RICHMOND UPON THAMES
PERFORMING ARTS FESTIVAL 2027

Vocal Syllabus 2027

www.richmondfestival.org.uk

SECTION SECRETARY – HEIDI PEGLER

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BEN COSTELLO – ADJUDICATOR (JUNIOR, INTERMEDIATE AND SENIOR SINGERS)

MA, BMus, PgDip, FISM FRSA



Ben is an artistic director, musical director and singing coach, working nationally and internationally. He is Artistic Director and Company Secretary of Thames Concerts, Artistic Director of the City Music series, a generalist music adjudicator for the British and International Federation of Festivals, and a music examiner, consultant and recording artist for LCM Exams.

A specialist in musical theatre and vocal performance, Ben has been musical director for numerous productions across the UK, and a reflective product of this has been his continuing work as a musical director and singing teacher (incorporating Estill and Bel Canto) at the cutting edge of performing arts training in London, with his portfolio over the years including Arts Ed, Mountview Academy, Trinity Laban, Laine Theatre Arts, Italia Conti, Guildford School of Acting, the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art, the Royal Academy of Music, Drama Studio London, and the London School of Musical Theatre. At these colleges his work has included teaching singing technique, portfolio, acting through song, audition technique, and auditioning thousands of prospective students. Countless of his former singing students enjoy successful careers in the West End and beyond. He also teaches singing at Tiffin Girls' School.

Born and based in London, Ben trained initially as a flautist before majoring in piano, singing and conducting. He read Music at Kingston University and the London College of Music, subsequently joining the teaching staff as the College's first resident MD.
Ben remains much sought-after as an accompanist, and collaborates in a variety of genres with countless singers and instrumentalists in many performing environments, working with several distinguished singers including Michael Chance CBE, James Bowman CBE, Roderick Williams OBE, Robin Blaze, Hugh Cutting, Alison Pearce, Joanne Lunn, Peter Savidge, Richard Suart, Lotte Betts-Dean and Mark Dobell. He is also one of the regular pianists for Cantabile (The London Quartet).
Ben is a Liveryman and on the Court of the Worshipful Company of Musicians. He chaired the Company's prestigious annual musical direction scholarship for eight years, and is presently Chairman of the Company's Jazz Committee.
For the Federation, he is also an adjudicator mentor, and is a member of the interviewing panel for potential new music adjudicators. He was a member of the Adjudicators' Council for 11 years, culminating in being elected Music Chairman, before stepping down in 2025.
Outside music, Ben is a keen motorcyclist.

KIRSTY HUGHES – ADJUDICATOR (JUNIOR AND INTERMEDIATE SINGERS)



Kirsty studied Music at the University of York, where she was actively involved in the jazz scene, performing regularly with trios, quartets, and big bands. She went on to complete a Master's degree in Musical Theatre at the Royal Academy of Music, graduating with Distinction and being awarded a DipRAM for an outstanding final recital.
During her time at the Academy, Kirsty received several notable accolades, including the Acting Through Song Prize (adjudicated by Sir Richard Eyre), the Toni V Fell Prize, and the Ian Fleming Award.

She has performed at a range of respected venues and festivals, including Cheltenham Jazz Festival, The 606 Club, The Jazz Café, St Paul's Cathedral, BBC Maida Vale, and Toulouse Lautrec Jazz Club. Kirsty recently released her EP, *The Bakerland Sessions*, recorded with The Sam Johnson Trio. The EP features selections from the Great American Songbook, jazz standards, and musical theatre repertoire.

Alongside performing, Kirsty maintains an active teaching practice. She has worked as a visiting singing teacher at leading drama schools and as a specialist in musical theatre and pop across several independent schools in and around London, including St Paul's Girls' School and Ibstock Place School where she currently holds teaching posts.

