



News release

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**MUSIC RATED TOP BY BUSINESS LEADERS,
NEW RESEARCH FINDS**

Business leaders rate music top for workplace skills - yet fewer young children in the UK have the opportunity to study it at school than at any point in a generation.

The findings come from the Royal College of Music's audience insights report, which surveyed 2,000 UK adults and 302 business leaders to explore their attitudes to music, music education and the skills that employers need and value most.

When asked which subjects best equipped graduates with the skills their organisations depend on, business leaders ranked music first across five of seven workplace competency areas: creativity and innovation, teamwork and collaboration, adaptability and flexibility, communication skills and time management. Furthermore, nine in ten business leaders (90%) said music helped them concentrate at work. Seven in ten (70%) said music-based wellbeing initiatives would provide tangible benefit for their staff.

Yet music education is under pressure. The research reflects this: when parents were asked which subjects to encourage their children to study, music scored significantly lower than among business leaders (37% vs 50%) - a gap that suggests parents have absorbed policy signals that those who hire graduates flatly reject.

Almost half of British adults (49%) now rank music as the UK's greatest export to the world, ahead of scientific research (28%), technology innovation (24%) and manufacturing (18%), according to new research commissioned by the Royal College of Music. The figure has risen sharply over the past year, up from 38% this time last year.

London topped a list of 20 global cities as the world's centre of excellence for music and theatre (45%). And when asked what was most effective at uniting people in an increasingly divided world, music came first among both the general public (39%) and business leaders (47%).

The Royal College of Music's report argues for a broad, coordinated coalition to sustain and grow music's future. Government, business, philanthropists, conservatories, schools, the UK's performing groups,

streaming platforms and community organisations each have an essential role to play. The research suggests the business community is ready to step up -- and is looking for the structures that would allow it to do so.

James Williams, Director at the Royal College of Music, comments: *'Business leaders are telling us something important: music builds the skills they actually need. The creativity, adaptability, teamwork and communication competences that employers say are hardest to find -- these are exactly what a music education develops. At a time when music is being quietly squeezed out of schools, that case needs to be made loudly and often. Music is one of the greatest exports we can be proud of as a country, and this research further demonstrates that music not only serves society but also drives business and growth for the benefit of the UK.'*

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Research methodology

The research cited in this report is taken from three pieces of research conducted by UK Omnibus Research for the Royal College of Music. The fieldwork was conducted among a nationally representative sample of 2,000 adults and 302 business decision makers. A similar survey was conducted a year before for comparative purposes. All surveys were conducted online.

About the Royal College of Music

Founded in 1882, the Royal College of Music (RCM) is a world-leading music conservatoire where 900 undergraduate and postgraduate students are taught in a creative environment informed by heritage and driven by innovation. In 2025 the Royal College of Music was ranked the Global No. 1 institution for Performing Arts and Music for the fourth year running in the QS World University Rankings by Subject.

RCM graduates forge extraordinary careers across the global music landscape. Many also thrive in diverse roles across the wider creative sector and beyond, showcasing the versatility and impact of an RCM education.

The Royal College of Music has trained some of the most important figures in music including composers and performers such as Sir Thomas Allen, Benjamin Britten, Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, Dame Sarah Connolly, Sir Colin Davis, Gustav Holst, Lord Lloyd Webber, Sir Neville Marriner, Anna Meredith MBE, Mark-Anthony Turnage and Ralph Vaughan Williams.

As a leading centre for innovation and research, students benefit from the Royal College of Music Library with manuscripts by Mozart, Elgar and Holst, and the Royal College of Music Museum with over 14,000 musical items and on-site collections. Our flourishing Junior College and community programme enables thousands of talented young students from diverse backgrounds to access high-quality music education.

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