

Music *at Aber*

TOP 5
IN THE UK
AND 1st IN WALES
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FOR STUDENT
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Music *at Aber*

A great musical life is one of the strengths of Aberystwyth and its University. The close-knit character of the place really makes things happen. Generations of students have discovered the special quality of music here. Aber is a great place to live and a great place to study. It's a very special place for music.

The history of music at Aberystwyth is long and distinguished. Well over a century ago the University College established one of Britain's first music departments. Initially under Professor Joseph Parry, the musical life of the College developed and by the 1920s Aberystwyth became a significant musical focal point. Elgar, Vaughan Williams and Holst were among many great musicians who held special affections for the place.

Music degrees are no longer offered by the University but we still appreciate the importance of a vibrant musical life - after all, music matters. Performance has always been at the heart of the University's music, and the Music Centre continues the tradition by providing all students with the opportunity to play, learn, and enjoy music alongside their other studies. We invite you to take a look at what we have to offer.

Dr David Russell Hulme, MA PhD FRSA
Director of Music

THE MUSIC CENTRE

Located near the seafront in Old College, the Music Centre provides facilities for students and the local community. The Centre has practice rooms available to students of all degree programmes, and teaching spaces for those students wishing to receive instrumental or vocal lessons. It has numerous pianos, a two-manual electronic organ, harp, harpsichord and chamber organ, as well as percussion and other instruments.

The Old College is also home to the Music Library, which houses a large sheet-music collection with particularly strong holdings of chamber and orchestral music. In addition, music books can be found in the Hugh Owen Library - and, of course, the enormous resources of the National Library of Wales are close at hand.



Aberystwyth University was a **top climber** in The Times and The Sunday Times Good University Guide (2016)



Justyna Zdybel (violin)

*BSc Tourism Management with Spanish
Philomusica and The University Singers
Music Scholarship Holder*

I came to Aberystwyth University to study Tourism and Spanish. I like travelling and languages in general but beyond that I enjoy expressing myself through music. Being here is just like a dream because I am following a course that really interests me and I also have an opportunity to pursue my music.

The university symphony orchestra - Philomusica of Aberystwyth - has given me an opportunity to continue my passion for music and develop myself in many ways. The standard of the orchestra is high and the repertoire that it covers is wonderful. My absolute favourite work was "Danzón No. 2" by Arturo Márques.

I have met many talented and nice people. This, along with the great atmosphere in the orchestra rehearsals, has given me the motivation to practice and improve my skills in addition to really enjoying the playing and being part of something wonderful.

I have also enjoyed singing with The University Singers. Having the opportunity to sing choral works with a professional orchestra and soloists has been a wonderful experience.



SINGING

If you enjoy singing, there's plenty to get involved in at Aberystwyth. **The University Singers** is a large mixed choir that prepares major works for a concert with soloists and orchestra in the second term. Recent highlights include performances of Mozart's *Requiem*, *The Dream of Gerontius* and Karl Jenkins's *The Armed Man* and *Stabat Mater*. There are no auditions and everyone is welcome.

The Elizabethan Madrigal Singers is an auditioned student a cappella chamber choir, performing a much wider repertoire than its name suggests. 'Mads' enjoys an enthusiastic and committed membership and has gained a reputation for high standards. The concert tours are a popular feature of the choir's programme and have taken it to France, Germany, Poland and many other countries.

For singers with a theatrical flair the **Showtime Singers** perform Gilbert and Sullivan as well as popular shows and **Curtain Call**, a student society, also stages productions of modern musicals. **Aber Opera** is a small group that performs operatic excerpts in concert.

PLAYING

Aberystwyth provides great opportunities for instrumentalists. The University's symphony orchestra, **Philomusica of Aberystwyth**, concentrates on music of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This large orchestra enjoys an excellent reputation and has worked with soloists of international standing, including pianist John Lill and harpist Catrin Finch. A recent orchestral highlight was the performance of Neil Brand's score to Hitchcock's silent film *Blackmail*.



The University Sinfonia is a chamber orchestra that comes together on a semi-casual basis to enjoy smaller repertoire. Also, on a more informal level, the University runs weekly string and saxophone groups, **Simply Strings** and **Saxophony**.

The **University Concert Band** offers wind, brass and percussion players the chance to experience the full range of the wind band repertoire. It provides a musical opening for both advanced and less experienced musicians and performs two concerts a year.

