


JUNIOR DEPARTMENT PROSPECTUS



ROYAL
COLLEGE
OF MUSIC
London





WELCOME

The Royal College of Music Junior Department (RCMJD) offers advanced musical training to talented young musicians between the ages of 8 and 18. Founded in 1926, the RCMJD has nurtured distinguished alumni including Clemency Burton-Hill, Daniel Kidane, John Lill, Julian Lloyd Webber and Tarik O'Regan.



Since its inception, the RCMJD has evolved to meet the musical needs of our students and adapted to the changing educational and musical landscape. We provide a programme designed to prepare you for musical life in the 21st century, working to make you a happy, successful, healthy and entrepreneurial young musician who can meet the ever-changing demands of the profession.

Students travel to the Royal College of Music each Saturday from all over the UK for a tailor-made programme of individual instrumental, vocal or composition lessons; chamber music, orchestral and choral training; and general musicianship. Our teachers are all professional performers or composers who offer the highest standards of tuition and coaching.

Every Saturday the RCM buzzes with musical energy and purpose. Our students take part in more than 100 internal and external concerts per year at major venues including Cadogan Hall, the Royal Albert Hall and Wigmore Hall.

Our young musicians enjoy significant success in national and international competitions, and many are members of leading ensembles including the National Youth Orchestra, National Children's Orchestras, Chineke! Junior Orchestra and National Youth Choirs of Great Britain. Michael Collins, RCMJD alumnus, was a finalist in the first BBC Young Musician Competition in 1978, and RCMJD students have dominated the competition in recent years, including percussionist Jordan Ashman, winner in 2022.

If you want to make the most of your musical ability, we are here to help you. We are committed to nurturing potential and offering a warm, creative yet disciplined environment in which you will flourish. Please read through the following prospectus to find out how you could be a part of the Royal College of Music Junior Department.

Miranda Francis

Head of Junior Programmes

FIND OUT MORE

www.rcm.ac.uk/junior



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“My time at the RCM Junior Department was a crucial part of my training as a young musician. I loved having the opportunity to make music at a high level with other young people and my collaboration with such fellow students as John Lill played a large part in shaping my musical future.”

Julian Lloyd Webber, RCMJD alumnus



WHAT WE OFFER

The Royal College of Music Junior Department (RCMJD) is a specialist, term-time only Saturday school offering advanced training to musicians aged 8–18. You will combine your studies here with your general education at your chosen weekday school.

We offer tuition in the following:

- Bass trombone
- Bassoon
- Cello
- Clarinet
- Composition
- Conducting
- Double bass
- Drum kit
- Flute
- French horn
- Guitar
- Harp
- Harpsichord
- Jazz piano
- Jazz saxophone
- Mini-bass
- Oboe
- Organ
- Percussion
- Piano
- Recorder
- Saxophone
- Trombone
- Trumpet
- Tuba
- Viola
- Violin
- Voice

CURRICULUM

Our core curriculum consists of the following:

- First study lesson (45 minutes minimum)
- Chamber music (60 minutes)
- Musicianship (60 minutes)
- Orchestra (60–120 minutes)
- Choir (60 minutes)

Unless otherwise explicitly agreed with the Head of Junior Programmes in advance, you are expected to take part in all elements of the core curriculum.

In addition to the core curriculum, you may opt to take the following:

- Second and third study lessons (minimum 30 minutes per instrument)
- Alexander Technique (30 minutes paired lessons).

CHAMBER MUSIC

Chamber Music is a core element of the RCM Junior Department programme. We have more than 120 chamber groups each year.

Our ensembles include:

- Baroque ensemble
- Bass groups
- Brass ensemble and dectet
- Brass quintets
- Cello groups
- Clarinet choir
- Flute group
- Guitar ensemble
- Harp ensemble
- Jazz ensembles
- Percussion ensemble
- Piano duos
- Piano trios
- Recorder ensemble
- Saxophone ensemble
- String quartets
- Violin groups
- Wind octet or dectet
- Wind quintets



Chamber groups meet for an hour or more each week. There are many performance and coaching opportunities both inside and outside the RCM.

