



HARROW  
SCHOOL

# MUSIC AT HARROW





## WHY DO PARENTS CHOOSE HARROW FOR MUSICAL BOYS?

- We achieve a remarkably high standard of tuition and performance across a wide range of musical styles and genres.
- Many of our teachers are professors at conservatories or play with some of London’s top orchestras.
- Most top musicians at Harrow leave with a Grade 8 in at least one instrument, and go on to take their higher qualifications while at the School.
- Our music scholars are highly committed; they act as role models and provide musical leadership to their peers.
- We encourage musical boys to take a full part in all other aspects of School life and they receive a rounded education.
- Being so close to London, boys are able to visit some of the best concert venues and events in the world.
- As a full-boarding school, we offer an exceptionally wide range of activities at the weekend — including, of course, music!

## WHAT DO OUR MUSICIANS DO WHEN THEY LEAVE?

Many top musicians at Harrow go on to music conservatories or take choral or organ awards at a variety of universities. Harrow is represented in national orchestras, cathedral organ lofts, close harmony groups and music management companies. The number of Harrovians winning coveted music scholarships has more than doubled in the last five years.

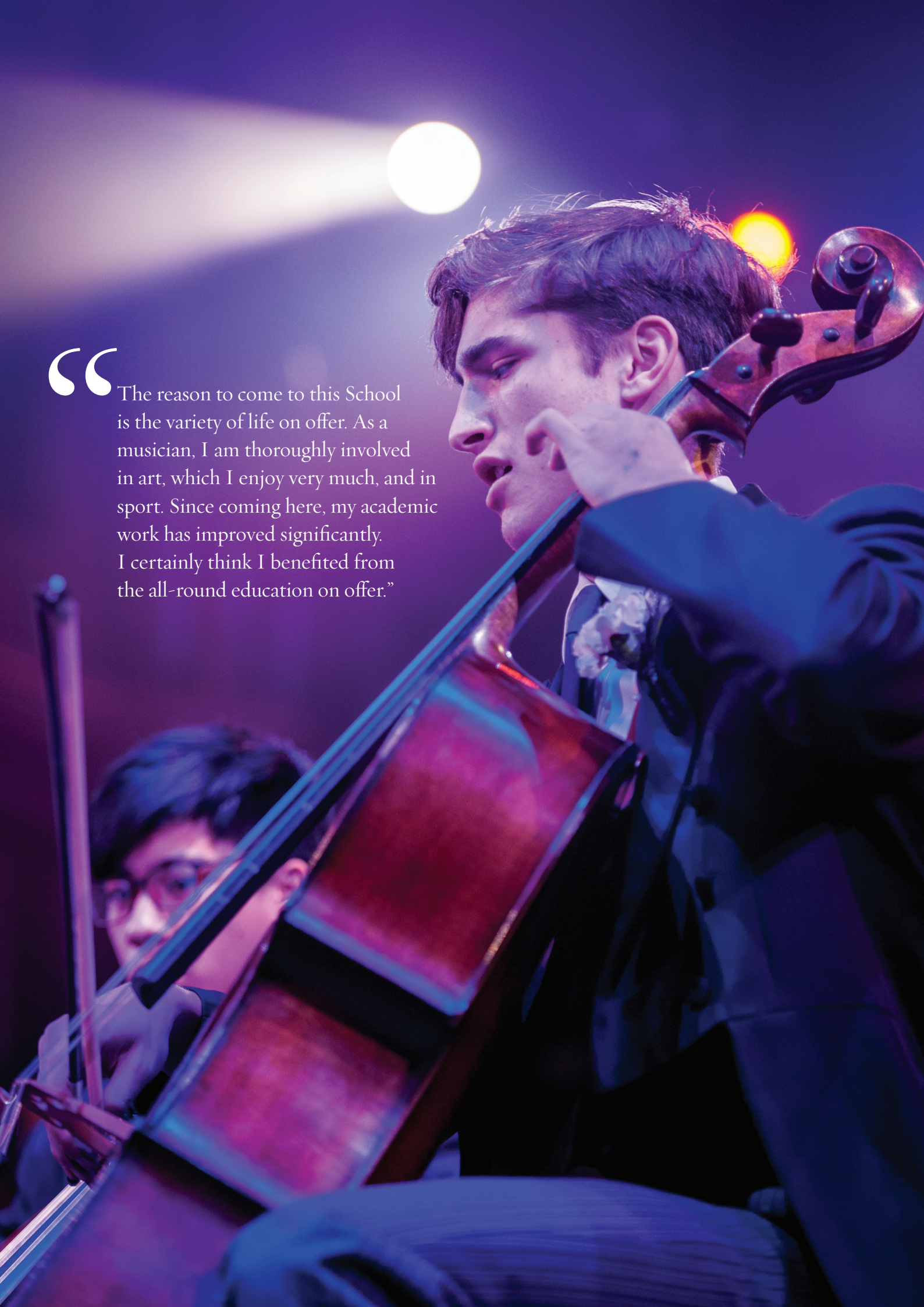
### EXAMPLES OF TOP UNIVERSITY DESTINATIONS

