

MUSEUM ANNUAL REPORT

1 SEPTEMBER 2023 / 31 AUGUST 2024

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Mission Statement

The Royal College of Music Museum manages, preserves, interprets and displays a Designated collection of musical instruments, paintings, sculptures, early prints and drawings, photographs and memorabilia relating to music.

The museum supports formal and informal learning through heritage, promoting onsite and online access to the RCM's collections for the RCM's student and professorial body, as well as reaching new and wider audiences locally, nationally and internationally.

Through partnership and collaboration, the Museum undertakes, promotes and supports research and knowledge exchange on the collections and in the field of music and material culture.

The year in brief

1. The year 2023-24 has been the third since the opening of the Museum in its new spaces in October 2021. Since then, visitor numbers have steadily increased from just over 12,000 in the first year, to just under 20,000 this year, with a further increase by 6% over 2022-23. Moreover, while external visitors remain the vast majority – in line with the commitments taken with the National Lottery Heritage Fund – internal users have proportionally doubled from 7 to 14% of the total, reflecting a strategic effort to expand resources for the RCM community of students, professors and administrative staff through performing and teaching opportunities, volunteering and research.
2. In January, Research England announced the outcome of the quinquennial review of the financial allocations for this round of the Higher Education Museum, Galleries and Collections Fund, to which the Museum had applied in summer 2023. The application was successful and led for the first time to the inclusion of the RCM Museum among the forty recipients of this prestigious grant, which supports the costs of providing outstanding service to the research community beyond the needs of the institution. The RCM Museum was the most generously funded among the eleven new institutions admitted to the scheme and will receive over £1.1m over five years (subject to being successful in the periodical monitoring exercises). This enabled a much-needed restructuring of the team, as the previous organigram had reached its capacity.
3. The year also saw a major effort in two research endeavours: the exploration of 3D scanning and printing of historical musical instruments for musicians and a special exhibition, realised in collaboration with guest-curator Attia Shiraz, focusing on the role of women in Sufi music in the Indian subcontinent. The first, supported by a grant from the Department of Culture, Media and Sports and Wolfson Foundation, was undertaken in collaboration with the University of Turin and culminated in an international conference and concert where the results reached at the RCM were discussed with representatives of the major institutions active in the same field in Europe, USA and Australia. The second, largely based on the result of a field-trip in Pakistan, Kashmir and Bangladesh and collaborations with artists and institutions in these countries, led to a vibrant display and to a series of activities supported by the Cockayne Foundation, attracting new hard-to-reach audiences to the Museum and developing a dialogue with communities which had not engaged with the RCM before.

4. Major conservation endeavours have been completed, including the restringing and structural consolidation of a Clementi square piano (1822) and the continuation of the assessment of the functionality of woodwind instruments that had started last year.
5. The digital availability of the collections was enhanced by a revision of the structure of the digital catalogue and the creation of new photographs for 470 items in the collection that either were not photographed, or were only documented through old b/w images.
6. The Museum received several requests for loans to external exhibitions, two of which were approved – to the Science Museum and to the Rustington Museum in Littlehampton. Further loans are being discussed with the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York and the Shimane Art Museum in Japan.
7. Finally, guest visits of classes from external HEIs – from the UK and overseas – and the involvement in grant applications led by other institutions, as co-applicants, partners or consultants, demonstrated the increasing role that the Museum is playing in the discussion and research on musical non-textual heritage in the UK and abroad.

Sustainability, Operations and Compliance

Research England – Higher Education Museum, Galleries and Collections Fund

8. The Museum was informed on the 27 March 2024 that the application submitted at the end of August 2023 to the HEMG scheme had been successful, leading to an allocation of £221,663 per year over five years (subject to successful monitoring outcome). This is a renewable grant allocated every five years to university museums 'so they can meet the costs of serving the wider research community beyond their own institutions'.
9. The RCM was one of eleven new museums admitted to the scheme (joining a total group of forty museums across England, including the Ashmolean, the Fitzwilliam, the Pitt Rivers and the Courtauld) and the one which obtained the highest grant among new entries.
10. The award letter highlighted how 'There was a large volume of submissions to the review ... This was a highly competitive process which required difficult decisions considering the number of high-quality bids and budget available. The levels of funding recommended by the panel reflect this, alongside their consideration of the extent to which the funding requested for each submission could be justified within that context'.
11. The grant – which supports core costs of running the Museum – has enabled a complete restructuring of the team and annual spending budget, aimed at fulfilling the grants' requirement of offering support to internal and external research through a more ambitious plan and reach.
12. The first monitoring exercise will be undertaken by RE in 2025 and will particularly focus on:
 - Income and staff details.
 - Significant reach beyond the HEI's own researchers and students and the additional costs associated with this.
 - Making a unique and significant contribution to research and scholarship in the higher education sector.
 - Forward planning.
 - Innovative practice for external benefit and in support of the open research agenda.
 - Demonstrating additionality through case studies.

Other sources of income

13. The Museum runs its independent shop, in coordination with the one situated in the RCM Box Office. Although some items of merchandise are sold by both shops, the majority of the stock available at the Museum's is collection-related and designed, commissioned and procured exclusively by the Museum team. Branding guidelines are signed-off by the Marcomms Department for every new piece of merchandise. Streamlining the operations of the shop is one of the priorities for the current year. Meanwhile, over the period

covered by this report the shop has generated a net income of £3,217, on top of a total investment of £3,798 (gross income=£7,015).

14. Museum visitors can also donate to the College through a digital Goodbox available at the welcome desk. Over the past year donations through this device have totalled £565, with an increase of 16% over the past year.
15. The aggregated income generated by each visitor results in an average spent of £0.39 per visitor, which is slightly lower than the average of £0.50 that was estimated in the planning phase of the shop (keeping in consideration that students are less likely to spend than external visitors) and substantially lower than the £1.60-1.80 which is the current London average. While this might be due to the small size of the display area, a thorough review of the merchandise has now started, aiming to increase individual spending over the current year.
16. A further income of £1,304 has been generated through the sale of images for commercial reproduction through the image licence service offered by ArenaPAL (see below n. 58 for further details).

