



Annual Impact Report

2023/24

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RNCM
ROYAL NORTHERN
COLLEGE of MUSIC



THANK YOU

At the RNCM, we are committed to equipping our students with an outstanding education in Manchester and propelling them into careers across the globe as inspiring and well-rounded musicians.

We are proud to be progressive and world-leading, and our teaching was recognised with a number five global ranking for music education in the QS World University Rankings this year, sharing the position with New York's prestigious Juilliard School.

We also won our fifth Times Higher Education Award for Outstanding Entrepreneurial University, in recognition of our dedication to empowering students to shape the music industry of the future.

Philanthropy plays a vital role in us achieving such successes and enabling our students to reach their full potential. Without your support, we simply could not provide our students with a world-class education and life-changing opportunities.

It is incredibly special to have a community of such amazing supporters who believe in what we do, and who want to invest directly in students and musical education.

Thank you for supporting our work, championing our talented young musicians, and advocating for the RNCM as we continue in our vision to Define the Future of Music.



**PROFESSOR
LINDA MERRICK CBE**
Principal



THANKS TO YOU, WE...

Raised

£2.85 million

with a further £783,000 committed to future support

Offered

421

scholarships and bursaries

- **306** student awards
- **101** Junior RNCM awards
- **10** Junior Fellowships
- **4** International Artist Diplomas

Gave

1 in 3

of our students

financial support to help them through the year

Engaged

over 6,500

children and young people in music-making opportunities and creative projects

STUDENT AWARDS

Student Awards (scholarships and bursaries) have a transformative impact, championing talent and helping young musicians to overcome challenges to being able to study. We are humbled that many donors increased their support significantly this year to ensure students are able to continue to live and study in Manchester in the face of the ongoing cost-of-living crisis.

A number of substantial philanthropic gifts helped establish a new wave of awards focussed on equitable access to musical education, including for disabled and neurodiverse students, for students from specific regions nationally and internationally, and targeted awards to ensure support for students across a wide range of instruments and disciplines.

'I would like to say a huge thank you for supporting my studies. Without this crucial financial aid, I would simply have been unable to complete my degree. I have benefitted immensely from the teaching and learning that I have received at the RNCM, as well as making some fundamental close contacts for my future work as a freelance musician and teacher.'

TOM HALL, *percussion*

'I am incredibly grateful for the significant part you have played in supporting my artistic growth this academic year. Being at the RNCM has introduced me to so many new experiences, people, and ideas, and my ability to participate fully in this experience is in large part due to your contribution to subsidising my course fees.'

MAEVE HERD, *soprano*

'My time at the RNCM has completely transformed my professional prospects as a musician, and I'm so grateful to have been offered the opportunities here that have led me onto a path I had always hoped for! Thank you so much for your support, I couldn't have done this otherwise.'

JOSH PYMAN, *clarinet*

'My time at the RNCM so far has been wonderful. I feel so honoured to be surrounded by such supportive and encouraging students and staff, and I am so grateful to you for making my time here possible.'

JASMINE BLACKSHAW-BRITTON, *cello*

RNCM UKRAINIAN MUSICIANS FUND

This year, the RNCM Ukrainian Musicians Fund provided essential support to **five Ukrainian undergraduate and postgraduate students** across the Schools of Strings, Keyboard Studies, and Wind, Brass and Percussion. Ukrainian musicians on our Junior RNCM and Young Artists programmes have also benefited from vital philanthropic support.

This funding has enabled these talented musicians to pursue their dreams of studying music, with the RNCM as their home.

'The Young Artists programme feels like a family.'

IVAN, Young Artist supported by the RNCM Ukrainian Musicians Fund



RNCM INNOVATE

RNCM Innovate is our platform for experimentation and discovery, enabling students and staff to push the boundaries of traditional music practices and drive the industry of tomorrow.

THE FUTURE IS GREEN

As part of our year-long theme focusing on climate change and the natural world, donations supported a new **Green Fund** which enabled **five student groups** to bring their green-inspired initiatives to life. Students used their funding to develop unique projects that use music as a powerful tool to spark meaningful conversations and encourage audiences to consider their response to climate change and sustainability.

RNCM CREATIVE INNOVATORS AWARD

The RNCM Creative Innovators Award recognises students who excel in creative ambition and entrepreneurship. Students pitched their business ideas to a panel of industry experts, with **four winners** receiving financial support and mentoring to help them develop their pioneering projects, from immersive, multi-disciplinary performances and installations to a new chamber music festival and a project combining music and ecology.

