

HIGHGATE



Senior School  
**Music**

[highgateschool.org.uk](http://highgateschool.org.uk)

# Studying Music

At Highgate, we believe that everyone is capable of being a musician and our department offers an aspirational and creative musical environment that is open to all pupils.

We want to inspire young people to engage confidently and critically with music, so they can develop an independent love of learning and an awareness that goes beyond the boundaries of the classroom to connect with the world. Our aim is to nurture pupils as 21st-century musicians, to foster the exploration of musical opportunities for all – both independent and collaborative – and to encourage each pupil in confident musical risk-taking at whatever level. This allows them to discover an independence of musical thought and style to express their individuality and pursue their ambition and aspiration.

The Music department teaches all pupils from Year 7 to 13, with the option to study for GCSE and A level Music. Class sizes are small, with a maximum of 24 in Years 7 and 8 and an average of 12 in Year 9, which is setted. Academic music lessons take place in bespoke classrooms, one of which features a Mac Music Technology Suite. We run free Theory classes for pupils studying different Grades (subject to demand) on a weekly basis before school. Each week, there are over 35 musical ensemble rehearsals and over 800 individual music lessons.

“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.”

Highgate Music pupil

## Composition

We celebrate composition and arranging in a wide range of music styles, from classical, jazz and pop. Pupils interested in music composition can get involved in opportunities through our composition clinic, as well as regular workshops with professional composers and performers, for all ages and abilities.

Our diverse ensemble leaders are always keen to programme pieces by pupils in concerts and other events, and we run a number of competitions which composers can get involved in, such as a Carol Competition, House Singing Challenge, Young Musician of the Year and an Instrumental Competition.

## Performance

Performance is a key aspect of all academic lessons, as well as the opportunities on offer outside of the classroom. Whether it’s 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 to develop their confidence and musical communication.



## Skills

Music is not just about playing and performing, it develops transferable skills that benefit young people in numerous ways: analytical thinking, aural awareness, creativity, critical thinking, communication, collaboration and teamwork, concentration, confidence, discipline, determination, digital and IT proficiency, perseverance, self-reflection and growth mindset.

## Higher Education & Careers

Many Highgate pupils have gone on to successful careers in music, including the composers Sir John Rutter and Sir John Tavener. Recent Sixth Form graduates have gone on to study at renowned universities including the Royal Academy of Music; Royal College of Music; Cambridge; Oxford; Edinburgh and King’s College London.



# Music Awards

We offer Music Scholarships, Exhibitions and Music Potential Awards, which can provide free tuition in one or two instruments or voice, and/or a remission of a percentage of school fees. Awards are open to applicants at 11+ and 16+ and are decided following auditions and interviews. All candidates must satisfy the academic requirements for a place at Highgate before they are considered for an award.

Interested candidates should indicate on the online Admissions application form that they wish to be considered for a music award.

*“It sounds like a lot, but really it is the perfect balance between fun and hard work.”*

## A week in the life of a Year 13 Music Scholar

“Highgate has a huge number of opportunities to rehearse and perform music both individually and as part of an ensemble.

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 have two or three activities depending on which week it is. At break, I normally have my individual piano lesson with the 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 the 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 the 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 pupil singers from all years (the younger boys with unbroken voices sing the treble line), and we work on pieces that we perform in services which happen about once every half-term. It's 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 it's really the perfect balance between fun and hard work, and I'm 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, Music Scholar**



# Choirs

Highgate has a strong choral tradition, with several opportunities for pupils of all abilities to get involved in different singing styles.

“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.”

Sarah, Music Scholar Alumni

The Senior School has six choirs covering a wide range of vocal repertoire, from sacred motets to musical theatre medleys. We provide a clear choral journey from Year 7 to 13, with specific training provided at each stage through the relevant choir. In addition, we also run smaller A Cappella groups who perform in concerts and at other school events. Recent leavers have gained choral scholarships at universities including Cambridge, Oxford and Chelmsford Cathedral.

## Training Choir

Year 7-10 pupils (no audition) have focused choral training, developing sight-reading and aural skills. Singing demanding secular music from a variety of composers, with performances at the end of term school concerts. This choir is perfect preparation for those pupils interested in auditioning for Chorale at a later stage.

## Chapel Choirs

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

## Chorale

Auditioned for Year 9-13 with basic/intermediate sightreading required as well as strong aural skills. Sing a variety of secular and sacred music from the Renaissance to the 21st century. Continued choral training. Chorale perform at evening and weekend services in the school Chapel and in end of term concerts.

## Consort

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

## Contemporary Choir

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

## Cambiata

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



# 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.”*

Highgate Music pupil

## **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, with concertos sometimes performed with pupil soloists.

## **Sinfonia**

An orchestra of approximately 30 players, with pupils mostly from Year 7 and 8, directed by the Head of Strings and 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.

## **Philharmonia**

An intermediate orchestra of approximately 50 players directed by a member of the Music department academic team. 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.

## **Chamber Orchestra**

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

## **Senior Woodwind Brass and Percussion Ensemble**

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

## **Junior Wind Ensemble**

A wind band of approximately 35 players of minimum Grade 2-3 standard, directed by Head of Woodwind and Percussion. Its repertoire consists of contemporary wind-band music, film and jazz music.

## **Jazz Orchestra**

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

## **Brass Ensemble**

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



## Rock, Pop & Rap

Pupils can get involved in our exciting and innovative rock, pop and rap department. Pupil producers work closely with our singers, songwriters and rappers to create original tracks.