New Team Structure

17. The HEMGC grant from Research England relates to the potential of the Museum to offer services that support the research community beyond the needs of the institution. For this reason, the grant made possible, and required, a thorough restructuring of the Museum team, also facilitated by some turnover (during the past year Lydia Baldwin, Richard Martin and Nicole Cochrane left the College).
18. In June 2024 the RCM approved the new team structure and recruitment is being undertaken over the autumn term 2024-25.

Old team structure 2022-2024	New team structure 2024-...
Curator (1FTE)	Curator (1FTE)
Administrator (1FTE)	-
Learning & Participation Officer (0.6FTE)	Learning and Participation Officer (0.8FTE)
Digitisation Officer (0.8FTE)	Digital Engagement Officer (0.4FTE)
Assistant Conservator (0.2FTE)	Conservator (0.4FTE)
Welcome Desk Assistant (week-days) (0.8FTE)	Operations and Administration Assistant (0.8FTE)
Welcome Desk Assistant (week-ends) (0.4FTE)	Operations Assistant (0.6FTE)
-	Research Coordinator (0.4FTE)
Gallery volunteers (n/a)	Gallery volunteers (n/a)
Collection volunteers (n/a)	Collection volunteers (n/a)

The team was supported by 47 volunteers in 2023-24, who helped with secondment in gallery invigilation, digitisation and cataloguing, exhibition install and learning and participation activities.

Accreditation

19. The Museum has been Accredited by the Arts Council of England since 2008 (n. AN1796).
The latest review was completed in 2022 when the Museum was reconfirmed Full Accredited status on the 22 November.
20. The next review is due in autumn 2027. In the meantime, the following policies, which are an integral part of the Accreditation package, have been revised and need to be approved by Collection Committee:
 - Collection Development Policy 2024-2029
 - Documentation Policy 2024-2029
 - Care and Conservation Policy 2024-2029
 - Access Policy 2024-2029

KCG Higher Education Internal Audit

21. The Museum procedures were independently examined by KCG Audit in February/March 2023.
22. The final report was submitted on the 23 March 2023 and highlighted how 'the College's processes for the operation of the Museum provide satisfactory assurance that associated risks material to the College's objectives are adequately managed and controlled'.
23. The report included one priority 2 recommendation that 'internal benchmarks/indicators are in place to evaluate the effectiveness of the individual programmes delivered as part of the learning and participation programme'. KPC has been informed in August 2024 that a draft for a benchmarking protocol has been prepared and will be finalised with the new Learning & Participation Officer as soon as they join.

Public Engagement and Dissemination

Our Audience in Numbers¹



24. Between the 1 September 2023 and the 31 August 2024, the Museum welcomed 19,248 visitors. This is a further increase by 6% over last year. This is proportionally comparable to the average increase registered across national DCMS-sponsored museums (9%) and to several museums in the South Kensington area such as the Natural History Museum (8%) and the Science Museum (9%).² However, the RCM Museum did not advertise in any way apart from the use of social media and a poster at the entrance of the College. A budget allocation is being considered this year for marketing and advertising and its impact will be measured next year.



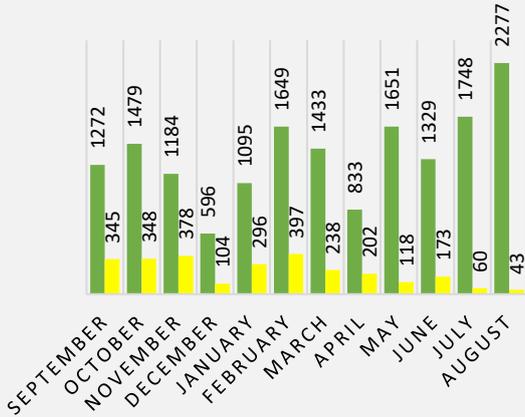
25. The comparison of monthly visitor numbers with last year shows that increases clustered at the beginning of the academic year (September and October), beginning of the solar year (January and February) and a slight increase over the summer period. A drop in numbers in April is due to the closer alignment of the Museum calendar to that of the College, therefore extending the closing period over the Easter break from one to two weeks. This was decided in order to facilitate the management of staff-leave, but will be revised this year. The same applies to the drop in numbers over the Christmas holidays, comparable year over year.

¹ Visitors' data are collected by the Welcome Desk Officers in a MS Excel spreadsheet which can be consulted upon request. Data were elaborated for the purpose of this report by Chiara Felice, who also generated the segmentations and graphs used for this report.

² Figures are calculated over the slightly different period July-June and based on GOV.UK data set <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/museums-and-galleries-monthly-visits>

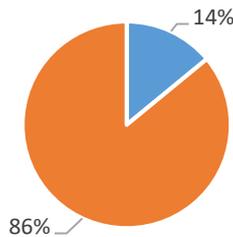
INTERNAL VS EXTERNAL VISITOR NUMBERS

■ External Visitors ■ Internal Visitors



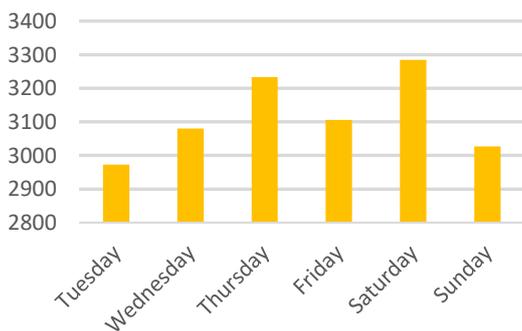
A more detailed analysis of the number of internal (RCM professors, students, administrative staff) vs. external visitors was undertaken this year. The number of internal users in 2023-24 doubled in percentage (14%) compared to the previous year (7%). This was the result of increased work with classes and of the involvement of students through concerts, teaching, individual projects and volunteering. The increase in percentage of internal visitors was one of the key strategic goals for the past year. The ratio of external vs internal users reflects the presence of students on campus according to the academic year.

