

MUSIC





Studying Music at Highgate

As a department we believe that everyone is capable of being a musician. We aim to build an aspirational and creative musical environment that is open to all.

We want to inspire young people to engage confidently and critically with music thereby developing an independent love of musical learning. We aim to promote musical awareness, which searches beyond the boundaries of the classroom to connect with the world; nurturing 21st-century musicians. We want to foster the exploration of musical opportunities for all – both independent and collaborative – and to encourage each student in confident musical risk-taking at whatever level, so that they may discover an independence of musical thought and style that allows them to express their individuality and pursue their ambition and aspiration, however great. Lastly, we want to promote musical relevance and authenticity, inspiring musical scholarship that dares.

“What I love about music at Highgate is that it’s so diverse - we have musicians that play all sorts of different genres, and performance opportunities that embrace this. One day I could be singing a Renaissance piece in a choir, and the next I’d be performing a Pop song at one of the open mic nights.”

Sarah, Y11

Performance

In addition to our wealth of performing opportunities beyond the classroom, performance is a key aspect of all academic lessons. Be it a collaborative performance of a group composition at Key Stage 3 or learning new and advanced repertoire at A Level, practical music making is central to our pupils’ learning experience. From Year 10 onwards, regular solo performance is also part of the curriculum. Pupils are expected to perform to their peers and take part in the termly solo platform concerts in order to develop their confidence and musical communication.

Composition

There is a wealth of opportunities for pupils interested in music composition at Highgate. We offer composition clubs twice a week, as well as regular workshops with professional composers and performers, for pupils of all ages and abilities, and we celebrate composition and arranging in a wide range of styles, including classical, jazz and pop. Our diverse ensemble leaders are always keen to programme pieces by Highgate students in concerts and other events, and we run a number of competitions which composers can get involved with: Highgate Carol Competition (the winning piece is sung at the Christmas services), Highgate House Singing Competition, and Highgate Instrumental Competition.

Skills gained

Creativity; Critical thinking; Communication; Collaboration; Self-discipline; Analytical thinking; Aural awareness; Organisation; Memory and concentration; Performing under pressure; Attention to detail; Independence; IT proficiency; Self-reflection; Determination; Growth mindset; Perseverance.

Destinations

Recent leavers have gone to study music at the following destinations

- Cambridge
- Oxford
- Kings College London
- Manchester
- Edinburgh
- Goldsmiths
- Royal Academy of Music
- Royal College of Music
- Guildford School of Acting (Musical Theatre)



Choirs

Highgate has a strong choral tradition, with alumni such as John Rutter and Sir John Tavener.

“Choral music has been one of the highlights of my time at Highgate. I’ve learnt so much music across all the choirs and had a lot of fun rehearsing and performing, getting to sing at venues such as Southwark Cathedral and the Royal Festival Hall. It has really boosted my confidence as a singer and inspired me to pursue a choral scholarship at Cambridge University next year.”

Sarah, Y13 Music Scholar

We have six choirs in the senior school, covering a wide range of vocal repertoire from sacred motets to musical theatre medleys, catering for all types and styles of singing. We provide a clear choral journey from year 7 to 13, with specific training provided at each stage through the relevant choir(s). Every year we have at least one pupil go to university with a choral scholarship.

Consort

Auditioned, years 11-13. Preparation for university choral scholarships with a focus on sight-reading Renaissance polyphony and one-to-a-part singing. Advanced sight-reading and strong aural skills required. Consort provides hymn singing in weekly break time chapel services, sings evening services in Chapel, and performs in concerts in and out of school.

Chorale

Auditioned, years 9-13. Singing a variety of secular and sacred music from the Renaissance to the 21st Century. Continued choral training. Basic/intermediate sight-reading required as well as strong aural skills. Chorale sings evening and weekend services in the school Chapel and performs in end of term concerts.

Boys’ and Girls’ Chapel Choirs

Auditioned, all year groups (including Junior School). Singing sacred music for evening Chapel services, Christmas Carol Services, and large-scale vocal works in the Lent term concert at a central London venue. Basic/intermediate sight-reading required.

Training Choir

Auditioned, years 7-10. Focused choral training, developing sight-reading and aural skills. Singing demanding secular music from a variety of composers. This choir is perfect preparation for those pupils interested in auditioning for Chorale at a later stage. Training Choir sings in end of term concerts.

Contemporary Choir

Open to all year groups (no audition). Singing pop and musical theatre songs. No sight-reading ability necessary, just a love of singing. Contemporary Choir sings in end of term concerts.

Cambiata

Open to all boys with changing voices (no audition).

