

MUSIC STAFF



Introduction

Edinburgh College's Music Department is fortunate to have a large and diverse staff group, each one of whom has extensive experience of working in the industry - performing, teaching, recording, broadcasting, composing, songwriting, directing, community work and much, much more. As such they all draw from a deep well of practical knowledge, and can offer invaluable insights and advice about many kinds of music careers and activities. In the biographies below, you can read about their training and some of their work outside College.



Alasdair Rankin - Percussion Tutor

Since graduating from the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, Alasdair has performed with some of the finest orchestras in the UK such as the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, Royal Scottish National Orchestra, Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Scottish Opera, Scottish Ballet, Scottish Ensemble, Scottish National Wind Orchestra and the City of Glasgow Philharmonic Orchestra amongst others.

Alasdair has also played in concerts for artists including Mel Tormé, George Shearing, Sir James Galway, Dame Evelyn Glennie, Nicola Benedetti, Eric Marienthal and Carol Kidd. He has also worked with conductors and composers such as Sir Alexander Gibson, Osmo Vänskä, John Cage, James MacMillan, John Rutter, Skitch Henderson, Martyn Brabbins and Jerzy Maksymiuk, playing in some of the most prestigious concert halls and venues across the world.

Alasdair's musical diversity has taken him to music festivals across Europe including numerous performances at the BBC Proms in the Royal Albert Hall, London and a season of 'Phantom of the Opera' in the Edinburgh Playhouse.

Alasdair is endorsed by Freer Percussion and is the owner of Edinburgh Percussion, the exclusive UK supplier of Freer Percussion Products.

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Allan Glen - Class Lecturer

Allan graduated from the acclaimed BA Applied Music course at the University of Strathclyde and continued his studies as a scholarship student at the world-renowned Berklee College of Music in Boston, USA. During his time at Berklee, he had the chance to play in some of the best student ensembles and faculty groups, going on to receive the Dean's List Award in 2007.

Over the years he has had the chance to study with many great teachers including Stewart Forbes and Bobby Wishart at the University of Strathclyde; Dino Govoni, Ralph Peterson, Jr., Shannon LeClaire, Eric Byers, Mitch Seidman, Bill Sicim, Bob Pilkington and Scott Free at Berklee College of Music; and privately with Bob Mintzer and Hal Crook.

As a performer, Allan has toured extensively in Europe and America working with many different artists and ensembles. He continues to maintain a very busy career as a performer alongside his teaching commitments at Edinburgh College.

At Edinburgh College, Allan teaches composition for film and television, and is the musical director of the EC Big Band.



Annette Chapman - Class Lecturer

Annette is a singer/songwriter whose music is a mix of folk, Americana and adult contemporary material with a particular Scottish focus. You can listen to her material by visiting her site annettechapman.me. Annette is also an experienced performer in a variety of genres from classical (she is a Fellow of the London College of Music) to Blues and Rock. She has performed on major stages such as The Royal Albert Hall, the O2 Arena, and the Usher Hall, as well as in iconic venues such as the 12-Bar Club in London. She also enjoys working in the studio and has released several recordings during her career.

She currently undertakes song and lyric-writing commissions. Edinburgh Fringe magazine, 3 Weeks awarded her songs 5 stars, commenting: 'they mix a variety of genres from wide-ranging influences with thought provoking, well-penned lyrics to produce moving and inspirational material'. Blues Matters Magazine commented that 'Annette Chapman's voice is a sheer delight'. Annette teaches live performance and songwriting, and guides students on creative projects. A specialist in popular music vocals and stagecraft, Annette distils over 30 years' experience to bring out the best performances from her students.

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Colin Cunningham - Class Lecturer and Bass Tutor

Raised in a creative and musical family, Colin started playing bass guitar at the age of 15. Since then his love for music quickly progressed, leaving school and entering full time education, studying for a BA Honours in Music.

Since graduating in 2001, he's taught at various music schools, colleges, universities and workshops while working extensively in the music industry as a session musician. He has toured worldwide including America, Canada, Europe and Scandinavia and performed for recordings on numerous albums, TV shows and film music.

