

ROYAL
ACADEMY
OF
MUSIC



ALMANAC
2024/25

A CATALOGUE OF THE ACADEMY'S EDUCATIONAL,
ACADEMIC AND ARTISTIC ACHIEVEMENTS
1 AUGUST 2024 – 31 JULY 2025

STUDENTS, STAFF AND ALUMNI

NOTABLE PERFORMANCES AND MEDIA APPEARANCES

David Butt Philip, Allan Clayton, Lucy Crowe, Plínio Fernandes, Edward Gardner, Benjamin Grosvenor, Christopher Maltman, Braimah, Isata and Sheku Kanneh-Mason and Nardus Williams – to name just a few – appeared in [BBC Proms](#) over the summer.

Daniel Vening stepped in to perform Bottom in Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at the BBC Proms.

Freddie De Tommaso made his [Metropolitan Opera debut](#) as Cavaradossi in *Tosca*.

Drama series *Kidnapped: The Chloe Ayling Story* aired on BBC Three with music by **Andrea Balency-Béarn**. Academy students played on the soundtrack.

Beau Woodbridge cast in title role in *Dear Evan Hansen* with Sydney Theatre Company.

Réka Jónás appeared as Aloysia Weber in drama series *Mozart: Rise of a Genius* on BBC Two.

Liv Andrusier starred as Tzeitel in Regent's Park Open Air Theatre's production of *Fiddler on the Roof*.

APPOINTMENTS

Jack Apperley and **Hilary Campbell** appointed Associate Chorus Directors of the London Symphony Chorus.

Laila Arafah appointed Composer in Residence of the CoMA London ensemble for 2025.

Emily Davis appointed Leader of the Hallé Orchestra.

Brett Dean joined the Academy's Composition and Contemporary Music Department as a Visiting Professor.

Tanya Houghton appointed Principal Conductor of the Studio Symphony Orchestra in Belfast.

James Orford [appointed the next organist](#) of St Paul's Cathedral.

Teodora Oprea appointed Professor for Accompaniment and Vocal Coach at the Reina Sofía School of Music in Madrid.

Emeritus Head of Choral Conducting **Patrick Russill** appointed a Papal Knight of St Gregory (KSG).

Daniele Rustioni appointed Principal Guest Conductor of the Metropolitan Opera. He will be the third person in the Met's 141-year history to hold the title.

Hannah Zaki appointed Director of Music at Wadham College, Oxford.

COMPETITION SUCCESSES

Junyan Chen received Second Prize, the Alexandra Dariescu Award and the Yaltah Menuhin Award at the [Leeds International Piano Competition](#) on 21 September.

Emma Rawicz, Emma Smith, Ife Ogunjobi and **Zoe Rahman** honoured at the 2024 [Parliamentary Jazz Awards](#) on 29 October.

Jack Lee reached the final of Operalia 2024 and won the Rolex Audience Prize on 21 September.

Aidan Mikdad won the Young Artist category in the Manhattan International Music Competition on 2 October.

Anita Monserrat placed second in the Neue Stimmen Competition 2024 on 11 October.

Tohi Harada won First Prize in the 2024 Brussels International Guitar Competition on 26 November.

OTHER NEWS

The Academy was listed as a top-rated conservatoire in the [Guardian University Guide 2025](#).

Askonas Holt welcomed **Junyan Chen** to their roster for worldwide general management.

The Academy's recording of [Stravinsky Chamber Works](#) was released by Linn Records on 4 October in collaboration with the Juilliard School Ensemble, conducted by **Barbara Hannigan**.

The Academy [partnered with the BFI](#) for the world premiere of *Silent Sherlock* at the BFI London Film Festival. Head of Piano **Joanna MacGregor** conducted an ensemble of ten Academy students in the live score at Alexandra Palace.

The Karelia String Quartet (**Megan Yang, Felix Pascoe, Takanori Okamoto** and **Daniel Schultz**) travelled to Tunisia for a project with the Hasdrubal Foundation, joining peers from the Paris Conservatoire and mdw, Vienna.

