



Chetham's School of Music Impact Report 2024-25

Welcome to Chetham's School of Music

“ We're the UK's largest specialist music school and the only one in the north of England. Our students come from all over the world, but they are all bonded by a passion for music, making our campus a truly special place to live, learn and make connections.

2024-25 was brimming with incredible music highlights. We embarked on an exciting partnership with the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra and our students have learnt from and performed with these exceptional musicians; we presented a fully staged opera, *L'enfant et les sortilèges*; we've welcomed the finest musicians from all over the world who have hosted insightful masterclasses; our musicians performed on iconic stages like The Bridgewater Hall and they were broadcast live on BBC Radio 3; and we've worked with schools and community groups in Greater Manchester and beyond to share the joy of music with more people.

Chetham's is a remarkable place and we're very proud of our community. We are also deeply grateful to the individuals and organisations who support our work and whose belief in what we do is essential.



A handwritten signature in orange ink, appearing to read 'Nicola Smith' followed by a flourish.

Nicola Smith and Tom Redmond
Joint Principals



2024–25 in numbers

68

Masterclasses



6,816

Academic lessons

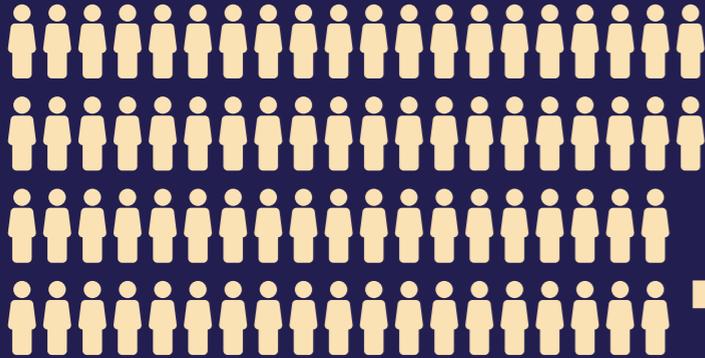


400

Concerts



LOWER SCHOOL



78

MIDDLE SCHOOL



121

SIXTH FORM



130

10,156

Ensemble rehearsals



26,477

Instrumental music lessons

57



Non-musical trips
(e.g. science, theatre, bowling)

Of our students:

90%
received a bursary to support their place at Chetham's

12%
received financial support from the Chetham's Bursary Fund, totalling over £800,000

75%
come from the North and Midlands

47%
come from Greater Manchester

32%
have an annual parental income under £34,000



263 received funding from the Government Music and Dance Scheme and only **25** paid full fees



“Chetham’s has been life-changing for my daughter. She has gone from a very quiet and timid girl who didn’t think she was good enough to a wonderful young woman full of confidence, ready for the next stages of her life. Without Music and Dance Scheme support, sending her to Chetham’s would never have been more than a dream, it was simply out of reach. Because of the support she’s received, she’s had access to a bespoke education and a genuine opportunity to have confidence that a career doing what she has always dreamed of is a real possibility”

—Parent

“Without support my children would not have been able to attend Chetham’s. The opportunities the school has given them has helped them grow not only as musicians but as people. All our local schools are no longer offering music as a subject at GCSE or A level. Chetham’s has enabled my children to follow their passion for music and to believe that a career in music is possible”

—Parent



Meet Angelica and James

Future musical stars

“I’m so grateful to have received funding from Chetham’s because it’s created this opportunity to meet people from everywhere around the world.”

Angelica joined Chetham’s as a chorister in year four and has spent nearly her entire education here. Now a violinist nearing the end of her studies, she has big ambitions for the future.

“Most of us musicians will go to conservatoire or uni after school, but I want to join the Royal Marines and play in the Royal Marines Band. Once I become successful in that field I would love to come back to Chetham’s to talk about it.”

For Angelica, music has been a language that has bonded her to her classmates for so many years: *“You don’t have to speak the same language because we all have that common language and love for music... it really brings a close-knit community together.”*



Angelica
Sixth form
Violin



James
Year 10
Tuba

“Without funding, I wouldn’t be here.”

James’s journey started with a single free music lesson in primary school. That spark turned into a passion for the tuba. When his teacher suggested he apply to Chetham’s, it wasn’t just about finding a new school—it was about finding a place where his ambition could grow.

As a year 10 student, James now spends his days immersed in music. In a standard school setting, the time required to master an instrument like the tuba is often sacrificed for a general curriculum. At Chetham’s, James has the practice opportunities and the time to focus on musicianship that are essential for his goal: becoming a professional orchestral player.

“A lot of musicians in this school wouldn’t be here without generous funding. It is really important for my musical development. I’m hoping to carry on doing music as a job.”

Progress and achievements



GCSE grade 7-9, 27% higher than the national average



A Level A*-B, 6% higher than the National Average



A Level A*-C, 6% higher than the National Average



GCSE grade 4 and above at Chetham's, 24% higher than the national average



students passed the AMusTCL - the equivalent of first year undergraduate study



Progress and achievements



“I am surrounded by incredible musicians and teachers that far exceed any other teachers that I’ve encountered in the past, and I feel comfortable asking any of them questions about both music and anything that could be troubling me. I simply wish I’d come here earlier!”

