Composition student and Head Boy Reuben's remarkable exploration of five end-of-life pianos, entitled *Reborn*.

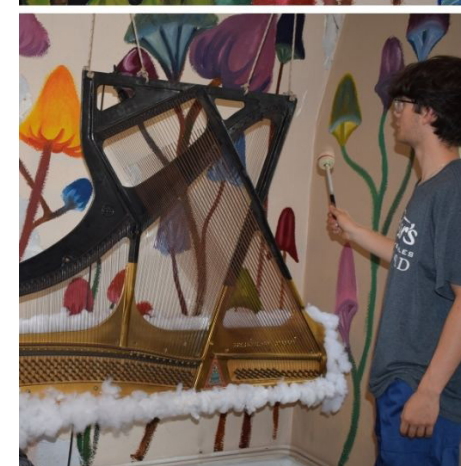
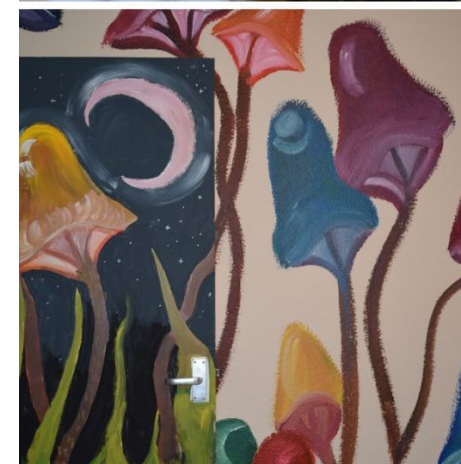
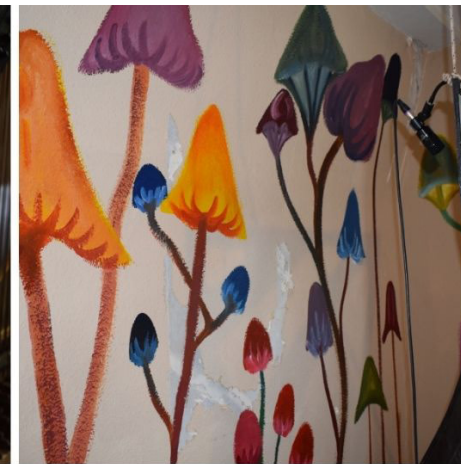
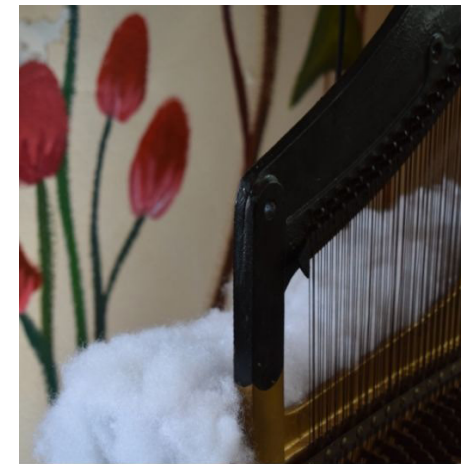
Reborn fostered creative pairings between Purcell's young composers and artists to make new and exciting creations from five vintage pianos. The transformations were both visual and sonic – ranging from complete deconstruction and internal exposure, to fundamental retuning and artistic installation – with each instrument receiving a unique

revision.

Displayed in a bespoke exhibition and concert space in a disused part of Dulverton House on Purcell's grounds, the metamorphosis of these old pianos creates a unique visual and auditory experience that pays tribute to the life of these amazing instruments.



Piano 1: Jamie (Year 12), Eric (Year 12) and Sam (Year 12)



Piano 2: Reuben (Year 13), Harvey (Year 13) and Madeleine (Year 12)

In conversation with Reuben

How did you source the pianos for *Reborn*?

'One is actually Miss Austin's, our School Nurse, which she wanted to donate, and a local piano company, Richard Lawson Pianos Ltd, donated the others. They have all come from the Bushey area,

and would have gone to the tip otherwise. All [of the pianos] are proper end-of-life instruments, worth nothing, and so we were delighted to have them. When you see them striped back, they are really

beautiful – the mechanisms inside are amazing – and it's incredible to think that they're not worth anything in monetary terms.'

It seems amazing that a working piano would ever end up on a skip!

