

Birmingham Conservatoire

First Study Information: Harp

Follow Eleanor and Catrin on twitter @EleanorTurner and @CatrinFinch

Welcome to Birmingham's harp 'compartment' – a hub of harp activity nestling within the Strings Department. As leader of a three-strong team that is now in its second year, principal harp tutor **Eleanor Turner** will give your weekly lessons. Ellie also curates the program of performance workshops, concert opportunities, chamber music and masterclasses with renowned visiting harpists and composers. **Katherine Thomas** coaches orchestral harp playing and pedagogy, helping to prepare you for a diverse professional life. **Catrin Finch**, our International Chair, shares her wealth of expertise with us on two visits each term, taking a vested interest in each student, inspiring and motivating us all. These occasions provide a wonderful focal point for progress to be made, as well as being great fun and strengthening our harp community.



Photo: Catrin Finch, Tsvetelina Likova, Ellie Taylor, Eleanor Turner



Photo: Emily Harris with visiting tutor Remy van Kesteren

Outside college, the harp scene in Birmingham is thriving, with recent graduates and seasoned professionals living in and near Birmingham. Rita Schindler studied as an undergrad here with Cathy White ten years ago, became a Junior Fellow in 2014 and is now a busy professional harpist. Rita continues to have a supporting role in our department, providing extra tuition and practical support, a regular 'Harp-Hive' meet-up to cover relevant topics such as repertoire, practice planning and careers advice.

Kinga Wąs is a recent graduate and organises the 'Sunday Classics' series at the Digbeth pub, The Spotted Dog, where harpists perform regularly and are invited to apply when fully prepared. Fran Barsby is another recent graduate and founded the Future Blend Project, resulting in 16 new works for acoustic and electric harps which were premiered in January 2016 at the 'Hidden Gem Concert' at Birmingham's Custard Factory. Look out for these and other exciting harp-based events!

As well as your weekly one-on-one lesson, Eleanor leads a fortnightly performance workshop as well as occasional group classes in technical development, improvisation, jazz and electronics. On the alternate weeks, Rita will host the fortnightly Harp-Hive, or there will be a visiting tutor/lecturer. It is also possible to attend some of the woodwind repertoire classes, to 'busk' through repertoire with

wind players and benefit from learning a wider range of chamber music, composers and skills in breathing and ensemble playing. Katherine Thomas coaches an intensive orchestral course which everyone participates in and is expected to prepare for fully. This is 15 hours per year and in your first two years you may receive some extra support from Rita, for the orchestral side of things. In addition to this, Katherine has prepared some intensive mini-courses which will all be taught and assessed within the harp department: Orchestral 'pops'; Technique and Exercises; Arranging and Transcribing; Vocal accompaniment. Katherine also tutors Pedagogy which is 8 hours per year. All of these should be done thoroughly and enthusiastically as they will equip you with essential skills for the profession and a confident and enthusiastic outlook as you start your career in music!

Organisation and practice are crucial for you to get the most out of your course here at Birmingham, whether an undergraduate or postgraduate student. Eleanor is on hand to help with practice suggestions and if extra motivation is required, FaceTime/Skype sessions between classes can be arranged to help you to meet your targets. In the first three years of the BMus course, you will have a Technical Exam in February in which you perform a study (e.g. Dizi, Posse, Salzedo), orchestral excerpts and an arrangement, of your own creation, from film music, pop or jazz. In the fourth year, you will prepare a Major Project (e.g. CD and concert, public performance, mixed media project, concerto [by application] or another original concept).