Each ensemble receives a weekly lesson and there are opportunities to participate in workshops and masterclasses with internationally acclaimed visiting ensembles. Visitors have included the Harlem Quartet, Onyx Brass, Riot Ensemble and the London Sinfonietta. The RCMJD also runs an annual Chamber Music Day and an annual Chamber Music Competition, with prizewinners performing at our yearly RCMJD Young Artists' Concert.

- RCMJD students participate in at least one chamber ensemble, with many performing in two or more. Our chamber musicians have performed at London's most prestigious venues, including Wigmore Hall and the Royal Albert Hall.

Hilary Sturt, Head of Chamber Music



We offer a wide variety of classes and encourage our younger students to combine both jazz and classical elements in their curriculum to give a thorough grounding in each style. This will enable you to make an informed decision if you wish to specialise in jazz at a later point.

INDIVIDUAL JAZZ LESSONS

We have two specialist jazz musicians teaching at the Royal College of Music Junior Department. They offer lessons in jazz improvisation to students on any instrument or voice and of any age.

JAZZ IMPROVISATION CLASSES

These classes are designed for students who would like to try jazz improvisation but who have little or no previous experience. Classes are configured depending on age and experience.

JAZZ ENSEMBLES

We have two jazz ensembles at the RCMJD. Jazz Ensemble, run by Sara Dhillon, is formed of students who have some experience of jazz improvisation. Senior Jazz Ensemble, a big band conducted by Mornington Lockett, is one of our flagship ensembles for our most advanced players. Both ensembles have had the opportunity to perform at world-famous venues such as Ronnie Scott's Jazz Club, the 606 Jazz Club and as part of the Late Night Jazz series at the Royal Albert Hall.

- The RCMJD offers countless opportunities to explore jazz in a nurturing and encouraging environment. The wider musical skills a developing musician can gain from studying this marvellous music are invaluable. Not only will jazz equip you with the ability to improvise, it will help you develop empathy and musical rapport with your fellow musicians.

Sara Dhillon, jazz piano teacher





HISTORICAL PERFORMANCE

Our baroque and recorder ensemble teachers are among the UK's leading players and teachers of historical music. We cover a vast, varied repertoire from the 17th and 18th centuries, including Bach, Vivaldi, Telemann, Rameau and Castello, as well as works by lesser-known composers.

ENSEMBLES

Most baroque ensembles consist of two or more melody instruments with basso continuo – usually harpsichord or chamber organ and cello or bassoon. We also offer larger-scale projects, such as a semi-staged performance of Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*. All groups gain an insight into different European styles, making historically informed decisions on bowing, ornamentation, phrasing and vibrato. There are also opportunities to take part in baroque dance workshops.

BAROQUE INSTRUMENTS

Players of recorder, flute, oboe, bassoon, violin, viola, cello, harpsichord and organ can take part in historical performance sessions. Pianists can learn the necessary skills to play the harpsichord. Projects have also included works with singers and brass players.

Senior string players may borrow a baroque bow. Recorder ensemble participants, in addition to baroque classes, may use a wide range of instruments and electronic equipment, and have the opportunity to collaborate with RCMJD composers and in senior college recorder events.

You will work in a mature, informal and supportive environment. Historical performance ensembles offer a chance for personal input and individual expression, as well as the opportunity to make stimulating and exciting chamber music at a very high level.

- Baroque Ensemble gives me a unique opportunity to create my own ornamentation. In the Recorder Ensemble, we cover a huge range of early to modern music using instruments such as Great Basses, making incredible sounds!

Polly, Recorder and Horn player

MUSICIANSHIP

All students take part in musicianship classes, which help to increase perception and knowledge of music and encourage creative responses. Musicianship classes provide a thorough grounding in listening skills, aural, harmony, contextual awareness and active performance, and they support all other elements of the programme.

On entry, students follow the RCMJD core musicianship curriculum, devised by Head of Musicianship, Andrew Williams. This interdisciplinary programme encourages young musicians to explore the connections between aural, theory and practical skills, enabling them to further their understanding of musical styles and individual works.

