



Royal Conservatoire  
*of* Scotland

**JAZZ**

[rcs.ac.uk](http://rcs.ac.uk)

# LIKE NOWHERE ELSE: STUDY JAZZ IN SCOTLAND

Scotland is home to a thriving jazz community, and RCS students can expect to become part of this vibrant scene, starting at RCS in Glasgow. The combination of high-quality education with performance opportunities makes studying jazz and improvisation in Glasgow distinctive and relevant to pursuing a future career in the music business.

Led by saxophonist **Tommy Smith** and a team of Scotland's most accomplished educators, the RCS Jazz department is an energetic environment, where new students are encouraged to explore jazz and hone a personal voice as an improviser and composer.

You will receive 90 minutes of one-to-one tuition on your principal study each week, allowing you more time for development and guidance.

# Jazz

**BMus: Four years, full-time**  
[rcs.ac.uk/jazz](https://www.rcs.ac.uk/jazz)

**MMus: Two years, full-time**  
**MA: One year, full-time**  
[rcs.ac.uk/pgjazz](https://www.rcs.ac.uk/pgjazz)

## Why choose us?

- | RCS is recognised as one of the world's top three destinations to study the performing arts (QS World University Rankings 2021)
- | Receive 90 minutes of one-to-one tuition on your principal study every week
- | Scotland is home to five major international jazz festivals
- | Work in dedicated jazz rehearsal spaces, and document your own music in our recording studio with a full-time professional sound engineer
- | Learn from a highly gifted team of educators and acclaimed performers
- | Benefit from close links to the Scottish National Jazz Orchestra and its international guests, enabling you to attend rehearsals and performances, and observe professionals at work
- | Audition for the Tommy Smith Youth Jazz Orchestra and perform with your peers throughout Scotland
- | Audition for the Jazz Workshop, a unique opportunity for jazz students to collaborate and perform in conservatoires and festivals in Europe
- | Perform in Fridays at One and Blue Mondays concert series
- | Compete for a range of RCS Jazz Awards worth just under £6000

- | Attend the Masters in Music series, sponsored by the Scottish National Jazz Orchestra, featuring legendary guests including **Mehmet Ali Sanlikol, Gary Crosby, Roger Spence, Laura Jurd, Kurt Elling, Jazzmeia Horn, Makoto Ozone, Stuart Nicholson, and Rob Adams.** Past clinicians include **Jacqui Dankworth, Bob Minzter, Mike Stern, Courtney Pine, Branford Marsalis, David Liebman, Peter Erskine, Paolo Fresu, Randy Brecker, Bill Evans, and Arild Andersen**
- | Perform in monthly 'Jazz at the Chimp' events featuring student-led projects
- | Undergraduate music students can take advantage of learning within this unique Scottish conservatoire and undertake a module within traditional music, enabling you to broaden your repertoire, musicality and ensemble arrangement practices

## DID YOU KNOW?

**Graduate jazz pianist and composer Fergus McCreadie (pictured on the cover) has become one of the most talented musicians and band leaders in Europe, winning both the UK's prestigious Parliamentary Jazz Awards' Album of the Year and Best Album at the Scottish Jazz Awards, as well as being shortlisted for the Scottish Album of the Year Award.**



**"The Royal Conservatoire of Scotland is a dynamic conservatoire filled with creative students bursting with potential. It's the place you want to be if you desire to truly be the best musician you can be."**

Head of Jazz: **Professor Tommy Smith OBE**

## Your studies

The jazz programme focuses on improvisation and composition, offering an ideal opportunity to gain expertise and skills in this challenging and artistic endeavour.

In the varied curriculum, other studies focus on the fundamentals of jazz, including harmonic-melodic/rhythmic theory, history, arranging for small and large ensembles, music business, ear training, chord scales, transcription, Latin music, and repertoire classes in original composition and standard jazz repertoire.

### Our aims are for students to:

- | deeply understand the fundamentals of improvisation, including jazz language, vocabulary, scales, modes, harmony, form, rhythm, composition
- | learn how to improvise creatively and fluently, utilising concepts of thematic development, mental strength, and collective ensemble interplay
- | learn how to practice more efficiently towards a goal of becoming a confident, fluent improviser with an original style
- | become familiar with the jazz repertoire
- | present your performances professionally
- | successfully record in a studio recording
- | graduate as a confident performer with the business skills necessary to succeed within the industry

