

Denne Gilkes Memorial Fund

Newsletter

Date June 2026



WELCOME to the latest edition of our newsletter featuring articles from some of the students we have assisted in recent times. Although we support actors as well as musicians, we have not received any details of what they have been up to but hopefully that will be rectified in future editions.

As I read the articles, I have been struck by successes of so many of the students we have supported. However, there is no expectation that everyone will proceed to become a professional in their fields and the Fund is just as proud of those actors and musicians who remain gifted amateurs. Our grants are not massive but hopefully can make a difference and help when money is tight.

At the end of the newsletter we have included the Annual Report for the charity.

Tim Raistrick
Chairman

Changes in Trustees

At the 2026 Annual General Meeting Josephine Walker, formerly Deputy Chair of the Fund, stood down as a trustee after 23 years' dedicated service for which we gratefully thank her.

Bruce O'Neil was elected as a new trustee. Until recently he was the Head of Music at the RSC and has extensive experience as a conductor and musician with a distinguished career in theatre, broadcast and live performance.



NIKITA LUKINOV writes

Since receiving support from the Denne Gilkes Memorial Fund, I have continued to develop an active international performing and teaching career.

A particular highlight was a recital and masterclass tour of China in late 2025, with appearances at major venues including Guangzhou Opera House, Shanghai Opera House, Suzhou Opera House, Chengdu Concert Hall, and Peking University. The opportunity to connect with young musicians and audiences across China was especially rewarding.



Closer to home, I have recently given recitals at London's St Martin-in-the-Fields and the Reform Club, alongside numerous appearances for music societies throughout Scotland. One of the most memorable projects of the past season was a recital tour that took me across Scotland, from the Borders to the Highlands and Islands, bringing classical music to communities of all sizes.



Alongside performing, I continue my work as a Senior Lecturer in Piano at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, where I teach, coach students, and contribute to the Conservatoire's wider artistic life.

Looking ahead, I am preparing several new programmes and am delighted to have concert tours planned across the UK, India, and China during autumn 2026.

I remain deeply grateful to the Denne Gilkes Memorial Fund for its support, which has played an important role in my artistic development.

NIKITA LUKINOV writes

I was fortunate to receive support from the Denne Gilkes Memorial Fund and the Enlightenment Scholarship, which enabled me to study at the Royal Academy of Music. I thrived in its fast-paced environment, benefiting from a wealth of opportunities and exceptional tuition from professors Rachel Podger, Margaret Faultless, Nicolette Moonen and Jane Rogers. In 2017, I graduated with Distinction with a Masters degree in Historical Performance and continued my association with the Academy through a fellowship at Open Academy, its community music department.



I now enjoy a varied freelance career as a violinist, violist and workshop leader. My work includes performing and touring with The English Concert, Gabrieli and Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment; designing and presenting children's programmes for the OAE, Handel Hendrix House and Brighton Early Music Festival; and leading collaborative composition projects for the Royal Academy of Music and English National Opera, including performances at the Royal Albert Hall.



In 2020, I co-founded and now direct Thinking Music, a charity connecting rural primary schools and universities through year-long music-making projects. A recent tour of the United States with The English Concert culminated in a performance at the Carnegie Hall, a career highlight.

The Two Organists

NICOLAS MCNAB writes

Upon entering Sixth Form in September 2024, I started having organ lessons. I have been playing the piano since my early years, but I found that the organ offered both new technical challenges and a wide range of character and musicality. I made considerable progress through Year 12 and achieved Distinction at Grade 7 the following July.

The Fund supported me in paying for tuition and in purchasing sheet music and organ repertoire. This has allowed me to explore different styles of music and periods ranging from the German baroque tradition to the 20th century French symphonic era.

Last year, I was awarded an Organ Scholarship at Holy Trinity Church, Stratford-upon-Avon. I am fortunate to receive excellent practical experience and training in liturgical skills such including hymn playing, improvisation, and choir accompaniment.

I have particularly enjoyed playing at services of Evensong and have accompanied numerous settings of psalms, canticles and anthems on multiple occasions. Organists are sought after across the country, with a great number of positions being offered by large churches and cathedrals. I am considering taking an ARCO diploma in the future, which would put me in a competitive position for such a role. My development over the past two years is immensely valuable to me, and the support of the DMGF has been indispensable.