Younger students are offered Dalcroze Eurythmics classes.

There are also opportunities to take foundation classes in areas such as composition and improvisation, or to prepare for a Grade 6 level exam in Theory or Practical Musicianship.

On completing the core musicianship programme, students may choose from a wide range of advanced level option classes, focusing on specific areas of interest and preparing for degree level music courses.

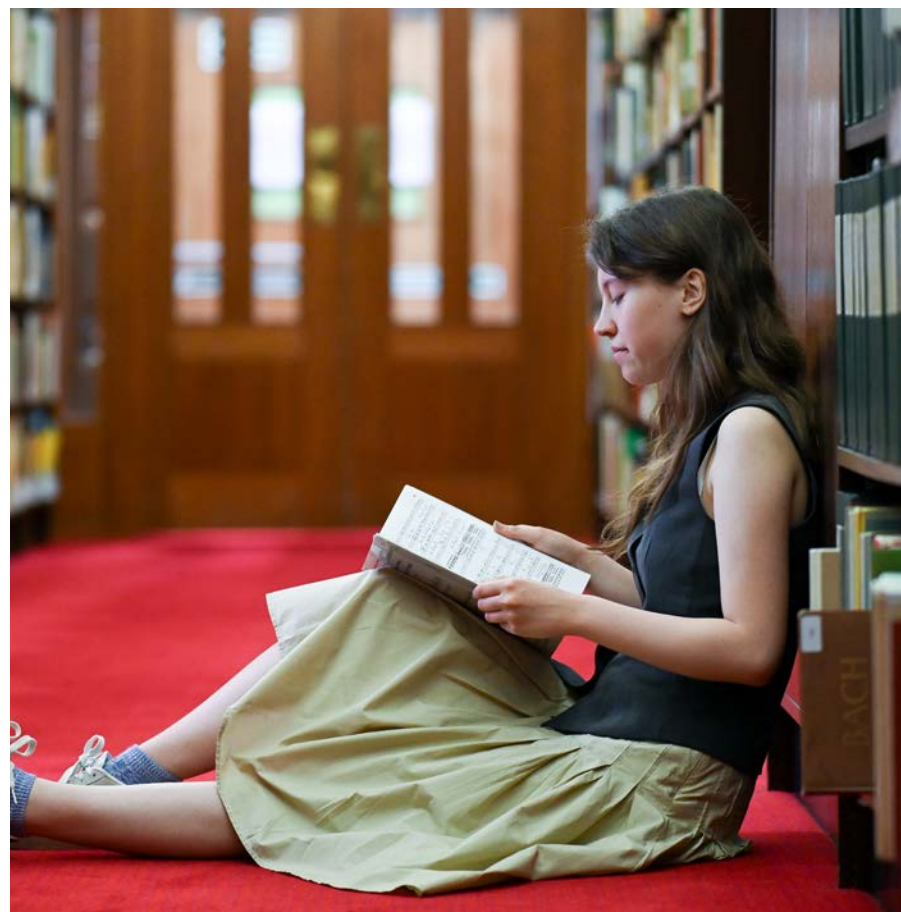


Advanced level options include:

- Musical Analysis
- Advanced Music Theory (ABRSM Grades 7 and 8)
- Advanced Practical Musicianship (ABRSM Grades 7 and 8)
- Keyboard skills
- Composition class
- Improvisation class
- Sight-singing class
- Conducting class
- Musicology and Aesthetics

ALEXANDER TECHNIQUE

The Alexander Technique works by helping you to identify and prevent the harmful postural habits (how you stand, sit or move) that cause or contribute to stress or pain. Shared and individual sessions are offered (with a charge); a number of slots are available to bursary holders free of charge (there may be a waiting list).



COMPOSITION &
CONTEMPORARY MUSIC

At the Royal College of Music Junior Department we believe composition provides vital insights into music-making of all kinds. We offer a unique environment in which composers are surrounded by instrumentalists and singers of the highest quality and are mentored by professional composers.