- Music with a Choral Scholarship at St John’s College, Cambridge
- Post-graduate vocal studies with a major scholarship at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama
- English with a Choral Scholarship at King’s College, Cambridge
- Music with an Organ Scholarship at Magdalene College, Cambridge

- Music with an Organ Scholarship at Trinity Hall, Cambridge
- Music with an Academical Clerkship (choral scholarship) at Christ Church, Oxford
- Law with an Academical Clerkship at Christ Church, Oxford
- Music with a Choral Scholarship at New College, Oxford
- English with a Choral Scholarship at St Edmund’s Hall, Oxford
- Music with a Choral Scholarship at Magdalen College, Oxford
- Music with an Instrumental Award at Girton College, Cambridge
- Music with a Choral Scholarship at Robinson College, Cambridge
- Mathematics with an Organ Scholarship at Clare College, Cambridge

### EXAMPLES OF TOP CONSERVATORY DESTINATIONS

- Master’s degree with a scholarship at the Royal Academy of Music
- Scholarship to the Royal Academy of Music, as a first study trumpeter
- Scholarship to the Royal Academy of Music as joint first study cellist and double bassist
- Scholarship to the Royal Academy of Music as a first study violinist
- Place at the Royal Academy of Music as a first study organist
- Scholarship to the Royal College of Music as a first study violinist
- Place on the Opera Repetiteur course at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama



“The reason to come to this School is the variety of life on offer. As a musician, I am thoroughly involved in art, which I enjoy very much, and in sport. Since coming here, my academic work has improved significantly. I certainly think I benefited from the all-round education on offer.”



## FELIX LASHMAR

Felix is a double bassist with the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra in Amsterdam. He was also assistant teacher to Professor Olivier Thiery at the Conservatorium van Amsterdam in 2018–19. Felix has played as guest principal with the Amsterdam Sinfonietta and the Royal Northern Sinfonia, and was previously a member of the Netherlands Philharmonic Orchestra.

After Felix left Harrow in 2011, he won a scholarship to the Royal Academy of Music, where he studied the cello and double bass. Outside the RAM, he was principal bassist with the European Union Youth Orchestra and began his professional career with orchestras in London, including the Philharmonia and English National Opera.

Felix moved to Amsterdam in 2015 to study for his Master’s degree. During this time, he explored the solo repertoire for double bass and was selected to take part in the 65th annual ARD International Music Competition for double bass. Alongside his studies, he continued to work with orchestras such as the Netherlands Chamber Orchestra and the Mahler Chamber Orchestra. In his second year of study, Felix was offered a place on the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra Academy.

I followed my elder brother Charlie, who was also a music scholar, to Harrow because I wanted to go to the same school as he did and was attracted by Charlie’s description of all the exciting things he was doing there.

My experience of Harrow was truly wonderful. Even though I devoted most of my free time to music, I enjoyed everything Harrow offered (except cross-country running!). I took part in an extraordinary range of musical activity; for example, one evening I would be in the recording studio experimenting with A-level recordings and the next evening I would be singing some William Byrd in preparation for a service on Sunday. The next afternoon I would rehearse with my string quartet then play bass guitar in the Big Band.

I also went to the Royal Academy of Music for double bass lessons every Saturday, which shows the level of support the School offers to musicians.