Recent leavers have gained choral scholarships at the following destinations:

- Cambridge University
- Oxford University
- Chelmsford Cathedral

“The choral aspect of Highgate is frankly incredible - every rehearsal is so engaging and fun, and I always feel proud of the results we achieve in each choir. I only wish I had joined the choirs earlier and been able to sing more music! I definitely have Highgate to thank for inspiring me to apply for a choral scholarship at university!”

Harry, Y13 Music Scholar



Instrumental Ensembles

We have multiple ensembles and orchestras for pupils to take part in depending on musical preferences and strengths, from jazz and brass through to woodwind and strings.

"The whole music department is great at providing help and attention. It is a joy to study a great range of music in such depth"

Joe, Year 12

Symphony Orchestra

An orchestra of approximately 50 players directed by the Director of Music. Minimum expected standard is approximately Grade 8 (strings) or Grade 8/7 (woodwind, brass, percussion). It prepares music for at least two concerts per year. In addition to a repertoire including classical symphonies and overtures, etc., concertos are sometimes performed with pupils as soloists.

Philharmonia

An intermediate orchestra of approximately 50 players directed by the Assistant Director of Music. Minimum expected standard is approximately Grade 6/7 (strings) or Grade 8/7 (woodwind, brass, percussion). It prepares music for at least two concerts per year.

Sinfonia

Drawing its players mostly from Y7 and Y8 this is an orchestra of approximately 30 players directed by the Director of Music. Minimum expected standard is approximately Grade 3/6 (strings) or Grade 5/6 (woodwind, brass, percussion). It prepares music for at least two concerts per year.

Chamber Orchestra

A string orchestra of approximately 25 players of minimum Grade 8 standard. Directed by the Director of Music. Performs at least twice a year, usually at the same concerts as the Symphony Orchestra.

Senior Woodwind Ensemble

A wind band of approximately 35 players of minimum Grade 7 standard. Its repertoire consists of mainly contemporary wind-band music, and traditional classical band music. Directed by the Head of Woodwind and Percussion.

Junior Wind Ensemble

A wind band of approximately 35 players of minimum Grade 2/3 standard. Its repertoire consists of contemporary wind-band music, film and jazz music. Directed by the Assistant Director of Music.

Jazz Orchestra

Consisting mostly of players above Grade 5/6 standard. Approximately 15 performers are involved in performing jazz band music from the 1920s to modern-day arrangements. Directed by the Head of Jazz.

Brass Ensemble

A band of approximately 15 players of minimum Grade 3/4 standard. Repertoire ranges from 1600 to the present day, mostly focussing on classical and brass-band music. Directed by the Head of Brass.

We run a popular instrumental scheme for pupils across the whole school. Music lessons are available for the following instruments: Bassoon, Cello, Clarinet, Contemporary piano styles, Double Bass, Drums/Percussion, Flute, Guitar/Electric Guitar, Horn, Jazz Piano, Jazz Saxophone, Oboe, Organ, Piano, Saxophone, Singing – classical, contemporary and music theatre, Trombone, Trumpet/Jazz trumpet, Tuba, Viola and Violin.



Beyond the Classroom

From classical and choral to pop, hip hop and rap, we offer a variety of performance opportunities, events and trips for all ages and abilities every term.

A typical Michaelmas Term in the Music Department

September

Music Scholars evening
House Vocal/Instrumental Competition
Evensong in Chapel

November

Fireworks Gig (Rock and Pop Bands)
Remembrance Service in Chapel (Chorale)
School Remembrance Service on the Parade Ground (Chorale and Brass)
Y7 & Y8 Solo Platform Concerts
Y9, Y10 & Y11 Solo Platform Concerts
Y12 & Y13 Solo Platform Concerts
Song Academy songwriting workshop
Winter Concert
Michaelmas Concert

October

Ensembles rehearse during school Open Day
Sung Eucharist in Chapel
Evensong in Chapel
Rock and Pop Gig
Mid-term Service at St Michael's

December

Advent Service in Chapel
Jazz Gala
'Unplugged' Gig
Rock and Pop bands perform at Charity Breakfast
Carol Service at St Mark's Church, Dalston, St Michael's Church, Highgate and School Chapel
Pond Square Carols



Music Scholarships

A Highgate music award can consist of tuition in one or two instruments or voice and/or a remission of a percentage of school fees.

Music awards are open to applicants at 11+ and 16+ and are awarded following two rounds of auditions.

"It sounds like a lot, but really it is the perfect balance between fun and hard work"

Harry, Year 13

Week of a Music Scholar

"Highgate has a huge number of opportunities to rehearse and perform music both individually and as part of an ensemble, so I thought I would write an account of the musical activities I get up to during a typical week at school.

On Monday I have two different ensembles - Symphonic Band at lunch and Symphony Orchestra after school. I play the flute in both of these ensembles, and I find it really interesting to notice the differences between playing with other wind instruments in the band and playing with strings in the orchestra. We produce very different sounds and play different repertoire, but both are really enjoyable.