Internal vs. External Visitors - Total

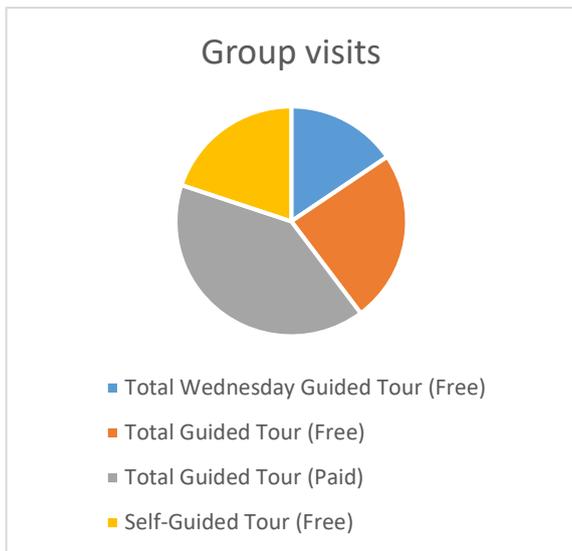


26. The majority of visitors (86%) was still formed by external users in line with the requirements of the National Lottery Heritage Fund and amply demonstrating the impact of the Museum beyond the institution.

Number of Visitors by Day of the Week - Academic Year 2023-2024



27. An analysis of average visitor numbers shows that Saturday is the most popular day, partially in connection with the activity of the Junior Department. This is followed by Thursdays and Fridays. Weekends attract over 30% of the total visitor numbers, while Tuesday is the quietest day of the week.



28. Group visits attracted 664 visitors, approximately 3.5% of the total.

The majority of group visits were external paying groups (the Museum offers guided tours for groups at a nominal fee of £5 per person), these were followed by attendees at the free drop-in tours offered every Wednesday at lunchtime.

The percentage of group visits is currently low due to the limited capacity of the team to manage this type of offer. Students are currently being trained to provide guided tours, with the aim of substantially increasing group visits over the current year, and particularly to increase the number of school groups and meet the demand for handling sessions over the spring and summer terms. 2025.

Music in the Museum and other concert series

29. The Museum hosted forty concerts (an increase of ten, or 33% compared to the previous year), all performed by RCM students and opened to the public on a 'Pay What You Can' basis. These are proving particularly effective in connecting both student and external audiences with our collections, as some of the concerts are inspired by them or are performed on Museum instruments

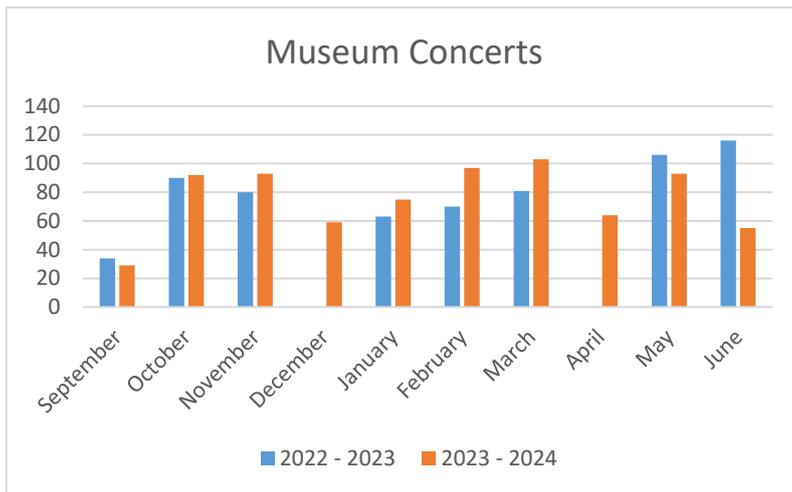
30. In particular, last year the Museum organised, in collaboration with P&P:

- Thirty-four 'Music in the Museum' Concerts: these are scheduled every Friday during term time at lunchtime (12:30-13:30) and feature mixed programmes proposed by the students. They have an audience of c. 30 people.
- Three Museum Late Concerts: these are programmed in the evening (18:30-20:00), once a term, with monographic programmes developed with one Faculty or class and connected to an object or group of objects from the collections. Last year these included:



- A programme of viol ensemble music showcasing the Kessler collection of English viols, led by prof. Sam Stadler.
- A performance by soloists and groups from the class of prof. Rachael Brown on a group of historical flutes that had undergone a careful assessment and had been prepared for performance by Robert Bigio, as part of our ongoing programme of conservation and playability evaluation.
- An evening entirely based on new music composed by RCM students and inspired by the collections organised in collaboration with the Composition Faculty.

- Three Museum Nocturnes: coordinated by the Learning and Participation Officer, these are also scheduled in the evening, but include music proposed by students following a call related to a specific theme.



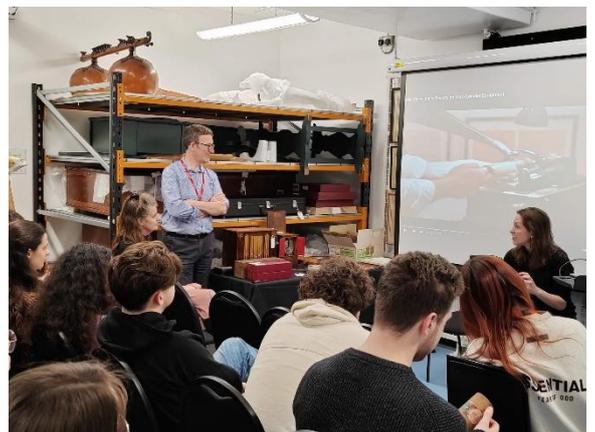
31. The total number of tickets sold increased by over 18%, from 640 people in the previous year to 760 in 2023-24.

