

Information for Applicants

# Music



TIFFIN

## Music at Tiffin

**At Tiffin, music represents an exceptionally important part of the school curriculum, and of the co-curricular life of the school. Pupils who have begun their musical journeys at Tiffin have performed with the UK's finest orchestras and soloists, recorded soundtracks for Hollywood films and toured the world, all whilst still pupils at the school. Altogether, Tiffin's choirs, instrumental ensembles and soloists, participate in over forty musical performances each year.**

## Co-curricular Music

The Tiffin Boys' Choir, one of the UK's leading boys' choirs, and Chamber Choir work regularly with professional orchestras and choruses, performing and recording at venues which include the ROH, RAH, RFH, Barbican, Cadogan Hall, Westminster Abbey, St. Paul's Cathedral and Abbey Road Studios. The choirs have appeared on national radio and television for BBC, ITV and Classic FM, and have toured annually to destinations in Europe, China and Australasia.

Current pupils have performed and recorded with artists and ensembles such as the BBCSO, Dunedin Consort, Danny Elfman, ENO, Gabrieli Consort, LCO, LPO, London Sinfonia, LSO, Madonna, Philharmonia, Prague Symphony, Royal Opera, RPO and Emma Thompson.

Each term the choirs present a major work which, during the autumn term, is performed with members of the school's wider community (parents, staff and, typically, more than fifty new Year 7 pupils) forming Tiffin's 200-strong Oratorio Choir.

A wide range of instrumental ensembles, including orchestras, bands and chamber music groups, together with the School's choirs, create a programme of over 30 co-curricular music rehearsals and classes each week, leading to termly and annual events which include ensembles, chamber music and soloists' concerts, musical theatre productions, jazz evenings, house

singing, instrumental and battle of the bands competitions, open mic events, Year 7 performances and competitions (involving all 186 members of the year group), and many other performances besides, taking place in venues both in and outside the school

Over 300 individual music lessons take place each week at Tiffin, with many more pupils learning outside school. A Year 7 beginners' bursary and instrument loan encourages the uptake of orchestral instruments among pupils in their first year, and engagement in ensemble music making soon after.

Musicians at Tiffin enjoy outstanding support from parents and alumni, not only through their membership of groups such as the Tiffin Oratorio Choir, but also through the Friends of Tiffin Music association: a registered charity of which Directors of Music have long been trustees. As a group with hundreds of subscribed members, the FoTM continue to support countless additional musical opportunities for pupils through both volunteering and fundraising. Recent purchases including new pianos, orchestral instruments, live audio and recording equipment, and sheet music have all been supported by FoTM. Similarly, FoTM subsidies for individual singing and instrumental tuition, tour travel and accommodation costs, venue hire, and Sixth Form Music Scholarships have recently supplemented the School's generous funding for music, and reflect the exceptional belief of parents and alumni in the value of music at Tiffin.

## Curricular Music

Reflecting its importance in the curriculum, music is studied by all pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9, each of whom receives three, 50-minute music lessons every fortnight, studying the key skills of performing, composing and listening to music, singing, instrumental and battle of the bands competitions.

From their first day at school, Year 7 pupils are engaged as performers through singing together, a skill which remains central to the curriculum throughout the first year, preparing all 186 pupils to perform publicly with their class in the Interform Choir Competition, and as a massed chorus at the Spring Concert. Class concerts, in which each class member performs as a soloist, continue the development of performing skills through Years 8 and 9, complemented by the study of set works (by composers including Bartok, Bizet, Mozart, John Williams, Steve Reich and Louis Armstrong) leading to a range of performing, composing and listening activities.

GCSE music is a popular option at Tiffin School, with 76 pupils currently studying the Edexcel specification, and 92% of former GCSE musicians achieving grades 8-9 over the past three years. Similarly, the numbers choosing to study A level music at Tiffin remain strong, with 17 pupils currently studying the subject (also Edexcel), many joining the School's sixth form each year on the strength of its reputation for co-curricular and A level music. This is reflected in the competition for Sixth Form Music Scholarships, supported financially by the Friends of Tiffin Music parents' and alumni association. The past three years have seen 73% of A level music students achieve grades A-A\*.



## Destinations

Many A level music students have gone on to study the subject at competitive universities and conservatoires. Within the last five years these have included Clare College Cambridge (3), Girton College Cambridge, GSMD, Lady Margaret Hall Oxford, Lincoln College Oxford, Keble College Oxford, Merton College Oxford, Magdalen College Oxford (2), Manchester (6), Pembroke College Cambridge, RCM, RWCM, Trinity Laban and York.

Yet more Tiffinians, including those studying music and a wide range of other subjects, have been awarded undergraduate choral and organ scholarships. Within the last five years, Tiffin alumni studying at Clare College Cambridge (2), Lady Margaret Hall Oxford and Lincoln College Oxford have all received organ scholarships. Choral scholarships have been awarded to those studying at Balliol College Oxford, Clare College Cambridge (2), Christ's College Cambridge, Keble College Oxford (2), Magdalen College Oxford (3), Merton College Oxford and St. John's College Cambridge.

## Facilities

The music department is located within the purpose-built Chester Arts Centre, which incorporates separate wings for drama, art and design technology. At the centre is the Walden Hall recital room: a dedicated, double height music rehearsal and performance space equipped with Yamaha C series grand piano along with audio equipment for live and recorded performance. The hall is neighboured by a connected music studio and musical instrument store for pupils, and mirrored across the corridor by a black box drama studio of the same dimensions.

Two music classrooms are found on the ground and first floors respectively, each equipped with 16 keyboards, Yamaha B series piano, AV equipment, and additional acoustic instruments. These are complemented by subscriptions to Noteflight, Bandlab and Focus on Sound cloud-based music software, accessed by each pupil through the personal Chromebook they bring to each lesson, provided and managed by the School.

Eight individual music teaching rooms are located within and adjacent to the Chester Centre building, five of which are equipped with Yamaha U and B series pianos (newly purchased or leased since 2014), the others including a percussion room and annexe. Two offices for department staff complete the facilities within the building.

Elsewhere on the site, the Main Hall (with floor and gallery seating for 350, proscenium arched stage, and Yamaha G series grand piano) provides the School's main performance venue.

The Judge Lecture Theatre and recently constructed dining hall (2020) offer additional large rehearsal spaces and, for massed choral and orchestral performances, the newly refurbished sports centre (2022) seats up to 600 performers and audience members.

Less than half a mile from the site are the churches of All Saints' and St. Luke's Kingston, with whom the school enjoys a special relationship. School concerts, choral services and rehearsals are held regularly in both venues, with church choral and organ scholarships offered to Tiffin pupils in collaboration with the School.

## Staff

The Director of Music leads two more subject specialists: an assistant director of music and teacher of music, in delivering the music curriculum. They are joined by a director of choral music, department administrator, coordinator for individual music lessons, music assistant, and a team of 22 visiting teachers of instrumental and vocal music. Frequent collaboration with colleagues outside the music department, including the Director in Residence and other drama department staff, along with many other keen staff musicians, reflects the central role of music in the Tiffin community.