On Tuesday, I will have two or three activities depending on which week it is. At break, I normally have my individual piano lesson with Ms Eimer, Head of Keyboard. This year we decided it would be a good idea for me to learn all of Bach's two-part inventions, which turned out to be a really interesting project. Then at lunch, Chorale assemble for our weekly rehearsal as a whole choir, led by Ms Harrison, Head of Choral Music. Every other week, each voice part has a before-school sectional rehearsal, and luckily the basses have theirs on Tuesday morning, so we are able to implement what we went through later that day in the whole-choir rehearsal.

Thursday is an equally busy day, with Music Theory classes before school and the weekly

Consort rehearsal at lunch. Consort is a smaller choir than Chorale, and we focus on close-harmony and polyphonic repertoire, as well as some arrangements of pop songs! The rehearsals are always great fun, but we also have to work hard because whenever we learn a new piece we immediately sight-read it without prior practice.

Finally, on Friday, I have my individual singing lesson with Mr Evans, Head of Vocal Studies. We have spent this year working towards and completing a DipABRSM qualification - this involved choosing and working on a huge amount of repertoire, which was great fun and improved my confidence immensely. At lunch I go to the weekly rehearsal for Boys' Chapel Choir, which has singers from all years (with the younger boys with unbroken voices singing the treble line), and we work on pieces that we sing in services which happen about once every half-term. It is really interesting to sing in an all-male choir because the sound we produce is very different to that of Chorale, say, where the Soprano and Alto lines are sung by female voices.

It sounds like a lot, but really it is the perfect balance between fun and hard work, and I am so grateful to Highgate for both encouraging me to join different ensembles and making them so enjoyable to go to. It really is one of the best parts of life at Highgate."

Harry, Year 13 Music Scholar

Interested candidates should submit a music scholarship application form to our Admissions Office by the closing date of Wednesday 10 November 2021 (11+) or Friday 22 October 2021 (16+).

All candidates must satisfy the academic requirements for a place at Highgate before they will be considered for a music award.



Rock, Pop & Rap

Over 100 pupils are involved in our exciting and innovative rock, pop and rap department. Pupil producers work closely with our singer/songwriters as well as our rappers to produce original tracks.

"Rap club has been an incredible journey. Learning and performing at world famous venues has been the best head start I could have."

Pupil

Previous activities have included:

Workshops in School

- Band Development sessions with Carrie Grant
- Q&A sessions with Mike Skinner and Akala
- Weekly rap and production mentoring sessions with Capo Lee
- Beatbox workshops with Grace Savage and Bellatrix
- DJ workshop with DJ Shorty
- Music Industry mentoring sessions with Nick Worthington
- Song writing sessions with Song Academy

Performances at London venues

- Wireless Stage at Finsbury Park
- Sadlers Wells
- Music for Youth Frequencies Showcase
- Radio 1 Rinse FM
- Rich Mix
- The Camden Assembly

Trips

Trips to record

- Nando's studio
- Ditto studios
- LSO digital tech suite

Trips to explore facilities

- Roundhouse Paul Hamlyn Wing
- YouTube space at Google HQ
- Soapbox Islington
- Urban Development Urban Artist School

Students recent work experience

- Warner Studios
- Black Butter Records
- Hackney Empire Young Producers Scheme
- Urban Flames

Staff

Director of Music

Mr Jonathan Murphy, GRNCM, FRSA

Head of Academic Music and Choral Music

Ms Catherine Harrison, MA (Cantab)

Assistant to the Director of Music

Mr Gareth Hanson BMus, LRAM, FRSM

Academic Music Teachers

Ms Ghislaine Reece-Trapp, BA (Oxon), FRCO; Mr Thomas Jack, MA (Cantab); Ms Emma Rivlin, BA, MPhil

Head of Strings

Mr Dan James, BMus (Hons), MMus

Head of Woodwind

Mr Stuart King, BMus (Hons)

Head of Brass

Ms Laetitia Stott, BA, MPhil, MPerf

Head of Keyboard

Ms Nicola Eimer, BMus, PGDip, DipRAM, MMus (Juilliard), ARAM

Head of Jazz

Mr Andre Canniere, BMus, MMus

Music Department Manager

Ms Natasha Creed, BMus

Musician in Residence

Mr James Way, BMus (Hons), MPerf

22

Instruments
Taught

6

Academic
Music Teachers



682

pupils learning
an instrument
in school



70

pupils performing
in solo concerts
every term

6

Heads of
Instrumental
School

51

Visiting
Music Teachers



49

Pupils studying
GCSE Music

6

Large
Instrumental
Ensembles



12

Pupils studying
A-Level Music



29

Musical
Ensembles



6

Choirs

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