Four Academy students joined the Czech Philharmonic for three [SIDE-BY-SIDE performances](#) in Prague (21-25 October) before touring with the orchestra to Carnegie Hall.

Five Strings Department students, **Mabelle Park, Megan Yang, JaeMin Kim Kang, Daniel Schultz** and **Matthew Gaffney**, selected for the 2025 LSO String Experience scheme.

Two digital albums released as part of the Academy's [Bicentenary Series on Linn Records](#): *Mendelssohn, Bach, Mozart* by **Jasmin Iris Ghera** and *Le Mercure Galant* by **Charlotte Spruit**.

As part of the **Sir Elton John Global Exchange Programme**, a student from Tokyo University of the Arts spent two weeks in the Academy's Conducting Department working with Sian Edwards, and a violinist from Shanghai Conservatory of Music took part in an Academy Symphony Orchestra project with Sir Mark Elder.

CONCERT AND EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

Resounding Shores concerts on 29 September, 27 October and 24 November at the Academy were directed by **Eamonn Dougan, Jonathan Manson** alongside **Nicholas Mulroy**, and **John Butt**. A SIDE-BY-SIDE with the Dunedin Consort in Edinburgh on 22 November earned a four-star review in [The Times](#) for its 'sumptuous' performance and 'trustworthy stewardship of Cecilia's art'.

Dave Holland performed a selection of his original works with the Academy Jazz Orchestra on 4 October.

Emanuil Ivanov, Tom Zalmanov and **Kasparas Mikuzis** performed in the Academy Piano Series at Wigmore Hall that ran from 9 October to 4 December.

Finnegan Downie Dear stepped in for **Jonathon Heyward** to conduct the Academy Symphony Orchestra's performance of Mahler's Symphony No 4 on 11 October.

Reviewing the Academy Chamber Orchestra's performance of Mendelssohn's Third Symphony conducted by **Trevor Pinnock** on 25 October, [Susan Elkin](#) praised the Adagio's 'delicacy and intelligence', which made her 'blink away tears'.

Royal Academy Opera presented *Hänsel und Gretel* from 19 to 22 November. In the Observer, Fiona Maddocks wrote 'I was also impressed that British operatic life, at student level, is firing on all cylinders, with bags of talent and a brilliant future.'

The Academy Jazz Orchestra collaborated with Spice Jazz and the EFG London Jazz Festival to celebrate 85 years of Blue Note Records, performing music by Bobby Hutcherson and Duke Pearson with **Winston Rollins** and **Orphy Robinson** on 16 November.

Sir Mark Elder conducted the Academy Symphony Orchestra in a programme of Strauss' *Also sprach Zarathustra* and *Till Eulenspiegels* on 29 November.

STUDENTS, STAFF AND ALUMNI

NOTABLE PERFORMANCES AND MEDIA APPEARANCES

Simon Rattle interviewed by Fiona Maddocks in [The Guardian](#).

Linda Rands was a stand-out contestant on BBC's *The Traitors*, sparking the Academy's viral TikTok of the Karelia Quartet playing the show's theme (314.8K views). The quartet — **Megan Yang, Felix Pascoe, Takanori Okamoto** and **Daniel Schultz** — was then invited to perform on BBC One's Morning Live and was featured on BBC Breakfast.

Eleven Academy students and alumni named in Classic FM's 'Rising Stars: 30 incredible musicians under 30 we're celebrating in 2025': **Jaren Ziegler, Sasha Canter, Kasparas Mikužis, Junyan Chen, Nicolò Umberto Foron, Adam Hickox, Enyi Okpara, Fergus McCready, Annemarie Federle, Liam Bonthrone** and **Mary Offer**.

Emanuil Ivanov released *16 Scarlatti Keyboard Sonatas* on the Naxos label.

Ignas Maknickas released his debut CD on Deux-Elles featuring works by Schubert, Alvidas Remesa, Philip Glass and Chopin.

