



The Purcell School
for young musicians



Head of Strings Department

From September 2025 (Permanent, Full Time Post)

INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES



INTRODUCTION

Celebrated throughout the world as a centre of musical excellence, The Purcell School is the most vibrant, exciting and exhilarating place to work or study. We are a close-knit community dedicated to nurturing some of the world's most talented young musicians and we recognise the unique privilege it is to work with these incredibly gifted students.

Our students are the liveliest, most committed and self-motivated young people you could hope to meet. Every day, the School's corridors echo with the sound of extraordinary music as our students prepare for one of the 150 concerts we present every year, both here at School and in the most prestigious venues in London.

It is a working environment quite unlike anywhere else! We want our students to be challenged and inspired by every aspect of their experience here, and we support and encourage staff to achieve this. Academic classes are small, behaviour is excellent and the opportunities for innovative and creative teaching practice are limitless.

If you are committed to providing an outstanding student experience and prepared to play a full part in the life of this extraordinary place, The Purcell School offers you the opportunity to join an exceptional team, serving truly exceptional students in a totally unique environment. I very much hope you will consider making an application to join us.

Kind regards

Paul Bambrough

Principal

ROLE DESCRIPTION

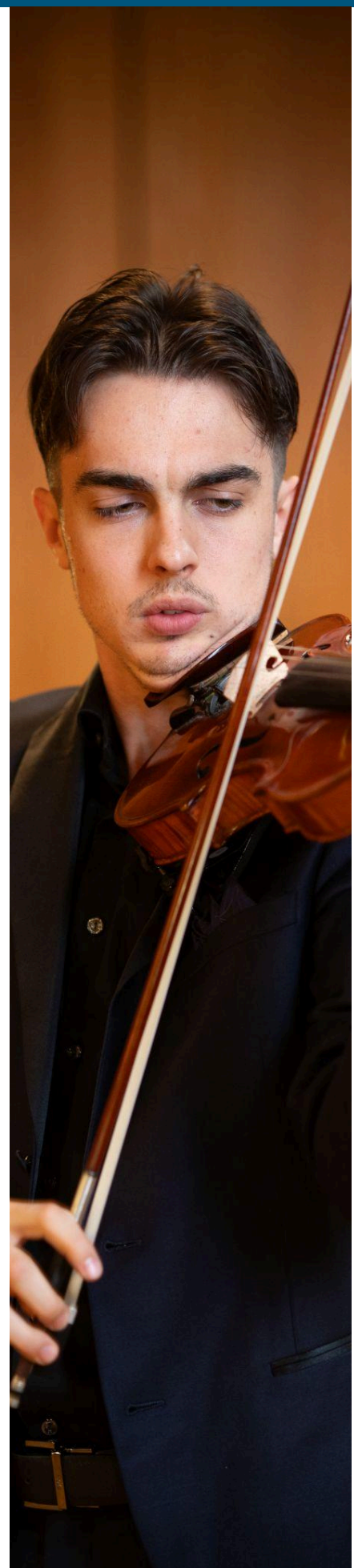
This is a once in a life-time opportunity to shape the future of music at one of the most distinguished and famous music schools in the world.

We are a secondary school and home to 200 young musicians for 34 weeks a year. Students live and breathe music, living and learning in a community that is unique, open and inspiring. Staff are equally energetic, passionate and committed.

The Head of Department role is crucially important, enjoying close interaction with students and staff. You will personally manage your students' musical programme, assess their progress and help to look after their wellbeing; you will develop artistic and creative projects and experiences; forge close strategic partnerships with other relevant institutions and individuals; proactively recruit students through networking and outreach activities; manage an outstanding team of teachers; and enhance good relationships with parents and colleagues. As in a conservatoire setting, Heads of Department are senior members of school staff and will need to have the necessary skills and profile to command the respect of students, potential students and colleagues both within school and the music industry more generally. Heads of Department play a leading role in shaping the School's strategic ambitions and are afforded autonomy over how they run and manage their own departments, under the oversight of the Director of Music.