In early Summer, you will take part in our annual showcase recital held at Holywell Music (the Salvi and Lyon and Healy harp shop) in London. In May 2016, we combined forces with the Harp Department of Trinity Laban and enjoyed a masterclass by Gabriella Dall'Olio, as well as a 'competition panel' event where Gabriella, Eleanor and a visiting Italian tutor Elena Manuela Cosentino, gave advice and feedback on preparing for international competitions, recordings and recitals. We aim to repeat this kind of cross-department event as it was hugely enjoyable to make new friends and share ideas



In addition to your 30 hours of one-on-one lessons per year (35 in the final year of the BMus and at postgraduate level), you can have 5 hours for a second study or an elected specialism (e.g. electronic music on harp, 19th century harp) and you are entitled to 5 hours of chamber music coaching from

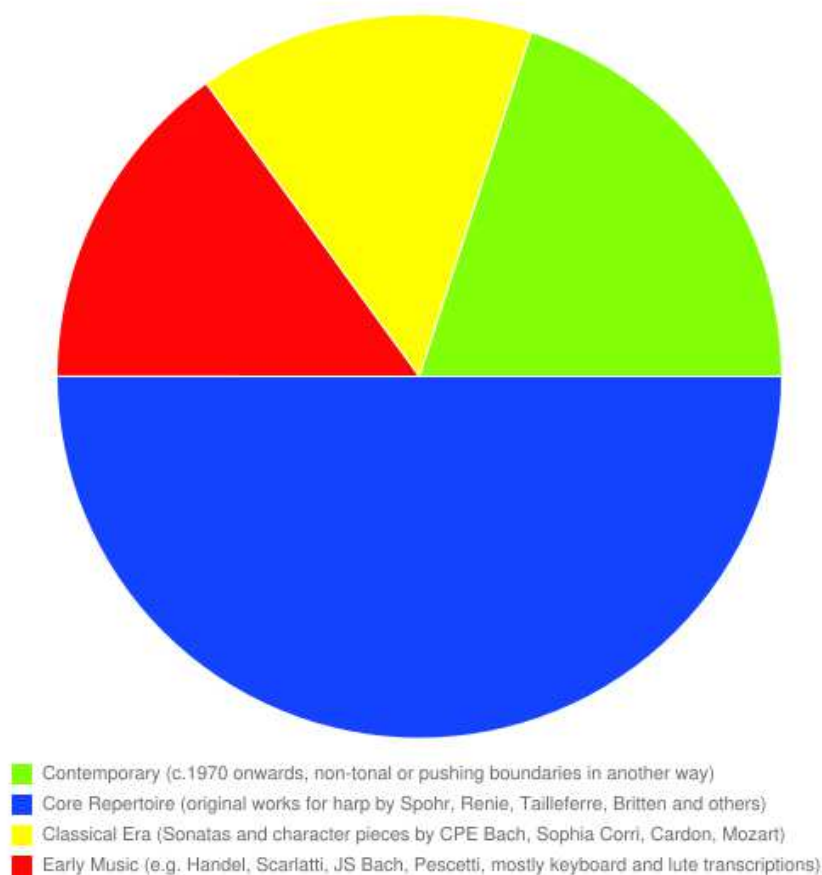
Eleanor Turner, Katherine Thomas or other instrumental or vocal tutors. Each term there is a masterclass with a visiting tutor, in December (tbc) there is a Harp Chamber Music Concert and in March 2017 will be the first Henriette Renié Harp Competition, for Birmingham harp students only.

The harp is a modern instrument with ancient origins and a long history, even in its present form. Eleanor has compiled a comprehensive list of harp solo and chamber music repertoire, which is available on her website: www.eleanorturner.com under the 'Harp at Birmingham' tab. New music will be added regularly and please do suggest music that has been overlooked or is hot off the press!

Please make sure you have Helga Stork's 'Orchester Probespiel' book, ready for your orchestral classes with Katherine. Equip yourself with a notebook for harp stuff and always carry pencils and eraser.

When putting together your recitals, you may wish to balance your programme using the following guide:

Harp Recital: a suggestion only!



Principal Harp Tutor	Eleanor Turner
Orchestral and Pedagogy	Katherine Thomas
International Chair	Catrin Finch
Assistant Harp Tutor	Rita Schindler
First Study Administrator	Lynsey Hopkinson