Cristian Sandrin released Beethoven's final three sonatas on the Evil Penguin label.

Eri Yamamoto became an Affiliate Artist with Aspen Music Agency.

Kieron Bell appeared in Disney's *Snow White*, released in cinemas on 25 March.

Desmonda Cathabel cast as Eurydice in the West End production of *Hadestown*, joining **Laura Delany** and **Oisín Nolan**.

APPOINTMENTS

Harry Atkinson joined the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra as tutti double bass.

James Buckle appointed Head of Bass Trombone at the Academy effective September 2025.

Ed Carew appointed Organ Scholar of Liverpool Cathedral.

Adam Hickox appointed Chief Conductor of Trondheim Symphony Orchestra.

Wenhan Jiang appointed co-principal violist of the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra.

Benjamin Mills appointed Assistant Organist at Durham Cathedral and Director of Music at St John's College, Durham.

Emma Prince joined the BBC National Orchestra of Wales as tutti double bass.

Daniel Schultz selected as a Tillett Trust Debut Artist for the 2025/26 season.

Helen Smee appointed Director of Music at Southwark Cathedral.

Daniel Vening selected to join the Opera Studio of the Bavarian State Opera in Munich.

COMPETITION SUCCESSES

Barbara Hannigan awarded the [Polar Music Prize](#) on 18 March.

Ezra Collective won Group of the Year at the 2025 BRIT Awards on 1 March.

Isata Kanneh-Mason, Charlotte Corderoy and **David Butt Philip** shortlisted for the 2025 RPS Awards on 30 January.

Jacob Collier's *Djesse Vol 4* nominated for Album of the Year at the 2025 GRAMMY Awards, with its track 'Bridge over Troubled Water' winning the Best Arrangement, Instrumental or A Cappella category on 3 February.

Allan Clayton, Es Devlin, Liv Andrusier, Mark Aspinall, Nicholas Skilbeck and Honorary Member **Imelda Staunton** nominated for 2025 Olivier Awards on 4 March.

ROYAL ACADEMY OF MUSIC ALMANAC **SPRING 2025**

In the Royal Over-Seas League Annual Music Competition, **Mabelle Park** won the Strings section and **Hugh Mackay** won the Len Lickorish Memorial Prize on 4 March.

Conrad Chatterton placed second in the 2025 Clonter Opera Prize on 8 February.

Matteo Hager won the Grand Prize in the 19-25 age bracket in the 2024 International Showcase Music Competition in Hamburg. He performed in the Winners' Concert on 3 January.

Open Academy lecturer **Dr Jackie Walduck** was honoured with the ABO Health and Wellbeing Award on 5 February.

Anson Wong, Bridget Yee and **Arthur Kokerai** qualified for the quarter-finals of the Dublin International Piano Competition on 4 March.

OTHER NEWS

The album [*Some Days Are Better: The Lost Scores*](#) by Kenny Wheeler Legacy, featuring the Royal Academy of Music Jazz Orchestra and Frost Jazz Orchestra, was released on the independent American label Greenleaf Music. It was selected by The Times for their list of 'The best jazz albums of 2025 so far'.

Myleene Klass awarded an MBE in the King's New Year Honours List.

The Academy received a [donation of £669,545](#) from the Leverhulme Trust, which will greatly enhance our educational and artistic initiatives.

Anna Lapwood [gave a masterclass](#), performed, then led a special Q&A for Junior Academy students in January.

As part of the **Sir Elton John Global Exchange Programme**, Historical Performance students travelled to Paris for concerts with **Christophe Coin** and students from the Paris Conservatoire, performing at the Festival Baroque de Pontoise and Les Invalides. The students from Paris then came to the Academy to perform in a *Resounding Shores* concert on 16 March. Also as part of the programme, a pianist from

The Juilliard School joined the Academy Manson Ensemble to perform in Boulez's *Sur incises*.

