



Glenalmond College

MUSIC STAFF

Glenalmond College boasts a number of extremely talented professional musicians on staff within the Music School. Please take a moment to read about all of their achievements here.

Mrs Ailsa Mooney

MA, GRNCM



Voice

Mrs Mooney gained a degree in Singing from the RNCM in Manchester and performed as a Soprano in the Chorus of companies including Royal Opera, Covent Garden, Opera North and was a full time member of Scottish Opera for four years. She has sung principal roles for D'Oyly Carte Opera in the West End and on National and International tours to the USA.

After leaving Scottish Opera Mrs Mooney moved to London where she worked for many companies including London Voices appearing regularly at the BBC proms. She was a regular recording artist and recorded for musicians such as Paul McCartney at Abbey Road studios as well as appearing on the soundtracks of The Lord of the Rings Trilogy and Star Wars.

Mrs Mooney is currently Lecturer in Singing at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland (Junior Dept) and has recently been awarded funding to provide breathing workshops for Instrumentalists, which is a special interest of hers.

Mr Andy James



Drum Kit and Percussion

From a very young age Mr James always had a fascination for drums and percussion. He started playing snare drum at the age of 10 in the local marching band (The Ilfracombe Corps of Drums) for about six years, during which time he also played bugle, trumpet and bell lyre. Mr James acquired his first drum set during this time and took lessons from a local drum teacher. On leaving school at 16 he joined the Royal Engineers staff band (Chatham) playing percussion and receiving tuition from Mike Skinner, principal percussionist of the Royal Opera House Orchestra, Covent Garden. He spent a further six years in the R.E. band gaining valuable experience playing in the concert band, orchestra, jazz band and dance bands, whilst also playing civilian gigs.

On leaving the R.E. band, aged 21, Mr James continued studying under the much respected Bob Armstrong for approximately five years developing his abilities technically and gaining great advice in many areas of playing. Also during this period he gradually built a reputation in the Kent and the London area working in various situations - shows, rock, pop, jazz bands and depts, recording sessions, cabaret backings including Jimmy Tarbuck, Kenny Lynch, Joe Pasquale and regular tours with folk singer Charlie Landsborough.

Since moving to Scotland Mr James has continued freelance work and teaching, including as drum tutor for the St. Andrews University Jazz course, led by renowned music educators Richard Ingham and Richard Michael. In addition to his work at Glenalmond he teaches privately at his own studio in Dundee.

Mr Brian Elrick

LLB (Hons)



Head of Pipes and Drums

Mr Elrick grew up in Stonehaven in North-East Scotland. He began piping at the age of 9 with Stonehaven Pipe Band receiving tuition from the Pipe Major Raymond Whyte and by the age of 14 he had taken on the position of Pipe Major of the band himself. He led them to the World, Scottish and Champion of Champion titles in Grade 4 aged just 17.

Mr Elrick then spent a season playing in the top grade, Grade 1, with the Polkemmet Pipe Band before returning to Stonehaven, leading the band in the Grade 1 arena as a 21 year old Pipe Major, probably the youngest ever at this level. In the intervening years he gained a law degree at the University of Aberdeen, during which time he joined the University Officers Training Corps. This was the beginning of a long association with the unit, being appointed Pipe Major, reaching the rank of Warrant Officer Second Class. On leaving Aberdeen UOTC he was appointed Pipe Major of the 51st Highland Regiment and finished his time in the Territorial Army as Pipe Major of the Tayforth Universities Officers Training Corps in 2010. At this time Brian accepted an Army Cadet Force commission to work as Chief Instructor Cadet Force Piping & Drumming. Top grade competition bands were not neglected through the years after Stonehaven and Brian was a senior piper with the Vale of Atholl Pipe Band under Pipe Major Ian Duncan, a huge influence, and Polkemmet and Lothian & Borders Police bands under the leadership of David Barnes. He returned to 'The Vale' as Pipe Sergeant under Adrian Cramb and continues to play at the top level with Police Scotland Fife under David Wilton. Whilst committing most of his focus to the pipe band side of life there was still time to dabble in the world of competitive solo piping, winning the prestigious MacAllan Trophy invitational competition in Lorient, Brittany in 1996, having featured regularly in the prize list at this event throughout that decade.

