

## “Women still reticent to try conducting” despite pioneering course at Morley College & across UK to encourage them to step forward



### KEY DATES (full listings below):

- 19-20 Sept 2015 Southbank Centre, London – Phase 1
- 26-27 Sept Royal Welsh College of Music & Drama, Cardiff – Phase 1
- 10-11 October Classical Symphony with Jane Glover, London
- 30 Oct – 1 Nov Birmingham Conservatoire Birmingham – Phase 1
- 7-8 November Romantic Symphony with Sian Edwards, London
- 13-14 February 2016 St. Catherine’s College, Cambridge – Phase 1
- 11-12 June 2016 Concerto Repertoire with Rebecca Miller, London

*“Morley College is doing something fantastic: a programme for women conductors taught by the very gifted Alice Farnham. A chance to explore issues, musical and interpersonal, faced by the leader of an orchestra who happens to be a woman!”*

**Sir Antonio Pappano**

**Conductor Alice Farnham, Co-Founder of Women Conductors @ Morley**, still finds “women and young girls reticent to try out conducting” and often reluctant to put themselves forward for a specially targeted conducting course, despite endorsement from fellow conductors such as **Sir Antonio Pappano** and bursaries.

Following a pilot scheme in 2014, **Morley College** has created a series of comprehensive conducting workshops running at weekends throughout 2015-16 in London and all across the UK for aspiring female conductors. Encouraged by conductors such as Valery Gergiev throughout her career, **Alice Farnham** conceived **Women Conductors @ Morley** together with Morley College’s former Director of Music **Andrea Brown** after a spate of negative responses from prominent male conductors to Marin Alsop’s appearance at the 2013 Last Night of the Proms. The project is divided into two phases: **Phase 1** targets young musicians between the ages of 16 and 25, and focuses on developing technique and facilitating expression with the body, following the Musin (St. Petersburg) school of conducting. **Phase 2** targets professionals and teachers aged 19 and over. Aimed both at encouraging older applicants, perhaps professional musicians who want to go into conducting but lack confidence. It consists of a series of workshops focused on different styles (baroque, classical opera, ballet, amateur etc), given by such respected conductors as **Rebecca Miller, Sian Edwards, Jane Glover**, and **Julia Jones**.



Following courses in Leeds and Oxford earlier this year, the next session runs on 19-20 September (close on the heels of Marin Alsop's return to the Last Night of the Proms), followed by Cardiff at the end of the month and Birmingham at the end of October. The London-based workshops have proven popular, and there are spaces and bursaries are still available for the regional sessions; with the application deadlines fast approaching, applicants are encouraged to apply soon.

As Farnham explains:

***“It is a shame that young women are still discouraged by this negative perception of leaders in classical music and that they continue to be unable to envisage themselves in these key roles even in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. There are some determined individuals out there but still too many girls and young female students are put off by the stereotypes of the patriarchal, dictatorial image of the maestro and often negative initial experiences, which can be off-putting. But the role of the conductor in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century has changed dramatically – conductors need to be far more collaborative with good social and communicative skills ... and we see so many young women exhibiting these on a daily basis. The time is ripe for a revolution of sorts; orchestras need women conductors.”***

Obstacles to leadership can be seen in so many professions, not just in conducting as Sheryl Sandberg's recent book *Lean In* testifies to the many reasons why women do not put themselves forward for promotion.

As Sandberg explained to a graduating class:

***“Like everyone here, I have great hopes for the members of this graduating class. I hope you find true meaning, contentment and passion in your life. And I hope that you have the ambition to lean in to your career and run the world, because the world needs you to change it. Women around the world are counting on you. So please ask yourself: What would I do if I weren't afraid? And then go do it.”***

**Women Conductors @ Morley** was instigated by Andrea Brown and Alice Farnham and grew out of an awareness that there was a shortage of women putting themselves forward to become conductors and the lack of visible role models to inspire them. Andrea Brown described to [artsprofessional.co.uk](http://artsprofessional.co.uk) the ***“feeling of liberation”*** of some of the girls on the pilot scheme, of ***“realising they could do it”*** thanks to the tuition they received.