LUKE CHERRY writes

I am incredibly grateful for this financial injection that ignited my career. Four years ago, I was fortunate to receive a grant from the Denne Gilkes Memorial Fund to attend the Oundle for Organists summer school, an intense week-long course for young organists.

It was great fun as we got to play in lots of different locations and I learned a lot about a range of repertoires and techniques.

After leaving King Edward VI School Stratford-upon-Avon, this experience was key to my success in being appointed organ scholar at Royal Holloway, University of London where I was the principal accompanist to the chapel choir.



Here I built on the skills I learnt at the summer school and developed myself as a choral accompanist and performer. We went on tour across England, Wales, and internationally, playing concerts and services in many festivals and cathedrals.

Other highlights include a live BBC Radio 3 Broadcast and appearing on the Apple TV show Prime Target. My time with the choir culminated in a recording of music by the organists of St. Clotilde Church, Paris which is due to be released later this year.

Following my degree, I am currently the organ scholar of Tewkesbury Abbey Schola Cantorum and the School Organist at Dean Close School, Cheltenham, where I have become a key participant in the musical life at both institutions. In the future I aim to work elsewhere as organ scholar with the aim of further developing my skills as organist.

LEELOO CREED writes

Thanks to the Denne Gilkes Memorial Fund, I was able to fund my viola studies at Guildhall this year. The first year of my master's has been an incredibly transformative experience and I am so happy with my progress.

The highlights for me have been performing at the Barbican as part of the Guildhall Symphony Orchestra projects and I recently performed a recital at Milton Court concert hall which was a fantastic opportunity.

I'm looking forward to what's coming next in my final year and beyond.

Thank you so much for your support.



MATTEA LITTLE writes

I received funds from DGMF at the beginning of my studies. I have just completed my 3rd year at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama. This year I have had many amazing opportunities. I was honoured to be concertmaster for our production of Offenbach's Orpheus in the Underworld, which features large violin solos that I really enjoyed bringing to life. I performed in a masterclass with Tasmin Little [the DGMF's President] in May and learnt so much from her.

Chamber music is a big part of why I love playing, and I have done a lot of work with my string quartet, including curating my own quartet recital with music from only the last 20 years.

This summer I am continuing my studies in opera by attending the Berlin Opera Academy. I'm so grateful for all the opportunities I've received including the support from DGMF.



The photo is credit to Kirsten McTernan and is from the production of Orpheus that I was part of.

Denne Gilkes Memorial Fund

President: Tasmin Little CBE

Patrons: Dame Judi Dench CH, Sir Greg Doran, Ben Elton, Alfred Enoch, Samuel West and Gary Yershon

Chairman: Tim Raistrick

Vice Chairman: Chris Hill

Secretary: Professor Abigail Rokison-Woodall

Treasurer: Giles Garratt

Grants Officer: Liz Statham

Committee Members:

Professor Daniel Grimley

Professor Sir Stanley Wells CBE

Hannah Young

Instrument Custodians:

Strings - Tori Rushton

Wind - Dot Brodie

E-mail: chairman.dgmf@gmail.com

www.dgmf.co.uk

JOANNE SKINNER writes

The Denne Gilkes Memorial Fund played a significant role in enabling me to complete the first year of my master's at the Royal College of Music. As a mature postgraduate student returning to education seven years after graduating from the University of Cambridge, funding opportunities were very limited. This Fund was one of the very few organisations able to provide much-needed support towards my studies.

I returned to education to build on the teaching and performing career I have developed over the past decade. I wanted to deepen my understanding of pedagogy, learning and leadership so that I could better support my own students and continue developing accessible music education resources.

This year has allowed me to grow enormously as both a performer and an educator. Alongside intensive saxophone study, I have explored educational research, worked with inspiring tutors, performed in concerts and chamber ensembles (including It's a Grand Night for Singing with Wayne Marshall OBE) and completed a placement in the Music Department at St Paul's Girls' School.

This week I completed my final recital, bringing my first year to a close. Everything I have learnt this year has strengthened both my performing and my teaching in all the ways I had hoped, and I will carry this knowledge with me throughout my career. Thank you once again to the Trustees for making this opportunity possible.