You are encouraged to perform your own and others' new pieces in a series of well-attended concerts throughout the year.

New partnerships are being forged with senior college students and staff and we have developed opportunities for RCM Postgraduate Fellows to play through and perform RCMJD student pieces. Recordings of these top-quality performances have helped our composition students when applying for competitions, courses and grants.

The Riot Ensemble, Juice, and Onyx Brass have given workshops and performances of student work, and future collaborative projects are planned with the London Sinfonietta.

Visits from eminent contemporary composers are an exciting part of our programme. RCMJD alumnus Mark-Anthony Turnage worked with young composers on a project based on his work *This Silence*, which was performed alongside the resulting student compositions in a memorable concert with the composer present. Our young composers regularly win the BBC Proms Inspire competition and many have gone on to study composition at leading universities and conservatoires.

- The most vital experience for a young composer is to hear their work rehearsed and performed. The RCMJD provides rich opportunities for this to happen under expert guidance. •

Simon Speare, Head of Composition and Contemporary Music

- RCMJD is an amazing place to spend every Saturday! My composition lessons are inspirational, teaching me something new every time. From individual lessons to orchestra, chamber groups and conducting classes, I enjoy every single minute I'm there. The social side is great too, and I've made some fantastic friends. If you love music, RCMJD is the place to be! •

Matty, Cello, Piano and Composition



ORCHESTRAS

The Royal College of Music Junior Department has six orchestras which perform in concerts throughout the year, both in the RCM's wonderful performance spaces and at external venues including Cadogan Hall.

Places are allocated according to the student's age, orchestral ability and progress. All orchestras have a team of tutors: leading professional orchestral musicians who assist in full rehearsals and sectionals.

The RCMJD orchestras are:

- Chamber Orchestra
- Sinfonia Orchestra
- Sinfonietta
- String Orchestra
- Symphonic Wind Orchestra
- Symphony Orchestra



- “The orchestra is a special place, bringing music to life. I’m guaranteed to take home something new, whether it’s information about a piece of music or future advice on instrumental playing with many opportunities to play to an audience.”

Lucas, Trumpet and Cello player

CHOIRS

Choral singing is a fundamental part of the RCMJD curriculum for all students up to the end of Year 6. It develops aural awareness, vocal technique and musical perception, as well as being an important part of the social fabric of the RCMJD.

In addition to Junior Choir, we have three choirs for students in Years 7–13. Students are asked to sing at a short informal audition.

- Junior Choir
- Upper Voices
- Chamber Choir
- Advanced Vocal Ensemble

Our choirs have performed alongside senior college musicians in the RCM's Amaryllis Fleming Concert Hall and Britten Theatre, the Purcell Room, St James's Piccadilly, at the Royal Albert Hall and at St James's Palace.



The RCMJD has been transformational for me! The teaching is unlike any I've had before – such incredible attention to detail is making a huge difference to my voice. Saturdays are the best days, every second of my long journey is worth it. It's like being part of a family, where you feel safe and happy, and with people who love the same things. My teacher's patience, positivity and inspiration bring me real joy. I hope to one day achieve a place at the very best conservatoire in the world – the RCM!

Hattie, Voice



PERFORMANCE OPPORTUNITIES

You are encouraged to make the most of the many performance opportunities on offer at the Royal College of Music Junior Department.

PERFORMERS' PLATFORM

Each week a Performers' Platform provides opportunities to perform solo or ensemble works in front of an informal audience. Experienced tutors give performance feedback as well as tips on technique. This is a valuable experience, particularly if you are preparing for an exam or competition.

INTERNAL CONCERTS

We hold more than 20 concerts at the Royal College of Music each year in which all students have the chance to perform. These concerts include our orchestras, choirs and ensembles, as well as several contemporary music concerts featuring compositions by RCMJD students. We present six formal concerts for young soloists, and offer a wide range of competitions for you to take part in.