Colin has played with a variety of international artists such as Larry Carlton, Martha Reeves and the Vandellas, Dan Reed (Dan Reed Network), Hue & Cry, James Grant (Love & Money), Wolfstone, Liane Carroll, Jacqui Hicks, Skerryvore, PeeWee Ellis & Federation of a Disco Pimp. He's also performed with some unsigned artists that have shared the stage with the likes of Elton John, Average White Band, Al Green, John McLaughlin, The Fratellis, Thin Lizzy and Fun Loving Criminals amongst many others.

He also lectures at Edinburgh College, teaching bass and performance class.



Colin Macfarlane - Class Lecturer

Colin has been a professional musician since 1989, although his first paid engagement was as long ago as 1976! He has spent several decades performing and recording with artists such as Rab Noakes, Benny Gallagher, Tam White, James Taylor, the Liberties (with whom, as a member, he was signed to Chrysalis Records in the early 90s), Elaine C Smith and many more. He is fundamentally a guitarist, but also works regularly on bass guitar, mandolin, dobro and keyboards. He has produced albums by Rab Noakes and the Varaflames, and American singer-songwriter Kathy Stewart. He has played on a large number of recording sessions over the years and now accomplishes much of his session work on a 'remote' basis, recording parts in his own studio and file-sharing with clients.

He has written, performed and recorded music for many TV and film productions over the years, the most recent of which was the BAFTA award-winning series 'This Farming Life' for the BBC in 2014, which has now run to a third series, still using his music. Other clients include Channel 4, Historic Scotland, Stirling District Council and STV.

He has a degree in Further Education from Stirling University, and his teaching interests include MIDI, sound recording, music technology and music performance.

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Dot Allan - Class Lecturer

At Edinburgh College, Dot teaches studio recording techniques, popular music performance, and music technology; she also plays for students' degree recitals. She combines this with her performance activities throughout the UK and abroad.

Dot worked in London as a session musician for 15 years before relocating to Edinburgh. She has collaborated with Lee Scratch Perry, Laurel Aitken, the Deltones, Dubweiser, Michelle Gayle, Kenickie, Macy Gray, Lynden David Hall, Blackalicious, and Richard Niles at Nomis Studios in London. She has appeared at Glastonbury and Reading Festivals, and the Trans Musical Festival in Rennes, France; and in venues including Ronnie Scott's, the Royal Festival Hall, and Shepherd's Bush Empire. Dot's TV and radio work includes Jools Holland, Radio 1 live (Steve Lamacq), Top of the Pops, CD UK, GMTV, GLR, SBN, Mad for It and Damon Rochefort (BBC Wales).

She has toured in the UK, France and Switzerland, and has had performing residencies in Bahrain and Malaysia.



Finlay Hetherington - Class Lecturer & Trumpet Tutor

Finlay is a Scottish trumpet player who works as an educator and performer throughout Scotland and the UK. After trumpet studies with one of the world's leading brass performers and pedagogues, John Miller at the Royal Northern College of Music and Manchester University, Finlay returned to Scotland and completed a post-graduate course in secondary music education at The University of Edinburgh.

Finlay has extensive experience performing across the UK and abroad including Asia and the USA, and is also a very experienced collaborator. His current projects include trumpet and accordion duo, Albaccord, and he is the founding director and trumpeter of brass quintet, Brass Tracks (www.brasstracksmusic.co.uk), which is represented by artist management, Classical Musicians Scotland.

As a dedicated educator Finlay has vast experience working in one-to-one sessions, as a musical workshop leader, and coaching and tutoring trumpet. Finlay has taught trumpet at St Mary's Music School since 2004 and is also currently a brass tutor with Edinburgh City, a trustee of Edinburgh Youth Orchestra, and has been a guest lecturer in music at Mansfield University, Pennsylvania, USA. Finlay has been a tutor at Edinburgh College since 2017.

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Francesco Sani - Class Lecturer

Born and educated in Rome, Francesco moved to the UK to complete a course of academic studies in music, first at school in Leeds, then as an undergraduate at Edinburgh University and a postgraduate at Huddersfield University.

Having taught music full time for many years, first as a strings tutor in schools in Leeds for two years, then as a lecturer at East Berkshire College and North East Scotland College, Francesco joined Edinburgh College in November 2018 as a music lecturer after three years working as a self-employed music tutor, ICMA examiner, performer, and co-founder of sonic arts festival sonADA.

