



ROYAL  
COLLEGE  
OF MUSIC  
*London*

# RCM STRATEGIC PLAN

2017–27



# SECURING THE FUTURE OF MUSIC THROUGH WORLD-CLASS EDUCATION: HERITAGE AND INNOVATION

## THIS STRATEGIC PLAN

This Plan is intended to set out the College's main plans for development and focus in the coming years for members of the College community, for our stakeholders and the general public.

The previous phase of the Strategic Plan (extended to 2021 because of Covid-19) centred on the More Music: Reimagining the Royal College of Music Campaign, which transformed the College. The project effected a physical transformation that has expanded the spaces available to students and visitors of all ages to make and learn about music. These vibrant, cutting-edge facilities provide an inspirational learning environment in which our students can create, research and perform.

The More Music Campaign delivered a new Performance Hall and Performance Studio, each with broadcast and integrated digital infrastructure; new visitor facilities and public spaces, including a café; College-wide step-free access and intuitive circulation between key public spaces; increased provision to over 100 multi-purpose teaching, rehearsal and practice rooms; additional recording and broadcast capability, enabling increased access for global audiences; a major new Museum, offering a permanent and interactive space for our internationally significant collections; a rebuilt entrance hall, welcoming the public to our performances and events; and a striking new Flentrop Orgelbouw organ for the Amaryllis Fleming Concert Hall.

This updated Plan starts with a refreshed ten-year Vision for the RCM to 2027, it goes on to our key initiatives for the three year immediate period 2022–25, and finishes with the guiding objectives and principles in the main ongoing areas of the College's activity.

## MISSION

The Royal College of Music provides specialised musical education and professional training at the highest international level for performers and composers, within an environment that stimulates innovation and research. This enables talented students from all backgrounds to develop the musical skills, knowledge, understanding and resourcefulness which will equip them to contribute significantly to musical life in this country and internationally.

### A contemporary ethos: innovation that builds on tradition

The Royal College of Music has a relationship with people throughout their lives and is committed to life-long musical relationships with all who have a link with us, notably alumni. We believe in the power of people to enrich the student experience with passion and commitment. The finest music from the best musicians in the world harnesses innovation and the potential it unleashes. Everyone is welcome at the RCM, whatever their background; indeed, accessibility and diversity define the College and all its activities. Global leadership is based at our newly reimagined South Kensington campus and extends online throughout the world. A new era of connectivity binds the community together.

### Innovative, ambitious, distinctive and accessible since its foundation

The Royal College of Music provides world-class music education that nurtures future generations of performers, composers, creative leaders and thinkers, allowing them to enjoy significant global careers in all areas of the music industry and beyond. Our iconic campus is in the heart of London's cultural area of

South Kensington and our distinguished staff, alumni and unmatched performance opportunities demonstrate excellence of the highest order. Innovation is central to the RCM and has been since we were first founded. An illustrious heritage, coupled with state-of-the-art digital technology, provides an unparalleled, dynamic learning environment. Our values anchor our mission, and access and inclusivity are at the heart of this strategy as we extend our reach and engage with a global audience in new and expanded ways.

## RCM IN 2027 – A TEN-YEAR VISION FOR THE RCM

The Royal College of Music provides music education and professional training at the highest international level, through commitment to the transformative power of music and its own founding principles of excellence, advocacy and access.

As a natural first choice for the most talented students from around the world, the RCM is consistently recognised as an international leader in developing versatile and innovative creators, communicators and curators within the world of music and beyond. It embraces the ideals of an inclusive, open and just society, supporting students from diverse social, economic and ethnic backgrounds. It fulfils its obligation as a relevant, persuasive and world-leading advocate for the future of music, as an agent for positive and meaningful cultural change. By 2027:

- A core curriculum blending theory and practice fosters critical appreciation and understanding of music as an art and a science, offering a transformative, holistic education, tailored to individual needs and supported by world class learning resources. New insights are generated through performance, research, community initiatives and global collaboration based on a dynamic sharing of both explicit and tacit knowledge. The RCM is a driving force within the music profession, in which its students are readily employable.
- Artistic performance both mirrors and leads professional activity. Opportunities are provided for students both to develop the skills necessary for successful careers within existing models, and also as leaders and innovators, extending reach, diversity and representation, and challenging and refreshing our artforms.
- Online artistic and educational activity enables the RCM to reach a world-wide audience, further redefining membership of the College across all age groups, including integrated pre-tertiary programmes and community engagement.
- World-class faculty, staff and visiting artists play a critical role within a working environment that provides an invaluable connection to the profession.
- The interactive RCM Museum and Library special collections are fully integrated into the curriculum, as well as being an established destination for the general public and international researchers.
- The student experience and public interaction are further cultivated within a wide-ranging estates plan, inflected by a commitment to a responsible and ambitious environmental policy.
- The RCM collaborates with its community of alumni and supporters to cultivate lifelong relationships with the College. The development of imaginative and tailored opportunities for philanthropy ensures the College's sustainability in this area.

