

SEDBERGH SCHOOL PERFORMING ARTS TIMELINE

From the very first recorded OS to take up a career on the stage, EJLR Laurence (E 1862-63), through the decades and into the 21st century OS have consistently chosen to pursue successful careers across all aspects of performing arts. The list below provides an anecdotal snapshot of many of these, some of whom have reached national and international fame. Sedbergh is determined that this tradition should continue.

- Pre 1940's
- 1940's
- 1950's
- 1960's
- 1970's
- 1980's
- 1990's
- 2000's

Simon Beaufay
Pupil: 1963-66
Simon's first full-length feature *The Fall Man* was nominated for the Academy Award for Best Original Screenplay and Best Film; the Golden Globe Best Picture award and for 11 BAFTAs. It was The Evening Standard Best Film award and was voted the Best English Film Ever by Empire Online readers. His other high profile success *Shining* Millionaire won 8 OSCAR wins at the Annual Academy Awards including Best Adapted Screenplay, Best Director and Best Film.



Jean-Benoit (JB) Blanc
Pupil: 1984-87
In 1987 JB was accepted at RADA, the youngest person to do so that year. He can his own theatre company, then in 2001, after 12 years almost exclusively working in theatre, he played Luigi Vanga in *The Coast of Monte Cristo*. Since moving to the US, he has appeared in television series such as *Breaking Bad*, *Better Call Saul* and *CSI: New York* and has appeared in films including *The Incredibles*, *Hulk* and *Pirates of the Caribbean*. He has also done voice-work for video games.



Mark Umbers
Pupil: 1986-91
Mark first appeared in *The Pirates of Penzance* at the West Yorkshire Playhouse and then in productions at the Royal National Theatre. Various TV roles followed including a lead in *The Scarlet Pimpernel* opposite Richard E Grant. After appearing in Noel Coward's *The Hires* he won his first leading film role in *A Good Woman* starring Scarlett Johansson and later played lead role in Channel 4's drama *Pinco in the Tower*. He was long-listed for the Evening Standard Best Actor Award for his role in *The Glass Menagerie* in the West End.



Alexander Finch
Pupil: 1983-86
Alexander studied at the Royal College of Music, and was later organ scholar of Kettle College, Oxford. He has performed in the UK, Europe, USA and Asia. He was appointed College Organist of Cheltenham College in 2004 and is responsible for the daily organ playing in the College Chapel as well as accompanying the Choir. In 2017, he oversaw the second complete rebuild of the Cheltenham College organ and continues to promote opportunities for both the young organists and visiting recitalists at the College.



D'Arcy Bleker
Pupil: 1986-1991
D'Arcy studied at the Royal Northern College of Music where he won the Alexander Young Competition. Whilst a member of Glyndebourne Festival Chorus in 1999 his potential was recognised and he was awarded the prestigious John Christie Award. A varied and full career has ensued in the UK, Europe and the US where he made his debut as Nero in *Flower in the Arancio* for Seattle Opera.



Justin Doyle
Pupil: 1988-93
Justin's musical education began as a chorister at Westminster Cathedral, and a chor d scholar at King's College, Cambridge. He was awarded the first Conductor Fellowship with the BBC Singers, with whom he continues to work. Justin is Chief Conductor and artistic director of the RIAS Kammerchor, Berlin and has been Artistic Director of the Ryedale Festival and Sussaleide Festival, and Principal Conductor of Musical Director of ensembles within the University of Manchester Chorus, Haffner Orchestra, Essex Symphony Orchestra and Manchester Chamber Choir.



Jonny Wrathor
Pupil: 1982-87
After joining the National Youth Theatre of Great Britain and studying at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art Jonny worked extensively in TV and the theatre. His TV work includes *Coronation Street* and *Emmerdale*. He has also worked on radio plays and voiced documentaries for TV.



Damian Howard
Pupil: 1988-1993
Damian studied organ, harpsichord and piano whilst being Organ scholar of Backburn Cathedral. He became Organ scholar of Lincoln Cathedral and then studied at the Conservatoire Nationale Supérieure de Musique in Paris. He has since been acknowledged as a leading authority on composer-organist Jean Langlais. Howard is Titular Director of ensembles within the University of Manchester Chorus, Haffner Orchestra, Essex Symphony Orchestra and Manchester Chamber Choir.



Geoffrey Newland
Pupil: 1988-1993
Geoffrey attended the Bristol Old Vic Theatre School, the Lee Strasberg Theatre and Film Institute (New York) and the Royal Shakespeare Company. He has performed in films and series, including *Titanic*, *Iron Lady*, *The Franchise*, *Outlander*, *Spooks*, *Coronation Street*, and with the Royal Shakespeare Company. He is a professional voice-over artist and the creator and host of the globally popular podcast *Night Falls*, which has been nominated for Independent Podcast Award in fiction.