His musical interests include experimental improvisation, world music, music analysis (pitch set and frequency analysis) and the music of the New York School. He has submitted compositions to a number of international competitions and has collaborated with artists creating soundscapes through fixed-medium, acousmatic, and improvised pieces. He lives in Aberdeen with his long-term partner and their daughter, where he continues music teaching and examining.



Jamie Turnbull - Class Lecturer

Jamie has been a musician from a very young age, and an engineer for around 15 years. Starting in live sound he found himself working in venues all over Scotland. The studio bug hit and after studying he started as a freelance producer and engineer in some of Scotland's most prestigious studios.

Over the years he has worked with a huge variety of artists, including old rockers Dogs D'Amour, TV superstar Idris Elba, award-winning RnB star Mr Hudson, vocal legend Mica Paris and many many more up-and-coming bands and solo artists. He has provided music for the Commonwealth Games, as well as for BBC and ITV programmes. Jamie has been lecturing in sound for ten years and is passionate about working with new talent.

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Jess Abrams - Class Lecturer

Jess Abrams is a musician, music practitioner and college lecturer.

She holds an MSc in Music in the Community from the University of Edinburgh but was a practitioner long before she held the degree! As a practitioner, her work is largely with young people who are hard to reach, young offenders and young people in care and those supported by Social Work. As well as teaching and facilitating workshops, Jess is the director of the Edinburgh Youth Music Forum, working with other practitioners to explore, develop and share practice.

Jess is from New York but has lived in Edinburgh for over 20 years. As a jazz vocalist, she gigs in the UK and Europe whenever she can.



Jonathan Bennett - Curriculum Manager

With a diverse portfolio of performance, composition and production projects, Jonathan's main specialisms reside in jazz piano and studio-based composition.

Jonathan has performed across the UK and Europe in several jazz, electronic and contemporary improvised music collectives, and as a composer and producer continues to work on a range of projects in both the corporate and commercial sectors – recently winning awards for original music and sound design, and ghost producing a number of global commercial releases.

In addition to his creative practice, Jonathan is an experienced educator working in lecturing and leadership roles at institutions in both Scotland and England.

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Jon-Luke Kirton - Class Lecturer and Piano Tutor

A conservatoire-educated pianist, Jon-Luke Kirton graduated with a first class honours degree from Birmingham Conservatoire, leading to a full scholarship for a Master's degree in Repetiteurship at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland.

Currently, Jon-Luke divides his time between being a musical director and accompanist, working at Edinburgh College, and completing his own part-time PhD project. His college responsibilities predominantly lie in leading solo and ensemble performance activities, but he is also responsible for research modules and the degree programme's capstone project module.

Currently working with Falkirk Operatic Society on a Cole Porter's 'Anything Goes', Jon-Luke is an experienced musical director in both musical theatre and opera. He has been involved with over three dozen productions from Bernstein's 'West Side Story' to Mozart's 'Don Giovanni'. He has worked across Scotland, and enjoyed collaborations with the Junior Conservatoire and Summer School programmes at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, Edinburgh Grand Opera and Aberdeen International Festival for Youth, to name but a few.

Jon-Luke is currently completing PhD research at the University of Glasgow under Bjorn Heile and David Code.



Judith Gardner-Jones - Class Lecturer and Voice Tutor

Judith combines a career as voice coach and vocalist. Her love of words & music took her from reading English at Edinburgh University to studying voice at the Royal College of Music, to a career as a singer, performer & teacher.

She has wide experience as an operatic soloist, including roles in Das Rheingold, Nabucco, Die Fledermaus and Don Giovanni, amongst many others. She has also performed in Opera Gala concerts throughout Scotland. During her time at the RCM, the Royal Warrant Holders Association awarded Judith a Queen Elizabeth Scholarship for opera. She featured in opera broadcasts for BBC Radio Scotland and has taken music to those who are in long-term care with 'Music in Hospitals'.

In the West End, Judith played Carlotta Giudicelli in The Phantom of the Opera at Her Majesty's Theatre, London. Her final performance was filmed for Joel Schumacher's The Phantom of the Opera - "Behind the Mask" DVD and for BBC2.

Her oratorio experience includes solo parts in St Matthew Passion (Bach), Messe Solonelle (Berlioz), In the Company of Heaven (Britten), and many more. Jonathan Dove wrote his song cycle, Five Am'rous Sighs, for Judith's voice; it was premiered with him at the Garrick Club, London.