'Pianos are expensive to keep tuned; people move and don't have space for their

pianos; they are expensive to transport; and there are always costs to doing anything

with them. So they end up on eBay for zero pounds, just for someone to collect them.'



Piano 3: Jonathan (Year 13), Zozi (Year 12) and Bertie (Year 12)

Could you talk us through the *Reborn* pianos?

‘Absolutely. I gave each composer a piano and then

they worked with a team of artists to transform them.’

Piano 1: Jamie (Year 12), Eric (Year 12) and Sam (Year 12)

‘Jamie’s piano is tuned to only three notes. The waves of

sound it creates are incredible.’

Piano 2: Reuben (Year 13), Harvey (Year 13) and Madeleine (Year 12)

‘This one [Reuben’s piano] exposes the heart of the piano - we spent two days hacking away at it with a saw, and we managed to remove it. Then we got adult swing mounts and we hung it from it from the ceiling. The sound is

astonishing.

The mushrooms on the walls which surround it are painted by Madeleine. They are just so phenomenal and otherworldly.’

Piano 3: Jonathan (Year 13), Zozi (Year 12) and Bertie (Year 12)

‘Jonathan threaded coins between all of the triple strings, and what it means is you get

this astonishing sound when you play his piano. He has also added drawing pins to some

keys to create an additional sound quality.’

Piano 4: Philip (Year 12) and Yinong (Year 12)

‘Philip sawed off the key bed and pulled it from the carcass of the piano. It was a huge amount of work, just to do

that. He has also incorporated some very complicated tuning. And the resonance is something very cool - it’s

almost as if you’re going to church.’



Piano 4: Philip (Year 12) and Yinong (Year 12)

Piano 5: Cole (Year 9) and Zozi (Year 12)

‘Cole’s got all of these link pedals, and loops all of the chords, which creates a real

eighties sound. And Zozi painted this amazing eighties mural dripping down into the

piano. It’s a real integration of art and music.’

Were you able to hold any performances in the *Reborn* space?

‘Yes, I took the Lower School performance class here. It was two groups of about 15 students from Years 6 to 9, and they loved it! It did kind of break my ears though!

Some of the composers wrote pieces to be played specifically on their pianos but there was also a lot of improvisation and some unstructured pieces too. If COVID wasn’t a thing, I’d have liked to have had loads

of bean bags and cushions [in the exhibition space] so that people could just sit and listen to each piano.’



Piano 5: Cole (Year 9) and Zozi (Year 12)

What is in the future for *Reborn*?

‘The exhibition will remain [in situ] next term so we hope to be able to open the project up a little more. It would be great to be able to hold a day workshop with a local primary

school, where the children could just mess around with all of the *Reborn* pianos. We would also like to encourage other students to try something similar. Even if not

with pianos, other instruments that would otherwise go to waste. I think it [the *Reborn* concept] has the scope for people to do it on their own, which is very cool.’

Are you pleased with how your concept has been realised?

‘Absolutely! I am really happy with what people have done with it [the *Reborn* concept]. And getting composers to

think not just about the music they’re making but the visual side of music too, has been fantastic. Because I think, more

often than not, we don’t really consider what music looks like, and that’s something really interesting to experiment with.’

PURCELL RETURNS TO LONDON

Our young musicians return to London with a series of stunning concerts

Purcell’s students and teachers worked unbelievably hard during the periods of lockdown and amassed a remarkable body of work which they were excited to have the opportunity to share with live audiences in the closing weeks of the Summer term. As part of this, after a little over a year, our young musicians were able to return to some of London’s principal performance venues in a series of remarkable concerts of the same name - *The Purcell School Returns to London*.

The performances, which featured both current and past students, presented debuts of original works alongside music by Bach, Beethoven, Chopin, Schubert and Shostakovich. They took place in front of enthusiastically appreciative audiences of family, friends and appreciators at London’s St John’s Smith Square, The Princess Alexandra Hall, Conway Hall & Cadogan Hall.