—Nat

“Last Music Course we got to play with the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra. I learnt a lot by playing with them and also talking to them about their experiences”

—Alex

“The friends I made here are so supportive and inclusive, that makes my personality grow more confidently”

—Li

“I have been teaching this student for a few years now and it has been a great pleasure to see how he has grown and matured as a musician and as a person. The confidence he has gained in this time has seen him develop from a quiet boy who was struggling with multiple challenges, to a leader amongst his peers who is clearly proud of his many achievements”

—Music tutor

“One to one tutoring is really fantastic. The teachers are at such a high level of knowledge and have helped my confidence in performances. Another really amazing thing is being assigned with an accompanist. The sessions we get with them are fantastic and almost like coaching. We are especially lucky to have them”

—Poppy

Moving up in the world

85% of leavers have continued studying music at conservatoires or university. Other 2025 leavers are studying languages, architecture, dentistry, physics, and more.



4	Royal Conservatoire of Scotland
1	Lancaster University
6	Royal Northern College of Music
1	University of Manchester
2	Sheffield University
1	Bangor University
6	Birmingham Conservatoire
1	Trinity College Cambridge
1	Bristol University
1	University of Reading
2	Universität der Künste Berlin
3	Guildhall School of Music & Drama
1	Kings College London
10	Royal Academy of Music
7	Royal College of Music
1	Royal Holloway
1	Trinity College London
1	University College London
1	Oberlin Conservatory of Music
1	École Polytechnique & Conservatoire de Versailles

What our students and teachers say

“It is truly amazing how cohesively everyone works together both academically, musically, and pastorally. It is a wonderful community to be part of”

—Coco

“I am in a couple of external ensembles, including National Children’s Orchestra and Greater Manchester Youth Brass Band. I love both and wouldn’t be part of them if I didn’t go to Chetham’s”

—Theo

“Chetham’s has taught me invaluable life skills applicable to anywhere, such as determination (for practice), confidence, patience. You appreciate music and the finer details in other things too”

—Kyle

“Natalia has grown remarkably during her time at Chetham’s. She has explored a wide range of songs and arias, including Georgian and Russian language repertoire linked to her cultural roots, and she brings a natural instinct and emotional depth to this music. She has also developed a brilliant rapport throughout her studies and performances, with a lovely professionalism and sense of humour, engaging openly with audiences and sharing her stories with increasing confidence and poise in both internal and external concerts”

—Music tutor

“Chetham’s has exposed me to a wide range of different music and performers. It’s helped me become a lot more analytical and mature in my approach to interpreting music”

—Lola

Transforming lives



Creating meaningful, musical opportunities for children, young people and communities in the local region and beyond is the mission of our Creative Engagement team. Our students are at the heart of this mission, sharing their musical gift.

Throughout 2024/25, we have seen young musical explorers aged 5-7 journey through different musical cultures in our Mini Music Adventures project; Stoller Story Sounds early years music project that uses creativity to support family bonding and school readiness; we have introduced primary schools to opera for the first time; we have worked in partnership with youth charity Wood Street Mission to deliver a new project – Make Some Noise – providing song-writing workshops to young people on free school meals in Salford and Manchester; we have provided curriculum-linked workshops to schools across the UK; and much more besides.

Following years of music education under-funding, this programme enables young people from all backgrounds to have the chance to be creative, feel musical and ignite a life-long passion for arts and culture.

Transforming lives

In 2024/25:

We held **76 events** across the year for ages 3+

We worked with **72 schools** from local authorities including Devon, Sefton, Wolverhampton, Suffolk, North Tyneside, Blackburn, Westmorland & Furness and all ten boroughs of Greater Manchester

We engaged **6,504 children** through our schools programme in-person and online

We welcomed **2,729 attendees** to family concerts and workshops at Stoller Hall

151 Chetham's students were involved across all creative engagement events

126 young people attended the Chetham's Summer School, 20% on full bursary places



“I don’t know if it was the nurturing environment, being around like-minded peers, the activities on offer, Katy’s determination to succeed or a likely combination of the four, but this is the first time in the whole of Katy’s secondary school educational experience that she has been able to cope within a school setting without needing to come home or call home on a regular basis. The change has been amazing. Thank you for allowing her to learn that she is able to succeed”

—Parent of Summer School student

“Why young people should join here is they can meet new friends instead of being isolated in their own house, using their phone, not communicating with each other. If they come here they can meet more people, communicate with more people. They can talk with each other”

—Make Some Noise participant

“My daughter loved the story telling. She even gasped at one point when the musicians started!”

—Mini Music Adventures participant

Our impact made possible

We're so grateful to all our supporters who enable us to do this important work at Chetham's.

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Mr Ian Yeomans
And all our supporters who wish to remain anonymous

The Chetham's Bursary Fund is a lifeline to our students.

By joining our community of passionate supporters, you can help to provide young people with financial support so they can attend our unique school and access life-transforming musical opportunities.

Give to our Bursary Fund today so that entry to our school continues to be based on ability to **play not pay**.

If you'd like to learn more about supporting us, please get in touch: development@chethams.com • 0161 838 7202

chethamsschoolofmusic.com/support-us



Chetham's

SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Reg. charity: 526702



Thank you.