Two participants in the Junior Academy Musical Theatre Department's mentorship programme, **Osian Salter** and **Isabelle Chiara Dawodu**, cast in *The Parent Agency* and the UK tour of *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*.

Andy Hamilton wrote in The Wire of **Robert Sholl's** *Olivier Messiaen: A Critical Biography*: 'It's the best biography of Messiaen thus far, and one of the most rewarding of any modern composer.'

CONCERT AND EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

Colin Currie conducted the Academy Manson Ensemble performing Steve Reich, Tippett, Andy Akiho, Martland and Andriessen on 24 January.

Jim Hart and **Sylvaine Hélyar** joined the Academy Jazz Orchestra for a programme of new works on 29 January.

Ryan Wigglesworth conducted the Academy Symphony Orchestra in a performance of Bruckner's Symphony No 7 on 31 January.

John Wilson conducted the Academy Symphony Orchestra in Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto and Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet* on 14 February.

The 11th Academy Jazz Festival took place from 12 to 13 February, where students were joined by **Lynn Cassiers, Will Vinson** and **Sarah Murcia**.

As part of the Academy's *Boulez 100* series, **Tamara Stefanovich** and **Susanna Mälkki** conducted students in performances of the composer's works between 12 and 26 March.

Royal Academy Opera presented *Die Zauberflöte* from 18 to 21 March. [Bachtrack](#) gave this production a four-star review, with Mark Valencia commenting 'This was as poised and professional a performance as one could wish to hear.'

STUDENTS, STAFF AND ALUMNI

NOTABLE PERFORMANCES AND MEDIA APPEARANCES

Sam Oladeinde and **Nick Carter** joined the new *Les Misérables* cast for performances at the Sondheim Theatre.

Rob Madge performed the role of Emcee in *Cabaret* at the Kit Kat Club from May to September 2025.

Square Elephant Productions released a five-part podcast series about Academy teacher **George Hall**, *George Hall at 100*.

Stephenson Ardern-Sodje made his West End debut in *The Lion King* as Simba. **Merryl Ansah** performed the role of Nala.

Agustín Pennino cast as Arbate in *Mitridate, re di Ponto* at Teatro San Carlo in Naples.

Yiling Lang, **Rayhan Lee** and **Anh-Koa Tran** sang roles in *Miss Saigon* on the West End.

Jonathan Slade released a flute sonata through Aurea Capra Editions.

APPOINTMENTS

Laila Arafah named a 2025 Residency Artist with Britten Pears Arts.

Julia Doukakis appointed Principal Viola No 2 in the Ulster Orchestra.

Guyaine Eckersley appointed Principal Bassoon in the Ulster Orchestra.

Tom Edwards appointed No 2 Percussion in the Philharmonia Orchestra.

Sinéad Frost appointed Associate Principal Bassoon in the National Symphony Orchestra Ireland.

Nikki Iles appointed [Principal Conductor](#) of the NDR Bigband.

Myleene Klass joined the Academy as Visiting Lecturer in Musical Theatre.

Ieva Kuprevičiūtė appointed Co-Principal Flute in the Lithuanian National Symphony Orchestra.

Angus McCall appointed a cellist in the BBC Symphony Orchestra.

Ersilia Mikrou appointed Principal Harp in the Greek National Opera.

Kasparas Mikužis added to YCAT's roster of young musicians.

Florence Price named the 2025/26 Genesis Sixteen Conducting Scholar.

Hilary Punnett appointed [Assistant Director of Music](#) at St Paul's Cathedral.

Richard Tanner appointed the next [Organist and Director of Music](#) at Saint Thomas Church and Choir School in New York.

Daniel Trodden appointed Principal Tuba in the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra.

Tristan Weymes appointed Principal Conductor of the Guildford Chamber Choir.

Joe Chu-Yu Yang appointed Section Player, Second Violin in the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra.

Oliver Yates appointed Sub-Principal Percussion in the London Philharmonic Orchestra.