MUSIC & HEALTH

In the first year of this three-year funded project, **16 students** received intensive, specialised training to work therapeutically with children and young people in health, care, and special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) settings, in partnership with professional music therapy organisations Songbirds Music UK and Jessie's Fund.

'I thoroughly enjoyed the interactions and connections I was able to make with patients and their families, and being able to use music to bring joy and comfort to them was really enjoyable and fulfilling.'

CHLOE CHEN, cello

'The students were all really enthused and left with a renewed hunger for this area of work.'

BRITTA KOERBER, Director of Learning at Jessie's Fund



RNCM students working alongside Songbirds Music UK at Royal Manchester Children's Hospital



RNCM Creative Innovators Award finalists and panellists

RNCM ENDANGERED INSTRUMENTS APPEAL

You donated **£55,000** to help us deliver targeted initiatives to support young musicians in playing the **viola, double bass, oboe, bassoon, French horn, bass trombone** and **tuba**.

Funds raised are helping to target the declining number of musicians choosing these at-risk instruments at a young age, and supporting them on their musical journeys from the point of first access right through to conservatoire study and beyond.

This issue remains a strategic priority for at least the next decade, as we continue to support under-18s to overcome barriers to studying endangered instruments, with tailored financial support and world-class tuition and training from some of the world's very best musicians.

'The great thing about the Young Projects is that they're open to all skill levels. They help you to push yourself, learn new things, and you meet people who play the same instrument as you.'

YOUNG VIOLAS PARTICIPANT



SPECIALIST FUNDED PROJECTS

WILLIAMS-HOWARD PRIZE

This prize celebrates the study and performance of art songs by composers of the African diaspora. Alongside monetary prizes for **six students**, winners received bespoke coaching and performed at Buxton International Festival. What's more, students feel inspired to incorporate these works in their own programmes, championing underrepresented pieces and sharing them with new audiences.

STRING QUARTET STUDIO

Thanks to long-term philanthropic support, the Studio offers young musicians intensive, bespoke training, developing the experience, networks, and confidence required to progress at a professional level as chamber musicians.

'The Studio has given us the opportunity to focus an incredible amount of time on rehearsing together, improving at a rate which would not have been possible without the support of this programme and leading to some fantastic opportunities and achievements.'

AESTUS QUARTET, 2023/24 String Quartet Studio participants

JOSÉ AND RAFTON SMALLWOOD MASTERCLASS SERIES

Continued generosity enabled **twelve singers** and **seven pianists** to work with one of our International Visiting Professors, promoting cross-school collaboration and enabling students to gain valuable experience by exploring new and familiar repertoire through a fresh lens. Additionally, pianists enjoyed the opportunity to perform on the fortepiano – a challenging and rewarding experience.

PRINCIPAL'S CIRCLE

Our Principal's Circle are a warm and loyal family of supporters and are an integral part of our community.

Their collective and continued generosity has a huge impact on life at the RNCM, enabling a wide range of unique opportunities that enrich our students' learning experience.

This year

40 members

supported with **£49,000**

Their contributions helped make the following projects a reality:

- A pilot project for **RNCM composers creating new music to help people with Parkinson's** manage daily activities.
- An **artist residency for virtuoso sitarist Jasdeep Singh Degun**, developing students' musical breadth and collaborative skills.
- **Guest artists for RNCM Lab Week**, supporting our students' learning, development, and ideas around being a sustainable musician.
- **Two students travelling to Sydney, Australia** to compose for the Sydney Symphony Orchestra Fellows and receive professional mentorship.
- A duo of **Popular Music students performing at Manchester Children's Hospital** for children and their families.
- **Purchasing an upright piano** as part of our RNCM Piano Fleet Campaign.
- Match funding for **saxophone students to attend the European Saxophone Congress** in Trento, Italy.
- **Harp students performing at the prestigious Edinburgh International Harp Festival**, plus attending workshops and concerts.
- **Supported the RNCM Green Fund**, allowing students to apply for funding to develop green-inspired musical initiatives.

Principal's Circle members come together regularly with our Principal, students, and staff at special events to see the impact of their support first-hand. Event highlights this year included a vocal masterclass with Ann Murray DBE and an insight into research around music and neuroscience.



Jasdeep Singh Degun performing with RNCM students



Insight Event: Music and the Mind with Dr Michelle Phillips and the Elias Quartet

DONATIONS AND REGULAR GIVING

Every donation to the RNCM makes a difference. We want to thank everyone who supports the RNCM through our Membership scheme, Name a Seat, regular donations, or ticket top-ups.