Judith has been a visiting teacher of singing at several independent schools.

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Katrina Bateman - Violin and Viola Tutor

Katrina Bateman read music at King's College, Cambridge. She studied violin with Erich Gruenberg, leading ensembles (directed by Stephen Cleobury) accompanying King's College choir throughout her degree, and performed Vaughan Williams' 'Lark Ascending' in King's College Chapel, conducted by her contemporary Edward Gardner, in her final year.

She then spent two years studying violin at London's Royal Academy of Music with Lydia Mordkovitch, a celebrated Russian soloist, and protégée of David Oistrakh. After leaving the Academy, she freelanced for several years with ensembles including the City of London Sinfonia, London Mozart Players and the BBC Concert Orchestra.

Since moving to Scotland she has worked with companies including the SCO, RSNO, BBCSSO and with the Scottish Opera and Ballet orchestras, appeared with artists as diverse as Andrea Bocelli, Sir James MacMillan and Dougie MacLean, performed in chamber music recitals across the country in many groups, and enjoyed a varied diet of teaching and directing.



Laurie Crump - Class Lecturer and Curriculum Leader

Laurie studied music at the University of Oxford and gained post-graduate qualifications at Trinity College of Music and the University of Edinburgh in performing, teaching and musicology. Following his studies he taught recorder in Edinburgh and worked for Live Music Now! as a performer and workshop leader in Scotland, England and Wales for several years, playing recorder, whistle, fiddle, piano and mandolin. He joined Edinburgh College (then Stevenson College) as a music lecturer in 2004.

As a recorder player, Laurie has wide experience in early music. He is also a traditional music enthusiast, and plays whistle and fiddle with Portobello Ceilidh Band, one of Scotland's longest-established dance bands. He was privileged to perform in Scottish songwriter Alan Reid's radio theatre project 'The Adventures of John Paul Jones' in 2012 and 2013.

Laurie was thrilled to lead a group of college musicians in a trip to Lithuania in 2010 to collaborate with Vilnius College in a unique crossover project directed by Russian jazz legend Vladimir Chekasin. The following year he joined the college choir in performing in the spectacular opening ceremony for World Skills 2011 at the O2 Arena in London.

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Lindsay Martindale - Cello Tutor

Lindsay Martindale has played as a freelance 'cellist with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, the Northern Sinfonia, the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, the Royal Scottish National Orchestra, the BBC Philharmonic, the Orchestra of Scottish Opera, Scottish Ballet, and as guest principal with the National Symphony Orchestra of Scotland.

For 12 years she held full-time positions in the National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland (as sub-principal) and in the Real Orquesta Sinfonica de Sevilla in Spain. She gives regular concerto performances and recitals in Scotland.

Lindsay studied with Kitty Gregorson, William Pleeth and with Joan Dickson at the Royal College of Music where she was awarded every major 'cello prize and a scholarship for string quartet.



Malcolm MacFarlane - Class Lecturer and Guitar Tutor

Malcolm is an award-winning musician with recognition from the Scottish Jazz Awards (for guitar, 2009) and Arts & Business, amongst others. As a guitarist he covers a wide range of styles and has worked with artists ranging from Dame Evelyn Glennie to Sir Tom Jones, and with ensembles including Covent Garden Opera, RSNO, Opera North, BBC SSO, Northern Sinfonia and the Red Note Ensemble. He has toured the world with pop artists as such as Shakatak and Matt Bianco, and jazz artists Barbara Thompson and Jamie Cullum. His own projects include The Scottish Guitar Quartet (formed in 2000 - leader and main composer), Grooveyard and Spoken Mirror; he is now co-leading an original small ensemble with saxophonist Gordon McNeill.

Always keen to evolve and develop, his electronic album project 'Winter's Journey' was released to critical acclaim in 2012 and a follow-up release is underway. Alongside this there is a book about The Beatles in progress (in-depth musical analyses, focusing on 1966) and the composition of a 50-minute suite for jazz orchestra, featuring guitar. At Edinburgh College, Malcolm teaches guitar and a wide variety of subjects including music notation and studio production.

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Ni Frayling-Kelly - Class Lecturer and Voice Tutor

Ni has been professionally involved with the music industry since 1990. He has been a collaborator, co-writer, front man, band member, backing vocalist, session player, programmer, producer, arranger, musical director, club promoter and college lecturer.