COMPETITION SUCCESSES

Allan Clayton won the Outstanding Achievement in Opera Award at the Olivier Awards on 6 April, while **Mark Aspinall**, **Liv Andrusier** and Honorary Member **Imelda Staunton** won awards for their roles in *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*, *Fiddler on the Roof* and *Hello, Dolly!*.

Samuel Stopford won the [12th Stanisław Moniuszko International Vocal Competition](#) on 7 June. **Zinxin Tang** also reached the final.

Georgia Blessitt named winner of the 2025 [Stephen Sondheim Society Student Performer of the Year](#) on 8 June.

Tomos Boyles won First Prize at the 2025 Dudley International Piano Competition on 25 May, with **Seth Schultheis** taking Second Prize.

Anson Wong won Third Prize at the Dublin International Piano Competition on 16 May, and also received the Ita Stephens Prize.

Tohi Harada won First Prize at the Ivor Mairants Guitar Award on 17 April, given by The Musicians' Company. He then won the Grand Prize and Rodrigo Prize at the 14th Joaquin Rodrigo Competition on 3 July.

OTHER NEWS

The Academy announced plans to create new teaching and rehearsal spaces on [London City Island](#) in Docklands in a major expansion of facilities.

As part of the **Sir Elton John Global Exchange Programme**, oboists **Harvey Jones** and **Alana Lynch** spent a week at the Glenn Gould School, Toronto, participating in a project on Stravinsky's *Petrushka*; the Neruda Quartet (**Adriana Bec**, **Mina Hobson-Mazur**, **Mark Leung** and **Jim Goss**) went to China for the Tianjin Juilliard School's International Orchestral Symposium and Leadership Forum; strings students **Will Priest** and **Theo Hayward** travelled to mdw, Vienna to perform in Mahler's Symphony No 1, while **Paloma Bharucha** and **Agatha Parkin** went to the Reina Sofía School of Music in Madrid to perform in Brahms' Symphony No 1. The Academy welcomed two pianists from the University of Music and Theatre, Munich, two singers from the Glenn Gould School and two violists from the Reina Sofía School.

Nick Smart released his book *Song for Someone – The Musical Life of Kenny Wheeler*, co-authored by **Brian Shaw**, with a foreword by **Dave Holland**.

The Academy celebrated artists and members of its community including **Alexis Ffrench**, **Anna Tilbrook**, **Matthew Wadsworth**, **Louisa Tuck**, **Iain Farrington** and **William de Winton** at the [Graduation Ceremony](#) in July.

Emily Kilpatrick published a new biography of Ravel in Reaktion Books' *Critical Lives* series.

CONCERT AND EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

Artists including **Lawrence Power**, **Nobuko Imai** and **Timothy Ridout** gave masterclasses from 24 April to 7 May.

Royal Academy Opera performed Britten's *The Burning Fiery Furnace* on 14 and 16 May.

The Summer Piano Festival ran from 11 to 13 June. The programme included film improvisation, dynamic multimedia performances and the second instalment of Schumann's complete piano music.

Edward Gardner conducted the Academy Symphony Orchestra in a programme of Mark-Anthony Turnage's *Refugee* and Nielsen's Symphony No 4 at the Aldeburgh Festival (19 June) and in the Duke's Hall (20 June).

On 26 June, composer-in-residence **Anna Meredith** was interviewed by **Philip Cashian** about her career, followed by a performance of new music by composition students.

Musical Theatre students performed *Nine* from 12 to 15 June and *Assassins* from 3 to 6 July. The latter received 5 stars in [Musical Theatre Review](#).

On 29 June, **Nicholas Mulroy** directed the Academy Baroque Soloists in a concert as part of the *Resounding Shores* series, which featured excerpts from Purcell's *King Arthur*.

On 4 July, the Academy Wind Ensemble and Academy Bassoon Ensemble performed concerts at the Deal Music and Arts Festival, as part of a new partnership between the Academy and the Festival.