Engagement with RCM students

32. Engaging with the RCM Community and particularly with the students is one of the priorities that the Museum actively pursues through a number of activities, initiatives and availability of spaces. Among them:
- Volunteering opportunities in the public gallery and in the Wolfson Centre in Music and Material Culture: seven students volunteered in 2023-24 both supporting the invigilation of the spaces and offering guidance and support to visitors and being involved in photography and handling sessions, digitisation and cataloguing of historical material as well as being involved in the development and installation of special exhibitions.
 - Rehearsing and performing in the Museum space: Area 3 of the Museum gallery is used for public concerts and events, and students are welcome to rehearse here during opening hours. The space is also available to students to rehearse and practice on their own instruments, an opportunity for them and visitors to connect and discuss the experience of studying at the RCM.
 - Meditation in the Museum: the Weston Discovery Centre hosts meditation classes open to all RCM students every Tuesday at lunchtime during term time.
 - Tour-guiding: the Museum offers training sessions for students to develop the skills and knowledge to give guided tours to the collection for schools and groups. Students can then be added to a list of paid tour-guides who deliver the tours throughout the year.
 - Classes: the Museum and the Wolfson Centre host several classes based on historical instruments during the academic year. These include German Lieder (Norbert Meyn), Historical Keyboards (Geoffrey Govier, Terence Charlston), Recorder (Ashley Solomon) and academic (historical) studies in the Weston Discovery Centre.
33. Moreover, a new series of initiatives has been developed this year with Historical Studies and the RCM Library. In particular:

Collections activity in the curriculum:

- In Spring 2024, two new modules orientated around the RCM Collections were launched, L5B Historical Studies ('Hands-On Music History', 13 students) and L7 Collections in Practice (also 13 students). Co-taught by Sarah Fuchs, Ingrid Pearson, Peter Linnitt, Gabriele Rossi Rognoni, and Richard Martin. These modules were very well-received by the students (see below for a round-up of feedback from BMus 2 students). These modules will run again in Spring 2025.
- Over the Autumn 2023 term, all four L5A Historical Studies modules - History of the Orchestra, History of Theatre Music, History of Public Music, and History of Musical Genres -



engaged with relevant items from the RCM Collections on at least two separate occasions (together, these modules reached the entire BMus 2 class of 2023–24). These activities will be repeated in Autumn 2024, with the entire BMus 2 class of 2024–25.

- In Spring 2025, one new L5B Historical Studies module ('Folk/Classical Crossover') orientated around the Collections will be launched by Caroline Gill and Paul Robinson. Development is still underway for this module, but all seats have been filled (12 students).

Staff training sessions:

- Over the 2023–24 academic year, Historical Studies staff participated in three training sessions orientated around the RCM Collections. These sessions were very well-attended and well-received by staff, several of whom are currently developing new modules around ideas sparked therein.

Further plans are currently being developed, with the leadership of Sarah Fuchs.

Feedback from the students included:

This module was perfect as I expected it to be. To be able to have hands on some of the collections from the museum and library was great. Very thankful to the module for introducing these great historical collections.'

This module had incredible depth and breadth for a single-term undergraduate module - it benefitted greatly from combination with the postgraduate module, and in comparison to other Historical Studies modules I have taken, it was outstanding. Having a multi-disciplinary team of professors was a fantastic opportunity to learn across different areas of historical research, and the core concept of artefact-based learning was consistently interesting and coherent. I was really excited for the module before it began, and it still exceeded my expectations!

Much better [than I expected]! Didn't really know what to expect but was really pleasantly surprised. Historical studies is a subject I always found really boring but I genuinely enjoyed and looked forward to these classes. Having a more practical, physical approach to looking at music history is so much more engaging and meaningful.'

This module far exceeded my expectations. The teaching was engaging and informative. The class environment [in the Wolfson Centre] was fantastic; the other students in this class encouraged a positive learning experience and enhanced my confidence and motivation to submit assignments and engage in class material.

Communication

34. In contrast to the first year of operations, no budget has been allocated to communication over the year 2023-24 due to other priorities and limited staff-capacity. Meanwhile, the team has worked in collaboration with the Marketing and Communication department to strengthen and streamline existing communication and dissemination platforms. This was a necessary step between restarting active advertising in the upcoming year.

In particular:

Newsletter

35. A Museum Newsletter has been launched and published on a termly basis at the beginning of each term. The Newsletter is distributed to all students and all staff through internal mailing lists, is meant exclusively for an internal (RCM based) audience and highlights possibilities of engagement for students and public projects and events. While it is difficult to assess the impact of this initiative, several students have mentioned it in conversation with colleagues and have inquired about volunteering immediately after the release of each issue.

Social Media

36. The Museum had run its own Twitter account since 2018 and reached an audience of over 3,000 followers on that platform. However, due to the changes in direction of Twitter/X, the decision was taken – in agreement with the MarComms Department – to transition to an Instagram account. The migration was finalised over the month of November 2023 and led to the closure of the Twitter/X account and the launch of a new @RCMMuseum Instagram profile. This also aligned with the general trend of museums to focus their social media activity on Instagram.

37. The migration was a calculated risk, as it required rebuilding the audience-base from scratch (X has filters in place to avoid disseminating information about competing platforms).
38. At the moment the @RCMMuseum account has a limited following of 539 people and institutions and, since the 28 November 2023, has published circa 90 posts, about 10 per month.
39. The Instagram dashboard only aggregates data over the past 90 days. Over the period 1 June – 31 August 2024 the account reached 7,355 accounts, of which 347 are followers and 7,008 are not, for a total of over 30,000 views. Of these, 561 accounts actively engaged with content, leading to 785 profiles checking the Museum profile.
40. Growing the platform will require dedicated time and expertise and the development of an engagement plan. This is part of the strategic goals of this year, to be implemented as soon as the new Digital Officer joins the team (end of 2024).

Dissemination/knowledge exchange videos

41. Three professional videos were created by the external company Tantrwm thanks to financial support from the RCM Knowledge Exchange fund.
42. The three videos illustrate the museum, the collections and the research activity. They will be released in autumn 2024.

Poster at the entrance of the RCM



43. Based on a survey delivered in spring 2024, the most effective dissemination tool to attract in-person visitors is currently a poster affixed at the entrance of the College on Prince Consort Road. This has been redesigned by the Marketing Team and is on display throughout the year, except short times when the space is required to announce other priority events.

