

# Exploring music archives of 20th-century British composers

Reference: 2018-9-SCO



<b>Supervisor</b>	Chris Scobie, Curator of Music Manuscripts
<b>Department, Location</b>	Music, St. Pancras
<b>Start date/timeframe</b>	The placement can take place any time between May 2018 and April 2019. A mutually convenient start date can be agreed with the supervisor.
<b>Duration</b>	<b>3 months</b> (or part-time equivalent – see below)  <i>For a part-time placement, the student would be required to spend a minimum of <b>2 days/week</b> on site at the Library.</i>
<b>Remote-working</b>	Remote working is not feasible for this placement – it has to be completed on-site at St Pancras.

Context for placement
<p>The student will join a small team of curators in the British Library’s Music department with responsibility for the collections of music manuscripts (ca. 100,000 items) and printed music (ca. 1.6 million items). The department’s work is primarily concerned with developing, conserving, and promoting access to these collections for the benefit of music scholars and the wider public. The BL holds one of the most important collections of archives relating to 20th-century British composers and musicians, providing a significant resource for studying musical repertoires of this period.</p> <p>The student will assist us in improving access to these holdings through input into one particular uncatalogued collection, the content of which could range from notated scores and sketch material through to correspondence and other personal papers. It is envisaged that the specific focus would be decided by the student and placement supervisor depending on personal knowledge and departmental priorities at the time of the placement. Current potential archives for the placement include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gerard McBurney (b. 1954)</li> <li>• Christopher Whelen (1927-1993)</li> <li>• Harrison Birtwistle (b. 1934)</li> <li>• Cornelius Cardew (1936-1981)</li> <li>• Wilfred Josephs (1927-1997)</li> <li>• Elizabeth Poston (1905-1987)</li> </ul>
Expected tasks and outcomes
<p>The student will research, arrange and list the music archive of a 20<sup>th</sup>-century composer. This may involve – for example – identifying sketches and working with related material such as correspondence. They will produce data on the archive that can be incorporated into the Library’s cataloguing system.</p> <p>Following discussion and agreement on the specific archive to be researched during the placement, initial meetings with the placement supervisor will focus on the background to that collection and particular challenges it is likely to pose – as well as general archival principles that might be applicable. The student will receive an introduction to the BL’s cataloguing system for archives and manuscripts, IAMS, and will be trained in how to capture data in a suitable format and relevant bibliographic standards.</p> <p>Beyond this, it is envisaged that the student would spend time with other colleagues in the Music department, framing the placement activities within the context of broader departmental work with printed and digital sheet music. There would also be the opportunity to shadow colleagues working with music in other areas of the Library, for example in the Rare Books &amp; Music Reference Service and with curatorial colleagues responsible for the Library’s Sound &amp; Vision collections.</p> <p>Throughout the placement, the student will have the opportunity to contribute posts to the <a href="#">BL Music Blog</a> to help promote wider public awareness of the collections and to share their research findings.</p>

There may also be the opportunity to contribute content to the new [Discovering Music](#) web pages.

**Training and experience expected to be gained by student through the placement**

At the beginning of the placement the student will receive an introduction to the working environment and the Library's Collection Security policies. This will also include an overview of basement storage locations, the Library's online catalogue and the systems behind it, the reading rooms, and general preservation/conservation processes.

In the course of the placement, the student will:

- gain experience of applying research skills to the identification and description of 20th-century musical sources
- acquire practical experience of arranging and creating inventories of music archives
- gain experience of producing research content for wider public dissemination
- have the opportunity to work as part of a team engaged with developing and promoting the BL's music collections

**Required knowledge and skills**

- the ability to read music notation, especially of twentieth-century sources
- knowledge of the broad trends in contemporary classical music in the twentieth century
- music research skills including a good general knowledge of music reference sources and bibliographies relating to the twentieth century

This is a training and development opportunity open to current PhD students only. It is not intended to lead to a permanent post at the Library. Please note that the Library is unable to provide a stipend for PhD research placements. Applicants must obtain the support of their PhD supervisor and Graduate Tutor (or someone in an equivalent senior academic management role) in advance and, as part of their process, consult their HEI to ascertain what funding is available to support them.