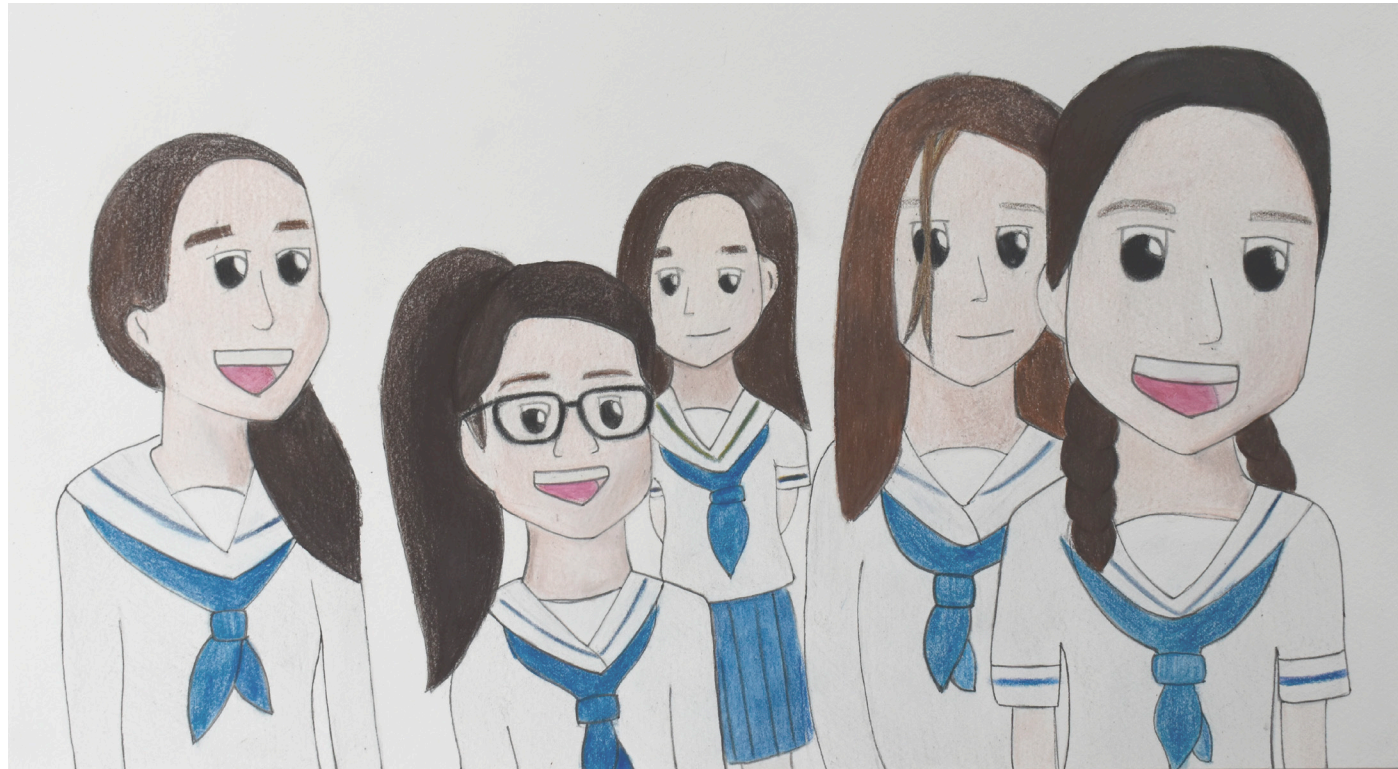
A number of concerts from the *Return to London* series, such as ‘Troubled Waters’, ‘Begin Again with Bach’, ‘Lamentations and Celebrations’ and ‘The School’s

Senior Pianists and Recent Alumni Present The Complete Chopin Etudes’ are available to watch on the School’s YouTube channel - [Purcell Online](#).



ART STUDIO HIGHLIGHTS

The art students have been really busy this year, therefore it would only be fitting that we share the work that has been going on in the department



Jennifer, Year 11
Watercolour, Ink and Colouring Pencil on Paper, 34 x 20cm, 2021



Manish, Year 11
Oil Paint on Paper, 36 x 58cm, 2021



Ted, Year 11
Ink on Paper, 84 x 60cm, 2021



Iklim, Year 11
Photograph, 2020



Yena, Year 13
Oil Paint and Mirror on MDF Board, 60 x 84cm, 2021



Lucia, Year 13
Watercolour and Ink on Paper, 55 x 39cm, 2021

The Year 11 and Year 13
Art exhibitions, along with
galleries from previous years,
are available to experience in
full via the School's [website](#).