There are 70-80 1st study students, of whom around half are violinists and recruitment is also healthy for viola, cello, double bass and classical guitar. Students have a broad range of classes, groups and performance opportunities, repertoire and styles. All go on to top conservatoires and universities in the UK and overseas. This year our students have performed romantic and contemporary string orchestra pieces with Dmitry Sitkovetsky, baroque projects with Lucy Russell and played Schoenberg *Pierrot Lunaire*, Berio *Folk Songs* and Ravel *Tzigane* at the Wigmore Hall. We have plans for the Enescu Octet and a Bartok String Quartet. Recent masterclasses have been given by guests including Robert Cohen, Tasmin Little, Tom Goodman, Philippe Graffin, Craig Ogden and Donglei Hou. There is almost no limit to what we can achieve artistically, with the right balance of ambition and support. A Head of Department who has imagination, vision, an ability to plan strategically, a lot of energy and a joy in music-making will find it the most rewarding job.

We are looking for an inspiring individual who has a clear vision of the purpose and direction of a music school in the 21st century, and the skills to deliver it throughout their department and beyond. The successful candidate will be a distinguished performer and/or teacher in any relevant instrumental discipline, with a national or international reputation. You will have access to an extensive network of professional colleagues and organisations and be happy to draw upon these for the benefit of students. You will instinctively bring people together, motivate and inspire others, have excellent organisational and communication skills, and be decisive when necessary. Most of all, you will exude a passion for working with young musicians, you will demonstrably enjoy their company, and will take pleasure and pride in their achievements.



In return, we offer the opportunity to work with truly outstanding students and colleagues within an ambitious but caring environment. Whilst term time is busy and often absorbing, we encourage and support your other professional work where this doesn't compromise your students' experience. Many current Heads of Department use the generous holiday periods to contribute to international summer schools, act as jury members and performers, and pursue their own musical and creative ambitions. Some also act as external examiners for conservatoires across the country. All such work is supported by the School.

If you are excited by the opportunities this role offers, we would be delighted to hear from you. If you would like to have an informal telephone conversation with the Principal in advance of making an application, please contact his Executive Assistant Sarah Graham at recruitment@Purcell-School.org to make an appointment.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

This is a full time post to start in September 2025. Competitive salary according to the candidate's experience. Children of staff are not eligible to be educated at the School except through the normal admissions and audition process. All members of staff are expected to contribute fully to the School's extra-curricular and/or boarding provision. Lunch and supper (when there is an evening event) can be taken free of charge at School during term time.

HOW TO APPLY

If you wish to apply, please complete the School's Application Form (available on our website) and send it with a supporting Personal Statement to the Principal as soon as possible. Please do not send a separate curriculum vitae as these will not be accepted. Closing date for applications is Thursday 17th April 2025. Interviews week of 5th May 2025.

Personal statements should outline your experience and subject knowledge and evidence your achievements. The Personal Statement is your opportunity to tell us how your skills and experience, both within your subject and beyond, can contribute to an outstanding student experience.

Shortlisted candidates will be invited to the school where you will have the opportunity to look around the school and meet key staff. Interviews will explore subject knowledge, pastoral experience and the ability to relate appropriately to students. Candidates will be required to produce evidence of identity and qualifications prior to the interview.

Applications should be made to the Principal, sent by email to recruitment@purcell-school.org or by letter to: Recruitment, The Purcell School, Aldenham Road, Bushey, Hertfordshire, WD23 2TS

CHILD PROTECTION

The Purcell School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff to share this commitment. All applicants should read the School's Child Protection policy, which is available on our website, and are required to declare any criminal convictions or cautions, or disciplinary proceedings related to young people. Applicants must be willing to undergo child protection screening appropriate to the post, including records checked and processed through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The Purcell School is an equal opportunities employer and welcomes application from appropriately qualified people regardless of gender, marital status, sexual orientation, race, ethnic origin, colour, nationality, religion, disability or age. Candidates will be assessed against relevant criteria only (i.e. skills, qualifications, abilities, experience) in selection and recruitment.