The most memorable aspect of my time at Harrow was the freedom to do as I pleased with my time outside the academic timetable. I did a lot of music, but a student with a different passion could spend their time in the theatre, the gym, or the library. Harrow enabled me to develop musically in an environment where I was constantly encouraged and given exciting projects to get my teeth into and was never told I should be doing something else.



I’m lucky that my job is my passion, and it really kicked off when I started at Harrow. Harrow offered me a varied musical training: large and small choir singing; full orchestra and chamber orchestra; small ensembles and solo playing; jazz and rock music; and studio-recording experience. Now I spend 99% of my time as a professional double bassist, but all that early varied training has made me into the musician I am today. I also learned how to manage my time, and how to respect and work with others.

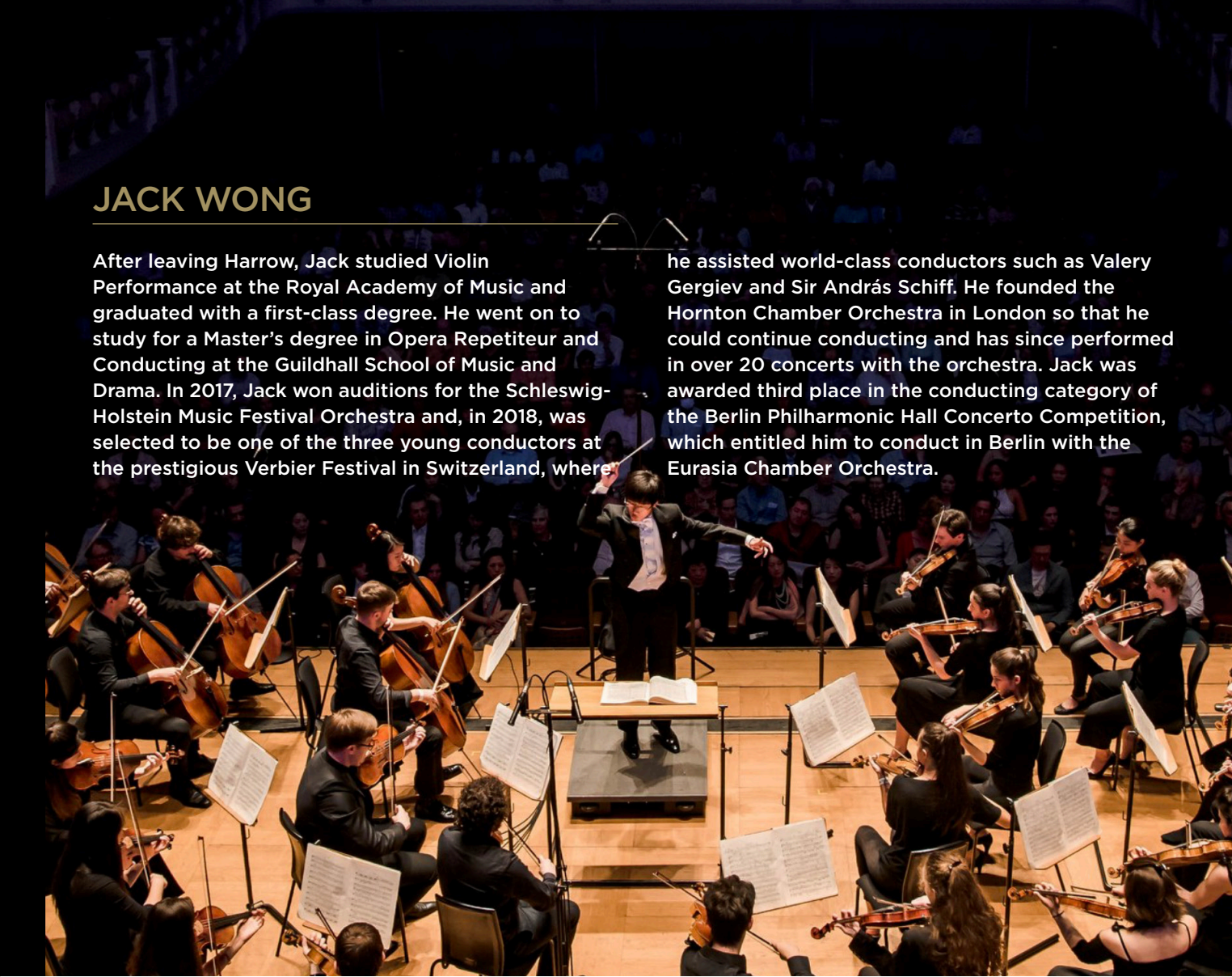
If you are a musical person, there are specialist music schools you can go to but, at Harrow, as well as music you get everything else the School offers. The experience of living in a tight-knit community and being immersed in the array of activities is part of the Harrow magic. You receive a world-class academic education and have amazing sports, drama and art facilities at your disposal.

