



## Summer at the Royal College of Music: folk, festivals and fantasy

### Summer 2026 highlights:

- RCM musicians take to stages across London, with the RCM Symphony Orchestra performing at Queen Elizabeth Hall and three concerts at Wigmore Hall showcasing voice, strings and the RCM Junior Department.
- The RCM Festival of Percussion returns for a fun-filled day of performances and hands-on experiences, headlined by legendary drummer Dave Weckl, and the RCM Strings Festival features a side-by-side concert with the Sacconi Quartet.
- New compositions are premiered, with fantastical new short operas brought to life with opera company Tête à Tête, works inspired by Western and non-Western classical traditions presented in collaboration with the Royal Albert Hall and original scores for screen unveiled alongside newly produced films.

The RCM Symphony Orchestra is out and about this season, performing 20th-century masterpieces under the baton of internationally acclaimed conductor Kahchun Wong at the Southbank Centre's Queen Elizabeth Hall, pairing Mahler's deeply moving Fifth Symphony with Shostakovich's energetic Piano Concerto no 2, performed by rising star Mariamna Sherling (17 May). The RCM Symphony Orchestra can also be heard at the RCM's Amaryllis Fleming Concert Hall on 2 July, with a thrilling programme ranging from Mozart to the modern day.

Three concerts at Wigmore Hall demonstrate the talent of RCM students. On 28 June, a vocal showcase explores the story of Alexandre Dumas' novel *La Dame aux camélias* through songs in French, German, English and Russian. A lunchtime performance on 1 July spotlights music for strings, with repertoire including a selection from Piazzolla's *Histoire du Tango*, and Bruch's rarely heard String Octet. And students from the Royal College of Music Junior Department (RCMJJD) perform as part of a Young Artists Concert (5 July).

New music features throughout the Summer Season. Five brand-new short operas by RCM composers are brought to life in association with opera company Tête à Tête, filled with fantastical settings and magical characters (3, 4 & 6 July). The RCM hosts Bridging Worlds, bringing together musicians from Royal Northern College of Music, Trinity Laban and the Sunshine Orchestra (Chennai) alongside RCM students for a concert of new music inspired by Western and non-Western classical traditions, presented in collaboration with the Royal Albert Hall and its Associate Artists Rushil Ranjan and Abi Sampa (7 May). Students from the College's Composition for Screen course unveil their latest scores, accompanied by new films from young producers, the films projected above the orchestra in the Britten Theatre (23 April).

Folk traditions provide inspiration throughout the season with the RCM Philharmonic celebrating folk music in *Orchestral Masterworks*, as Scottish tunes are transplanted into a contemporary classical concert in *Hearth and Home* by RCM Composition Competition winner Robert Baird, alongside Hindemith's *Symphonic Metamorphosis of Themes by Carl Maria von Weber* and Kodály's *Háry János Suite* (30 April). *Larks Ascending* (29 April) features new works by RCM composers using pre-recorded lark song, while the RCM Museum's new exhibition, *Shared Airs: The Thriving Folk Musics of These Islands*, explores how folk musics are celebrated, shared and reimagined today (19 May – 25 October).

The RCM Festival of Percussion returns for an inspiring and fun day of performances, hands-on experiences and immersive tech. Legendary drummer Dave Weckl joins Mike Dolbear during the day for a talk, before performing alongside the RCM Jazz Orchestra in the evening (10 May). On 28 June, the RCM Strings Festival showcases the RCM Strings Faculty through a range of talks and performances, featuring guest stars the Kleio Quartet and the Sacconi Quartet.

The RCM's exceptional masterclass series continues, welcoming some of today's finest artists. Highlights this season include vocalist and RCM International Visiting Artist Nicky Spence (29 April) and renowned violinist Tasmin Little (5 May).

The Royal College of Music's Junior Department give a variety of performances across the season, with concerts featuring RCMJD Baroque and recorder ensembles, pianists and new works by RCM Junior Department composers. On 28 June, the RCMJD Symphony and Chamber Orchestras return to Cadogan Hall with a thrilling programme including Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring*.

Booking for the Royal College of Music's Summer Season opens on 8 April (1 April for RCM Friends). Full programme details can be found in the [What's On section of the RCM website](#), where tickets will be available online when bookings open. [Find out more about becoming an RCM Friend](#) to access priority booking one week before general release. For press enquiries please contact Emma Cragg: [emma.cragg@rcm.ac.uk](mailto:emma.cragg@rcm.ac.uk)

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About the Royal College of Music

Founded in 1883, the Royal College of Music (RCM) is a world leading music conservatoire with a prestigious history and contemporary outlook. More than 900 undergraduate and postgraduate students come from over 50 countries and are taught in a dynamic environment, leaving the RCM to become the outstanding performers, conductors, and composers of the future. In 2025 the Royal College of Music was ranked the Global No. 1 institution for Performing Arts and Music for the fourth year running in the QS World University Rankings by Subject.

The Royal College of Music has trained some of the most important figures in British and international music including composers and performers such as Gustav Holst, Ralph Vaughan Williams, Benjamin Britten, Michael Tippett, Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, Leopold Stokowski, Sir Hubert Parry, Sir Colin Davis, Sir Neville Marriner, Dame Joan Sutherland, Sir Thomas Allen, Dame Sarah Connolly, Tarik O'Regan, Lord Lloyd Webber, Sir James Galway, Anna Meredith MBE, Louise Alder and Mark-Anthony Turnage.

Regular visitors to the RCM include Sir Thomas Allen, Sir Antonio Pappano, Alina Ibragimova and Lang Lang. Our recent honorary doctorates include Sir Antonio Pappano, Jonas Kaufmann, Dame Kiri Te Kanawa, Sir Roger Norrington, Sir Bryn Terfel, Steve Reich and Maxim Vengerov (Polonsky Visiting Professor of Violin).