



Brentwood School

Specialist Music Programme



A Legacy of Excellence Since 1557

For nearly five centuries, Brentwood School has stood as a beacon of education in the heart of Essex. Spread across 75 acres of playing fields and historic gardens, our campus offers a sanctuary for learning that is both tranquil and inspiring. While our facilities are world-class, our identity is rooted in three simple yet profound words: Virtue, Learning, and Manners. These values, first recorded in 1622, remain the North Star for our community today. They guide our mission to help every young person discover their unique talents, fostering a sense of self-assurance that is always balanced with genuine humility.

In an era defined by rapid technological shifts and global uncertainty, a Brentwood education is a preparation for the unknown. We recognise that our students will eventually step into a world where they must solve problems that do not yet exist and occupy roles that have not yet been invented. To meet this challenge, we cultivate 'active participants' – young people who are not just recipients of knowledge, but kind, enterprising individuals who strive daily to become the best versions of themselves.

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Our Specialist Music Programme represents another step towards delivering our vision to be known locally, regionally, nationally and internationally as a centre of best practice. Our high-achieving musicians benefit from a programme that recognises their talent and ambition



while maintaining the range and balance that comes with being part of a thriving mainstream school. No longer will talented musicians need to decide between a mainstream or specialist school – they can genuinely have the best of both worlds here at Brentwood.”

A note from Headmaster, Michael Bond



The music tuition at Brentwood School was incredible because of the amount of detail we went into, both in performance and theory. There were so many masterclasses, one-to-one sessions and group ensembles. The following year, I took my trumpet playing to Boston, where I became involved with jazz at Berklee, as well as releasing music on streaming services as a jazz artist, while studying cinematography at Emerson College."

Ore Fashesin-Souza (OB 2013-2024) – Bursary Student and Music Scholar, Member of Junior Guildhall & the National Youth Orchestra

A Conservatory Within a School

The Specialist Music Programme (SMP) represents the pinnacle of our performing arts provision. Launched in September 2024, this premier pathway is designed specifically for the most talented and ambitious musicians who seek a professional-standard training environment without compromising their academic trajectory. We operate on the belief that musical excellence and scholarly achievement are mutually reinforcing; at Brentwood, our finest musicians are frequently our highest academic achievers.

The performance platforms available to Brentwood musicians are truly prestigious. Beyond our 70 annual on-campus performances, SMP students feature in an annual series of specialist recitals that take place throughout the UK in notable venues as well as in the local community. Our SMP students perform so regularly and in such a variety of different acoustics that performance becomes second nature to them and they are able to develop the crucial skills of performance, alongside technical development. Further opportunities for concerto performance with orchestra and high-level ensemble and chamber music also await our specialist musicians. Additionally, SMP students are given a bespoke timetable that includes but isn't limited to; one-to-one lessons and coaching, increased time for students to have first-study tuition, musicianship classes and supervised practices



Music profoundly shaped my time at Brentwood. I had the pleasure of being involved in such a wide variety of music, alongside so many incredible musicians. Performing Rachmaninov's Second Piano Concerto in Brentwood Cathedral was easily the highlight of my time at Brentwood. Sessions with Mr Cuciuc left me so immensely inspired; full of advice on technique and interpretation, and also art, literature, philosophy, even occasionally maths and physics! It was never just about the piano, but always with a larger picture in mind. I owe most of what I can do at the piano, and who I am as a musician and a person, to him."

Sammy Li (OB 2013–2023) – Bursary Student and Music Scholar
Vice-Chancellor's Music Scholar at Bristol University

From the Cathedral to the Capital

Performance is the heartbeat of the Specialist Music Programme. We maintain an ambitious expectation for our students, supported by a rigorous annual assessment cycle that ensures constant technical and artistic growth. This includes formal repertoire examinations featuring contrasting styles from the classical canon, as well as regular masterclasses with industry professionals. Our musicians do not just play; they communicate, developing the stage presence and emotional intelligence required for a life in the arts.

The platforms available to Brentwood musicians are truly prestigious. Beyond our 70 annual on-campus performances, students feature in lunchtime recitals at Brentwood Cathedral and various renowned venues across London. Perhaps most notably, our partnership with the Guildhall School of Music & Drama allows for high-profile concerts at Milton Court Concert Hall. This exposure to professional-standard acoustics and diverse audiences prepares our students for successful auditions at leading conservatoires and prestigious universities worldwide.