FESTIVAL ACCOMPANISTS –

OLIVIA TRAVERS - OLIVIATRAVERS@MAC.COM

ENTRANTS WILL BE ALLOCATED AN ACCOMPANIST ACCORDING TO THE CLASS THEY HAVE ENTERED. PLEASE WAIT TO BE NOTIFIED OF YOUR ALLOCATED ACCOMPANIST BEFORE MAKING CONTACT.

PROVISIONAL TIMETABLE

VOCAL SOLOS

Adult Classes – Friday 26 February 2027 (evening from 6pm)
VENUE: Tagg's Yard, 23 Woodlands Road, Barnes, London SW13 0JZ

Junior Classes 9 years and under – Saturday 27 February 2027 (morning/afternoon)
Junior Class – 10-11 years - Saturday 27 February 2027 (morning/afternoon)
Junior Classes – 12-13 years - Saturday 27 February (afternoon/evening); Sunday 28 February (morning – classical singers)
Intermediate Classes 14-15 years – Sunday 28 February (afternoon/evening)
Intermediate Classes 16-18 years - Sunday 28 February (afternoon and evening)

VENUE: St Luke's in the Avenue, Kew Community Centre, Richmond TW9 2AJ
VENUE: Tagg's Yard, 23 Woodlands Road, Barnes, London SW13 0JZ (Sunday morning only)

ENTRY INFORMATION

CLOSING DATE FOR ENTRIES: FRIDAY 15 JANUARY (MIDNIGHT)
Please use the online entry system which can be found by going to our website
www.richmondfestival.org.uk
Fees are payable through the online system via Paypal or BACS

Although we will try to run all classes, if sufficient entries are not received we reserve the right to cancel classes and return fees paid. We also reserve the right to split classes if they become too big. Richmond upon Thames Performing Arts Festival will hold data solely for the purpose of running the Festival.

Please read this syllabus in conjunction with the Rules and Regulations for the Festival together with the Festival's Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct Policy. All the documents are downloadable from the festival website.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- Entry age as of 1st September 2026.
- Only one entry may be made in each class.
- Songs cannot be used across classes – a song can only be entered once. E.g. a song entered in a recital class, cannot be entered in a classical song class.
- Time limits are given and must be observed. A performance may be stopped if time limits are exceeded.
- Own choice titles must be stated on the entry form.
- All songs may be sung in a key suitable for young voices irrespective of the original key.
- Songs may be sung in English or the original language where required. Diction and pronunciation will be assessed by the adjudicator.
- An additional payment of £5 per song is required if using the official accompanist. Please send a copy of the music to the official accompanist at least three weeks before the competition date (contact details are on page 2). Music may be posted or scanned and emailed. Any repeats or cuts must be clearly marked on the copy. A chord chart with lyrics is not acceptable.
- An original copy of the music must be provided for the adjudicator on the day of the competition. A photocopy may be made for the use of the adjudicator provided that the competitor has already purchased their own copy. The photocopy will be retained and destroyed by the Section Secretary immediately after the event.
- Whilst the Festival does not have an official dress code, competitors are reminded that dress should be appropriate for a platform or concert performance.

Classes 1, 3, 7, 12, 14,
Songs in a classical style include songs by Peter Jenkyns, Lin Marsh, John Rutter etc, aria antiche, art songs in English or a foreign language, lute songs, accompanied traditional/folksongs and spirituals, and opera and oratorio arias. They do not include hymns, carols, pop songs or music theatre songs. Singers should use the official accompanist or bring their own accompanist (backing tracks are not permitted for these classes)

Classes 2, 6, 9, 13, 17, 26
Songs from the Shows and Disney Songs – competitors are encouraged to have live accompaniment, however backing tracks can be used. Please bring this on a device (e.g. phone) along with your own portal speakers. Microphones are NOT permitted in these classes.

Classes 10, 18
Pop Music Solo – a microphone and amp will be provided. Competitors may accompany themselves in these classes. If you are using a backing track, please bring this on a device (e.g. phone) along with your own portal speakers. Pre-recorded vocals on the backing track are NOT permitted.