Mr Elrick arrived at Glenalmond as a visiting piping teacher in April 1998 and joined the full-time staff in September 1999. He enjoys hill-walking and long-distance running and is married to Janet.

Mrs Colleen Nicoll



Voice

Mrs Nicoll completed a Masters in Vocal Performance at Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance with distinction and combines a successful career as a professional soprano, choral conductor and singing teacher. In Early 2024 she performed the role of Queen of the Night In Mozart's the Magic Flute at Perth Theatre with The Scots Opera Project for Perth Festival of the Arts.

Most recently Mrs Nicoll has performed the role of Belinda in Purcell's Dido and Aeneas in a co-production with The Scots Opera Project and Pitlochry Festival Theatre. Previously she has performed roles in numerous operatic productions including the title role in Handel's Semele, Tytania (A Midsummer Night's Dream- Britten), Susanna (Le Nozze di Figaro - Mozart), Diana (Actéon - Charpentier), Yum Yum (The Mikado - Gilbert and Sullivan), Giannetta (L'elisir d'amore - Donizetti), Lady Dunmow (A Dinner Engagement - Lennox Berkeley), Galatea (Acis and Galatea - Handel). She sang the role of Tytania in Britten's A Midsummer Night's Dream at the Minack Theatre, including a special performance for King Charles III and Camilla, Queen Consort.

Mrs Nicoll has a busy concert diary working in the UK and abroad and has recently recorded an album of Scottish classical art song with pianist Andrew Johnston - 'Wi A Canny Lilt'. Colleen has completed outreach and education training with The Royal Opera House and English National Opera and works as a workshop leader and performer with Scottish Opera. She also conducts Pitlochry and District Choral Society and Pitlochry Festival Theatre's Show Choir.

Mr Elias Rooney

BMus (Hons)



Cello

Mr Rooney studied the cello in Glasgow, London and Copenhagen. He has enjoyed working as a guest cellist at English National Opera, Scottish Ballet, Royal Scottish National Orchestra, BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, Royal Northern Sinfonia, London Contemporary Orchestra, the Ulster Orchestra, Camerata Ireland and the RTÉ Concert Orchestra. This work regularly involves live broadcasts on BBC Radio 3, RTÉ Lyric FM and on television at the BBC Proms.

Mr Rooney has played the solo cello part on *Hamilton*, *The King and I*, *Les Misérables* and *My Fair Lady* in the West End of London and on tour. Studio work has included making the Hans Zimmer score for BBC *Frozen Planet II* as well as feature film soundtracks for Warner Brothers and Netflix. These include *The Matrix Resurrections*, *Saltburn*, *Fantastic Beasts: The Secrets of Dumbledore* and *The Batman*. Elias has toured and recorded with Evanescence, Bastille, Ronan Keating, and Katherine Jenkins. He has appeared, complete with wig and frills, as a cellist in seasons six and seven of *Outlander*.

Mr Rooney is a founding member of The Belfast Ensemble, a collective of artists based in Northern Ireland. Since its inception, the Ensemble has gained critical acclaim for its groundbreaking performances, blending music, theatre and multimedia to challenge traditional boundaries of performance art. Awards include 'Best Opera,' Irish Times Theatre Awards, 'Best Theatre of 2022 [and] 2021,' the Guardian and an Ivor Novello Award for the chamber opera, 'ABOMINATION: a DUP Opera.' As well as having recently toured productions to the PRS New Music Biennale and the Festivale de Marseille, the ensemble is about to undertake a three year residency at London's Southbank Centre.

Thanks to generous investment from the Arts Council of Northern Ireland, Mr Rooney plays a cello by Kai-Thomas Roth and bows by Howard Green and Charles Louis Bazin. When not playing the cello, hanging around in airports or teaching the talented cellists at Glenalmond College, Mr Rooney enjoys playing squash and baking all the things he shouldn't be eating.

Mr Joe Moore

BA(Hons) HNC



Guitar

Mr Moore joined Glenalmond College in January of 2023 as the Visiting Music Instructor of guitar, having graduated from the University of the Highlands & Islands in 2022 with an Honours Degree in Popular Music. He first picked up the guitar at the age of 12, and soon after began forming bands and groups with many like minded musicians. Mr Moore has toured the UK and had several releases with various bands and projects over the years including recordings from record labels in London.