Collections

Digital resources

Website

44. The Museum has a dedicated suite of pages in the RCM website (<https://www.rcm.ac.uk/>), accessible through the home page, clicking on What's on / Visiting the RCM / Museum.
45. The web pages have been updated in 2023 to include relevant policies and information, but a thorough review of content is required. While this is noted, it is not a top priority for the current year.
46. Over the period covered by this report, the Museum web-page attracted 27,301 users – unique visitors to the RCM Museum pages, 17,804 of which scrolled down the page with an engagement rate of 68% of users spending over 10 seconds on the page.
47. Exhibition pages attracted 4,614 users, of which 3,912 scrolled down with a >10-sec engagement rate of 79%.

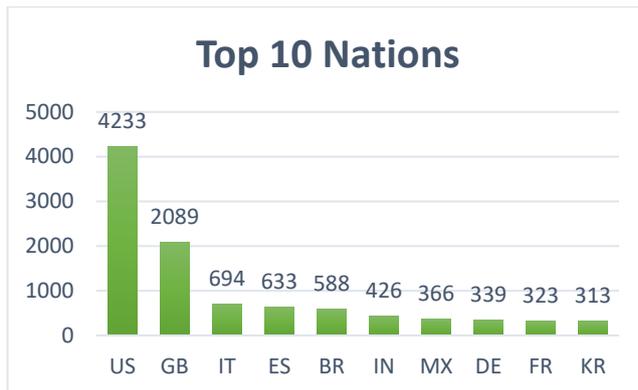
Online catalogue

48. The digital catalogue of the Museum has been designed by an external company (Surface Impression) in 2015 thanks to a Capital Allocation from the RCM. It is hosted on an independent server and accessible through museumcollections.rcm.ac.uk
49. Over the past year, the platform has been redesigned and reorganised in order to offer a more rational access to the 10,013 records with photographs that it includes. These are now clustered by category and the categories have been redefined, each section being provided with an introductory overview.
50. Moreover, during the past year c. 470 items were photographed or re-photographed under the coordination of Richard Martin and with the collaboration of Museum volunteer and RCM PhD student Arianna Rigamonti.
51. All records about woodwind instruments were revised by Museum Volunteer Douglas Macmillan and republished.
52. However, the platform is by now ten years old, and the Content Management System (CMS) used by the Museum – Axiell, ex AdLib – offers new possibilities to publish content online. Over the current year, after the new Digital Officer joins, the situation will be reviewed, to consider the possibility of a migration of the catalogue to a different platform.
53. The accuracy of records is also being revised in an ongoing process led by the Museum Operations Assistant, Louise Richardson.

Google Arts & Culture Digital Exhibitions

54. Since 2018 the RCM has partnered with Google Arts and Culture for the creation and public availability of digital exhibitions, which are available through the website <https://artsandculture.google.com/> and embedded in the Museum webpage.
55. Over 2,300 digital objects are available and free to use for digital exhibition by other users of the same platform. Some are aggregated and curated in 14 'stories' – i.e. digital exhibitions – produced by the Museum and the Library.
56. Over the past year, a new digital exhibition has been released, digitising the content of the physical exhibition *Musical Portraits in Bohemian London* (concept and texts by Anna Maria Barry, digital development Yahui Zhang, Richard Martin, Gabriele Rossi Rognoni, and Laura House). Material has been lent by the British Museum, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Getty Research Institute, the Art Institute in Chicago and several other international bodies.
57. Google Arts & Culture digital exhibitions are by far the most successful digital engagement platform for the Museum, attracting an additional 17,871 users over the period September 2023 – July 2024, c. 40% of which from the US, 20% from the UK and the others, in order, from Italy, Spain, Brazil, India, Mexico, Denmark, France,

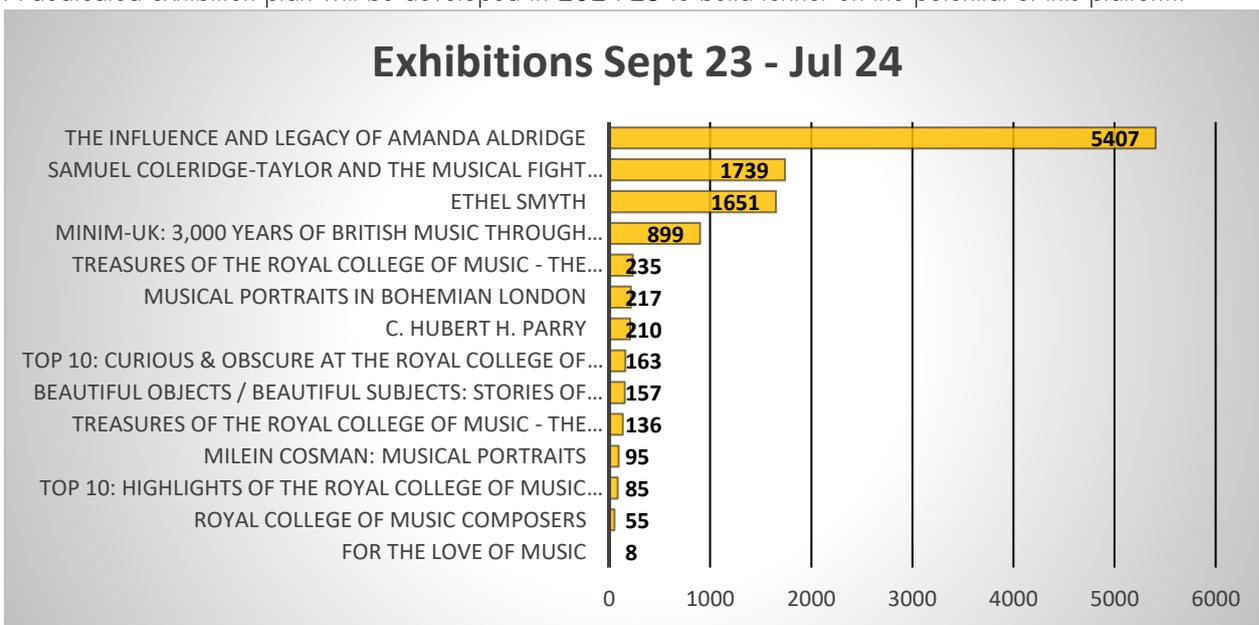
Croatia, Japan, etc. This highlights the potential of this platform to expand the geographic reach of the Museum and the international reputation of the College.³



About half of these are attracted by the 14 curated exhibitions produced by the Museum and the Library, with particular attention on the Black history of the College – Amanda Aldridge and Samuel Coleridge Taylor – and women rights – Ethel Smyth.