Class 4
Set Song Classes – all songs must use the prescribed edition and key options. One of the main objectives is to see if all the musical detail written by the composer is observed.

Please note that if classes become to big, they will be split into two groups – this is to allow more people to win medals and to ensure people are not sitting through long sessions.

SPECIAL AWARDS

Young Singer Awards are made at the discretion of the adjudicator and are subject to the winner receiving a mark of Honours, Outstanding or Exceptional in at least one class. Previous first placed winners of each award are not eligible although it is possible for a winner of the Junior Award to go on to win the Young Singer Award etc.

Young Singer of the Year Award (£100) – this will be awarded at the discretion of the adjudicator to a singer who is 14-18 years and who has participated in three or more classes in their age category.

Junior Young Singer of the Year Award (£50) – this will be awarded at the discretion of the adjudicator to a singer who is 13 years and under and who has participated in three or more classes in their age category.

Kirkland Cup for Musical Theatre – this will be awarded at the discretion of the adjudicator to an outstanding singer in the Songs from the Shows classes.

Boys' Challenge Cup (Junior)
Given to the most promising boy singer aged 11 and under

Girls' Challenge Cup (Junior)
Given to the most promising girl singer aged 11 and under

Janet Sodring Cup for Boy's Solo – 15 years and under
Given to the most outstanding performance by a boy in this age group

Allegra Thompson Cup for Girls solo – awarded to the best performance by a girl 15 years and under

JUNIOR SINGERS – 11 YEARS AND UNDER

Junior singers entering three or more classes will be eligible for consideration for the Junior Young Singer of the Year Award - £50

These classes are likely to be during the morning and afternoon of Saturday 27 February (subject to entry numbers)

Class 1	**Vocal Solo – 9 years and under** Own choice song in a classical style (no musical theatre or pop) Time limit: 3 mins	**£9**
Class 2	**Songs from the Shows and Disney Films – 9 years and under** A song from a musical show or film Material should be age appropriate. Backing tracks are permitted. Time limit: 3 mins	**£9**
Class 3	**Vocal Solo – 10-11 years** Own choice song in a classical style (no musical theatre or pop) Time limit: 3 mins	**£9**
Class 4	**Set Song – 11 years and under** Singin' in the Rain -Songbook Plus Grade 2	**£9**
Class 5	**Unaccompanied folksong – 11 years and under** (no carols, pop songs or hymns) Time limit: 3 mins	**£9**
Class 6	**Songs from the Shows and Disney Films – 10-11 years** A song from a musical show or film Material should be age appropriate. Backing tracks are permitted. Time limit: 3 mins	**£9**

JUNIOR SINGERS – 12-13 YEARS

Junior singers entering three or more classes will be eligible for consideration for the Junior Young Singer of the Year Award - £50

These classes are likely to be during the afternoon and evening of Saturday 27 February and the morning of Sunday 28 February (subject to entry numbers)

Class 7 **Classical Vocal Solo – 12-13 years** **£9**
Own choice song in a classical style (no musical theatre or pop)
Time limit: 3 mins

Class 8 **Unaccompanied folksong – 12-13 years** **£9**
(no carols, pop songs or hymns)
Time limit: 3 mins

Class 9 **Songs from the Shows and Disney Films** **£9**
A song from a musical show or film
Material should be age appropriate. Backing tracks are permitted.
Time limit: 3 mins

Class 10 **Pop Music Solo – 13 years and under** **£9**
Own choice pop song from any genre performed to piano or acoustic guitar or recorded accompaniment. No pre-recorded vocals are allowed on the backing track. A microphone and amp will be provided for this class and competitors are advised to use it.
Time limit: 4 mins

Class 11 **Vocal Duet or Trio – 13 years and under JUNIOR DUET CUP** **£12**
Own choice in any style
Time limit: 4 mins