Mr Moore started teaching guitar before he began to study music further and across the various schools he worked at, he ran guitar clubs and band classes, encouraging the next generation of musicians to perform, start bands and to play music.

Many of Mr Moore's weekend evenings are spent performing with various bands and ensembles at festivals, venues and clubs across the country along with writing and recording original material. Away from music he is an avid sport and football fan (NUFC), and a very keen Squash player. But most importantly, his time is spent with his daughter Olivia.

Mr Mark Wilson



Strings

Mr Wilson is a versatile musician. In addition to being a successful violinist and violist, he is also a pianist, conductor and composer. An alumni of the University of St. Andrews, London University, The Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, The Royal Academy of Music, and Trinity College, Mark has enjoyed a long career as an orchestral leader, chamber musician and soloist. Mark's playing career has taken him to many far-flung places. He lived in Mato Grosso in Brazil for two years, where he led the state orchestra, and he had the distinction of giving the Mato Grossense premier of Vivaldi's The Four Seasons! He is currently a member of the piano trio, Trilogy, leader of the versatile string group, Afton Strings, violinist with the improvising group The Show Affs, and leader of The Scottish Pops Orchestra.

Alongside his playing work, Mr Wilson has always been a string teacher. He has taught in schools and colleges, including Glenalmond College, Dollar Academy, The London College of Music, Junior RCS, Junior Guildhall, and Junior Trinity. He enjoyed a happy time as Head of Strings at St. George's School for Girls in Edinburgh. In recent years, Mr Wilson has become a published composer. He is co-author of the Stringtastic series (with his friend Paul Wood), which is published by Faber Music and distributed worldwide. He is also a major contributor to a major new book for the Trinity violin examinations, with the working title, Folk Pathways. Mark, working with Paul, now has more than twenty pieces in the ABRSM and Trinity exam lists.

Outside of music, Mr Wilson has a degree in mathematics. He loves playing snooker and darts, going for country walks, and solving and setting cryptic crosswords.

Mrs Michelle Sheridan-Grant

BMus PGdip (Opera) MA



Voice

Mrs Sheridan-Grant was born in Ireland and studied at the DIT Conservatoire of Music and Drama and Trinity College Dublin, the Royal College of Music in London and the Flanders Opera Studio in Ghent, Belgium. Her performing career has taken her around the world, and she has worked with some of the world's leading conductors, directors and orchestras.

As a freelance opera singer, Mrs Sheridan-Grant has performed with English National Opera, English Touring Opera, Flanders Opera, Opera Ireland, Opera Theatre Company and The Classical Opera Company, playing roles in operas and giving concerts all around the UK, Ireland, Europe and as far afield as Bermuda and the United States of America. As a soprano soloist on the concert platform, she has performed works by Mozart, Handel, Haydn, Schubert, Tavener, Reich and Cooke to name a few. She has made numerous TV appearances, has recorded recitals for RTE and BBC radio, and was the voice of the Chief Hen in the BBC / European Opera Centre's cartoon version of Janacek's *The Cunning Little Vixen*.

A passionate teacher, Mrs Sheridan-Grant has a busy teaching practice and regularly leads musical outreach projects in schools with members of the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. She recently completed an MA in voice pedagogy at the University of Wales Trinity St David, specialising in the management of performance anxiety in singers.

Mr Nigel Cox

BA DipRAM LRAM(T)



Brass

Mr Cox was born and raised in St Andrews and after school went on to study at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama (now the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland).

Although able to teach all brass instruments, he is first and foremost a trombonist who has worked as a professional freelance musician in Scotland and nationally for over 30 years, working with all of the major orchestras and extensively with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra and Scottish Ballet.

Mr Cox has taught at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland's junior department throughout this time and has recently returned to Glenalmond as a visiting music tutor.

