

London's newest museum to open to public at Royal College of Music this October

London's newest museum will open to the public this autumn after being kept under-wraps for over a year due to the Covid-19 pandemic disrupting its original planned opening.

- New Royal College of Music Museum will be the only museum of music in the unique Exhibition Road cultural area of South Kensington
- Following a £3.6million investment from Heritage Lottery Fund, the Museum underwent a complete redevelopment, with the old building demolished and a new state-of-the-art Museum built in its place
- Priceless items on display include the world's earliest guitar and earliest stringed keyboard instruments, plus Milein Cosman artworks on public display for the first time and exciting temporary exhibitions to be announced

The highly anticipated Royal College of Music Museum will open to the public on 5 October 2021, offering visitors the unique opportunity to interact with over 500 years of musical history. Items on permanent display include the world's oldest guitar and earliest keyboard instrument with strings, along with 56 other fascinating instruments specially chosen from the Royal College of Music's designated collection of over 15,000 items to bring musical history to life.

Originally due to open in spring 2021, the new Royal College of Music Museum was built from scratch as part of the RCM's £40 million four-year campus transformation project. Since 2017, the College's iconic Grade II listed South Kensington home has nearly doubled in capacity, designed by celebrated architect John Simpson. Building work continued throughout the pandemic, including fit-out and instrument mounting under strict social distancing rules, but the Museum's intended opening date had to be delayed. The new Royal College of Music Museum brings public access to the heart of the historic institution, alongside a new public café and two new performance spaces.

The Royal College of Music Museum is intended as an interactive experience, with regular performances by RCM musicians and the opportunity for visitors to create their own music in the Weston Discovery Centre. As well as musical instruments, the Museum tells its story through art, including an iconic portrait of Farinelli and a remarkable Tischbein featuring an instrument from the collection displayed alongside. A series of portraits by celebrated German artist Milein Cosman will be on display to the public for the first time in the Lavery Gallery, featuring intimate sketches of RCM alumni Benjamin Britten, Ralph Vaughan Williams, Imogen Holst and Amaryllis Fleming, alongside many other composers and musicians.

There are three key areas – Music is Creation, Music is Craft and Music is Performance – each exploring phases of the creative process from the birth of a new idea, its realisation through

craftsmanship, to performance. In the Museum's beautiful double-height atrium space, a hanging artwork installation by Scottish artist Victoria Morton takes its inspiration from the permanent exhibition, having been specially commissioned and created for the space.

In anticipation of the physical opening, the Museum collection is publicly available in several free digital exhibitions released online. These specially curated exhibitions explore the core collection and spotlight particular items, composers and themes represented strongly in the Museum. Also available online is the RCM Library's extensive collection; together, the Royal College of Music's Museum and Library collections were awarded prestigious designated status by Arts Council England in recognition of their outstanding cultural significance.

The Royal College of Music Museum provides unparalleled insights into music history for the public and is also an important additional learning space for RCM students. Musicians studying at the renowned institution will have access to the instruments and resident experts, complimenting their research and study with first-hand experience. The new Wolfson Centre in Music & Material Culture will house more of the Museum's collection and facilitate on-site conservation work. Students will be able to volunteer for Museum-led educational activities aimed at primary, secondary and home-educated children.

Professor Gabriele Rossi Rognoni, Curator of the Royal College of Music Museum and Professor of Material Culture and Music, comments: *'The Royal College of Music Museum will be a wonderful addition to London's cultural scene and I can't wait to finally invite visitors to experience our quirky, living, breathing collection first-hand. The Museum will not be a quiet, stuffy place but a space filled with music; our artefacts were made to be played and heard after all! As well as visitors, I am excited to offer our students the unique experience of having such a rich collection on-site, as well as conservation work and historical performances, to complement their education.'*

www.rcm.ac.uk/museum

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Notes to Editors

Social Media

If you do visit, please help spread the word about the new museum by sharing your experience on your social media channels, tagging and following [Facebook](#) (@royalcollegeofmusic), [Twitter](#) (@rcmlondon) and [Instagram](#) (@rcmlondon).

Please also encourage your friends, families and other networks to visit and experience what the museum has to offer.

Images

Download images:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/lmd0w8hm79ocr5f/AACfza4pf1vr-HgZ4TCdBga7a?dl=0>

Tickets

Entry to the RCM Museum is free though a ticket is required. Tickets can be [booked online*](#), and some tickets will be available on the door without prior registration. Tickets will be available for either morning or afternoon slots.

- The RCM Museum is open Tuesday–Friday, 10.15am-5.45pm and Saturday–Sunday, 11am-6pm
- *Tickets reserved online are subject to a £1.95 booking fee.

Tickets for October can be booked via this link: <http://www.rcm.ac.uk/bookmuseumoct>

First Temporary Exhibition

Discover a world where art & music collided

Alongside the permanent exhibition visitors are invited to experience the spirit of bohemia with the Royal College of Music Museum's new temporary exhibition, *Musical Portraits in Bohemian London (1870-1930)*

Kensington was once home to a lively social circle of famous artists and musicians. Through their friendships they inspired each other in new, creative ways. Artists like Edward Burne-Jones and John Singer Sargent painted portraits and designed posters of musicians including Jan Paderewski and George Henschel. Equally, composers who were exposed to the Pre-Raphaelite movement were inspired to write new music and many performed in artists' studios.

The Royal College of Music was at the heart of this community. RCM professors and students drew upon their artistic connections and several prominent artists even enrolled their children as budding instrumentalists. Find out more about these characters and get up close to their original artworks and manuscripts.

Book now to secure your visit to the museum this October. Tickets will be release on a month-by-month basis.

The temporary exhibition will run until 8 January 2022

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. Our 900 undergraduate and postgraduate students come from over 55 countries and are taught in a dynamic environment, leaving the RCM to become the outstanding performers, conductors and composers of the future.

For the sixth consecutive year, the RCM was ranked as the top institution in the UK for Performing Arts in the prestigious QS World University Rankings 2021, and top in Europe for the second year running. In a recent Higher Education Statistics Agency survey (2021), of the RCM alumni who graduated in 2019, 86% of survey respondents had moved into employment or further study 15 months after graduating.

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

Among our over 9,500 alumni are composers and performers such as Sir Hubert Parry, Benjamin Britten, Gustav Holst, Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, Lord Lloyd Webber, Rebecca Clarke, Anna Meredith, Clemency Burton-Hill, Dame Joan Sutherland, Dame Sarah Connolly, Gerald Finley, Sophie Bevan, Louise Alder, Ralph Vaughan Williams, Mark-Anthony Turnage and Sir Thomas Allen.

Regular visitors to the RCM include Sir Thomas Allen, Vladimir Ashkenazy, Bernard Haitink, 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).