Also, please see Classes 15, 19, 20, 21

INTERMEDIATE SINGERS – 14-18 YEARS

Intermediate singers entering three or more classes will be eligible for consideration for the Young Singer of the Year Award - £100

These classes are likely to be on the afternoon and evening of Sunday 28 February (subject to entry numbers)

Class 12 **Classical Vocal Solo – 14-15 years** **£12**
Own choice song in a classical style (no musical theatre or pop)
Time limit: 4 mins

Class 13 **Songs from the Shows and Disney Films – 14-15 years** **£12**
A song from a musical show or film
Material should be age appropriate. Backing tracks are permitted.
Time limit: 4 mins

Class 14 **Classical Vocal Solo – 16-18 years** **£12**
Own choice song in a classical style (no musical theatre or pop)
Time limit: 4 mins

Class 15 **Operatic or Oratorio Aria – 18 years and under** **£12**
Own choice from an opera or oratorio (G&S is acceptable)
Time limit: 5 mins

Class 16 **Unaccompanied folksong – 14-18 years** **£12**
(no carols, pop songs or hymns)
Time limit: 4 mins

Class 17 **Songs from the Shows and Disney Films – 16-18 years** **£12**
A song from a musical show or film
Material should be age appropriate. Backing tracks are permitted.
Time limit: 4 mins

Class 18 **Pop Music Solo – 14-18 years** **£12**
Own choice pop song from any genre performed to piano or acoustic guitar or recorded accompaniment. No pre-recorded vocals are allowed on the backing track. A microphone and amp will be provided for this class and competitors are advised to use it.
Time limit: 4 mins

Class 19 **Vocal Duet or Trio –18 years and under – INTERMEDIATE DUET CUP** **£15**
Own choice in any style
Time limit: 5 mins

Class 20 **Recital Class – 18 years and under** **£15**

Two contrasting art songs (not operatic or oratorio arias). One of the songs must be in a classical style; the other song can be in any style except for pop music. Presentation and performance skills will be taken into account along with the versatility and imagination of the programme chosen. Spoken introductions are recommended.
Time limit: 10 mins

Class 21 **Play and Sing – 18 years and under** **£12**

A song in any style that is sung and accompanied by the singer (e.g. on a guitar or piano). This can include songs that have been written by the singer.
Time limit: 4 min

SENIOR SINGERS – 19 YEARS AND OVER

These classes will take place on Friday 26 February from 6pm onwards at Tagg's Yard

Class 22 **Own Choice: Classical Art Song – ANNE BEVAN PLATE** **£12**
Sung in the original language
Songs by English composers (e.g. Vaughan Williams, Howells, Holst etc), French composers (e.g. Faure, Duparc etc), German composers (e.g. Brahms, Schumann etc), Spanish composers (e.g. De Falla, Granados etc), Italian composers (e.g. Donizetti, Bellini), Russian composers (Tchaikovsky etc), Czech, Finnish, Danish, Icelandic, Swedish etc.
Time limit: 5 mins

Class 23 **Own Choice: Operatic or Oratorio Aria – FRANK SALE OPERA CUP** **£12**
(can include Gilbert and Sullivan)
Time limit: 5 mins

Class 24 **Open Vocal Solo – SENIOR VOCAL ROSE BOWL** **£12**
A song from any genre
Time limit: 5 mins

Class 25 **Recital - SENIOR RECITAL CUP** **£15**
Two or three contrasting songs - Two of the songs must be in a classical style; the other song can be in any style except for pop music. Presentation and performance skills will be taken into account along with the versatility and imagination of the programme chosen. Spoken introductions are recommended.
Time limit: 10 mins

Class 26 **Songs from the Shows – THE GRIFFIN PARK DECANTER** **£12**
A song from a musical show or film
Backing tracks are permitted – please bring this on your own device with a Bluetooth speaker.
Time limit: 5 mins