JOB SPECIFICATION

The Purcell School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

JOB TITLE: HEAD OF STRINGS

- All members of staff are ultimately answerable to the Principal.
- Your line manager is the Director of Music

This job specification sets out the duties of the post at the time of drafting. Specific responsibilities are as follows:

FOR HEAD OF STRINGS

Line managed by Director of Music

Promote the school's ethos of safe, happy healthy students

- Inspire an ambitious department
- Create positive relationships between students, music teachers, pastoral and academic staff
- Act as first point of contact for parents of first study students
- Set clear expectations, assessment criteria and varied, appropriate repertoire
- Oversee continuous assessment of students, providing feedback to students and parents at appropriate times
- Manage the team of teachers and their teaching allocations, with good communication, high expectations and generous support
- Set and maintain healthy musician practices for students and staff, both physical and psychological
- Observe teaching and evaluate progress of department on a regular basis
- Set a vibrant curriculum and artistic programme

Teach students

- One-to-one, in chamber music, small ensembles, orchestral sections, department classes and seminars
- Organise guest masterclasses
- Assist with hiring adjudicators and guest assessors where appropriate
- Assist with programming students in internal and external concerts

Recruit students, and nurture the reputation and profile of the School

- Maintain external profile, teaching, adjudicating, coaching, performing (where this does not compromise your contribution to Purcell students' experience)
- Attend Open Mornings and run departmental open days
- Assess all applications, and audition shortlisted candidates
- Liaise with potential feeder schools, bands, junior conservatoires, outside hirers, hubs and wider networks

Instruments

- Oversight of the school's string instruments, inventory, advice on repair/hire/purchase/renewal of stock

Events and concerts

- Help to staff some evening and weekend classes, rehearsals and concerts, sharing the load with other instrumental HoDs
- Attend instrumental HoD planning meetings
- EDI: Diversify the repertoire, training students and teachers in accessing work by under-represented composers

Influence futures

- Give impartial advice about HE, consultation lessons and careers; write references

FOR ALL TEACHING STAFF

- To carry out teaching commitments as agreed with the Principal and Vice-Principal
- To participate in the School's appraisal scheme
- To support and implement the School's behaviour policy
- To monitor students' attendance at lessons and to liaise with the Vice-Principal or the Instrumental Timetabler when difficulties arise
- To assist in providing cover for absent colleagues
- To supervise students during internal and external examinations
- To supervise students during breaks on a duty rota
- To attend assemblies
- To attend the weekly staff meeting and other relevant meetings by arrangement
- To attend Parents' Evenings
- To participate in School Inset meetings
- To contribute to the School's extra-curricular and/or boarding provision
- To assist occasionally at whole school events

FOR ALL STAFF

- To promote the aims and values of the School
- To support and protect the interests of the students
- To support colleagues in their work
- To ensure the smooth-running of the School and the well-being of the School community
- To act in accordance with the current legal requirements, School policies and guidance on the safeguarding of children and young people
- To undertake such administrative and supervisory duties as may be required
- To follow the procedures and policies set out in the Staff Handbook
- To promote equality by actively protecting staff and students from discrimination
- To comply with current Health and Safety regulations and best practice

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Experience and Knowledge:
Expert knowledge of repertoire and pedagogical methods
Open to question the status quo
Ambitious for high standards
Equally passionate about the core repertoire and the new or less familiar
Knowledge of HE in UK and abroad
Network of friends and allies in the conservatoire sector

Ability and Skills:
Excellent administrator
Diplomatic, quick to communicate
Excellent verbal and written communication skills
Able to hold people to account and unafraid of difficult conversations
Charismatic performer and teacher
Respected as a figure of authority in the profession
Open minded and generous in linking with external organisations in UK and abroad
Reliable judge of standards, achievement and potential

Personal Attributes:
Strong understanding of expectations in music education
In tune with today's profession
Empathetic and professional
Passionate about student well-being
Familiar with current practice in education, including some understanding of SEND and adolescent mental health