Mr Robert Digney

BMus MMus



Clarinet & Saxophone

Mr Digney is a clarinetist and teacher based in Glasgow. He graduated from the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland in 2017, and has since carved out a busy freelance career performing across the UK. He regularly performs with all the Scottish orchestras, including the Orchestra of Scottish Opera, Scottish Ballet and the Royal Scottish National Orchestra, with whom he has undertaken several international tours to China, the USA and across Europe. Mr Digney has recently had trials for positions with the RSNO, the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra and the BBC National Orchestra of Wales. Alongside orchestral work he performs with Nordic Viola, an award-winning chamber group performing works inspired by Nordic history, culture and landscapes. Projects have included tours to the Faroe Islands, Shetland and Orkney.

As well as performing, Mr Digney is a dedicated teacher, working as a visiting Clarinet and Saxophone Tutor at Glenalmond College, Hamilton College and Queen Victoria School, Dunblane. He teaches privately at home, and has worked as an Associate Tutor for the National Youth Orchestra of Scotland and the Harrogate Clarinet Summer School.

Outside music, Mr Digney enjoys exploring Scotland's spectacular landscape. As such he will often be found hyperventilating on top of a mountain or over the handlebars of his bike.

Mr Samuel Howley

BA (Hons) LRWCMD ACRWCMD



Piano

Mr Howley was born in the Rhondda Valley, South Wales. After graduating from the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama, where he studied both Piano and Voice, he has worked as a pianist, accompanist, singer, voice coach, conductor, composer and teacher.

His 'WW1 A Village Opera' won the Daily Telegraph Award for commemorating the centenary of the First World War. He has also been commissioned to compose works for Ada Witczyk (Reviewed in the BBC Music Magazine), Caroline Jones, the Dyfed Choir, Ancient Connections (Welsh/Irish cultural partnership) and Artistic Licence Theatre Company. His music has been played on BBC Radio 3, Radio Polska, Argentinian Classical Radio and BBC Radio Orkney.

Future projects include a new album of Songs based on the poems of Michael Bruce (the gentle poet of Loch Leven) and Robert Burns, composed for Malcolm Bennett together with a Fantasy for Oboe and Piano for George Talmaciu.

As a pianist/accompanist, Mr Howley has worked with both singers and instrumentalists but his main passion is chamber music. He is a founding member of the Arnot Piano Trio.

Mr Sandy Bayne



Percussion

Mr Bayne was born in St Andrews, Scotland. He started drumming at the age of 10 in the esteemed 1st St Andrews Boys Brigade program under former world champion Davie Clark. It was when Alan Graham took over the tuition however that Sandy excelled. He became Lead Drummer at 13 and led the corps (and eventually the City of St Andrews) to several major titles as well as many solo honours both home and abroad.

At 18, he joined the world famous Scotrail Vale of Atholl Pipe Band under the leadership of Pipe Major Ian Duncan, winning several prizes in the top grade, before returning to St Andrews to begin a full-time drumming career. In 2005, Mr Bayne got the chance to return to the Vale, learning and playing alongside former world champion Paul Turner. Over the next few seasons, the band and drum corps were consistently in the prizes. This opened up the opportunity to emigrate to Western Australia in 2008, helping rebuild the Western Australia Police Pipe Band; a process that ultimately led the band to winning three National titles.

In 2013, Mr Bayne accepted an offer from the Sultan of Oman to relocate and teach the Royal Air Force of Oman Pipe Band ahead of their proposed trip to Scotland the following year. The band successfully toured in 2014, with the drum corps becoming the first from Oman to win a drumming prize. Family reasons led to a Scotland return in 2016, where Mr Bayne resumed teaching schools, bands and individuals around the country. In 2019, he joined the Glenalmond team and is enjoying life here.

Away from pipe bands, Mr Bayne likes a quiet life. Walking the dog on the St Andrews beaches, chilling in the garden, foreign travel and good food are all things that make him very happy.

Mr Simon Walker

BMus (Hons) MMus PGCert ARCO ChRCCO



Assistant Director of Music

Mr Walker has been Assistant Director of Music at Glenalmond College in Perthshire since September 2022. He is also Assistant Housemaster to Matheson's House.

Mr Walker was born in North Yorkshire and started his musical training as a chorister at Durham Cathedral. He studied music at the University of Edinburgh and spent three years as Organ Scholar of St. Mary's Episcopal Cathedral. From September 2009 he spent a year as Organ Scholar of Chester Cathedral before moving to Canada in 2010. He returned to the UK in 2021 to pursue a career in teaching, having spent eleven years in Ontario as a professional organist and choral conductor. He was Director of Music at St. Jude's Anglican Church in Oakville, and Organist to Appleby College in the same town.