If you are already thinking about music as a potential career, Harrow is waiting for you! But a music scholarship at Harrow can also lead to other careers. One of my School contemporaries, a very talented music scholar who studied Music at Cambridge with an organ scholarship, is now a coder for a respected programming company.

## JACK WONG

After leaving Harrow, Jack studied Violin Performance at the Royal Academy of Music and graduated with a first-class degree. He went on to study for a Master’s degree in Opera Repetiteur and Conducting at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. In 2017, Jack won auditions for the Schleswig-Holstein Music Festival Orchestra and, in 2018, was selected to be one of the three young conductors at the prestigious Verbier Festival in Switzerland, where

he assisted world-class conductors such as Valery Gergiev and Sir András Schiff. He founded the Hornton Chamber Orchestra in London so that he could continue conducting and has since performed in over 20 concerts with the orchestra. Jack was awarded third place in the conducting category of the Berlin Philharmonic Hall Concerto Competition, which entitled him to conduct in Berlin with the Eurasia Chamber Orchestra.



I decided to apply to Harrow so that I could experience British culture and give myself the challenge of being independent and adapting to a new environment. I also wanted to study in a less stressful environment than was offered by the education system in Hong Kong.

It was a privilege to go to Harrow and very rewarding. The education it offers is well balanced and I learnt a lot of new skills. Every day was packed with activities and, although this was sometimes stressful, I learnt how to manage my time and how always to perform at my best. I made lots of friends at Harrow and it was like another family to me.

The most memorable thing about going to Harrow was living with my schoolmates in my boarding House and sharing every moment with them, especially inter-House events such as the Glee and Twelves and Songs.

The greatest skill I learnt at School was self-discipline. I learnt how to be independent and how to think of the best solutions at difficult moments. It also taught me how to manage stress and convert it into positive energy.

If you are serious about music, Harrow has a great team of music staff and wonderful facilities. The number of concerts held at School is fantastic and they are of outstanding quality. It really stimulates and motivates you to practise hard and be good at your instruments, and to become a better musician in every way possible.





## OPPORTUNITIES TO PERFORM

Every boy at Harrow is part of the School's musical life. All new boys have a singing test when they arrive, and sing a solo as part of House Songs – a tradition that dates back to the 19th century. Nearly half the School learns a musical instrument, and every boy who does so participates in the annual Music Prizes competition. Boys who do not learn an instrument still have an opportunity to enjoy music at Chapel, in House competitions and at Speech Room concerts.

House competitions give music, and particularly singing, a significance not found in other non-specialist schools, providing Harrovians with opportunities to lead, conduct, perform and win honour for their Houses. The House Instrumental Competition encourages boys of all standards to perform for their House. Glee and Twelves is a unique singing competition that creates intense musical rivalry between the Houses, leading to high-quality performances in front of the whole School.

Harrow Songs provide an uplifting opportunity for all boys in the School to sing together regularly, led by the School's musicians and music scholars. Every boy in the School sings in House Songs and in School Songs at least five times a year. Every five years, Harrow Songs are sung by boys, parents, staff and Old Harrovians in the Royal Albert Hall.

As well as the annual competitions for soloists, chamber ensembles, organists, jazz musicians and singers, opportunities for performance include:

- informal concerts;
- weekly recitals at our local parish church;
- regular concerts in the Music Schools;
- large-scale concerts in Speech Room;
- House concerts; and
- international tours.

### HARROW'S UNIQUE ENVIRONMENT

The all-round education we offer provides a springboard for top musicians. Life at a full-boarding school includes plenty of time for all kinds of activities. Alongside a busy schedule, top musicians are still able to achieve the highest grades at A-level and GCSE.