PHOTOSHOOT

A new photography suite for a new academic year!

At the end of the Summer term, the School commissioned a new photographic suite with Innermedia.

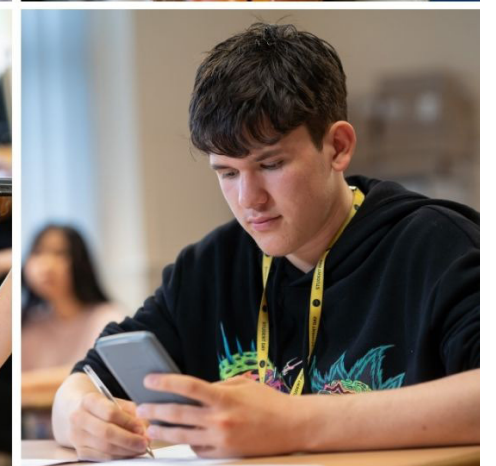
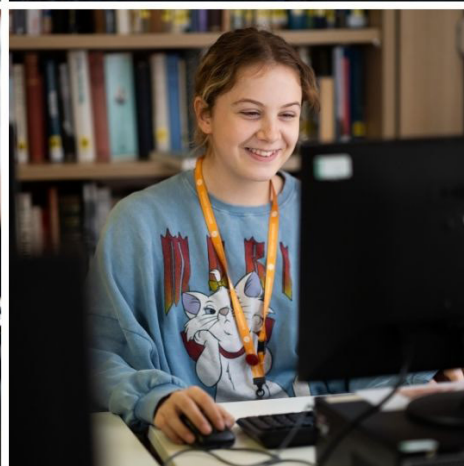
The photoshoot ran over the course of a day, taking in orchestral rehearsals for July's Deal Festival performance with renowned oboist

Nicholas Daniel OBE, as well as academic and instrumental lessons.

We are delighted to be able to share a small sample of these images with *Crescendo*.

Our thanks to Nicholas Daniel and all the students and staff

who took part. There are some fantastic photographs here!



2020/21 PREFECT REFLECTIONS

The 2020/21 Prefect Team consisted of Head Boy (Reuben), Head Girl (Eva), Chelsea, Jonathan, Gabriel and Zara (all Year 13)

Let's start with an introduction . . .

(Reuben): What I found really amazing about coming to Purcell, was the opportunity to work with people who are so interested in exactly what you're interested in. At a normal school, you've usually got that little group of music people but to be an entire school where everyone wants to do the same thing, is incredible. I was a little bit nervous coming from a state school, but it ended up being amazing. I'm glad I chose

Purcell and the Sixth Form has been fantastic.

(Jonathan): I joined the School quite suddenly in the Lower Sixth, with only a few weeks' notice. However, joining this community of like-minded people, was a really easy thing to do. I've really enjoyed getting to know people who have similar passions to me, and as a composer it's amazing being able to work with people who are so driven to perform

your music.

(Eva): I joined in Year Six after coming to an Open Morning. Funnily enough, I didn't actually have any intention of coming here, but after visiting Purcell I felt such a big sense of community, and it was so homely, that I turned to my mum and told her that I definitely wanted to come here.

What do you like about being a student at Purcell?

(Jonathan): What I've loved about being here at Purcell is working with the dedicated Head of Departments. The opportunities they make available for us really are endless. The work that my Head of Department [Alison Cox/Composition] puts into ensuring the best of opportunities for us is unparalleled to any other institution. To be able to work with such prestigious composers from all around the UK, and around the world, is an opportunity I simply would not have got going to a non-specialist music school.

(Reuben): For me, it's just being able to interact with the community. Being able to go to concerts every day and listen to your classmates who are so talented is such a treat. To be surrounded by such wonderful people and being able to chat about literally anything to do with music is fantastic. It's a very powerful thing to be surrounded by people who share your hobbies, interests and passions. It makes the environment and the education process much more fun.

(Eva): Being here since the

early days, I've had lots of opportunities to play with so many different people in so many different venues. Joining the School at a really young age, gave me the confidence to audition for the NCO [National Children's Orchestra] and NYO [National Youth Orchestra], especially with the support of the teachers. One of my recent highlights was getting the opportunity to go to Moscow last year with one other student. It was fantastic to be able to travel internationally to play for the School.