The wealth of opportunities available allowed me to participate in ensembles performing music ranging from Dvořák's Cello Concerto to Snarky Puppy's Lingus. The encouragement to pursue my passions enabled me to develop my skills as an arranger and to have my arrangements performed by choirs, the Big Band and the Symphony Orchestra. My time at Brentwood expanded my musical horizons far beyond anything I could have imagined, and music became my greatest joy and something that would remain a part of my life forever."

Sophia Assitzoglou (OB 2017–2024) Bursary Student and Music Scholar & Vice-Chancellor's Music Scholar at Durham University



"I have had the enormous privilege of being Director of Music at Brentwood School for the past decade and am immensely proud to have seen the department grow from humble beginnings to recognition as one of the finest bastions for musical education in the United Kingdom.

At the heart of the Brentwood School Music Department is a shared joy and camaraderie at making excellent music together, a sense of belonging, an understanding that everyone's journey is different, a determined work-ethic and most of all, a huge sense of fun.

The Specialist Music Programme is the logical next chapter for the future development and continued success of Brentwood Music and, as a proud Old Brentwood myself, I can only look at the inaugural students enrolled on the programme with the utmost jealousy. **Florian Cooper (OB), Head of Brentwood School of Music**



I was lucky enough to have an amazing music education at school, starting with learning the trumpet at the age of nine, playing in orchestras and ensembles, singing in the choir, and learning the theory and history of music. I could not have wanted for more, and it has become my lifelong passion as a result. I am proud to be Chairman of Governors at a school where music is at the heart of the School's identity and culture. This programme allows exceptional musicians from around the world access to the very best possible music education and I am truly excited to see the results of this venture." **Lord Black of Brentwood (OB), Chairman of Governors**

Lord Black of Brentwood is among the country's most active advocates for arts education. Since 2017, he has served as the Chairman of Council for the Royal College of Music after eight years on the College Council and as a major benefactor to their scholarship fund. Lord Black serves as a Trustee of the Mayor of London's Fund for Young Musicians and is a patron of the Hanover Band.



Grig Cuciuc

Artistic Director of Specialist Music

Since his debut as a soloist with the National Chamber Orchestra of Moldova at the age of 15, Grig has performed as a soloist with orchestras including the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra in London, Kings Chamber Orchestra, the National Philharmonic of Moldova and the Moldovan National Youth Orchestra.

“My life has been transformed by the nurture and guidance I have received from renowned teachers in the great European musical tradition



and inspiring the next generation to fulfil their artistic potential has become my passion. Brentwood has a long history of musical excellence and we are determined to continue this with a programme providing training of the highest quality. We aim to equip students with the musical, cultural and interpersonal skills required for a lifetime of exceptional music making and I am thrilled to play my part in leading the Specialist Music Programme.

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Grig has given recitals and chamber concerts across the UK, Russia, Europe, Central America and the Middle East and performed solo in halls including Cadogan Hall in London, Teatro Olimpico in Vicenza, Murmansk Philharmonic in Russia and Christ Church in the Old City of Jerusalem. Grig has appeared as a conductor with orchestras in the UK and Italy and regularly directs Kings Chamber Orchestra.

Much in demand as an educator, Grig has given masterclasses in the UK, Europe and Central America and is currently the Artistic Director of Specialist Music at Brentwood School. Previously, he taught at Junior Guildhall and Whitgift School where he helped set up the Whitgift International Music Competition. More recently, Grig has been invited to collaborate on artistic research on Schubert at the Edvard Grieg Academy, Bergen.

During his musical studies, Grig was awarded a DipRAM for an outstanding MA final recital at the Royal Academy of Music, having previously gained a First Class degree from the Royal College of Music. In his development, Grig has benefited from the Auer, Galamian, Ysaÿe and Yankelevich traditions, having been taught by Maciej Rakowski, Anne Shih, Clio Gould, Remus Azoitei and Tamara Kaftanat.

Grig is fluent in several European languages and plays on a fine 1780 Nicolo Gagliano violin.

Showcase Your Talent on a Global Stage

Are you a young musician with dreams of international acclaim? Our annual International Music Competition at Brentwood School offers a special opportunity to showcase your skills, receive expert feedback and win life-changing prizes!

Why Enter?

- Gain global recognition by performing in front of world-renowned adjudicators.
- Receive personalised feedback from a panel of distinguished music professionals.
- Win life-changing scholarships, bursaries and prize money that could shape your future.
- All finalists receive a place on the Specialist Music Programme at Brentwood School.

Life-Changing Prizes

Would you like a chance to win a full boarding bursary to Brentwood School and cash prizes?