Adrian Gibson
Pupil: 1982-89
Adrian gained a music scholarship to Sedbergh. Studied at Leeds College of Music and won the brass prize and became a professional player and educator. In demand as a Grenada trumpet artist recording and playing worldwide.



Adam Rickitt
Pupil: 1991-96
Adam is most famous for his role on popular TV soap opera *Coronation Street*. After leaving *Coronation Street* he started a music career with Polygram Records. His first single reached No 5 in the UK. He returned to acting and joined the cast of the short-lived *Starline* in 2007. Rickitt then moved to the theatre, starting in the UK National tour of the musical *West End* which then moved to the West End for a record-breaking run.



Matthew Watts
Pupil: 1992-97
Matthew studied conducting and singing and won the Record Conducting Prize. He attended the Advanced Conducting Course at Dartington International Summer School and then studied orchestral conducting with Denise Ham from the Royal Academy of Music. He studied singing with London Van Der Pump and won a Choral Scholar at St Martin-in-the-Fields. He is now Musical Director of the London Classical Choir, Orchestra and Singers.



Douglas Bruce-Lockhart
Pupil: 1981-86
Douglas trained at RADA then began his career as a stage actor, working with the Royal Shakespeare Company and the National Theatre. Since 1990, he has acted mostly with Propeller, with which he is now an associate director. He is also an associate of the Teatre Akadèmia Theatre Company in Barcelona. He teaches and directs at drama schools in London. He played David Cameron in *The Three Lions* for which he was nominated as best actor by The Stage at the Edinburgh Festival of 2013. He is the author of *The Lizard* and *Second Skin*.



Fraser Precious
Pupil: 1999-2006
Gained a music scholarship to Sedbergh. Achieved a Licentiate Diploma in Music from Trinity College London and was a Solo Corist in the National Youth Brass Band of Great Britain. Gained a Bachelor of Music Performance degree at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music then moved to Stockholm where he worked as Head of Music at an International School. Studied at the New York Film Academy and then moved to Los Angeles to commence a One Year Acting Conservatory. His first single reached No 5 in the UK. He returned to acting and joined the cast of the short-lived *Starline* in 2007. Rickitt then moved to the theatre, starting in the UK National tour of the musical *West End* which then moved to the West End for a record-breaking run.



Freddie Hogan
Pupil: 2005-09
His first acting role was with The National Youth Theatre in Cymbeline. He has appeared on TV in *Emmerdale*, *Jonathan Strange & Mr Norrell* and *Coronation Street*. He has appeared in the films *Fighting Hatters* and *Harry Potter & The Deathly Hallows Part II*. In the theatre he played Eliot in *Extra Virgin* and received his first nomination for an Off West End Award for Best Actor.



Paul Clay
Pupil: 1979-84
Paul graduated from the Stage Management and Technical Theatre course at RADA in 1980. His experience in the arts spans over 30 years working in executive, producing, and technical positions for companies such as The Almeida Theatre London, English National Opera and the Royal Exchange Manchester. Paul joined Manchester International Film 2012 as Executive Producer and then International Director in 2018. He is now an International Arts Consultant.



Gary Hitchinson
Pupil: 1982-88
Gary is a singer, musician and actor. He was featured performer for the Perfect Pitch Awards 2014, winning the best new musical with *Old* and sang in the choir for the Olivier Awards. In 2024, along with the cast of "The World Live", he was awarded an Olivier Award for "The Best Family Show". Gary's role is Chief Technician and Puppeteer for the musical.



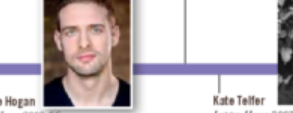
Kate Teller
Pupil: 2003-08
Kate gained a 1st class Honours degree in Music from Royal Holloway University of London in 2012. She has spent over a decade in the classical music industry as a performer, score editor and as a surtitle for English National Opera and Opera Rara.



Ashutosh Khandekar
Pupil: 1978-83
Ashutosh studied English at Oxford and he was a choral scholar with New College Choir. He is passionate about singing and is a keen tenor as well as an enthusiastic pianist. He has been Editor of *Opera Now* since 1997. Ashutosh is also a founding partner of C Sharp Media which provides strategic communications, editorial and project management services for classical music clients in the UK, Europe and Asia. He is also a trustee of the Georg Solti Accademia and Second Movement.



Patrick Ralph
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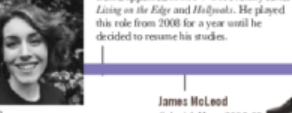
James Wilby
Pupil: 1971-76
Attended the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art and first appeared on screen in *Privilege* in 1982. Received Venice Film Festival Best Actor award for *Maurice* in 1987. He has starred in film productions such as *Howard's End* and *Garden Path*, stage productions including *A Patriot for Me* by the Royal Shakespeare Company and most recently on TV in *Poldark*.