His musical experience and interests range from musical theatre, pop, rock and dance music right through to brutal metal, and everything in between. As well as being a keen songwriter working in various styles and genres of music, he has also written incidental, library and feature music for the computer games industry and corporate videos.

He has appeared on television and live radio and works closely with a US record label, with whom he has been signed for two album projects. He has worked at Edinburgh College since 1999 as a vocal coach and lecturer in music, music business and music technology. He has also taught music business subjects at Forth Valley College and been an Associate Lecturer for Abertay University, teaching Professional Practice and Media Law.



Richard Kass - Drum Tutor

Described by Steve White as 'a poly-rhythmic monster', Richard Kass is a drummer with a unique and powerful voice on the instrument. Richard is currently recording and touring with Trio HLK and Dame Evelyn Glennie.

As a performer he has toured and recorded with Cory Henry (Snarky Puppy), Arild Andersen, Steve Lehman, John Etheridge, Haftor Medboe, Muhsinah, Somi, the Sugababes and many more.

As an educator, Richard has been invited to give masterclasses across the UK and Europe including at the Royal Northern College of Music, Birmingham Conservatoire, Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama, the Academy of Music and Sound, The University of Edinburgh and Edinburgh Napier University.

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Robin Robertson - Class Lecturer and Guitar Tutor

Robin studied classical guitar at Napier University and continued his training at the RCS (then RSAMD) in Glasgow.

Robin has played professionally with bands and groups in genres from Country, Blues, Rock, Metal and Funk to Jazz and Fusion. He continues to perform in classical recitals and makes guest appearances at music and guitar societies throughout Scotland. In addition he has played on a number of sessions with a variety of projects, including adverts and radio jingles and a 'Scotland World Cup Football Anthem'. In summer 2014 Robin UK-premiered Jim Hall's Suite for Jazz Guitar and Strings.

He has featured at many festivals, and has been a guest lecturer and teacher for guitar and jazz workshops and seminars throughout the UK. Robin has written for and played with Glasgow Symphony Orchestra and The Royal Scottish National Orchestra, and has worked with artists as diverse as Jon Lord (Deep Purple), Gunther Schuller (Miles Davis), Guthrie Govan, Stuart Ryan and John Wheatcroft.

Robin writes for and records with The Jazz Tigers and has recently recorded and toured with the Robin Robertson Blues Band. The Blues Band project has had international acclaim with reviews and radio play in Europe, Australia and USA.



Rocio Banyuls-Bertomeu - Class Lecturer and Saxophone Tutor

Rocio graduated in 2009 from Edinburgh Napier University with a first-class BMus degree, studying saxophone with Sue McKenzie. She later completed an Advanced Diploma in Jazz with Richard Ingham at the University of St Andrews. She has given many solo performances since then, with concerts in the Reid Hall (The University of Edinburgh), St Giles Cathedral and St Andrews University and many other venues, often with the renowned concert pianist Audrey Innes. The duo gave the premiere of a piece by Helen Grime at the World Saxophone Congress, performing alongside several of world-renowned saxophonists.

She has travelled all over the world receiving master classes from distinguished performers Claude Delangle, Arno Bornkamp, Kyle Horsh, Marie Bernadette Charrier and Josetxo Silguero. She is also the leader of the Banyuls Saxophone Quartet and has played with many established orchestras and chamber groups including the Edinburgh Quartet.

In college Rocio teaches music theory and saxophone, and is the director of the saxophone ensemble, clarinet ensemble and concert band. She is also the manager of Ritmico Music, which provides music tuition and classes for primary school children in Edinburgh; it is also a platform for college students to get experience in music teaching.

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Scott Hannah - Class Lecturer and Guitar Tutor

Scott graduated from Leeds College of Music in 2011 with a first Class Honours degree in Jazz as well as achieving the Eric Kershaw award for guitar in his final year. He maintains a busy teaching schedule as well as performing regularly with a variety of ensembles, ranging from blues, jazz, country and also theater groups. Scott has attended the International Association of School of Jazz where he studied and performed with David Liebman (Miles Davis) as well as working with students from conservatoires around the world including the Manhattan New School and Julliard.

As well as this he has also studied with Darius Brubeck, George Garzone and Jerry Bergonzi.