## RCM 2022–25

Over this three-year period:

- Programming, staff appointments and student recruitment will reflect the diversity of contemporary society in the UK and beyond. Pre-tertiary provision and community engagement will be further integrated into the RCM's programmes and ethos, reflecting the College's obligation to be a relevant, persuasive advocate for music globally.
- Recognising that student and staff well-being is of the utmost importance, the RCM will prioritise support accordingly.
- The College will pursue further access and engagement across the globe, collaborating in and opening up online resources to a worldwide audience and undertaking international initiatives that are consonant with this Plan, while taking into account the changing geopolitical environment.
- Research Strategy will make further connections between learning, teaching and the artistic programme. The RCM will encourage all its members to engage in critical enquiry leading to the creation and dissemination of new knowledge across theory and practice. Major projects will demonstrate the RCM's value to society beyond music, such as in arts and health.
- Opportunities afforded by the College's new facilities, created through the previous three year plan (Performance Hall, Performance Studio, Museum, café), will be maximised to serve the RCM's ambitions and aspirations in innovative ways.
- Capitalising on rapid progress during the pandemic, the RCM will embark on further digital transformation of its systems. This will enable the College to become a more agile and efficient organisation with improved channels for internal communication and information sharing and sector-leading advances in technology in learning and teaching.
- Estates priorities will be codified and costed, pending further opportunities, with a focus on advancing its environmental sustainability strategy.
- Following the success of the More Music Campaign, fundraising priorities will be focused on this Strategic Plan and priorities which will include enhancing the scholarships programme and addressing core costs, whilst formulating plans for the future. The pipeline of supporters and wider RCM family will be cultivated and enhanced.



# GUIDING OBJECTIVES AND PRINCIPLES FOR ONGOING INITIATIVES IN THE MAIN AREAS OF THE COLLEGE'S ACTIVITY, WITH RENEWED EMPHASIS ON DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION ACROSS ALL AREAS

Our guiding objectives and principles are:

## Research & Knowledge Exchange (KE)

- Ensure an environment that supports the development of all RCM staff and students to engage in enquiry leading to the creation of new knowledge.
- Substantially raise the RCM's national and international research profile.
- Aspire to be a world leader in practice research.
- Identify and maximise opportunities for industry partnerships and commercialisation through the development of Knowledge Exchange.
- Further refine RCM research degrees programmes, to attract candidates in appropriate fields who can become the next generation of research leaders.

## Learning and teaching

- Offer holistic programmes of study that respond to the needs of our global society, enabling each student to fulfil their aspirations as artists, educators and researchers of the future.
- Nurture artistic innovation through a curriculum that embraces critical enquiry, current professional practice and inclusive approaches to learning and teaching.
- Draw upon a range of cutting-edge technologies to support and enhance face-to-face teaching and learning, including links with international artists, scholars, and partner institutions such as the Global Conservatoire.
- Equip students with the skills, confidence and resourcefulness to shape fulfilling and sustainable careers as professional musicians and educators.
- Extend our RCM student community by offering specialist, high-quality distance learning programmes, modules and short courses in appropriate subject areas.
- Recruit outstanding teachers and support their continuing development by promoting a shared understanding of learning and teaching excellence, especially in the areas of performance, composition and research-led teaching.

## Artistic programme

- Present an artistic programme with learning, excellence and diversity at its heart, acknowledging and promoting our roles as both curators and creators.
- Recognise evolution and divergence in professional practice, including different modes of performance, different spaces and the opportunities afforded by new media.
- Provide regular opportunities for all students to perform in a suitable environment for their current stage of learning, and ensuring transparency in the choices made.
- Work with international artists at the highest levels.
- Create opportunities for student innovation and experimentation.
- Use performance as a learning environment and training for the standards and demands of the musical profession.

- Ensure all students experience teaching and performance in all suitable genres – solo, chamber and large ensemble, and performance of compositions.
- Create the environment for students to develop their skills in confident, expressive, innovative and independent performance, and to engage with audiences both live and online.
- Provide the tools and experience for students to gain confidence and fluency in curation, programming and presentational skills with audiences.