Searches by keyword also indicate a strong interest in social history (Coleridge Taylor alone aggregates over 2,000 searches), women’s rights (Ethel Smyth reaches a similar number), with much more limited numbers for music-specific topics (Chopin, c. 600; Dias guitar, c. 200); Anne Boleyn, c. 200)

A dedicated exhibition plan will be developed in 2024-25 to build further on the potential of this platform.



ArenaPal

58. Since 2015 all licences to reproduce RCM Museum images are managed externally by the digital licence library ArenaPal. Fees are reverted to the College on a monthly basis.

4,829 images are currently available through ArenaPAL’s website and more images will be added over the next year.

59. Sales included 22 licences issued for use in the UK and Europe by – among others – the BBC, the British Library and the Open University for a variety of works including several musical instruments (clavicytherium, machete, chitarrone), paintings (Haydn, Chopin) and several prints.

³ Data analysis and graphs by Chiara Felice.

Other aggregators

60. The Museum collections are also available through the following specialised aggregators:

- MIMO – Musical Instrument Museums Online (<https://mimo-international.com/>): the platform aggregates over 64,000 records of musical instruments in the main music museums across Europe, North America, Africa and Asia. 1,141 instruments from the RCM Collection are included in the platform.
- MINIM-UK (<https://minim.ac.uk/>): the platform, created and managed by the RCM, aggregates over 22,600 records of instruments held in collections in Britain. 898 instruments from the RCM Collections are represented.
- ArtUK (<https://artuk.org/>): a national aggregator of paintings and sculptures in UK public collections. 846 items from the RCM Museum collections are represented.
- Europeana (<https://www.europeana.eu/>): the European Digital Library. The platform includes 1,213 items related to the RCM.

Conservation [ES]

61. The RCM Museum hosts a diverse collection of items, vastly ranging in material, condition, and age. To ensure their longevity, the team includes a museum conservator who is responsible for the ongoing maintenance and care for the collection. Responsibilities of the conservator include:

- Implementation of preventative care of collection items on display and in storage.
- Weekly surface cleaning of open display instruments and termly cleaning of items housed in display cases.
- Systematic analysis of environmental monitoring and pest management for the collection.
- Creating and maintaining risk assessment strategies, standard operating procedures, and COSHH records to support the safe storage of the collection and interaction with objects.
- Maintenance of playable historical musical instruments in the collection as well as handling collection instruments in the Weston Discovery Centre.
- Aiding in documentation of the collection and manage physical and digital records of conservation treatments.
- Supporting installation of objects in temporary exhibitions and college buildings.
- Management of storage facilities on and off site organising the space, coordinating audits, improving object storage solutions and object transport when necessary.
- Consulting with external specialist conservators, suppliers and companies to support the treatment, transport, and delivery of collection items.
- Organisation of the conservation budget and collaboration in grant proposal applications related to conservation of the collections.

Preventive Conservation Measures: Environmental Monitoring

62. From 2022 to 2024, a primary goal of the conservation strategy was to establish preventive conservation measures within both the RCM museum and the storage spaces on campus. Monthly analyses of environmental monitoring, focused on relative humidity (RH) and average temperature (AT) and light/UV levels were conducted to track climate fluctuations throughout the year. Detailed data compiled in 2022 served as a foundation for comparison with the 2023 monitoring results. This in-depth investigation has provided valuable insight in preventive care for the collection and aided in accurately identifying various environmental hazards that present themselves throughout the year.

63. It was determined that the UK's rapidly fluctuating weather patterns cause significant changes in the environmental conditions of both the museum and storage areas, notwithstanding the 'self-enclosed' design of the space (no windows nor external walls). RH and AT consistently peaked between May and August, compromising the optimal

storage conditions for the collection. With this insight, proactive adjustments to temperature and humidity can be made to mitigate these anticipated fluctuations.

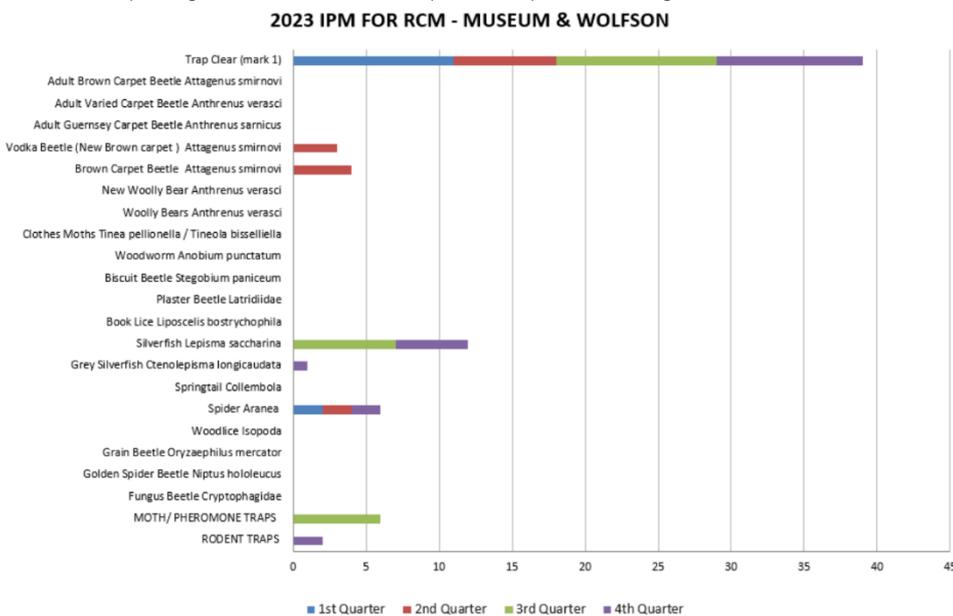
- 64. Following routine maintenance procedures, all environmental monitors in the Wolfson Centre and Museum were calibrated during the first quarter of 2024 to ensure accurate data was being collected. Between 2023 and September 2024, the conditions of the Museum galleries have remained within the desired environmental parameters for the collection. Due to the more frequent traffic of visitors in the Museum, the space displayed increased AT and RH fluctuations compared to the storage areas of the Wolfson Centre.
- 65. With musical instruments being a focus of the collection, it is essential to maintain optimal AT and RH ranges that accommodate these composite artefacts. As displayed in Figure 1, these environmental parameters were successfully maintained.