DGMF Patron Dame Judi Dench honoured



The Fund is delighted that the Shaftesbury Theatre in London's West End is to be renamed next year after its distinguished Patron, Dame Judi Dench. When Dame Judi first performed in Stratford she knew Denne Gilkes, the RSC's teacher of voice production and singing. So we like to think that Denne had some influence on developing that wonderful voice that has graced so many plays, musicals and films.

DENNE GILKES MEMORIAL FUND

Registered Charity Number: 502269

ANNUAL REPORT

for the year ending 5th April 2026

The objects of the Association are:-

- (i) the advancement of the education of young persons in music and drama;
- (ii) the assistance of such persons in need.

In furtherance of such objects the Association may:-

- (a) raise sums of money by means of concerts, publications and other means;
- (b) apply such sums of money so raised or any part thereof:-
 - (i) by the annual award of prizes and awards through local institutions;
 - (ii) by making grants to students of music and/or drama;
 - (iii) to do all such things as are necessary for the attainment of the above objects or any of them.

The trustees believe that from what follows in this report they have maintained the principals of good governance and have complied with the public benefit provisions as required by the Charity Commissioners.

During the year ending 5th April 2026, the Fund continued its policy of assisting young musicians and actors by making grants totalling £5,050 to nine students towards their costs for tuition or instruments. A further £500 was agreed to be awarded but payment was delayed until after the financial year pending references being received. The Fund also gave annual prizes amounting to £145 to King Edward VI School in Stratford-upon-Avon, Prince Henry's School in Evesham and Holy Trinity Church Choir, Stratford-upon-Avon.

The Guy Woolfenden Prize for a student conductor at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire was awarded to Xinru Wang who received £250.

The schedule details the awards made and lists the organisations which received the annual Denne Gilkes Memorial Fund Prizes during the year ending 5th April 2026.

The Fund benefitted from a £5,000. £255 was received as a result of donations. Leaflets detailing the work of the Fund has been communicated to local solicitors in the hope that this may elicit future legacies.

Dot Brodie and Tori Rushton continued to manage the loan and care of the Fund's bassoons and stringed instruments respectively.

The first newsletter was issued in June 2025 detailing what some of the students who have benefitted from the Fund have been doing since. A second newsletter followed at the end of the year and it is now hope to issue one biannually.

The Denne Gilkes Memorial Fund has a website with the address dgmf.co.uk.

Tim Raistrick
Chairman

Denne Gilkes Memorial Fund

Accounts for the year ended 5th April 2026

Receipts and Payments Account for the year ended 5th April 2026

	Notes	2026		2025	
		£	£	£	£
Receipts					
Donations and Gifts	2	5,255		147	
Fundraising		-		-	
Investment income		4,799		5,526	
Repair contributions		-		-	
Insurance contributions		190		635	
			10,244		6,308
Assets and Investments Sales					
Sale of Investments		3,950		10,338	
Sale of Instruments		-		5,135	
			3,950		15,473
Total Receipts			<u>14,194</u>		<u>21,781</u>
Payments					
Direct Charitable Expenditure	3	5,445		4,800	
Other Expenditure					
Fundraising/Event Costs		-		350	
Management and Administration	4	2,137		2,239	
			7,582		7,389
Assets and Investments Purchases					
Purchase of Investments		10,125		13,594	
Purchase of Instruments		-		-	
			10,125		13,594
Total Payments			<u>17,707</u>		<u>20,983</u>
Net Movement of Cash Funds for the period	5		<u>(3,513)</u>		<u>798</u>
Cash Funds brought forward at 6th April 2025		£	<u>12,745</u>	£	<u>11,947</u>
Cash Funds carried forward at 5th April 2026		£	<u>9,232</u>	£	<u>12,745</u>

The notes on pages 3-4 form part of these accounts.

Denne Gilkes Memorial Fund

Accounts for the year ended 5th April 2026

Statement of Assets and Liabilities as at 5th April 2026

	Notes	2026 £	2025 £
Musical Instruments	6	50,423	50,423
Investments	7	129,372	120,164
Investments at cost £125,909 (2025 £121,597)			
Cash Funds			
Cash at bank and in hand	8	9,232	12,745
Net Assets/Total Assets		<u>£ 189,027</u>	<u>£ 183,332</u>
Funds			
Unrestricted Funds		<u>£ 189,027</u>	<u>£ 183,332</u>

Giles Garratt
Treasurer

The notes on pages 3-4 form part of these accounts.