Simon Slater
Pupil: 1972-77
Simon plays the piano, double bass, saxophone, clarinet, guitar and the piano accordion. He has composed more than 300 original music scores for film, theatre, TV and radio. He is a member of the British Academy of Composers and Songwriters. Simon has appeared in several TV series, including *Heartbeat*, *Inspector Morse* and *The Bill*. He also works in theatre as an actor and composer.



Ben Cheng Tsun Yin
Pupil: 2009-13
Better known by his stage name Tyson Yoshi, he is a Hong Kong singer, songwriter, and MV director. He started as an independent singer in 2010 and his first album, *I-1*, was released in 2019. He is now one of Hong Kong's best-known hip hop artists and rappers.



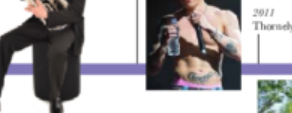
James McLeod
Pupil: 2005-09
James was the Principal Euphonium of the inaugural National Children's Brass Band of Great Britain in 2004, and a member of the National Youth Brass Band from 2005-2009. In 2010 he joined the Corydon Band, recognised as the world's best brass band, and in 2011 was one of the finalists in the BBC Young Brass Soloist competition. In 2013 he joined the Leyland Band as Principal Euphonium. James has represented the UK three times as part of the European Brass Band Championships, and in 2011 won the British Open Brass Band Championships. He has travelled the world as an euphonium soloist and teacher.



Timothy Birdall
Pupil: 1989-93
Timothy received his school colours for Art, and won the Murray Craigmuir Art Prize and Sterling English Verse Prize. After graduating from Cambridge, he appeared on BBC's *That Was The Week That Was* and contributed to *The Sunday Times*, *Private Eye* and *The Spectator*. He regularly guested on the then prime minister Harold Macmillan, Harold Wilson, and Lord Bessbrook, who issued a writ against him. Sadly he succumbed to leukaemia, aged 27. After his death the BBC made a tribute programme and Bamber Gascoigne organised a posthumous exhibition of his works in London.



Benjamin Storer
Pupil: 2016-21
A Roger Lupton Scholar, Amelia was awarded the first Brown Blazer for Music in 2021. She was selected as a finalist for BBC Radio 2 Young Chorister of the Year in 2019 and was a member of the National Youth Choir of Great Britain. After spending time teaching music at St Andrew's School in Tait in Kenya, Amelia achieved a 2:1 BA (Hons) Music Degree at Durham University in 2025. At Durham, she was conductor and director of St John's College Choir and a chorister at St John's Chapel Choir, Hatfield Chapel Choir and Chad's Chapel Choir. She was a member of the Choral Society.



James Walker ne Chaiton
Pupil: 1981-86
Walker studied modern languages at Trinity College, Oxford then went to the Central School of Speech and Drama in London. He acted between 1980 and 2006. His career highlights included a season between 1992 and 1994 with the Royal Shakespeare Company in TV series including *The Secret Adversary*, *Fairly Secret Army*, *Howard's Way* and *Inspector Morse* and in films including *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, *Danny the Champion of the World* and *Empire Of The Sun*.



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Ben Crossland
Pupil: 1964-69
Having played guitar in rock and pop groups during the 1960s and 1970s, Ben took up the electric bass in the 1980s and began to explore modern jazz. This led to a career working with leading American and UK soloists. His band 'Thereaway' recorded two critically acclaimed albums and have toured nationally. He was a nominee in the British Jazz Awards in 2012. In 2024, inspired by the Sedbergh values of HARK (honesty, ambition, resilience and kindness), Ben composed *The HARK Suite* which features on Ben's new album, *HARKEN*.



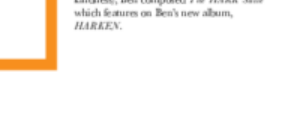
Richard Stuart
Pupil: 1963-69
Began his career with the English Music Theatre Company and Opera Factory. He has worked for all the major British opera houses and been a member of the DPO's Core since 1988. He has enjoyed a long association with DPO Opera, made a number of recordings for both national and European TV channels and appeared at the BBC Proms and other Gala Concerts internationally. He is a Vice-President of the Gilbert and Sullivan Society and was elected a Fellow of the Royal Academy of Music in 2004.



Archie Glover
Pupil: 2018-23
At Sedbergh, Archie was President of Collegium Musicum, Head Chorister and recipient of a Senior Music Prize. He is currently studying Music at Trinity Hall Cambridge. He is a member of the Trinity Hall Chapel Choir, Cambridge University School of Music, the Henry Latham Consort, Cambridge Early Music Consort, Cambridge University Symphony Chorus. He is also a professional singer at Ripon Cathedral and Musical Director of the Henry Latham Consort.



Joe DeGroot
Pupil: 2019-24
Joe is currently studying at the Juillard School of Music in New York.



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