Our full-time boarding model means we can provide the time and resources for music rehearsals, teaching and performance that a day or flexi-boarding school cannot. Harrow's music staff live on the School estate and are available at any time during the term for advice, rehearsals and supervised practice. This allows us to put on more than 80 musical events annually, across a range of styles including early music, jazz, rock and pop.

“ I was a chamber musician and went on to read Engineering with an Organ Scholarship at Trinity College, Oxford, having achieved six A grades at A-level. While at Harrow, I was in the School Harrow football XI, represented the School in cricket and performed at the finals of the National Chamber Music Competition on a number of occasions.”





## SEAN LI

**After leaving Harrow in 2007, Sean studied Law at the University of Hong Kong. In February 2019, he joined the Competition Commission as litigation counsel.**

**In 2009, while still at university, Sean founded the Hong Kong Festival Orchestra (HKFO). Since 2009, the orchestra has grown from 80 performers to one of the city's largest youth orchestras and choirs, involving more than 300 choristers and orchestral players.**

**As Music Director and conductor of HKFO, Sean has worked with many distinguished artists and created a critically acclaimed classical music comedy act with the social-media phenomenon Twoset Violin. As an impresario, he has worked with musicians including pianist Yundi Li and Vassily Sinaisky of the Bolshoi Theatre, as well as Grammy-winning artists such as Eric Whitacre, Joshua Bell and The King's Singers.**

I went to Harrow because my parents were drawn to the School's rich history and success in a variety of fields. The decision to award me a music scholarship was also a decisive factor.

Ten years on, I can say that Harrow provided me with the best-quality education. Learning there is never dull because the teachers have a genuine passion for teaching.

It is the staff and the fantastic resources that make the Harrovian music experience an unparalleled one. One of the most striking things is its intensity and breadth. I still remember an occasion when I performed five times in one week: a Choral Society concert, a chamber music concert, an open masterclass, a competition and a lunchtime recital at St Mary's. The frequency of these performances gives you a strong incentive to practise.

Towards the end of each academic year, Harrow chooses some of its best instrumental musicians to perform a solo work accompanied by an orchestra of boys and professionals. I was lucky enough to be chosen twice. This is just one of many things the Music Department organises, such as masterclasses with world-class ensembles, annual large-scale oratorio productions with professional singers, bi-annual musical productions – the list just goes on.

Some memorable achievements for me were leading the School Orchestra and its elite string ensemble The Nine, winning the National Chamber Music Competition (Under-16 category) and composing for the School Shakespeare production.

The main lesson Harrow taught me is the importance of being passionate about everything you do. Harrow always keeps you busy, whether you are a musician, a sportsman or an academic. You get to do many things that you never imagined you would, which can help you discover yourself and your deepest passions.

## SHAMUS PALMER

**Shamus studied Sound Technology at The Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts (LIPA), where he developed an interest in the music industry and A&R. Shamus's first A&R job was as a regional scout in the North West for Atlantic Records. After graduating from LIPA, he went to work for Parlophone Records where he ran his own in-print label within the company and worked with some of the most exciting new talent. He recently left the Warner Music Group family to focus on running his creative agency Digital Picnic.**

One of the main reasons my parents chose to send me to Harrow was because they felt it had the reputation and the ability to cater for every type of student; whether it is in the form room, on the football fields or in the music studios, the School gives you the best possible support, facilities and freedom to express exactly what you want to achieve.

My experience at Harrow wasn't one of academic prowess, but it gave me the means to turn myself into a proper, rounded individual. I arrived as a small, shy blonde boy and I left not only with an amazing group of lifelong friends, but also with the confidence to pursue what I wanted. Harrow gave me that confidence and I will always be grateful for that.

I have many wonderful memories of Harrow, but what has stuck with me most are the rich and unrivalled musical traditions: from Harrow Songs to Glee's and Twelves and, most notably, the incredible spectacle that was Churchill Songs at the Royal Albert Hall. There was never a quiet day on the Hill and I look back at my time there with fondness.



Harrow gave me the means to explore areas of music I previously didn't know existed. The industry-standard recording studios unlocked a passion for music production, business and sound technology that propelled me into my university life and my current career. Even if you aren't directly interested in music, it's impossible not to be surrounded by it at Harrow. If you want to be a pop star or sound engineer, an opera singer or a drummer, a songwriter or musical theatre star, it is the perfect place to shine.