Aberystwyth Silver Band is a local brass band with a busy concert calendar and offers a warm welcome to students.

INSTRUMENTAL & VOCAL LESSONS

If you have been learning for many years or would like to take up something new, instrumental and vocal tuition is available through the Music Centre at special student rates. Playing an instrument and singing are certainly great ways to take a break and de-stress. So if you are interested in arranging lessons, please contact the Music Centre.

PRACTICE FACILITIES & THE MUSIC CARD

Whether you are taking lessons or not, the Music Centre's practice rooms in Old College are available to all students. Each room is equipped with a good piano. For a small annual fee, students, staff and local musicians can purchase a **Music Card**. This gives access to practice rooms, as well as free membership of Music Centre ensembles and music library borrowing.

MUSIC SCHOLARSHIPS

- up to £650 a year

Music Scholarships are intended for experienced players of orchestral and band instruments or singers (jointly with an instrument) who can actively contribute to the University's orchestras, bands, choirs and other ensembles.

They are awarded on the basis of competitive audition to new entrants in any discipline (undergraduate or postgraduate) and held for the duration of the course. Scholarships are open to those who hold Aberystwyth as a firm choice at the time of the closing date, which is 15 June in the year in which entry is proposed. (Later applications may be considered.)

The benefits of Music Scholarships are:

- Up to £650 a year (four or more awards available annually)
- Free membership of all Music Centre ensembles or affiliated ensembles (including orchestras, bands, choir, etc.)
- Free use of Music Centre practice rooms, library and other appropriate facilities
- Guaranteed accommodation in a Hall of Residence/University - managed property for the duration of the course.*

** In order to secure your guaranteed place in Residence, you must apply for accommodation for the following academic year within dates advertised by the Accommodation Office for returning students.*

Application forms, regulations and further details of scholarships are available from the Director of Music.

Music Scholarships may be held with any other award.

THE ARTS CENTRE

Aberystwyth Arts Centre, situated on the Penglais Campus, is an extensive modern complex incorporating Wales's largest arts centre and home to a large concert hall, theatre, cinema, performance studio, art galleries and studio/rehearsal facilities, as well as a Craft & Design Shop, Book Shop and busy cafes and bars. Described as 'A National Flagship for the Arts', it is a major venue for international artists, as well as local performers, with plenty of orchestral concerts, recitals, opera and drama on offer. Special rates are available for students and entry is free to the first-class evening and lunchtime concerts organised by Aberystwyth Music Club.

The Arts Centre's education programme offers a huge range of courses and workshops – everything from samba drumming and electric guitar to pottery, photography, ballet, tap and poetry. Each summer the Arts Centre and the University are hosts to Musicfest, the renowned international Music Festival and Summer School, which takes place every July, drawing in musicians and audiences from around the world for a week-long celebration of music.



Alex Bland (trombone)

*BSc Marine and Freshwater Biology
Philomusica and Concert Band
Music Scholarship Holder*

When deciding which university to attend, the musical opportunities on offer were an important factor in my final decision. Aberystwyth University has a rich history of musical excellence therefore the decision was easier than I thought.

Personal highlights of mine include playing Principal Trombone for Philomusica in Rachmaninoff's 1st symphony, and bass trombone in Holst's famous Planets Suite.

We have also done some great repertoire with the University Concert Band, and I even had the chance to perform a solo concerto work entitled Dance Sequence by Gareth Wood.

The musical opportunities on offer here at Aberystwyth are second to none, and with the excellent support from the staff, I have been able to broaden my musical horizons into both starting a trombone quartet and delving into musical theatre - incorporating such aspects as conducting and teaching.

The social aspect of music has always been important, and due to an even mix of students, locals and University staff involved in the various ensembles, it has led me to make some really great like-minded friends who will remain as such for a long while yet.



LIVE MUSIC

If you enjoy listening to live music, Aberystwyth offers an enormously diverse musical life. The Music Centre ensembles present regular concerts, and the Arts Centre is host to a large number of performances every year (see opposite). The Students' Union organises a full programme of live band events. Folk music is thriving with, as you might expect, a strong Celtic bias. Live music, including jam nights, is a feature of several Aberystwyth pubs, including Rummors, Scholars, and the Ship & Castle. Local festivals include MusicFest, The Big Tribute, and Mid Mad. If you keep an eye out for posters, you'll find there's something for everyone around the town.



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