

GUILDHALL HARP DEPARTMENT NEWS: SPRING/SUMMER 2026

We started 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. In May alumna **Bethany Caswell** won the first prize in the UK Harp Association Competition, competing against other conservatoire-level harpists from around the UK.

Orchestral opportunities 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 performed Prokofiev's Romeo and Juliet in the Barbican Hall in March. Students also had a chance to rehearse Francesca da Rimini in February with **Gianandrea Noseda**, the Principal Guest Conductor of the London Symphony Orchestra. Our Spring Opera was Britten's rarely-performed opera Owen Wingrave, with plenty to do for our student harpist!

In February we welcomed **Stephen Fitzpatrick**, Principal Harp of the Staatskapelle Berlin and Professor at the Mozarteum Salzburg, for an inspiring Masterclass, and in March we hosted a fantastic Chamber Music Masterclass given by Polish harpist **Adrian Nowak**.

The Guildhall Chamber Festival in March gave senior students the wonderful 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** gave masterclasses at the Amsterdam Conservatoire, and in June she visits the Mozarteum Salzburg – a wonderful way of building bridges with other professors and students!

We have put together a great programme for our **Summer Harp Festival: Looking Back, Looking Forward** 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**, and a mock orchestra audition with the Philharmonia Orchestra's Principal harpist **Heidi Krutzen**. From Greece we welcome **Lena Palera and Theodoros Koumartzis** who will give a concert and workshop on the harp's ancient ancestor, the Lyre, and **Joy Smith** gives a lunchtime recital with early harps and stories. We have a presentation on **Britten's Harp** devised by Eleanor Medcalf, and **Contemporary**

Music for Harp presented by Guildhall students. Check out all the details on the website: <https://www.gsmd.ac.uk/harp-festival-2026>

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.

11.45 Registration

12.00 Welcome

12.15 Presentation on the Harp Department

1.00pm Students' Recital in the Music Hall

1.45-2.15 Lunch break

2.15 Harp Masterclass with Imogen Barford

3.15 Workshop on Speed and Agility with Keziah Thomas

4.15 Workshop on Orchestral Skills with Charlotte Seale

5.00 Tour of the School

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

Postgraduate harpist Eleanor Medcalf in recital

12 March 6.30pm at Salvi Harps London Showroom, 14 Molasses Row, London SW11 3UX

Guildhall Harpists present solos and chamber music by Debussy, Damase, Tournier, Britten, Bach, Rota and Tedeschi. *Admission free but reserve a seat by telephoning 020 3002 4841*

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

Guildhall Harpists in Recital:

works by Mozart, Britten, Bach, Renié and Caplet in this beautiful City Church

25 March 10.00am to 6.00pm in 150 *Please email if you would like to attend*

Adrian Nowak gives a Chamber Music Masterclass and Presentations

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) and a mock Orchestra Audition (23 June) with **Heidi Krutzen**, Principal Harpist of the Philharmonia Orchestra.

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>