

## **The Royal College of Music**

Things haven't quietened down at the RCM since the last update! The summer term got off to a busy (and somewhat stressful) start with recitals taking place during the first couple of months, but the supportive atmosphere buzzing round college made it all worth it. After celebratory parties and summer balls, it was back to work for the rest of term, with a performance of Holst's "The Planets" with the RCM's Symphony Orchestra at the Queen Elizabeth Hall fast approaching. After just a few days of intense rehearsals with conductor Andrew Gourlay, we made our way to Abbey Road Studios and spent a busy day recording a few of the movements in Studio 1 (as well as being starstruck over some famous faces in the café!). The sell-out concert just a week later was a huge success and a fitting way to end the year at the RCM.

After a relaxing summer, this academic year for the violas started in a bit of a different way to normal, with an introduction to the Baroque viola! We were each given one of these historical instruments before spending a few insightful days playing in ensembles and masterclasses with RCM's wonderful baroque viola teachers, Pablo De Pedro Cano and Jane Rogers. We were lucky enough to have another inspiring masterclass from Jennifer Stumm (International Chair of Viola at the RCM) who introduced us to the perspective that our body makes the sound, not the viola.

After a conducting class with Martyn Brabbins, the RCM Symphony Orchestra is looking forward to a performance of Mahler's 1<sup>st</sup> symphony and Schoenberg's *A Survivor from Warsaw*. With the academic year now in full swing, we are all excited at the prospect of a visit from the Chamber Orchestra of Europe as well as viola masterclasses from Isabel Villanueva and Maxim Rysanov!

Helena Bartlett