EXTERNAL CONCERTS

There are performance opportunities in some of London's most exceptional venues, including the Royal Albert Hall, Cadogan Hall and St John's Smith Square. We also hold an annual Young Artists' Concert at Wigmore Hall which features some of our solo performers and the winners of our Chamber Music Competition.



MINI-BASS COURSE

The mini-bass course is our pioneering scheme for double bass beginners aged 7–10. Established in 1985 by Caroline Emery in association with the Yorke Trust, this exciting initiative allows you to learn the double bass on specially designed instruments in individual lessons and small groups.

The mini-bass course consists of the following:

- Mini-bass lesson (30 minutes minimum)
- Bass Group (45–60 minutes)
- Choir and/or Musicianship (45–60 minutes)
- Orchestra (60 minutes, once required level achieved)

In addition, mini-bass students may opt to take the following:

- Second study lesson (30 minutes minimum)

Like the rest of the RCM Junior Department, the mini-bass course takes place between 9am and 5pm on Saturdays during term time. The mini-bass course will not fill all those hours and timetables will be kept as compact as possible for our youngest students.

A fully insured instrument is provided for practice at home.



Being on the mini-bass course has been a fantastic experience. The community of bassists at the RCMJD is very special, I really value the friendships made and the teachers. I play in Bass Group and have been a member of the String Orchestra and Sinfonia, which I absolutely love. I'm so very lucky to have had the opportunity to study at the RCMJD since I was seven years old.

Thommy, mini-bass player

APPLYING TO THE RCMJD



“MY TIME AT THE RCMJD HAS SHAPED ME AS A PLAYER. MY TEACHERS HAVE NURTURED AND INSPIRED ME, ALLOWING ME TO GROW IN CONFIDENCE AS A PERFORMER. AMAZING OPPORTUNITIES, INCLUDING MY FIRST SOLO RECITAL AT THE ROYAL ALBERT HALL AS PART OF THE CLASSICAL COFFEE MORNING SERIES HAVE ENABLED ME TO BECOME A BETTER PLAYER. THE WIND QUINTET IS PARTICULARLY SPECIAL TO ME, WE HAVE GROWN UP TOGETHER AND EVERY WEEK IS A JOY. I’M INCREDIBLY PROUD OF MY ACHIEVEMENTS DURING MY TIME HERE.”

Amalia, Clarinet and Piano player

VISIT OPPORTUNITIES

RCMJD visit opportunities give prospective students and their parents/guardians a chance to experience the RCM campus in person, and to meet members of the RCMJD team.

We hold a small number of visits during the Autumn and Spring terms; applicants and their parents are also welcome to attend some RCMJD concerts, subject to ticket availability.

Our visit opportunities have limited capacity, so advance booking is essential. Please note that it is not essential to visit before applying – later chances will be provided for successful auditionees to visit the Junior Department before our offer acceptance deadline.

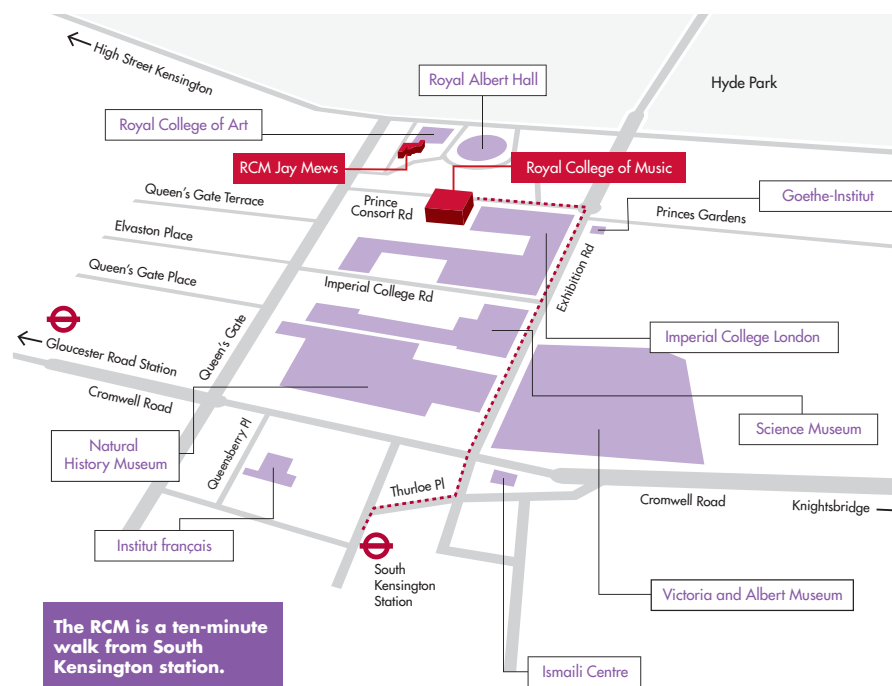
Find out more about visit opportunities at www.rcm.ac.uk/junior/rcmjdvisitsdays

