

GUILDHALL HARP DEPARTMENT NEWS: SPRING 2026

We start the New Year feeling very upbeat as current and past students were prizewinners in the recent 7th International Harp Competition in Szeged, Hungary. Alumna **Heather Brooks** won the Silver Medal in the under-25s category, and 2nd-year student **Naomi Drew** won the Bronze Medal in the under-19s. We are also very proud that alumnus **Oliver Wass** has recently been appointed Professor of Harp at the Royal College of Music.

Orchestral opportunities this term range from Vaughan Williams' tricky Five Variants on Dives and Lazarus, through Rachmaninov, Borodin, Tchaikovsky, and Debussy to Phantom of the Opera, while the Guildhall Symphony Orchestra will perform Prokofiev's Romeo and Juliet in the Barbican Hall in March. Students will also have a chance to rehearse Francesca da Rimini in February with **Gianandrea Noseda**, the Principal Guest Conductor of the London Symphony Orchestra. In late February and March our Spring Opera is Britten's rarely-performed opera Owen Wingrave, with plenty to do for our student harpist!

In February we welcome **Stephen Fitzpatrick**, Principal Harp of the Staatskapelle Berlin and Professor at the Mozarteum Salzburg, for a Masterclass, and in March we are looking forward to a Chamber Music Masterclass given by Polish harpist **Adrian Nowak**.

The Guildhall Chamber Festival in March gives senior students the fantastic chance to play alongside professors in beloved chamber works – this time the Bax Elegiac Trio performed by **Eleanor Medcalf**.

We are passionate about the importance of contemporary music and about educating young composers to love the harp and to write well for it. In February, **Imogen Barford** and the harp students will give a workshop and demonstration for all Guildhall composers on writing for the harp, and, in the Summer, we hope to premiere our latest commission, a Trio for flute, cello and harp by Benji Gronlie.

In January **Imogen Barford** will be giving masterclasses at the Amsterdam Conservatoire – a wonderful way of building bridges with other professors and students!

We are putting together a great programme for our Summer Harp Festival on 22/23 June, including a celebration of 200 years since the birth of John Thomas in the form of an exhibition and a lecture recital by **Sioned Williams**.

This year we are excited to be launching two brand-new harp courses taught by Guildhall harp professors, so do check them out:

<https://www.gsmd.ac.uk/study-with-guildhall/short-courses-summer-schools/find-a-short-course-or-summer-school/harp-intensive-for-ages-15-24>

<https://www.gsmd.ac.uk/study-with-guildhall/short-courses-summer-schools/find-a-short-course-or-summer-school/short-courses-summer-schools/harp-intensive-for-ages-9-15>

For the most up-to-date information, follow us on Instagram

<https://www.instagram.com/guildhallharps/>

and Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/GuildhallHarps/>

OPEN EVENTS 2026

Email harp@gsmd.ac.uk to check details for events. All events take place at Guildhall School, Silk Street Barbican London EC2Y 8DT unless otherwise stated.

29 January 7.00pm in the Music Hall *Free to attend*

Guildhall Harpists and Friends play solos and chamber music.

18 February 2.00-5.00pm in Milton Court Concert Hall *Free to attend*

Stephen Fitzpatrick Masterclass

6 March 11.45am Harp Department Open Day in 150 and the Music Hall *Book a place online*

Join us for Classes, Masterclasses and a Student Recital to experience for yourself life in our vibrant and forward-looking department. Students, teachers and parents welcome.

6.00pm Strings at Six Concert in Milton Court Concert Hall *Free to attend*

Eleanor Medcalf in recital

19 March 1.00pm at St Olave's Church, 8 Hart Street, London EC3R 7NB *Free to attend*

Guildhall Harpists in Recital

25 March time t.b.c. in 150 *Please email if you would like to attend*

Adrian Nowak gives a Chamber Music Masterclass

4 May 1.00pm in the Lecture Recital Room *Free to attend*

Guildhall Harpists and Friends

21 May 1.00pm at St Olave's Church, 8 Hart Street, London EC3R 7NB *Free to attend*

Guildhall Harpists in Recital

5 June 3.45-8.15pm in Milton Court Concert Hall *Free to attend*

Postgraduate Final Recitals

8 June 10.00-11.00am in the Music Hall *Free to attend*

Arwen Withey-Harrison Final Recital

22 and 23 June in the Lecture Recital Room *Free to attend*

Summer Harp Festival, including Lecture Recital by Sioned Williams celebrating the 200th anniversary of the birth of John Thomas (22 June)

17-19 July Guildhall Harp Intensive summer course

<https://www.gsmd.ac.uk/study-with-guildhall/short-courses-summer-schools/find-a-short-course-or-summer-school/harp-intensive-for-ages-15-24>