He currently teaches guitar, studio skills, music listening, music technology and creative work at Edinburgh College. In his time teaching at college he has taught across all academic levels from NC5 to BA with many past students going on to maintain successful careers in the music industry.

Scott recently graduated from Dundee University with a Postgraduate certificate in Further Education.



Simon Thacker - Guitar Tutor

Simon is a composer, classical guitarist, improviser and ensemble leader. As well as touring as a classical guitar soloist, he has developed some of today's most prescient ensembles: Simon Thacker's Svara-Kanti, a world leading Indo-Western collective which has seen him tour and collaborate at major festivals in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, including for an audience of 60 000 in Dhaka and at The Sacred Pushkar, one of the region's biggest sacred music festivals; Simon Thacker's Ritmata, his musical laboratory with three of Europe's leading improvisers; Karmana with Polish cellist Justyna Jablonska, a new vision for chamber music; and Songs of the Roma with Justyna and Roma Gypsy singer/violinist Masha Natanson, a new Romany musical journey.

All of these groups have been selected for the prestigious Made in Scotland showcase, exclusively feature Simon's music and have recently recorded albums. His music has been played on radio in over 50 countries. He has performed as soloist with many orchestras, including the RSNO.

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Steve Grossart - Piano Tutor

Steve is a highly respected and sought-after session pianist and piano/keyboard teacher. He has a teaching and performing career spanning more than thirty years and teaches popular and classical piano students at all levels.

Steve has performed in a variety of bands within diverse genres including jazz, rock, pop, ceilidh and country. He has undertaken studio work, toured extensively throughout the UK and Europe, and performed on live BBC broadcasts.

Steve is one of the founding members of the jazz quartet 'Jazzmain'.



Fiona McLean - Trombone Tutor

Fiona studied at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama (London) where she achieved a BMus (Hons) on tenor and alto trombone, a MMus on Bass trombone and in her final year became a Guildhall Artist by undertaking a Masters in Musical Performance (MMP) whilst her brass quintet Brass Spectrum studied as ensemble in residence. She has studied with many great teachers including Eric Crees, John Kenny and Keith McNicoll to mention but a few. She has been heavily involved in education work including the Wigmore Hall Chamber Tots and the LSO discovery scheme. This work continued after graduating as a member of Live Music Now! where she toured the country providing educational workshops for music authorities and individuals with specific learning needs. Fiona has taught in various schools and specialised music centres where she also directed the brass ensembles and jazz bands.

As a performer, music has taken Fiona many places throughout Britain and abroad ranging from orchestral to chamber music and everything in between. Closer to home she has freelanced in West End shows and performed with many orchestras and soul/funk/big bands.

Fiona now teaches for the City of Edinburgh Council, Napier University and Edinburgh College whilst maintaining a busy freelance career and is a member of Brass Tracks brass quintet and the founder of Castle Brass brass ensemble.

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Sue Evans - Flute Tutor

Sue Evans started playing the flute at the age of 10, and went on to study at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama (RSAMD, now the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland). Sue gained a B.A. (Musical Studies) and a M. Mus (Flute Performance, RSAMD), spending a short spell of her studies at the Rimsky-Korsakov St. Petersburg State Conservatory, Russia.

After graduating, Sue worked with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra (RSNO), Scottish Opera, Scottish Ballet, BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Ludus Baroque and the Dunedin Consort.

In parallel to her orchestral playing career Sue performs as part of the Sue Evans Flute and Harp duo. Sue has been teaching flute and music theory at St George's School in Edinburgh since 1996, and directs the Senior and Intermediate Flute ensembles there. She has been teaching at Edinburgh College since 2003, and also teaches at The University of Edinburgh.



Taj Wyzgowski - Class Lecturer and Guitar Tutor

Taj began his career working in Edinburgh with local bands, and spent several years as an in-house musician with the BBC in Glasgow. A move to London saw him collaborate with Carol Decker and Ronnie Rodgers, recording the 'Bridge of Spies' album with legendary Queen producer Roy Thomas Baker. The album included the US hit 'Heart and Soul' and the UK number one 'China in Your Hands'. He has also worked as a freelance musician with artists including Julia Fordham, John Martyn, Jimmy Ruffin, Leo Lyons (Ten Years After), and Daryl Hall, and producer Mike Peadon (The Chimes).