'Everyone should just have a chat with Mr Szafranski at some point . . . because he's quite a funny and effortlessly cool person.' Reuben (Year 13)

Any advice for students considering boarding?

(Reuben): My advice for boarders would be to bring some snacks and not to worry. I was a little bit nervous as it my first time away from home but, coming here with my bag of snacks my mum gave me, it all ended up being completely fine. All of your worries go straight away because you meet the staff, and at some

point they stop being just members of staff and start becoming people you can actually talk to.

(Eva): I think it depends on what year you are joining. I joined in Year 6, and at the beginning I got a bit homesick, so my mum bought me a phone so I could call her every

night. But if you're joining in older years, even if it is a big change from what you're used to, the Houseparents are so lovely that you can always talk to them about your problems. You can also talk to your friends; everyone's really supportive of each other.



How has Purcell helped shape your aspirations for the future?

(Jonathan): I think being here at Purcell has had quite a big impact on thinking about where my future would take me. Speaking to my teacher and all the members of staff who have been through the process of studying at conservatoire or studying music at a university, has definitely given me a lot of clarity on what I think the best option for next year is.

(Reuben): Before coming here, I wasn't really sure what the options were outside of

university. But being able to explore the other paths of higher education for musicians was really valuable. Being at Purcell has allowed me to focus on what I want to do better, because there is so much support from the staff. Whether you are going to university, conservatoire or doing something different, really anything goes and they will support you in anything you want to do - music or not!

(Eva): I initially had the plan of going to conservatoire to

play and study the bassoon, but, I think it was at the end of Year 11, we started taking Music Tech lessons, and I realised that I had this whole other subject that I was so passionate about. And now, throughout Year 12 and Year 13, I've just been thinking, "Oh, it'd be really cool if I go to study Music Tech somewhere". I'm still not sure yet where I want to go but if I have gone somewhere else I wouldn't have realised this whole other passion and potential pathway.

Looking back at your early days at Purcell, is there any advice you would give yourself?

(Jonathan): I think one of the most important things I would tell myself is to listen to people more. Mainly our peers but also the staff because, in my first few weeks, I didn't quite realise the opportunity I had in coming here. Listening to the staff and students who have been here longer than

me, helped me find the best possible way of making the most of these two years. It really is a different experience to one you would get at a state school.

(Reuben): I think I'd tell myself just to talk to people. There's all of this support for

you, but actually going out and doing it can sometimes be quite difficult, but it's so worthwhile and so necessary. If you have a problem or if you need something, just find the relevant people to talk to and they'll get the problem sorted out as soon as possible.

How was adjusting to the changes brought on from Covid-19?

(Eva): I think musicians have actually been the best people to carry on during lockdown. Without live concerts or being able to see each other, the music industry quickly adapted, and we saw split screen videos appearing online within two or three weeks of lockdown. This definitely resonated within the School, and we even managed to have the whole Sound Image Movement concert [Summer 2020] take place online. It's one of the highlights of The

Purcell School calendar, and it ended up being broadcast on YouTube as a live concert.

(Reuben): Well, since being back, obviously there's a lot more restrictions than we normally have, which is to be expected, but what's been really amazing is that we've still managed to make music and to show each other our music. It's really helped to be able to have some sort of normality - the fact that we can still put on concerts for the other students,

even without audiences coming in, has really lifted morale. During tough times people do get down and get into a kind of lockdown fever, but being able to engage with our passion and do what we love has just been so nice and, I think, so good for our mental health. That's what I've been most happy about in coming back to School, that we're still managing to get our music out there.

How have you been involved in enhancing the student experience at Purcell?

(Reuben): Something good which has come out of this year is the Prefect Team. It's created a way for students to voice their thoughts and opinions about how they want the School to be. We have also created a new Sixth Form Common Room, which is a nice space for sixth formers to

relax and work in. We're also trying to get the School to be more sustainable. For example, we have signed up for an Eco Award and have put more recycling bins out. The great thing is, it's not just the prefects helping out, it's everyone. We have also set up and revamped Student Counsel, so students

can come to us with their ideas for the School. We're trying to create a community where any idea is valid and everyone's voice is heard. I think we're going to really make this a fantastic place. Well, even more fantastic than it already is!