## Teaching staff

- | **Tommy Smith** Head of Jazz
- | **Dr Colin Broom** Jazz Co-ordinator
- | **Paul Harrison**
- | **Kevin MacKenzie**
- | **Mario Caribe**
- | **Alyn Cosker**
- | **Louise Mochan**
- | **Dennis Rollins** MBE
- | **Andrew Robb**
- | **John Lowrie**
- | **Tom MacNiven**
- | **Chris Greive**
- | **James Copus**
- | **Tom Gibbs**
- | **Peter Johnstone**





## Our graduates

Recent graduate successes include:

- | **Fergus McCreadie Trio** (graduates **Fergus McCreadie, David Bowden** and **Stephen Henderson**) won a 2019 Scottish Jazz Award for Best Album
- | **Strata** (formed of graduates **Liam Shortall, Fergus McCreadie, Joe Williamson, Mark Hendry** and **Graham Costello**) have received excellent reviews for their album *Obelisk*, which was also nominated for Scottish Album of the Year, 2019
- | **Utsav Lal** performed at the Carnegie Hall in New York City
- | **Joshua Elcock** continually pushes himself and adapts to the times, composing and recording a debut big band EP throughout the pandemic, which received numerous radio play and newspaper coverage
- | **Joe Williamson** and his group **Square One** released their debut album in 2017, following their win of the prestigious Peter Whittingham Jazz Award

**“Matt Carmichael has his own sound and storytelling together... very believable, lyrical and emotive... you can really feel the Scottish landscape in his playing and compositions”.**

**BBC Four** on student Matt Carmichael (BBC Young Jazz Musician 2020 finalist)

## How to apply

Before you apply, please go to [rcs.ac.uk](https://www.rcs.ac.uk) to read full details on the music programme you wish to apply to, and the application and admissions processes.

The standard application deadline is **1 October**. Late applications made after this date may be accepted and those details can be found at [rcs.ac.uk/apply](https://www.rcs.ac.uk/apply)

All applications must be made through the UCAS Conservatoires online admissions service: [ucas.com/conservatoires](https://www.ucas.com/conservatoires).

Our institution code is **R58** and you'll find the specific programme code on [rcs.ac.uk](https://www.rcs.ac.uk).

**“Costello’s Strata has been setting a standard of musicianship that has seasoned observers talking about Glasgow as a jazz hotbed of approaching New York proportions.”**

**The Herald** on graduate jazz band **Strata**

## Entry requirements

Entrance to RCS is based on talent, potential and ability. We are looking for students who display outstanding potential, dedication and ambition.

### BMus academic entry requirements

- | Scottish Highers - 3 passes (grade C or above)
- | A Levels - 2 passes
- | International Baccalaureate - minimum score of 24 with 3 subjects at Higher Level
- | Recognised equivalences

We offer a flexible approach to students taking Highers over more than one academic year and/or who achieve their qualifications in more than one sitting.

Within the minimum academic entry requirements, the subjects recommended are:

- | Music at Higher, Advanced Higher or Advanced level or equivalent
- | English at Higher, Advanced Higher or Advanced level or equivalent

### Postgraduate academic entry requirements

- | Honours degree (at least 2.2), or its overseas equivalent in a subject area relevant to the demands of the programme

For more specific entry requirements, including language requirements, please visit [rcs.ac.uk](https://www.rcs.ac.uk).

## Your audition

We want you to enjoy the audition process and use the opportunity to discover more about RCS and see if it is the right place for you. You can also audition via a video recording, please see our website for what to prepare.

Stage 1 of the jazz audition is designed to assess your improvisational skills and is submitted electronically. To apply, you need to send a video of yourself performing prescribed pieces - please see [rcs.ac.uk](https://www.rcs.ac.uk) for the current audition prescribed pieces.

You may then be called back for a second audition conducted by a member of the RCS Jazz faculty and the full Stage 2 audition process can be found on our website.

## Tuition fees and scholarships

Tuition fees can be found at [rcs.ac.uk/fees](https://www.rcs.ac.uk/fees) as well as information on financial support and scholarships.

## Junior Conservatoire

The Junior Conservatoire of Music programme is for talented and committed young people aged 11-18 who are passionate about music and want to develop their skills and techniques.

Junior Conservatoire students benefit from one-to-one tuition from RCS expert teaching staff, performance classes and the opportunity to play in a variety of ensembles every week.

Find out more at [rcs.ac.uk/junior](https://www.rcs.ac.uk/junior)

## Short Courses

We offer a range of short courses and summer schools for people who wish to develop their skills and passion for music.

To see what courses are on offer this year, please visit [rcs.ac.uk/shortcourses](https://www.rcs.ac.uk/shortcourses)

## Contact us

If you have any questions about your application, please contact us at [admissions@rcs.ac.uk](mailto:admissions@rcs.ac.uk) and we will be happy to help you.

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