Find out more about RCMJD concerts at www.rcm.ac.uk/events



HOW TO FIND US

The Royal College of Music's location is the envy of the musical world. We are situated opposite the Royal Albert Hall in one of London's most attractive and vibrant areas – just a ten-minute walk from South Kensington tube station. For details on how to find us, please visit www.rcm.ac.uk/visit



APPLYING

Entry is by audition in March and April to start in September the same year. This is our only audition period, though we may offer auditions outside this period in exceptional circumstances.

The closing date for applications is 1 March for entry in September of the same year.

Applications open in January and can be made using our online application form, a link to which can be found on our website. An audition fee will usually be required. For further information visit www.rcm.ac.uk/junior/rcmjapply

APPLICATIONS FOR THE MINI-BASS COURSE

Applications for the mini-bass course should be made in the same way as for the full programme, putting mini-bass in the first study field. If you currently play an instrument, note this in the second study field. The ability to play another instrument and to read music is an advantage.

LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS

All elements of the curriculum and correspondence are delivered in English. It is therefore essential that all students and parents have a good understanding of both written and spoken English.

ACCESS

We do not wish for the cost of the audition to prevent anyone from auditioning for the RCM Junior Department. We welcome applications from everyone and aim to provide support to make this possible. If you have any concerns or specific requirements, please email jd@rcm.ac.uk.

For information about financial support see page 32.

- “When my daughter joined, I didn’t know what to expect. The incredible warmth from her teachers, and the phenomenal development she has made as musician have been extraordinary. It has been wonderful to see how children and young people and parents support the whole cohort of musicians, attending each other’s performances and championing the success of others. I have made friendships with other parents at the Junior Department, lasting long after she has moved on.”

Sasha, Parent

AUDITION REQUIREMENTS

The audition may be a one or two-stage process. You will be advised of specific requirements at the time of application.

You should be prepared for:

- First study*: two short contrasting pieces
- Second and third study* (if relevant): one short piece per instrument
- Sight reading on your first study instrument
- Aural tests
- Musical and general discussion

*Composers will be required to submit scores in advance and may also be asked to complete a short composition exercise at audition.

You will need to use our official accompanist and will have time to rehearse with them before your audition.

AUDITIONS FOR THE MINI-BASS COURSE

For those applying for the mini-bass course, we will schedule an audition in the same way as for those applying for the full RCMJD programme; however, the audition will be more informal. You will be given musical awareness tests to assess your sense of pitch and rhythm and we will ask you to play a piece on your second instrument.

AUDITION RESULTS

The decision of the audition panel is final and we regret that we are unable to enter into correspondence about results. Results are sent directly to parents/guardians as soon as possible after the audition period.



FEES & BURSARIES

FEES

Fees are payable in advance and may be paid annually or termly. A full term's notice is required if a student wishes to leave the RCM Junior Department. Current fees are available online at www.rcm.ac.uk/juniorfees

At extra charge, individual lessons may be extended in 15-minute blocks.

BURSARIES

We believe that students who are successful at audition should not be prevented from attending through financial hardship. Those needing support may apply for a bursary from the RCM Junior Department.