UPSTAIRS GALLERY – OPTIMAL AT & RH RANGES vs. ANNUAL VALUES		
	Average Temperature	Relative Humidity (%)
Keyboards	20 - 25	45 - 65%
Woodwinds	20 - 25	45 - 60%
Brass	20 - 25	45 - 60%
Strings	20 - 25	45 - 60%
Paintings	15 -25	45 - 55%
OVERALL SAFE RANGES	20 - 25	45 – 60%
AVERAGE RANGE 2023-2024	20.6 – 21.2	50.1 - 54.2%

Figure 1: AT and RH values for 2023 - 2024

Preventive Conservation Measures – Integrated Pest Management (IPM)

- 66. Policies and strategies for IPM were established in 2023 as a means of accurately assessing the threat of pests to the collection. Insect, moth, and rodent traps were strategically placed throughout the museum and collections storage. From 2022 – 2023, each trap was assessed and replaced monthly as a means of accurately assessing and targeting threats to the collection. This detailed analysis has determined that there is a very limited presence of pests in both spaces. From 2023 – 2024, IPM data collection has been conducted on a quarterly basis, comparing similar results to the previous year (See Figures 2 and 3).



2024 IPM FOR RCM MUSEUM & WOLFSON CENTRE - SUMMARY

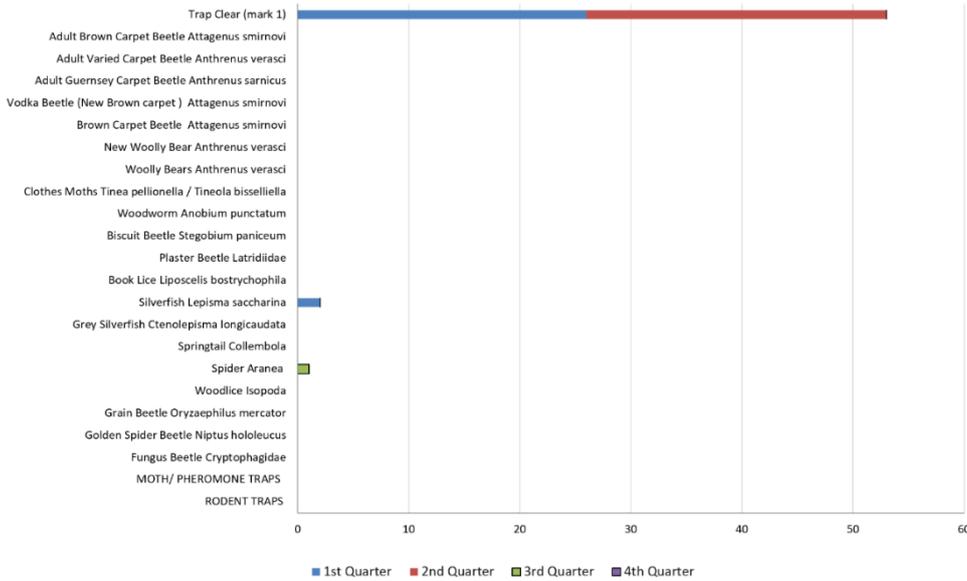


Figure 2 & 3: IPM Values

Recent Conservation Projects

67. From 2023 to 2024, notable conservation treatments were undertaken and completed for the following items in the collection:

Conservation of the Clementi Square Piano

68. In April 2024, the treatment of the Clementi Square Piano was completed. The extensive conservation treatment involved structural repairs such as the replacement of the hitch-pin plank which had been severely compromised due to previous woodworm damage. Following the repair, the piano was fully restrung to further ensure the safe use and longevity of the object. It recently returned to its display in the museum and can now continue to be utilised by musicians and academics for years to come.



Flute Condition Assessments and Conservation

69. Over the past year, a comprehensive condition assessment of the flutes was undertaken to determine potential playability and conservation needs. Condition and playability were measured in terms of provenance, physical state, conservation needs, and role in the collection. Approximately 60 flutes were assessed and are currently being incrementally treated based on their intended use and physical stability.

Hidden Treasures Exhibition

70. The Hidden Treasures Exhibition in 2024 explored a variety of unique instruments in the collection. For the exhibition, five instruments required conservation and restringing for display purposes. To complete these treatments, extensive research was conducted to ensure accurate stringing techniques and replacement components were utilised.



Special Exhibitions

Awaken: Sufi Music & Women of South Asia (18 June – 20 October 2024)

71. The exhibition, co-curated by guest curator Attia Shiraz in collaboration with Gabriele Rossi Rognoni, explores the role of women in Sufi music and poetry, the mystical devotion of the Islamic faith, across Pakistan, India, Bengal and the diasporic communities settled in Britain, through their shared contributions in the devotional musical culture that unites diverse communities across borders in the past and present.

72. With over 60 loans from individuals and institutions in the UK, Pakistan, Kashmir and Bangladesh, the exhibition illuminates the long-overlooked connection of women in the musical landscape of Sufism over centuries. Original video and audio content gathered during a field trip in early 2024 represents the rich diversity of Sufi soundscapes and rituals rooted in various cultures, including the Siddi community, through Mughal miniature paintings, photography, instruments and women's representation in cinema.