Notes to the Accounts for the year ended 5th April 2026

1. Accounting Policies

a. Basis of preparation of accounts

The accounts are prepared on the receipts and payments basis and include the results of the Charity's operations which are described in the Trustee's Annual Report and all of which are continuing.

b. Income

Voluntary income and donations are accounted for as received by the Charity. The income from fundraising ventures is shown gross, with the associated costs included in fundraising costs.

c. Value Added Tax

Value Added Tax is not recoverable by the Charity and as such is included in the relevant costs in the Receipts and Payments Account.

d. Fundraising Costs

Fundraising expenditure comprises costs incurred in inducing people and organizations to contribute financially to the Charity's work.

e. Management and Administration Costs

Expenditure on management and administration of the Charity includes all expenditure not directly related to the charitable activity and fundraising ventures.

2. Voluntary Income

	2026	2025
	£	£
Legacy	5,000	-
Donations	255	147
	<u>£ 5,255</u>	<u>£ 147</u>

3. Direct Charitable Expenditure

	2026	2025
	£	£
Prizes	395	400
Student Grants	5,050	4,400
	<u>£ 5,445</u>	<u>£ 4,800</u>

Notes to the Accounts for the year ended 5th April 2026

4. Management and Administration	2026	2025
	£	£
Administration	153	130
Instrument Insurance	442	462
Instrument Repairs	-	139
Bank Charges	-	29
Fund Management Fees	1,542	1,479
	<u>£ 2,137</u>	<u>£ 2,239</u>

5. Net Movement of Cash Funds for the year

The movement in cash funds for the year was a decrease of £3,513 (2025: £798 increase).
There was an operating surplus of £2,662 (2025: £1,081 deficit).

6. Musical Instruments

The musical instruments are shown at the current estimated value.

7. Investments

Cost at 6th April 2025	121,597	119,858
Additions	10,125	13,594
Redemptions	(3,949)	(10,338)
Profit/(loss) on sale	(1,864)	(1,517)
Cost at 5th April 2026	<u>£ 125,909</u>	<u>£ 121,597</u>
Cost at 6th April 2025	121,597	119,858
Unrealised (loss)/profit on portfolio	(1,434)	(2,215)
Market Value as at 6th April 2025	120,163	117,643
Additions	10,125	13,594
Redemptions	(3,949)	(10,338)
Profit/(loss) on sale	(1,864)	(1,517)
Movement in unrealised profit on portfolio	4,897	781
Market Value as at 5th April 2026	129,372	120,163
Unrealised loss/(profit) on portfolio	(3,463)	1,434
Cost at 5th April 2026	<u>£ 125,909</u>	<u>£ 121,597</u>

8. Cash at bank and in hand

HSBC	7,106	10,023
Canaccord Genuity Wealth Management	2,126	2,722
	<u>£ 9,232</u>	<u>£ 12,745</u>

Registered Charity Number 502269

DENNE GILKES MEMORIAL FUND

Registered Charity Number: 502269

Awards made during the year ending 5th April 2026:

Name	Sum	Purpose	Paid
Artie Dobson (acting and singing)	£ 500	towards drama school audition costs	June 25
Gareth Lewis (trombone)	£ 400	towards residential course	July 25
Alec Banner (percussion)	£ 400	towards residential courses	July 25
Leeloo Creed (viola)	£ 500	towards MA study costs	July 25
Mark Avery (saxophone)	£ 500	towards purchase of new instrument	July 25
Nicholas McNab (organ)	£ 500	towards tuition and music	July 25
Cameron Spruce (piano)	£ 500	towards piano tuition	Nov 25
Matias Heker (piano)	£ 500	towards Guildhall fees	Mar 26
Joanne Skinner (clarinet)	£ 500	towards RCM study costs	Mar 26
Cameron Spruce (singing)	£ 250	towards choir tour costs	Mar 26
Alec Banner (percussion)	£ 500	towards residential courses	Mar 26

TOTAL £5,050

Denne Gilkes Memorial Fund Prizes presented to:

King Edward VI Grammar School, Stratford-upon-Avon	£ 50
Holy Trinity Choir	£ 45
Prince Henry's Evesham	£ 50
Guy Woolfenden Prize	£ 250

Notes – Theo Bamford-Mills was awarded £500 at the March 2026 committee meeting for Conservatoire and National Children's Orchestra costs. The award was paid on submission of a second reference in May 2026.