What activities outside of music take place at Purcell?

(Reuben): Obviously, we don't just do music. We love to enjoy lots of stuff. For example, Monday evening is yoga, which is absolutely fantastic. It gets us all very zen and aligns

all our shakra. There's also basketball on Wednesdays and Mondays, which is good fun. We're all atrocious obviously, because we're musicians, but it's quite fun anyway. And then

there's football, netball and running - basically, if you want to do a sport, you can do it. But do keep in mind that we are all pretty horrible!

Any final pieces of advice?

(Reuben): I think everyone should just have a chat with Mr Szafranski [Head of Sixth Form/DSL] at some point. He's just great. The Sixth Formers

should make it a priority to go to see him. You can talk to him about anything - not only was he really helpful with all my university stuff, but you can

just chat to him about anything because he's quite a funny and effortlessly cool person.

2021/22 HEADS OF SCHOOL

We are delighted to announce the Heads of School and Prefect Team for 2021-2022



Following a rigorous interview process with Purcell's Principal Paul Bambrough and members of the Senior Leadership Team, in which all candidates were outstanding, we are delighted to announce that the School has appointed Philip (Year 12) and Zozi (Year 12) as our new Head Boy and Head Girl.

Joining them and completing the Prefect team are Bertie, Anelise, Jenny, Christian, Reese and Ella (all current Year 12).

As Purcell's student representatives, the Heads of School and Prefect Team perform a crucial role within

the school community. In the coming academic year they will run the School Council, bring student concerns to the Senior Leadership Team, represent the school at functions and events, and work to enhance the life of the School through social and other events.

In the presentation of their manifestos, Philip outlined a need to return to student socials; an increase of on-site recycling; revision of practice time and space; further boarding integration of day students; the development of student run clubs; greater student input into catering;

and increased transparency between staff and students. Zozi's aspirations for the school and student body included improving connectivity; increasing mutual respect and understanding between students and staff; diminishing the divisions between year groups and boarding houses; and encouraging the building of a safe and respectful Purcell community.

Our congratulations to the 2021/22 Heads of School and Prefect Team. We are excited to see what the new academic year will bring with you in this important role.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Ongoing sponsorship and financial support is crucial to The Purcell School maintaining its role as a world renowned centre of excellence for Young Musicians. In addition to the funding provided by the Department of Education through the Music and Dance scheme, The Purcell School wishes to thank the following for their generous financial support in the last 12 months:

- The Albert & Eugenie Frost Music Trust
- The Alex Ross Memorial Trust
- The Andor Charitable Trust
- Angus Allnatt Charitable Foundation
- The Austin and Hope Pilkington Trust
- C. Bechstein Pianos
- The Brian Mitchell Charitable Settlement

- The John S Cohen Foundation
- Dunard Fund
- The Estate of the late R Russ
- The Estates of the late Sir Charles and Lady Mackerras
- George Drexler Foundation
- The Gosling Foundation
- The Helen Roll Charity
- The Hobson Charity
- The Jacqueline & Michael Gee Charitable Trust
- Jaques Samuel Pianos
- The Lawton Trust Limited
- The Leverhulme Trust
- Mills Williams Foundation
- The Robert Fleming Hannay Memorial Charity
- The Samuel Gardner

- Memorial Trust
- The Steel Charitable Trust
- The Taurus Foundation
- Veronica Awdry Charitable Trust
- The Wall Trust
- Anonymous
- Mr and Mrs H Amar
- Mr and Mrs R Arwas
- Mr and Mrs M Garner
- Mr R Jacobs
- Mr G Meyer
- Mr D Morgan
- Mr M Saunders
- The Friends of Clumber Studio
- The Friends of The Purcell School
- Supporters of The Purcell School Annual Fundraising Gala Dinner

SECOND ISSUE OF WAVES

Following last year's hugely successful inaugural publication of *Waves*, we are delighted to release a second edition

Curated by Head Girl Eva, this new edition of *Waves* is full of short stories, poems, essays, artwork and photography, showcasing the creative output of Purcell's students, staff and alumni side by side.

This edition of *Waves*, along with all of the previous editions of *Crescendo*, are available [here](#) on the School's website.