## Equality, Diversity & Inclusion and Widening engagement (including Junior Programmes and Sparks)

- Broaden the diversity of the RCM community, including professors, visiting artists, other staff and the student population, to ensure we are doing everything we can to remove barriers for access to music.
- Take the lead in bringing a wide range of repertoire to learners and audiences, by sharing, discussing, rehearsing and performing more repertoire by under-represented composers as a central part of our core curriculum and artistic programme.
- Advocate for the importance of music education at all ages through leadership and example.
- Increase our relevance to the local community through a programme of public engagement featuring meaningful projects and partnerships.
- Develop the profile of the RCM Junior Department as the UK's leading transition programme into conservatoire training for students from all backgrounds.
- Learning and participation projects are more collaborative and have expanded reach across the UK. Working with staff and students from across the College and our external partners, identify and develop outstanding young musical talent, promoting inclusive progression opportunities internally and externally.
- Integrate Junior College and our learning and participation programme, within a strong and unified profile that is seamless with and supported by the College's HE work. Develop a range of ways to bring the musically gifted and/or enthusiastic of all ages into involvement with the inspirational learning experience on offer.

## Supporting our professors and administrative staff

- Bring professors closer to the priorities of the College. Make new professorial appointments that enhance the RCM's reputation for quality teaching, in a way that reflects all the markets in which the College needs to be competitive.
- Maintain a supportive professional environment that enables staff to realise their full potential and share tacit knowledge. Ensure the health, safety and well-being of all professors and administrative staff.
- Provide an innovative and comprehensive programme of professional development and training.

## Environment and social responsibility

- Minimise the environmental, social and economic impacts of our operations. Apply a mature and multi-dimensional approach to sustainability that encourages members of the RCM to respond to environmental and societal challenges in our day-to-day operations, in the profession and across the globe.

- Continuously improve our environmental performance through implementation of appropriate environmental initiatives.
- Achieve net zero carbon by 2035 across scopes 1,2 and 3, with an interim reduction target of 73% against a 2005 baseline by 2027. Develop short-term initiatives which engage students and staff with the environmental issues that directly affect their future.
- Seek innovative ways to meet our sustainability objectives in all our activities, and ensure that our values are embedded within our community, our research and our teaching:
  - embed sustainability into teaching and research
  - support talent, preserve culture and expand access to classical music
  - deliver sustainable operations, events and performances
  - deliver sustainability with partners and suppliers
  - foster a healthy, inclusive and supportive environment
- Aim to be a centre of excellence in environmental management within higher education, and to promote environmental best practice.

## Sustainability & fundraising

- Optimise long-term supporter development with donor-led, tailored relationship management based on defined needs.
- Fund new specific projects based on integrated fundraising appeals, following new regulatory guidelines and aligned with strategic priorities.
- Increase the predictability of income with a focus on regular giving asks, and high-volume appeals and activity.
- Support international presence with increased investment in Development communications and engagement overseas.
- Expand and enhance commercial potential via new facilities and strategic partnerships with the cultural sector as well as the corporate sector where appropriate.
- Continue to develop a scholarships programme that enables RCM to remain globally competitive and eventually become fee-free.

## APPENDIX: CONTEXT FOR THE MISSION STATEMENT

The Mission Statement supplements the Objects of the Royal College of Music as set out in the 1883 Charter:

- a) the advancement of the Art of Music by means of a central teaching and examining body charged with the duty of providing musical instruction of the highest class, and of rewarding with academical degrees and certificates of proficiency and otherwise persons, whether educated or not at the College, who on examination may prove themselves worthy of such distinctions and evidences of attainment; and
- b) the promotion and supervision of such musical instruction in schools and elsewhere, as may be thought most conducive to the cultivation and dissemination of the Art of Music in the United Kingdom; and
- c) generally the encouragement and promotion of the cultivation of music as an art throughout the world.

Extract from a speech of HRH The Prince of Wales at the opening of the Royal College of Music, as reported in *The Times*, 8 May 1883:

'Fifty scholarships have been established, of which twenty-five confer a free education in music, and twenty-five provide, not only a free education, but also maintenance for the scholars. Of these scholarships, half are held by boys and half by girls. I observe with pleasure that the various districts from which the scholars are drawn indicate the wide-spread distribution of a taste for music, and an adequate cultivation of music throughout the United Kingdom. London, with its vast population, sends only twelve out of the fifty. The remaining thirty-eight come as follows: twenty-eight from fourteen different counties in England, two from Scotland, six from Ireland, one from Wales, and one from Jersey. The occupations of the scholars are as various as the places from which they come. I find that a mill girl, the daughter of a brickmaker, and the son of a blacksmith, take high places in singing, and the son of a farm labourer in violin playing. The capacity of these candidates has been tested by an examination of unusual severity.'