- Grand-Prize: Head's Award up to the value of a full boarding bursary at Brentwood School – worth up to £60k annually
- 1st Place: £1000
- 2nd Place: £500
- 3rd Place: £300

Additional prizes, scholarships, bursary awards and masterclasses at the discretion of the panel.



All finalists will receive an automatic place on our Specialist Music Programme (value circa £2000 per year).

Competition Details

Age Range: 13–17 years (Year 9, 10, 11 & Lower Sixth Form)

Instruments: Strings, Piano, Winds & Brass, Percussion, Classical Voice

Rounds: Online preliminary and a live in-person final round

Applicants should be of an outstanding standard (Grade 8+) who are seriously considering a professional career as a musician.



A Sector-Leading “Home-from-Home”

The year 2025 marked a transformative milestone for our residential community with the opening of our state-of-the-art boarding house. This facility was years in the making and represents the absolute forefront of student accommodation design. The house is intelligently divided into three distinct wings: separate, secure boarding houses for girls and boys, joined by a central shared facility. This layout provides a perfect balance of privacy and community, anchored by modern dining areas and a beautifully landscaped courtyard designed specifically for student socialising.

On the upper floors, our boarders enjoy university-style ensuite bedrooms that are light, airy, and modern. These private spaces are designed to be sanctuaries for both rest and focused study. More than just a place to sleep, the boarding house is a vibrant, international community. With London only 23 minutes away via the Elizabeth Line, our boarders have the world's cultural capital at their doorstep, while being supported by experienced houseparents who ensure that happiness and wellbeing are always the priority.

Pathways to a Global Future

Brentwood offers unparalleled flexibility. We believe in keeping horizons broad for as long as possible, which is why we design our timetable around the specific choices of our students. Additionally, we are proud to offer three distinct academic pathways: A Levels, the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma, and BTEC. This ensures that whether a student thrives through deep specialisation, a broad global curriculum, or practical vocational application, they have a route to success that suits their unique strengths.

Beyond the classroom, the Brentwood School Foundation provides a professional springboard. Our students gain access to a thriving network of parents and “Old Brentwoods” who offer mentorship and career guidance. Whether a student is destined for a leading UK conservatoire, an Ivy League university, or a high-level apprenticeship, they leave Brentwood with the leadership skills, resilience, and values necessary to thrive. This blend of tradition and constant evolution is what truly makes us Brentwood.



Mr Cuciuc has been an incredibly influential figure in my musical journey. His artistic vision, boundless generosity, and kind spirit have profoundly inspired me. As a mentor, he has not only guided me to become a better guitarist and musician but also a better person. His impact on my life goes beyond music, and I am deeply grateful for his unwavering support and guidance. Any young musician would be incredibly fortunate to have the opportunity to learn from Grig.”

Tom Hodgkinson (OB 2012–2023) Music Scholar at Kunst–Universität
Graz Essex Ambassador for Culture

Your Pathway to Brentwood

The transition to a new school is a significant milestone, and at Brentwood, we are committed to making the admissions process as transparent and welcoming as possible. Whether you are considering our Specialist Music Programme, our sector-leading boarding facilities, or our broad academic curriculum, our dedicated team is here to guide you through every stage of the journey. We believe that the best way to understand the unique spirit of our community is to experience it firsthand, and we invite prospective families to engage with us through personal visits, performance attendance, and detailed consultations.

For those interested in the Specialist Music Programme, the process begins with an initial inquiry to the Head of Brentwood School of Music. This allows for a preliminary discussion regarding the student's musical background and aspirations. Following this, the formal application involves both academic assessment and a musical audition, where candidates perform for a panel and discuss their technical and artistic goals. We seek to identify not only current proficiency but also the potential for significant growth within our conservatory-style environment.

Taking the Next Step

To begin your journey with Brentwood School, we encourage you to reach out to the relevant department head. We are happy to arrange in-person or online conversations, school tours, and shadow days for prospective students.

For Music Specialism: Contact Mr Florian Cooper, Head of Brentwood School of Music, at fac@brentwood.essex.sch.uk.

For General Admissions: Contact Mrs Debbie Cook, Head of Admissions, via the school's main admissions portal.

For Boarding Inquiries: Contact Mr Brian Hays, Boarding Admissions Manager, to discuss residential options and the new facilities.

Scholarships and Bursaries

Brentwood is committed to social mobility and recognising excellence. Scholarships worth 10% of fees are available for academic potential and talent in Art, Chess, Dance, Drama, Music, and Sport. Furthermore, our means-tested bursaries can cover up to 100% of tuition fees, ensuring that talented and ambitious young people can benefit from a Brentwood education regardless of their financial circumstances.

