



ROYAL  
COLLEGE  
OF MUSIC  
*London*

# OUR VOLUNTEERS HANDBOOK



**LOTTERY FUNDED**

Hello and Welcome!

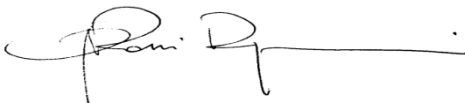
Thank you for choosing to volunteer with us and support the work of the Royal College of Music Museum.

Volunteers are an incredibly important part of our team. You help us deliver a first class service for our visitors, you tell people about our collections, and you are essential to all that goes on in the life of our Museum.

We aim to make sure all our volunteers are welcomed, respected and given opportunities to grow in knowledge, skill and experience.

This handbook will give you an overview of what to expect from volunteering with us. If you need more information or want to view our vacancies, please visit our website [www.rcm.ac.uk/museum](http://www.rcm.ac.uk/museum).

Thank you once again.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gabriele Rossi Rognoni', followed by a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Gabriele Rossi Rognoni  
Curator of the RCM Museum



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*Learning about what goes on in the Museum day-to-day is fascinating and always good fun! The staff are incredibly helpful and friendly, and I always feel able to ask if I am unsure about something.*

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# About us

## The Museum and Collection

The Royal College of Music is a world-leading centre for music education, performance and research, with a museum that preserves and displays an internationally renowned collection of more than 45,000 items including musical instruments, portraits, sculptures, photographs and engravings related to music.

## The Redevelopment

In October 2016, The Heritage Lottery fund awarded a grant of £3.6 million to fund the redevelopment of the Royal College of Music Museum. This significant investment will provide a new Museum to house the RCM's extensive collection, and open up new volunteering opportunities in outreach and audience engagement, digitization and conservation.

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*I first visited the museum in 1973! My real involvement began when I registered for my DMus degree on the subject of the flageolet: the museums' collection of flageolets was invaluable to my research.*

*On completion of my thesis, I volunteered in the museum, re-cataloguing all the recorders, flageolets, and whistles and worked with the conservator to carry out condition surveys on the recorders, flageolets, and early flutes. Volunteering to work on historic instruments is a fascination, a stimulus, and a privilege - a delightful change for an academic from the hours spent in libraries studying fusty archives! I would certainly recommend signing up with the museum and its friendly, professional team - the RCM collection needs you!*

Douglas Macmillan, DMus(RCM), PhD FTCL

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# Volunteering with us

We want to:

- Reach new audiences
- Promote the understanding of music through objects and stories related to its history and performance
- Enable our visitors to experience music directly

You can help us! As a Museum Volunteer, we will give you opportunities to share knowledge, receive training, use your skills and learn new ones, and network.

Here's what some of our volunteers said about us:

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*I visited the Museum many years ago and bought a postcard of the interior, which I still have. I was pleased to be invited last year to be part of the volunteer team!* Charles Hopkins, retired volunteer

*I have taken part in workshops for families and children, as well as doing cataloguing work, conducting visitor surveys and greeting visitors. It's been very helpful for my career development and I've had the chance to participate in lots of different projects and activities, which has been a great experience!* Isobel Clarke, student volunteer

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*Music is always being played in the Museum, which makes it a very pleasant environment to work in.*

Joe Marshall, ex-Team London volunteer

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# Ways to get involved

We are offering volunteer roles in outreach and audience engagement, digitisation and conservation.

## Digitisation

Digital volunteers will be able to get up close to collections material and help us in our quest to make our collections available online. You could assist in photographing our collections, help us put information online, create audio-visual content, or design a virtual exhibition as well as a whole host of other opportunities.





## Outreach activities and audience engagement

As an activity volunteer you could be involved in a range of experiences, from joining us on our Museum Roadshow and manning a pop-up exhibition, assisting in delivering workshops for all ages, to becoming a Museum storyteller, and so much more!



## Conservation

For volunteers in conservation, this will mean working closely with our Conservator to preserve and maintain objects in our collection ready for our new display and research facility.



# Types of volunteering

## Minutes to spare

These are short, 5-10 minute tasks that can often be done remotely. They can include preparing and sending a tweet, sharing a social media post with their friends, inviting friends to events or joining a fundraising campaign. They do not have to be done regularly.

## Give an hour or two

These tasks are fairly short but more meaningful and can involve a quick bit of useful data entry, or creating a Pinterest board of ideas for a Museum project or exhibition.

## Donate a day

This encourages volunteers to spend a day helping the Museum without having to make a regular commitment. It can be project or event related, being part of a consultation focus group or setting up an exhibition.

## Make it regular

This type of volunteering can be more operations-based, encouraging a volunteer to make the Museum a regular part of life by invigilating the galleries on a weekly basis, giving tours, taking storytelling sessions, being involved in a series of events, being part of a regular forum or consultation group, doing research.

## Do it together

This is particularly relevant for family volunteers and can be as simple as volunteering to bring a group to test out a new activity. We would like to begin trialing this type of volunteering as part of our Museum Roadshow.

# What you can expect from us

We aim to make our volunteers feel valued for their abilities, and supported by a comprehensive induction, training and mentoring package. We are committed to recruiting a diverse community of volunteers. See *How We Will Support You* for more details.

# What we expect from you

To ensure you get the most out of your volunteering, please try to do the following:

1. Agree your volunteer hours with your main contact in the Museum
2. Provide as much notice as possible if you are unable to fulfil your volunteering commitment, or no longer wish to be involved in a project
3. Act in a way that doesn't discriminate against or exclude anyone
4. Act in a professional way, especially when you represent the Museum to the public



# How we will support you

## Induction

Your Museum contact will introduce you to your team and anyone else you might be working with. They'll go over health and safety requirements, etc. Please use this opportunity to ask any questions and to highlight any areas in which you would like further training and support.

If you'll be volunteering with us for a period of time, we recommend a settling in period which gives us both a chance to assess how things are working out.

## Training

We want to ensure you feel confident in carrying out your role. We'll give you access to online resources and professional development tools, and will provide one-to-one training and group sessions for more specialised tasks.

## Reliability and commitment

It's very important that you are reliable and stick to any arrangements you have made with us. If you're planning to be away, please let us know well in advance so we can plan ahead.

## Support

You'll receive ongoing support from your main Museum contact and have a regular review meeting dependent on the nature of your role or time commitment. The review meeting, in person or by phone, will focus on how your role is going, what support you need and, if necessary will include an update on what's happening in the life of the Museum. It is an opportunity for you to raise issues and talk constructively about your involvement with us.

# Contact

If you are interested in finding more about volunteering with us, please contact us at [museum@rcm.ac.uk](mailto:museum@rcm.ac.uk) or call 0207 591 4346.

Volunteer vacancies will be advertised on our website, [www.rcm.ac.uk/museum](http://www.rcm.ac.uk/museum).

