

## PRESS RELEASE

Embargoed until 20 November 2017



### Royal College of Music to unveil new organ custom built by world-renowned Flentrop Orgelbouw

#### Designed to complement the College's Amaryllis Fleming Concert Hall in design and sound, the organ is an exceptional new facility for RCM students

The Royal College of Music (RCM) today announced that its new organ will be unveiled to the public in spring 2018. The organ has been custom built by Flentrop Orgelbouw to service the specific requirements of teaching and performance at the College, which has a prestigious history of organ training and many distinguished organ alumni including Dame Gillian Weir, Ralph Downes, Wayne Marshall, Timothy Wakerell and Nicholas Danby. The new instrument is part of the RCM's More Music project, which represents a once-in-a-generation opportunity to transform the College's facilities.

With 34 stops over three manuals and pedals, the RCM's new organ was designed with an emphasis on beauty of tone and voiced for the particular acoustic of the Amaryllis Fleming Concert Hall. Its aesthetic is in the Dutch and North German traditions. The instrument has a case of Limousin oak, with gilding to echo the decoration of the hall. The keyboard has a suspended mechanical action and the sound is fed by two large V-fold bellows with a relatively low wind pressure to achieve a warm, prominent tone, ideal for the Amaryllis Fleming Concert Hall's lively acoustic.

Organ students at the Royal College of Music currently have access to the conservatoire's collection of a further six organs, which include three mechanical action instruments, as well as enjoying opportunities to play and learn at numerous locations across London, including the Royal Albert Hall, St George's Hanover Square and Christ Church Chelsea. The new organ will further enrich teaching and practice for students on the RCM's Bachelors and Masters courses and will feature regularly in performance with soloists and ensembles.

The Royal College of Music is hosting an organ festival on 25 February 2018 to celebrate the new instrument. There will be performances of works by distinguished RCM alumni including Vaughan Williams, Parry and Stanford alongside new works by RCM composers. Experts from Flentrop will be in attendance to provide fascinating insights into the building of the organ. The day will conclude with a recital from internationally acclaimed organist Thomas Trotter, who will demonstrate the power of the new organ with a programme that includes Parry's Fantasia and Fugue in G major.

The new organ replaces an instrument which saw a century of service at the Royal College of Music. A committee chaired by RCM Artistic Director Stephen Johns and led by professor in-charge-of organ David Graham, organ professor Margaret Phillips and academic programmes professor Andrew McCrea, unanimously agreed to engage Flentrop Orgelbouw, amongst the leading and most respected organ builders in the world, to design and build the new instrument. Flentrop has been owned by its employees since 1976 and is a uniquely collaborative company. Flentrop's celebrated organ builder Frits Elshout and General Director Erik Winkel designed the organ in collaboration with their skilled staff. Frits Elshout has been with the company since 1971 and is overseeing the voicing of the Royal College of Music organ.

Professor Colin Lawson CBE, Director of the Royal College of Music, comments, 'I am overjoyed at the results of Flentrop Orgelbouw's expert craftsmanship and their success in turning our vision for this new instrument into a reality. The College's ongoing mission is to enhance our students' experience and I know every musician here will enjoy and learn from our new organ.'

The Royal College of Music organ is in recognition of James Zheng Huang HonRCM, generously supported by the Kingdom Music Education Group, Sir Anthony Cleaver FRCM & Lady Cleaver, The Hon Richard Lyttelton & Romilly Lyttelton, Jane Wilson and John Ward.

Applications to study at the Royal College of Music will open in summer 2018 for entry in September 2019. Find out more about our BMus course and Keyboard Faculty at [www.rcm.ac.uk/keyboard](http://www.rcm.ac.uk/keyboard).

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**Note to editors**

### **About the Royal College of Music**

Founded in 1882, the Royal College of Music (RCM) is a world leading music conservatoire with a prestigious history and contemporary outlook. Our 800 undergraduate and postgraduate students come from over 60 countries and are taught in a dynamic environment, leaving the RCM to become the outstanding performers, conductors and composers of the future.

For the second consecutive year in 2017, the RCM was ranked as the top conservatoire in the UK and Europe for the Performing Arts in the QS World University Rankings and second in the world. In 2016, the RCM was ranked by The Guardian as the leading Higher Education Institution in the UK for studying music and as the top UK conservatoire in the Complete University Guide's Arts/Music Institution League Table 2017.

RCM professors are leaders in their fields and, under such expert guidance, RCM students regularly achieve remarkable success around the globe.

Among our alumni are composers and performers such as Sir Hubert Parry, Benjamin Britten, Gustav Holst, Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, Lord Lloyd Webber, Rebecca Clarke, Dame Joan Sutherland, Dame Sarah Connolly, Elizabeth Watts, Ralph Vaughan Williams, Mark-Anthony Turnage, and Alfie Boe.

Regular visitors to the RCM include Maxim Vengerov (Polonsky Visiting Professor of Violin), Bernard Haitink, Sir Thomas Allen, Vladimir Ashkenazy, Alina Ibragimova and Lang Lang. Our most recent honorary doctorates include Vladimir Jurowski, Dame Kiri Te Kanawa, Sir Roger Norrington, Bryn Terfel and Steve Reich.