Bursaries are means-tested and allocated according to financial need by an independent committee. Parents wishing to apply should request more information by ticking the appropriate box on the application form. A list of supporters of our bursaries can be found at www.rcm.ac.uk/junior/supportrcmjd

A small number of scholarships (a 25% core fee waiver) are available each year. They are awarded based on musical merit at the discretion of the Head of Junior Programmes/audition panel.



FREQUENTLY
ASKED QUESTIONS**Joining the RCMJD**

Entry is subject to audition. Your current ability and potential, the number of places available for each instrument and suitability for the course are all taken into consideration. You don't need to have taken exams but, as a general rule, if you are aged 11 or younger your first study should be at least Grade 5 level and if you are older than 11 we will expect you to be more advanced. Our sixth formers are usually post-Grade 8 standard. On instruments often started at a later age, particularly viola, bassoon, horn, trombone, tuba, harp, organ and double bass, a lower level of attainment may be acceptable. On our most popular instruments (currently violin and piano) the students to whom we offer places are often at a significantly more advanced level. Your current teacher or a professional musician who has heard you perform can advise as to whether you are ready.

I don't play the piano either as a first or second instrument. Does that matter?

No, though we'd encourage you to take it up as keyboard skills are useful to every musician. We'd advise you to have lessons locally before learning at the RCMJD when you're more advanced.

I'm great at my first instrument but I've only just started my second instrument, will this disadvantage me at audition?

Not at all: it is potential we're looking for, and it's your first study in which we're most interested, so don't let that worry you. Well done for being adventurous and trying something new.

I only play one instrument. Can I still come to the RCMJD?

Of course! We might encourage you to play an additional instrument but it is not a requirement and will not affect your audition if you do not. Situations in which we might encourage a second instrument (depending on age and development) are:

- Piano – first study pianists may be encouraged to play an orchestral instrument so that they may take part in orchestras.
- Composition – first study composers may be encouraged to play an instrument to allow them to take part in ensembles.
- Singers – first study singers are particularly encouraged to learn piano.

I don't read music and only play, sing and compose by ear. Can I still come to the RCMJD?

Reading music is an important skill for musicians of every style and level. If your playing, singing or composing is exciting and musical then it shouldn't be a problem at audition, but we would expect you to learn to read music as soon as possible.

Is the RCMJD only for people who want to go on to study at a conservatoire?

Absolutely not. Whilst the majority of our students do go on to study music at conservatoires or university, recent RCMJD graduates have enjoyed a variety of courses and careers, such as engineering, languages, medicine and even rocket science! Our aim is that by the time you leave at age 18, you will be of a standard needed to apply successfully to a conservatoire if you wish.

ALUMNI

The Royal College of Music Junior Department has been nurturing young musicians for more than 90 years and many of our students have gone on to have successful international careers in music.

RCMJD ALUMNI INCLUDE:

- Henry Baldwin Section Principal Percussionist of the Royal Opera House orchestra
- Martin James Bartlett pianist
- Emily Beynon Principal Flute of the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra
- Clemency Burton-Hill violinist, broadcaster, journalist and presenter
- Michael Collins clarinettist
- Ben Goldscheider horn player
- John Lill pianist
- Mark-Anthony Turnage composer
- Julian Lloyd Webber cellist

- RCM Junior Department was something I really loved doing because it's such a wonderful place to learn, make new friends and be totally immersed with people who are passionate about music.

Martin James Bartlett, RCMJD alumnus and winner of BBC Young Musician 2014

Patron His Majesty King Charles III

Chairman Lord Black of Brentwood

Director James Williams LVO FRCM

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Every effort has been made to ensure that the information contained in this publication is fair and accurate at the time of going to print. Information on programmes, fees and services contained within this publication are subject to occasional changes, and no guarantee can be given that these will not be made following publication.

For the most up-to-date information on our programmes visit www.rcm.ac.uk/junior

Any complaints concerning the fairness or accuracy of this publication should be addressed to prospectus@rcm.ac.uk

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**GLOBAL
NO.1**

MUSIC & PERFORMING ARTS

QS WORLD UNIVERSITY RANKINGS 2025/2024/2023/2022