

Music At Wells



WELLS
CATHEDRAL SCHOOL

Wells Cathedral School, as one of the UK five Music Specialist Schools, offers a world-class music education. Herewith is a summary of some of the key features of the Music Department currently.

Music Department Buildings

The Music Department operates from various buildings across the School campus. These include **The Music School**, a medieval building embracing **Quilter Hall** which is the base for academic music, brass teaching and for some of the administration team. Adjoining this is **No 26 Vicars' Close**, the home of Woodwind and Jazz. **Polydor House** accommodates the Director and Deputy Director of Music, their PA, and some additional administrative staff. This is also where most of the vocal teaching takes place and its rooms are used for practice and some teaching of junior school pupils. **Mullins** is the base for the keyboard and strings departments. Percussion is based in **Cedars Hall** with a fully-equipped, sound-proofed percussion studio and practice rooms.



Music Department Staffing

The current staffing of the Music Department is as follows:

Director of Music

Also Member of Senior Management Team (SMT)

Deputy Director of Music (Alison Armstrong)

Deputises for the Director of Music as necessary

Oversees the day to day life of the specialist musicians, including being involved in organising their routines and assisting in the achieving of their musical goals and schedules

Advises, in conjunction with Department Coordinators, on the allocation of pupil performances

Liaises with the Director of Music, Admissions and Bursar on recruitment/retention of musicians and any financial support requests

Manages the Graduate Music Assistants Team

Teaches in the academic Music Department and has a Tutor group

Head of Academic Music (Harvey Brink)

Responsible for the management of the academic music teaching staff

A level and GCSE exam administration

Theory provision

Attendance at Senior School Head of Department meetings

Head of Performing Arts, Junior School (Clare Rowntree)

Responsible for all aspects of Music in the Junior School (Nursery to Year 6)

Oversees the provision of ensembles for junior musicians and directs the Junior Choir and Orchestra.

Liaises with the Department Coordinators on the provision of instrumental lessons

Liaises with the Director of Music of Wells Cathedral on the provision of musicianship skills for the Choristers

Coordinates performance opportunities for Junior School pupils

Department Coordinators

Strings: Simon Smith

Woodwind, Jazz/Popular Music and Coordinator of the Visiting Music Staff: Ed Leaker

Brass: Ross Brown

Keyboard: John Byrne

Vocal: Christopher Finch

Percussion: Jayne Obradovic (also oversees pupil well-being and residential courses)

Responsible for oversight of their staff teams of instrumental/vocal coaches and for the musicians in their Department

Advise the Director of Music on all matters relating to their specialisms

Join audition panels for recruitment

Allocate pupils to performances and ensemble groups

Coach ensembles and teach as appropriate

Coordinators also lead a Tutor group

Collaborative Pianist/Accompaniment (Dominic Hansom)

Responsible for coordinating the accompaniment needs of all pupils across all Departments

Supported by three full-time staff accompanists and with help from other members of the Music Department staff

Overall, the Music Department has approximately 100 staff in total, including the academic, administrative and Visiting Music Staff. Approximately 70 of these staff are Visiting Music Staff. There are also ten Graduate Music Assistants and two full-time technicians.

Music Lessons

400 pupils across the School have weekly instrumental/vocal lessons, of which around 200 are Music Specialists, Special Provision Musicians or Vocal Programme pupils. Other pupils are classed as General Musicians.

The School provides 1,500 instrumental/vocal music lessons per week (including ensembles) on average. We currently have 84 pupils studying A Level Music (many of whom also study Music Technology A Level), and around 100 pupils study GCSE Music each year. Some of our Music Specialists sit their GCSE Music in Year 9 and then follow the recently introduced Wells Specialist Music Certificate course.

The Specialist Music Programme

This course is for very able young musicians whose intention is to pursue a professional career in music. They receive up to three hours 1:1 specialist coaching weekly and attend a performance class. Specialists also participate in masterclasses by eminent visiting practitioners and other activities. Whilst some are also high-flying academics, specialist musicians will generally have a reduced academic timetable to allow them to focus on their musical studies and enable them to fulfil the practice regime expected of them.

Music and Dance Scheme

The Department for Education funds some of the pupil places at the five Specialist Music Schools in the UK through the Music & Dance Scheme. Wells is currently allocated 80 places for specialist musicians annually on this scheme. Additional funding is available via the School's own Bursary Awards.



Percussion Studio, Cedars Hall

Performance Venues

Our main performance venues are:

- the state-of-the-art Eavis Auditorium and John Baxter Foyer, both in Cedars Hall (which opened in 2016)
- Quilter Hall, a 14th century former Archdeacon's Hall in the Music School
- Ritchie Hall, which is primarily a performance space for the Junior School
- Wells Cathedral

Concerts

There are more than 250 concert performances at Wells each year which are mainly given by our own young musicians but we also host some of the world's finest performers as part of our Events Programme. Quilter Hall hosts Lunchtime Concerts most Tuesdays and Thursdays. Most concerts are open to the public.

Ensembles

There are currently more than 50 ensembles which include Symphony Orchestra, String Orchestra, Jazz Orchestra, Wind Band, natural trumpets, new music ensemble, brass dectet, jazz combos, octets, rock bands, percussion ensembles, quartets, trios and a range of vocal ensembles including Choralia (premier upper voices), Chamber Choir, Chapel Choir and close harmony groups.



Quilter Hall



Choristers

Wells Cathedral has both a boys and a girls choir. All the Choristers are educated at Wells Cathedral School where they receive musicianship, theory, aural and academic music courses alongside the specialist musicians. They are trained for their Cathedral responsibilities by the Director of Music of Wells Cathedral (Jeremy Cole) and by the Assistant Director of Music and Assistant Organist of the Cathedral. A number of Choristers develop their instrumental skills sufficiently to enable them to go on to become specialist musicians when they leave the choir.

Music Facilities

Commensurate with the demands of operating a Specialist Music School, Wells has a fine range of instruments including Steinway grand pianos, two-pipe organs (as well as access to the Cathedral organ), harpsichords, natural brass instruments, several sets of percussion instruments including marimbas and orchestral percussion, a full Gamelan and string and woodwind instruments which are available on loan. The School has a recording suite and state-of-the-art recording and mixing equipment. In recent years the School has invested in its provision for Music Technology.

Wells Cathedral School Music YouTube

Many performances by our young musicians are video recorded and we have live-streamed a significant number of concerts and events. We also showcase musical performances on our YouTube channel which contains performances ranging from our solo recitals to our Symphony Orchestra performances, and School services to charity events. It gives a flavour of the breadth of musical experiences that take place at Wells from those following Specialist Music courses to those who enjoy their Music as a hobby. As well as enabling our musicians to reach a global audience it also means that parents/guardians, friends and relatives can access performances wherever they are based. Please use this link to access a range of our recordings: <https://www.youtube.com/c/WellsCathedralSchoolMusic>

Life after Wells

Wells has a superb track record of working with its pupils to help them achieve their goals. Its musicians go on to the finest conservatoires and universities in the UK, Europe, the USA and elsewhere. Its success rate in terms of musicians winning places at their first-choice destinations has always been extremely high and for the past three years 100% of leavers have achieved this, many with generous scholarships.





Control Room, Cedars Hall