Taj has also undertaken many projects with legendary traditional musician Phil Cunningham, working alongside artists including Aly Bain, Martin O'Connor, Bonnie Raitt, Paul Brady, Midge Ure, Martin Taylor, Eddie Reader and The Proclaimers. Taj has also performed with Scottish band Deacon Blue over several years.

With Jim Prime (Deacon Blue), Taj co-composed the score for the six-part comedy drama series 'Bad Boys' for the BBC. He was also commissioned to compose the score for a Celtic dance theatre production, 'Rhythm of the Celts'; and was musical director for the production, which had two runs in the Waterfront Theatre, Belfast, and the Playhouse Theatre, Edinburgh.

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Taylor Wilson - Class Lecturer and Voice Tutor

Taylor is an international performer and vocal teacher/consultant. She attained a music degree from the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, a language degree from Strathclyde University (French, German, Italian) and, with a scholarship, she pursued postgraduate studies at the Royal Northern College of Music.

She has performed as Madame Giry in Phantom of the Opera in Germany (where she also studied music theatre in Berlin); in Silent Jack, a one-woman piece of music theatre written for her, in Tête-à-Tête Festival, London, and in 'Spitfire' Irene, at the Cultural Olympiad. Her one-woman shows have premièred at the Hong Kong International Festival, the Edinburgh festivals and Glasgow West End Festival. As a mezzo-soprano soloist she has worked with Scottish Opera Education (touring internationally) and has sung with orchestras such as Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Mr McFall's Chamber, Scottish Opera Orchestra, NDR Orchestra and BBC Philharmonic Orchestra.

Her continued study and research is leading her to be much in demand as a vocal practitioner and consultant. She is also a language coach for singers. Taylor has delivered vocal workshops and master classes both within the UK and abroad. She has gained the Estill Proficiency Certificate and has commenced her studies to become an Estill Master Trainer.



Romy Wijmer - Clarsach Tutor

Originally from the Netherlands, Romy first moved to Scotland to study the Scottish harp at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. She currently holds a BMus degree with first-class honours in Traditional Music.

As a performer, Romy plays music rooted in the traditions of both Scotland and the Netherlands, as well as her own original works. She has played at the Edinburgh International Harp Festival, the International Harp Friends Meeting in the Netherlands, and is a finalist in the 2020/2021 World Harp Competition, being the first harpist to present a programme played exclusively on the lever harp in this competition.

Romy frequently teaches group workshops, as well as one-to-one lessons.

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William Robertson - Class Lecturer

William has worked in the audio/music industry since 1998 in many different roles including musician, producer, recording engineer, composer, sound designer, stage manager, production supervisor, live sound engineer, DJ, AV Technician, location recordist and Foley artist. He has a First Class (Hons) Degree in Audio Technology with Multimedia from Glasgow Caledonian University and a Masters with distinction in Sound for the Moving Image from The Glasgow School of Art.

He has played a variety of instruments (synth, live electronics, guitar, drums, bass, theremin, omnichord) in different projects covering many genres (electronic, noise, neo-classical, minimal) playing with wide variety of artists such as The Buzzcocks (Perth Concert Hall), Calvin Harris (ABC 1 Glasgow), Arab Strap/Squarepusher (Liquid Rooms Edinburgh) and Massive Attack (T in the Park).

His work has been played extensively on national radio including live sessions for Radio 1 and Radio Scotland, and has also had 5/5 reviews in The Herald and The Scotsman.

As a stage manager he has worked with some of the world's biggest artists, his personal favourites including Kraftwerk, David Byrne, Brian Eno, Phillip Glass, Steve Reich & Jedward.



May Halyburton - Double Bass Tutor

May Halyburton studied double bass at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama. On graduating in 1994 with a BA (musical studies), a Certificate of Post Graduate Studies and the Eugene Cruft Prize for double bass, she took up the post of sub principal bass with Orquestra Simfonica de Balears, Palma de Mallorca. Since returning to Scotland in 1998, she has freelanced extensively throughout the UK as an orchestral and chamber musician.

May has a very eclectic taste in music and also performs with various jazz ensembles, as well as performing and recording with a variety of singer/songwriters. May is a highly sought after teacher and works with students of all ages, with a special interest in mini bass tuition. She is the author and creator of the children's books with music project, "Around the World with Bessy."