

St Mary's Music School auditioning for the next generation

The city's specialist music school, St Mary's Music School which has its base in the heart of the West End is holding a series of auditions in the next few months. They want to find those children and young adults who dream of a musical career in the same way as the school's alumni pianist Steven Osborne, conductor Garry Walker and baritone (and comedian) Alexander Armstrong.



The school has a teacher for every instrument from accordion to bagpipes, organ and flute. Those who audition now could be at the school this September.

Entry is based on musical talent, not on ability to pay and Scottish Government funding, up to 100 percent, is available through the Aided Places Scheme to assist with the cost of tuition and boarding fees.

Dr Kenneth Taylor, headteacher at St Mary's Music School, said: "We are looking for students of all ages who show exceptional ability and have the real desire to make music their focus. The school offers them the opportunity an excellent academic education alongside a dedicated music programme structured around their individual talents and preferences and can be an incredibly fulfilling experience.

"Importantly, the school offers students numerous opportunities to perform and develop their skills in front of a live audience, including concerts at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, guest recitals or at our own public performances. With the majority of our students going on to enjoy a career

in music, this is an enormously rewarding element of the educational environment we provide.”



Hannah Foster | Scottish Flautist

www.hannahfoster.co.uk

Former St Mary’s Music School pupil, Hannah Foster, 21, is currently in her third year of study at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland (RCS) in Glasgow. She has had a passion for the flute since the age of seven, and joined St Mary’s in Primary 7.

She describes her arrival at the school and her memories of the music school: “Despite initially being nervous, I found that the setting was quite informal and welcoming. The purpose of the advisory audition was to see if I was ready for a formal instrumental audition. After successfully completing this second audition, I was offered a place at the school.

“The Primary department at St Mary’s consisted of 18 pupils, between Primary 5 and Primary 7. It was a positive and friendly environment, where staff worked very hard to ensure pupils received support in every area of the curriculum. Even during academic lessons, however, I knew music was never far away.

“The sounds of strings, wind, piano and voice constantly flowed and echoed through the corridors. Each day was broken into periods of academic lessons and music, allowing me to commit far more time to practising flute each day. The experience also afforded new opportunities, such as chamber music and jazz ensembles.

“When it came to sitting Standard Grades and Highers, I loved being able to take my mind off the exams by practising flute. My favourite practice room in the school was the Music Library. It was full of books, old and new, and looked out onto the grassy school grounds. It was great to have peace and

quiet to practise during the day.

“It was important to me to focus on music during my time at school and I was given many performance opportunities at the school that I wouldn’t have had anywhere else.”

Hannah left St Mary’s Music School with four Highers (grade A) and two Advanced Highers (grade A) and had been a Woodwind Category Finalist in BBC Young Musician 2014 before taking up her place at RCS. Earlier this year, she won the RCS Classical Concerto Competition, reached the Semi-final of the Stockport International Music Competition, and was awarded Second Prize at the British Flute Society Young Artist Competition in London.

She has now been accepted onto both the Royal Scottish National Orchestra (RSNO) and the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra (BBC SSO) Apprenticeship Schemes.

Hannah adds: “After graduating, I would like to continue performing in the UK. For me, music is about communication. Being part of the magic of live performance is exhilarating. I am particularly passionate about performing concertos with orchestra and this is something I hope to continue after I graduate. My overall ambition is to take part in as many different musical experiences as possible; to perform, to collaborate and to spend my career bringing my passion for music to audiences far and wide.”