£21,233

donated via direct debit and standing orders
by **106** generous supporters

£6,260

raised through Box Office donations
when booking to see performances at the RNCM

9

seats named
across our Concert Hall and Theatre



Bronze sculpture of Sir John Manduell CBE, Founding Principal of the RNCM. Sculpted by Hazel Reeves with a plinth made by RNCM alumnus and furniture designer, Jonathan Stockton.

Commissioned thanks to a generous donation.

RNCM ENGAGE: EDUCATION

RNCM Engage encompasses a wide range of initiatives to inspire children and young people to make music, helping to raise musical attainment and providing progression pathways to higher music education and beyond. Entirely supported by philanthropy, your support for RNCM Engage: Education is critical.

PATHFINDER

Pathfinder provided free, bespoke training, support and mentoring to **54 young musicians** experiencing barriers to their musical development. Alongside group activities, staff ran one-on-one sessions to focus on individual challenges. Increasingly, Pathfinder is working hand-in-hand with our other projects to provide individual and flexible support for young people as, when, and how they need it, in order for them to achieve their full musical potential.

'The staff are exemplary, and the entire environment is nurturing and wholesome. As a parent, you really feel your child is cared for, safe and happy. I have never seen him so immediately comfortable in a completely new, and potentially intimidating, space and atmosphere. He now calls the RNCM his 'Happy Place.'

PARENT OF PATHFINDER PARTICIPANT

RNCM YOUNG PROJECTS

Free targeted instrumental workshops enabled **257 young musicians** aged 5-18 to experience the joy of learning an instrument in a group setting, enhance their skills, and meet like-minded peers. Open to all, these programmes are a key component in addressing the declining number of children learning endangered instruments.

RNCM TRANSITIONS

Through one-to-one mentoring, audition advice, and application assistance tailored to the needs of each participant, RNCM Transitions helps raise the aspirations of young people aged 16-20 who require additional support with pursuing music studies at Higher Education level.

RNCM YOUNG ARTISTS

Participants on our award-winning popular music programme for 11-18-year-olds learn key industry skills from RNCM student mentors and industry professionals. These include composition, recording, production, and performance. A generously supported provision of fully subsidised places ensures we can accommodate young musicians regardless of financial circumstances.

JUNIOR RNCM

Taking over our building on Saturdays, JRNCM delivers an outstanding musical education to **203 talented young musicians** aged 8-18 each year. It offers a comprehensive programme of instrumental tuition, academic study, ensemble coaching, composition, conducting and more, preparing musicians for further study at conservatoire level and beyond.

RNCM ENGAGE WEST CUMBRIA

Over 2,100 children and young people had the chance to try an instrument for the first time or learn new skills from staff and student mentors this year. Made possible by a transformational gift, the first year of this five-year programme focused on establishing the needs of schools and communities in West Cumbria, with taster sessions in **21 schools and brass bands**.



RNCM Young Artists showcase at Contact, Manchester

RNCM ENGAGE: COMMUNITY

RNCM Engage also includes a range of outreach activities that bring members of our local community closer to the RNCM, both on-site and around Greater Manchester.

RNCM CHILDREN'S OPERA

A charitable grant enabled **130 children** to take part in our annual Children's Opera. The children, from local primary schools in areas of social deprivation and low arts engagement, co-created and performed a new work based on *The Jungle Book*.

'Music gives children a way in. Children who maybe struggle a bit with their writing or reading can access this and perform – and that confidence then builds into other subjects.'

CATH HIGSON, Headteacher at Ribble Drive Primary School

RNCM COMMUNITY OPERA

A grant also supported our inaugural Community Opera, developing the skills and confidence of local residents, and culminating in performances on our Theatre stage. **129 local residents**, including our new open-access Community Chorus, community organisations, and primary school children, devised a brand-new opera about the importance of holding on to our green spaces.

Both our Children's Opera and Community Opera explored environmental themes as part of our *The Future is Green* initiative and provided unique training opportunities for **over 150 RNCM students** who worked with the groups.

THROWING OPEN THE CONCERT DOORS

Over **1,350 archive recordings**, which may otherwise have been lost forever, have been conserved and digitised and are now available to listen to online and in person at the RNCM, thanks to a substantial grant and support from our alumni.

The project has also delivered bespoke workshops with **five local community groups** for people experiencing isolation or other challenges, and collected a series of oral histories to bring to life the stories and memories of our alumni, staff, and audiences.