Previous activities have included:

### Workshops

- Band Development sessions with Carrie Grant
- Q&A sessions with Mike Skinner (The Streets) and Akala
- 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

- Jacksons Lane Theatre
- Roundhouse, Camden
- Wireless Stage at Finsbury Park
- Sadlers Wells
- Music for Youth Frequencies Showcase
- Rich Mix
- The Camden Assembly

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

Highgate Music pupil

### Trips

- Nando’s studio
- Ditto studios
- LSO digital tech suite
- Roundhouse Paul Hamlyn Wing
- YouTube space at Google HQ
- Soapbox Islington
- Urban Development Urban Artist School

### Pupil work experience

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

# School Facilities & Equipment



The Senior School has excellent facilities for lessons, rehearsing, recording and performing.

**Performance spaces include: Dyne House Auditorium; School Chapel, Central Hall, Drama Studio and School Museum.**

**12 Individual teaching studios**

**5 Academic Music classrooms including a 13 Mac technology suite with Sibelius software.**

**2 large recital spaces with Steinway/Yamaha Grand Pianos**

**1 Drum studio**

**Music Lessons & Instrument Hire**

We run an instrumental scheme for pupils across the whole school with paid music lessons and instrument hire available for the following instruments and vocals:

Bassoon, Cello, Clarinet, Double Bass, Drums/Jazz Drums, Flute, Guitar/Electric Guitar, Horn, Oboe, Organ, Percussion, Piano (classical and jazz), Recorder, Saxophone/Jazz Saxophone, Singing (classical, contemporary and musical theatre), Trombone, Trumpet/Jazz trumpet, Tuba, Viola and Violin.

For music lesson prices please visit the School Fees page on the Highgate website.

## Staff

Our staff come from a wide range of musical backgrounds, pupils also benefit from visiting teachers from different music disciplines.



**Director of Music**

Mr Jonathan Murphy GRNCM MA FRSA

**Head of Academic Music and Choral Music**

Ms Catherine Harrison MA (Cantab) QTS

**Academic Music Teachers**

Ms Ghislaine Reece-Trapp BA (Oxon)  
PGCE FRCO

Mr Thomas Jack MA (Cantab)

Ms Serena Shah MA (Cantab) PGCE  
DipABRSM ATCL

Mr Laurence Padfield BMus (Hons)

**Head of Strings**

Mr Adam Gibbs BMus MMus MMus

**Head of Woodwind**

Mr Stuart King BMus (Hons) GGSMD

**Head of Brass**

Mr Jonathan Harris BMus (Hons)  
BSc (Hons)

**Head of Keyboard**

Ms Nicola Eimer BMus PGDip DipRAM  
MMus (Juilliard) ARAM

**Head of Vocal Studies**

Mr James Way BMus (Hons) MPerf PgCert

**Head of Jazz**

Mr Andre Canniere BMus MMus

**Graduate Music Administrator**

Ms Cara Houghton MMus

**Music Department Manager**

Ms Rachael Williams BMus



# Music Calendar

Highgate's musical life is lively and varied, and we encourage pupils to participate in co-curricular musical activities beyond the classroom. Across the school year, we schedule performance opportunities, events and trips for all ages and abilities – from classical and choral to pop and jazz.

## Michaelmas Term (September to December)

Alumni Evensong in Chapel  
 Music Scholars evening  
 House Vocal Competition  
 Sung Eucharists in Chapel  
 Come and Sing Event  
 Rock and Pop Gig  
 Remembrance Services  
 Fireworks Gig  
 Solo Platform Concerts for all year groups  
 Song Academy songwriting workshop  
 Lower School Ensembles Winter Concert  
 Michaelmas Senior Large Ensembles Concert  
 Advent Service in Chapel  
 Jazz Gala  
 'Unplugged' Gig  
 Rock and Pop bands perform at Charity Breakfast  
 Carol Service at St Mark's Church, Dalston

Carol Service at St Michael's Church, Highgate  
 Pond Square Carols  
 End of Term Carol Service

## Lent Term (January to March)

Highgate Young Musician of the Year Competition  
 House Instrumental Competition  
 School Musical at Finchley ArtsDepot  
 Rothenberg Pop and Rock Sessions  
 Solo Platform Concerts for all year groups  
 A level Recitals  
 Come and Sing Event  
 Contemporary Music Showcase  
 Lower School Ensembles Rush Hour Concert  
 Lent Concert at Southwark Cathedral  
 Bach Day  
 End of Term Service

## Summer Term (April to July)

Vocal Showcase  
 Chorale in Concert  
 Guitar Showcase  
 Chamber Orchestra in Concert  
 Pizza Express Jazz Gig  
 Highgate Emerging Talent Competition  
 Year 13 Leavers' Service  
 Solo Platform Concerts for all year groups  
 Piano Day  
 Come and Sing Event  
 Summer Concert  
 Vocal Day  
 Summer Jazz Series  
 Brass Day  
 Summer Pop and Rock Series  
 Valedictory Service in Chapel  
 End of Term Service

35

music ensembles  
rehearse each week



60

visiting  
music teachers



12

individual teaching  
studios



70

pupils performing  
in solo concerts  
every term



800

music lessons  
taught each week



28

instruments &  
vocals taught



Statistics as of 2023/24

