**Guildford High School**

**Overview of Senior school Music Department for Prospective new Teachers**

Guildford High School has an exceptionally strong musical tradition. There is a structured course of class music from Year 7 through to GCSE and A Level. Instrumental lessons are offered in a very wide range of instruments. Extra-curricular activities are an integral and extensive part of the Department's educational programme, aiming to include as many pupils as possible as well as the large number of able and gifted musicians.

## **Current Music Staff (full-time unless otherwise indicated):**

Director of Music

Assistant Director of Music

Two Teachers of Music

Music Administrator

Head of Strings (part-time)

27 instrumental / singing teachers (part-time, self-employed)

*Also, a Director of Junior School Music, who teaches Reception to Year 6*

**Senior School Music (11-18)**

## **Class Music**

All pupils in Years 7 and 8 participate in class music lessons; pupils in Year 9 opt for two subjects with which to continue from Art, Drama and Music and the take-up in Music is high. The emphasis throughout KS3 is on composing and improvising (using classroom percussion, keyboards, pupils’ own instruments and voices, as well as GarageBand and Sibelius), singing, playing instruments, and learning to listen in an analytical way. Pupils’ compositions are often performed in concerts. Public examination results are consistently outstanding. Upper Sixth pupils regularly take up offers to study Music at conservatoires and leading universities, including Oxford and Cambridge; pupils are frequently awarded choral scholarships and instrumental awards at Oxbridge and other universities.

## **Music Technology**

GHS is well-equipped, with software and hardware frequently updated. There are three large classrooms, each equipped with 13 PCs and keyboards, with Cubase software for sequencing and Sibelius for score-writing. All pupils are issued with iPads and there are a number of music-based apps available to them, including GarageBand.

## **Extra-Curricular Music**

The musical education programme also involves regular choral and instrumental ensemble training, masterclasses, opera and concert visits. Major music drama productions are staged in collaboration with the Royal Grammar School, Guildford (RGS), and recent productions have included *Little Shop of Horrors*, *Rent*, *West Side Story* and *Grease*. Recent Lower School productions, for pupils in KS3, have included *Oliver* and *Joseph*.

Large-scale choral and orchestral concerts take place at G Live (Guildford’s entertainment and conference centre, with a 1000-seater concert hall), which is a 5-minute walk from school. On a biennial basis GHS and RGS usually put on a joint concert at G Live, forming a joint orchestra and merging the pupil choirs; we also have a long tradition of forming a joint parent/staff choir. In March 2023 the combined parents/staff choir (200) and upper school choirs from both schools (180) performed the *Requiems* by Rutter and Mozart with the Joint Orchestra and four professional soloists. Concerts in the past ten years have included *Gloria* (Poulenc)*, Nelson Mass* (Haydn)*, Carmina Burana* (Orff)*, Coronation Mass* (Mozart), *Gloria* (Rutter), *Feel the Spirit* (Rutter)*, Polovtsian Dances* (Borodin)andthe *Requiems* byVerdi, and Chilcott.

There are five choirs in the Senior School. The Senior and Lower School Choirs are large choirs of approximately 70 singers, open to all. An auditioned Lower School Chamber Choir stretches and challenges the most able singers in Years 7, 8 & 9 (limited to 45 pupils) and pupils Years 10-13 can audition for the Senior Chamber Choir, which sings demanding SSAA music to a high standard (55 singers). The Joint GHS & RGS Chamber Choir is open to the most able singers in the Senior Chamber Choir from Year 11, with auditioned tenors and basses drawn from the RGS. This joint choir (40) sings 8-part music to a very high standard and is particularly beneficial for pupils considering choral scholarships and further study in music after the Sixth Form. In the past seven years the choir has sung Choral Evensong at the cathedrals of Winchester, Chichester, Rochester, St Albans, St Paul’s (London), Christ Church (Oxford), and Westminster Abbey (London). There are frequent visits to Cambridge and Oxford college chapels – the choir has recently sung at Trinity, Clare and Queens’ (Cambridge), and Merton and Keble (Oxford).

Pupils audition for the Symphony Orchestra (70 players) and Wind Band (55) when they have reached Grade 6 standard, depending on vacancies. The String Orchestra (55) and Mathias Band (50, for wind, brass and percussion) offer ensemble opportunities for less experienced instrumentalists. Advanced string players can audition for the Chamber Orchestra. The Big Band is aimed at more experienced sax, brass players, kit and bass players. The saxophone, brass, guitar, flute, clarinet, and cello ensembles rehearse weekly and there are also chamber music groups for Music Scholars, coached by instrumental and academic staff.

There are, usually, annual overseas tours. The Joint GHS & RGS Chamber Choir and Orchestra has performed in Tuscany and Verona/Venice (2019, 2017), Barcelona (2015), and Malta (2013). The joint GHS & RGS Concert Band and Swing Band also tours on a regular basis: recent destinations have included Lake Garda (2023), Barcelona (2018), Croatia (2016), and France (2014).

Many pupils take part in instrumental and choral ensembles organised by Surrey County Council: Surrey County Youth Orchestra, Surrey County Wind Band, Surrey Youth Choir and area groups. Some are members of other orchestras, bands and choirs, including Guildford Cathedral Choir, National Youth Choir, Rodolfus Choir, National Youth Chamber Orchestra and National Children's Orchestra. A good number of musicians attend the Junior Department of the London music colleges on Saturdays. Of particular note amongst our current pupils, two woodwind players are members of the National Youth Orchestra, and one pupil reached the final of the BBC Songs of Praise Young Chorister of the Year, televised in December 2023.

A brand new 200-seater recital hall opened in 2016. This purpose-built hall is a fantastic space for rehearsals, concerts, workshops and recordings. On the first floor are two teaching studios, a recording control room and an office for the Director of Music. On the ground floor, adjoining the recital hall, is a large galleried atrium with refreshment bar. In 2016 the department bought a Yamaha S6 grand piano for the Recital Hall and a Yamaha CFX Concert grand piano for the larger Senior Hall.

The Music Department moved into a brand-new Performing Arts Building, for teaching, in September 2023. With three large classrooms (one large enough to rehearse a 65-strong instrumental ensemble) and eight additional studios for 1-to-1 lessons, as well as office and storage space, the facilities are outstanding.

## **Instrumental and Singing lessons**

Approximately 350 Senior School pupils are taught by a team of 27 experienced freelance teachers. (Many pupils have private lessons, externally, in the evenings and at weekends.) Tuition is available on the violin, viola, cello, double bass, harp, flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, trumpet, horn, trombone, tuba, saxophone, percussion, piano, guitar, bass guitar, and singing. The school hosts ABRSM exams for one week every term.