RNCM Community Opera: Silverwood

RNCM PIANO FLEET CAMPAIGN

We are raising funds to purchase our fleet of 132 pianos, one of the largest in the UK. Currently leased, we have the opportunity to purchase the entire fleet at an exclusive price when our lease expires in July 2025. Purchasing all our pianos, from concert grands to uprights, will ensure long-term savings and financial sustainability, whilst enabling continued excellence in music teaching and access to the finest possible instruments for students, tutors, visiting artists, and RNCM Engage participants.

We are reaching out to our wider community to ask for help in taking control of this essential and appreciating asset for the RNCM into the future.

Thanks to a significant charitable grant and generous support from individuals, we are thrilled to have received **over £800,000** in support so far.

Contact eve.riley@rncm.ac.uk | 0161 907 5338 to learn more.



RNCM Piano Fleet Campaign launch event



Sir Stephen Hough CBE at the launch of the RNCM Piano Fleet Campaign

GIFTS IN WILLS

Each year, we are humbled to receive gifts from music lovers who have remembered us in their Will. This incredible support can have a transformational impact on the lives of our students and is a direct investment in the next generation of musical talent.

£285,652 gifted

Please do let us know if you are considering leaving a gift to the RNCM in your Will, so that we can express our gratitude during your lifetime and invite you to join the RNCM Legacy Club and special events.

Contact bethan.ward@rncm.ac.uk | 0161 907 5388 to learn more.

This spring, we welcomed 35 legacy pledgers to our annual RNCM Legacy Club event – a very special afternoon including performances by students supported by Gifts in Wills.



Gema Lu, first recipient of the Lucy Hale Award

IN MEMORY GIVING

Many chose to honour the memory of loved ones with a gift to the RNCM this year, from one-off donations to naming seats in our venues, purchasing pianos as part of the RNCM Piano Fleet Campaign, and establishing named awards as a way of remembering fondly missed family and friends.

Some supporters opted to endow their In Memory award, ensuring vital support to students in perpetuity and enabling countless future generations to benefit from their incredible generosity.

'We set up the Lucy Hale Award in memory of our daughter, to support students with disabilities to access music in higher education. Music and disability rights were twin passions for Lucy, and we feel that this award keeps her close to us. We hope she would have been pleased.'

NICKY HALE, JOHN MELLOR and ELLIE MELLOR



RNCM Legacy Club event on the set of our production of *La scala di seta*

THANK YOU

We are incredibly grateful to all those who have made donations this year. We cannot list everyone who supported us so generously, but we do want to express special thanks to those who made substantial contributions:

NAMED AWARDS AND PRIZES

The Adam Gorb Award for Composition
Alice Orrell and A&N Kendall Award
Anderson Powell Prize
Andrew Collender Award
Andrew Marsden Award
Ann Gerrard Bursaries
Annie Fletcher Award
The Anstey-Harriott Awards
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The Enid Featonby Keyboard Award
The Eric Horner Award
The Valerie Horner Award
Francis Higgins Bursary
Frederick Lunt Award
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The George Henry Peters Scholarship
The Gilbert and Sullivan Society Award
Giles Thomas Lyth Scholarships
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The GREAT Scholarships
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Jacob Marsland Award
James and Mary Glass Scholarship

Jellis Bequest
John Fewkes (Leicestershire) Instrumentalist Scholarships
John Halsall Scholarship
John Wilson Junior Fellowship in Piano Accompaniment
The José and Rafton Smallwood Award
The Kennedy Strauss Award
The Kenneth Hedley Bequest
The LHR Charitable Foundation Award
The Lucy Hale Award
Manchester Welsh Society Prize
The Margaret Allen Piano and Cello Award
Margaret Hopwood Award
Margaret Hunter Award
Marie Thecla Kieran Award
Marjorie and John Brooks Award
Martyn Edwards Jazz Bursary
Maurice and Jean Buckley Award
The Maureen Spurgin Award
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Richard Newitt Awards
The Riga Heesom Award
The Rollo Davidson Scholarship
Rowland Hardy Awards for Clarinet and Cello
The Sir John Manduell Prize
Sylvia Wyndham Bursary
Thomas Edward Wilson Bursary
Thomas W Swift Award

Waverley Fund Scholarships
The Williams-Howard Prize
Yvonne and Peter Wilson Award

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RNCM Library in memory of
Nigel Martin Evans

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**Special thanks to all our
generous donors who prefer
to remain anonymous.**



RNCM OPERA CIRCLE

A new scheme where members will play an important role by investing in our productions, whilst enjoying unique opportunities to see behind-the-scenes during the planning and rehearsal process.

rncm.ac.uk/opera-circle

CONTACT US

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REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBERS:

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