Mr Walker holds the Associate diploma of the Royal College of Organists, a master's degree in music from the University of Toronto, and the professional diploma in choral conducting from the Royal Canadian College of Organists. Away from music, Simon has a passion for classic cars (especially old Rovers and Citroens) and keeps active with swimming, a bit of running, and looking after a miniature Dachshund called Norma.

Dr Tim Ridley

GRSM PhD LRAM FRSA



Director of Music

In his teens Dr Ridley was a music scholar at Marlborough College, studying organ, piano, cello, double bass, singing, drums and percussion. In 1985 he rejected the offer of an Oxford organ scholarship to move to the Royal Academy of Music in London to study the organ (with Peter Hurford), percussion (with Susan Bixley) and church music (with David Hill and Patrick Russill). His more recent (2003-2007) PhD studies at Brunel University centred on the art of composition viewed from within a pedagogical educational framework.

On leaving the RAM in 1988, Dr Ridley toured the world as a session keyboard player, often as keyboardist for the Brotherhood of Man and The Supremes. In addition he covered many other musical bases, ranging from orchestral piano with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales to playing keyboards for the first ever pantomime to be performed in Dubai, while all the time writing and playing keyboards in his own progressive rock band, Mentaur. During this time he also worked as a peripatetic teacher of drums, percussion and jazz piano at Marlborough, St Mary's Calne, Cheam Hawtreys and Sutton Valence schools.

Tim was appointed to the full time music department staff at Marlborough in 1996, as Master i/c Music Technology, spending 13 years as an Assistant Housemaster while also assuming the roles of Head of Shell (Year 9/Third Form) and later Director of Chapel Music. In 2009 he made the big break with his alma mater to move north to Scotland to become Director of Music at Glenalmond College. At Glenalmond he is responsible for the day-to-day running of the Music Department, together with teaching academic Music and Music Technology and directing the Chapel and Chamber Choirs. In addition to his role at Glenalmond, Dr Ridley is also a member of the Main, Diploma and Jazz Examiner Panels for ABRSM.

Dr Ridley is married to Judith, who is a psychotherapist, and they have three children. He has a private pilot's licence and is a passionate supporter of Somerset cricket, Portsmouth football, Bath rugby and the San Francisco 49ers NFL teams, although it has to be said that SPL St Johnstone have gradually found a little space in his heart.

Mrs Vicky Campbell

LTCL



Woodwinds

Mrs Campbell hails from London where she commenced her woodwind studies at an early age. When she was 13 she won a place as a Junior Exhibitioner at Trinity College of Music in London to study Clarinet. Mrs Campbell was offered a sixth form place at The Purcell School but instead went to North London Collegiate school where she could work with early woodwind instruments such as the Crumhorn and Racket. It was at this point that the opportunity to learn Bassoon appeared which Vicky seized on. By the time she entered Trinity as a full time student, Bassoon had taken over as a 1st study. It was at Trinity that Mrs Campbell met her future husband the classical Guitarist and Lutenist Hugh Campbell. Shortly thereafter she took up the Flute which then became her main instrument.

After leaving college Mrs Campbell and her husband formed the Campbell Duo, a Flute & Guitar team with an occasional foray into Lute & Recorder. The well-established duo have toured throughout Europe and have a special relationship with Scandinavia. They also perform regularly at many guitar festivals. The Campbells have given many 1st performances and have had numerous works written for them. Hugh also makes adventurous arrangements of music by well known (and sometimes more obscure) composers which the duo include in their concerts.

Mrs Campbell remained in London after finishing her studies at Trinity, where her interests included beekeeping. In 2002 she moved to Scotland, temporarily living in Bathgate, then settling in a village north of her husband's native Dundee. Mrs Campbell and her husband share their house with an assortment of cats and enjoy going for daily walks together. She is a keen crafter and enjoys making things. Mrs Campbell is particularly keen on sewing, knitting and jewellery making as she is an enthusiastic amateur silversmith.