# APPLYING FOR A MUSIC SCHOLARSHIP

We offer approximately 15 music awards each year.

Music scholarships are worth up to 5% of the School fee and can be supplemented by a means-tested bursary of up to the full fee. Music scholarships also carry free tuition on instruments and/or singing.

Music exhibitions typically cover free tuition in one or two instruments and/or singing, but cannot be supplemented by a bursary.

## OUR REQUIREMENTS

### INSTRUMENTS

In order to achieve a balance, we might prioritise a particular instrument in a given year but, since this fluctuates constantly, we do not favour any instruments in particular.

### NON-CLASSICAL MUSICIANS

There are many opportunities for good jazz players. We assess other non-classical talents in the context of the contribution they may make at Harrow. A boy who plays classical Indian music, for example, could feature as a soloist but would not fit into our mainstream music making; such a candidate might well be offered an exhibition but possibly not a scholarship.

### STANDARDS

The level required for the award of a music scholarship will vary from year to year; sometimes boys with two Grade 5 Distinctions will gain an award while, at other times, awards will be given to boys who are of Grade 7–8 standard. However, a boy with one instrument at Grade 5 level and under 120 marks, with no singing ability, will be a borderline candidate.

While it is helpful for us to know that a boy has gained particular grades in ABRSM examinations, this does not in itself affect our judgement of his suitability for an award. We always suggest that it is better for a candidate to aim for a high mark in a lower grade of assessment, rather than scraping through at a higher grade. In our view, a high Grade 5 Distinction is worth far more than a Grade 7 Pass with, say, 103 marks. The candidate achieving the former will have a concept of what musical quality is; the boy achieving the latter will think he is ready to prepare for Grade 8 but may still need to work on consolidating his general technique.

### SINGING

As a boys-only school, we rely on our youngest year for the treble line, so we take singing ability and experience

very seriously. Boys who have sung in cathedral or collegiate choirs can count their voice as an extra instrument and will be credited accordingly for their musical experience. We also recommend that boys who sing in their current school choir (especially if he takes part in chapel services on a weekly basis) offer singing as well.

A successful candidate's offer is not affected if his voice breaks before he starts at Harrow. Voices that break early have longer to mature in their broken state; boys who wish to take university choral awards will therefore be in a stronger position eventually. While a boy's voice breaks, we keep him singing as much as possible, as long as it is not damaging; singing is such a large part of many boys' lives that to stop them singing altogether, unless absolutely essential, could be a psychological blow.

### WHAT WE TEST

Candidates are asked to play two pieces on their principal instrument and one on any other. Those offering singing in a serious way should offer a song or anthem. Between them, the two pieces on the principal instrument should demonstrate a boy's ability to play musically with good tone and competent technique.

Sight-reading carries significant weight in our final discussions, since it determines, almost more than anything, whether a boy will fit into the busy life at Harrow. Aural tests tend to be rhythm and pitch-based, rather than involving memory testing.

During the interview, we talk to boys about both their interest in and experience of music. We are most likely to consider individuals whom we think will make a useful and interesting member of our music community. Some examples of attributes we look for are a readiness to compose (fanfares, carols etc), a willingness to organise small-scale concerts with friends, and an interest in concert visits, music recording or music technology.

## HOW TO APPLY

Many boys apply for a variety of awards including academic, Art, Sport and Drama scholarships. Traditionally, parents start by organising a pre-audition between six months to two years ahead of the music scholarship assessment. It is worth discussing the best strategy for a particular candidate in advance. For some boys, it is best to use their musical abilities to enhance their application for one of the other awards rather than applying for a standalone music award.

For our registration and scholarship application forms, and to see our deadlines and requirements, please visit our website or contact the Director of Music on 020 8872 8231 or at [music@harrowschool.org.uk](mailto:music@harrowschool.org.uk).



“ I was a trumpet-player at Harrow and won the Renny Cup in the Public Schools Rackets Championships at Queen’s. I also played rugby for the School in the XV and achieved three As at A-level. In my final year, I was offered places at the Royal Academy of Music (with a scholarship), Royal College of Music and Guildhall School of Music & Drama as a first study trumpeter. I took up the place at the Royal Academy.”





# HARROW SCHOOL

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