73. Thanks to the generous support of the Cockayne Foundation, the exhibition includes a series of events organised by Hannah G. Seavey, including poetry and music performances, a documentary screening, a Mughal Miniature soundscape workshop for children and families, as well as curator-led talks and panel discussions. Exhibition events have included:

- 9 August: Family Concert with Fatima Zahra Hassan and Grand Union Orchestra
- 14 August: Indus Blues (2018) Screening
- 18 August: RCM Museum: Relaxed Opening
- 12 September: Curator-led Talk with Attia Shiraz
- 15 September: RCM Museum: Relaxed Opening
- 16 September: Indus Blues (2018) Screening and Q&A with Filmmaker Jawad Sharif
- 25 September: In Conversation and Song with JAS Musicals
- 27 September: Indus Blues (2018) Screening
- 6 October: RCM Museum: Relaxed Opening
- 9 October: Closing Celebration with DJ Almass Badat

Hidden Treasures of the RCM Collections (June 2023 - May 2024 edition)

74. An updated iteration of the *Hidden Treasures of the RCM Collections* exhibition opened on 6th June 2023. The exhibition featured new content including:



- Photographs and memorabilia from the personal collections of early 20th century opera singer Mary Garden.
- Items from the Library collections celebrating the works of female composers from the RCM with interpretation produced by post-graduate student Laura Casas Cambra.
- Drawings from the Milein Cosman collection.
- Musical instruments from the Royal Collections.
- A focus on the project to conserve playable wind instruments.
- Rare prints and artworks from the Christopher Hogwood collections.

Research and Knowledge Exchange

3D Printing and Musical Heritage (DCMS / Wolfson Museums and Galleries Improvement Fund)



75. The project explored the most recent developments in 3D modelling and printing technologies to create accurate copies of historical musical instruments for advanced and professional musicians.

76. The instruments, all chosen from the collection of the Museum, included five ivory instruments – particularly fragile due to the specific characteristics of the material – (two alto recorders by Jacob Denner and Paul Villars, an early clarinet by George Heinrich Scherer, a flute by Ignaz Scherer and a renaissance cornett) as well as two boxwood ones – an oboe by Jacob Grundman and a recorder by Johann W. Oberlender.

77. The first part of the study was generously supported by a £33,000 grant from the DCMS/Wolfson Museum and Galleries Improvement Fund which enabled the micro-CT scanning of the instruments, their digital restoration and prints using a variety of materials and techniques.

78. The copies were then tested to compare their physical and acoustical characteristics with the originals and musicians' and audiences' responses were analysed, in order to reach a fuller understanding of the potential of this technique to support early music performance and the preservation and dissemination of historical musical instruments.

79. Results were shared in an international workshop supported by the RCM Regional Innovation Fund. Participants included invited representatives from major institutions involved in the same area of research, such as the Musée de la Musique and Sorbonne University/CNRS in Paris, the Hochschule für Musik in Basel, the University of Edinburgh, Brown University in Rhode Island and several others (the full programme and videos of all the papers are available on



<https://www.rcm.ac.uk/research/projects/3dprintedmusicalinstruments/>).

80. The conference ended with a concert in the Performance Hall entirely based on the copies, with the participation of Prof. Colin Lawson, Prof. Ashley Solomon, Ingrid Pearson and several RCM students.

81. The project has now entered its final phase, which consists in comparative psycho-acoustical analyses of the original and copies and in the development of a feasibility study on the production of prints in collaboration with makers.

82. The project is led by Gabriele Rossi Rognoni in partnership with Gabriele Ricchiardi (University of Turin) as part of the research activities of the RCM-Wolfson Centre in Music and Material Culture. CT scans of the instruments were undertaken at the Micro-CT laboratory of the Natural History Museum by Brett Clark (Micro-CT Scanning Specialist) and the post-production of the digital models, including digital restoration, was delivered by Federico Xiccato e Francesca Tansella. Instruments' set up – where necessary – was undertaken by Robert Bigio.

Knowledge exchange

83. In the month of August, the Museum hosted Catalina Vicens, Curator of the Luigi Ferdinando Tagliavini collection at the Museum of San Colombano in Bologna and internationally renown early-keyboard player.

The visit was the culmination of a long-lasting collaboration discussing the intersection between practice-based research, material culture studies and historical instruments in museums.

The visit led to the creation of a jointly-produced educational video based on an instrument of the collection, to test new formats for digital engagement for the collection. The video – released on the Museum Instagram account – reached over 3,500 views reaching 3,000 accounts over the first 30 days, over double the account average.



MINIM-UK Project

84. The Museum has continued the maintenance and expansion of the MINIM-UK resource (www.minim.ac.uk), however, the hosting agreement will reach its end by the end of 2025. As the resource still attracts over 32,000 unique visits a year, a new hosting model will be explored as soon as a new Digital Officer is recruited.

Other research activities and collaborations

85. During the past year the Curator has been appointed Chair of the Galpin Society – the oldest professional association dedicated to the study of historical musical instruments.
86. One of the students enrolled in the RCM PhD cluster in Music and Material Culture, Fanny Guillaume-Castel, has completed her studies and was awarded a PhD for her thesis *Noble Throughout: the Transformations of the Pedal Harp in Paris and London, between 1749 and 1811*. Three more students are enrolled in the programme, supervised by the Curator.
87. Other research involvements included consultancy for the project *Cooperation on the Safeguarding and Continuation of Intangible Cultural Heritage* (Samarbeid for vern og vidareføring av immateriell kulturarv) led by the Ringve Museum and Rockheim in Trondheim and supported by the Kulturdirektoratet (Arts and Culture Norway).
88. The Curator has been contracted to co-edit a *Bloomsbury Handbook of Sound in Museums* – with Holger Schulze, Alcina Cortez and Eric De Visscher, while a book proposal on *Displaying Sound in the 21st Century* – co-edited with Eric De Visscher – is currently under peer-review.
89. Papers have been presented – in person and online - at conferences in Nottingham (RMA), Wuhan (China), Copenhagen, Oxford and Brussels, some of which have been requested for publication.