Running throughout 2015/16, the scheme represents the fulfillment of the goals set out in the pilot, which originally only targeted 16-19 year olds. The expanded age range comes with a greater focus on general leadership skills for young women, helping them to put themselves forward for projects just like this one; stagecraft and movement coaches will be on hand to help women project a confident, positive image at all times.

***“It is an opportunity to celebrate women's musical achievements and bring***



***their work to a wider audience at last.”***  
**Jessica Duchen, The Guardian**

***Women Conductors @ Morley*** is supported using public funding by Arts Council England to help take its message far and wide, and was placed first runner-up in the Classical:Next 2015 Rotterdam Innovation Award.

## **2015-16 Term Schedule**

### **Phase 1: Introductory sessions**

#### **London**

19 September 2015 Queen Elizabeth Hall

20 September 2015 Royal Festival Hall (Sunley Pavilion)

**Southbank Sinfonia Alumni strings, led by Jenny Nickson of the Royal Opera House Orchestra**

#### **Cardiff**

26-27 September 2015 Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama

**Welsh National Opera strings and Lowri Porter**

#### **Birmingham**

30 October – 1 November Birmingham Conservatoire

#### **Cambridge**

13-14 February 2016 St Catherine's College, University of Cambridge

#### **Leeds**

Dates TBA Leeds College of Music

#### **Glasgow**

Dates TBA Royal Conservatoire of Scotland

### **Phase 2: For music professionals and teachers**

#### **Morley College and Royal Opera House**

10-11 October 2015 Classical Symphony | **Jane Glover**

7-8 November 2015 Romantic Symphony | **Sian Edwards**

30-31 January 2016 Opera | **Julia Jones**

20-21 February 2016 Ballet | **Andrea Quinn**

5-6 March 2016 Choral | **Sarah Tenant-Flowers**

21-22 May 2016 Conducting for Composers | **Jessica Cottis**

4-5 June 2016 For Animateurs & Music Teachers | **Alice Farnham**

11-12 June 2016 Concerto | **Rebecca Miller**

## Alice Farnham

Alice Farnham trained under the legendary pedagogue **Ilya Musin** and **Leonid Korchmar** at the St. Petersburg State Conservatoire, she enjoys a growing reputation both in the UK and abroad.

Alice was Music Director of **Welsh National Youth Opera** for their award-winning 2013 production of Paul Bunyan to critical acclaim, and will return as Music Director for their 2016 production. She was recently invited by Valery Gergiev to conduct Britten's *The Rape of Lucretia* at the Mariinsky St Petersburg in November 2013 and 4th April 2015.

Passionate about training the next generation of conductors, Alice Co-Founded **Women Conductors @ Morley**, the ground-breaking series of workshops to encourage women to enter the conducting profession.

She is an experienced conductor of contemporary music including the World



Premiere of **Charlotte Bray's** *Making Arrangements for Tête à Tête* Opera to critical acclaim. In 2008 she conducted the Royal Ballet *New Works* at the Linbury including **Graham Fitkin's** *Reel*, which won Best Stage Work, for the British Composers' Awards. She has also conducted large-scale communities concerts and operas including **David Bedford's** *Titanic* at Carlisle Sands and **Martin Read's** *Roundabout Basingstoke* at the Anvil.

Alice is known for her work with young singers and musicians and is on the staff at the **Royal Welsh College of Music & Drama** and recently conducted an Opera Gala Concert with the vocal students and RWCMD Chamber Orchestra, a Side-by-Side concert with Welsh National Opera and the RWCMD. She is Music Director of Cumbria Youth Orchestra and is a regular Guest Conductor of the South Bank Sinfonia. She is Course Director of Morley Opera

School since 2013.

She began her career as an organist, holding Organ Scholarships at St. Hugh's College Oxford where she read Music and later was Organ Fellow at St. Thomas' Fifth Avenue, New York. For three years she studied Symphonic and Operatic Conducting at the St. Petersburg State Conservatoire under the legendary pedagogue, Ilya Musin.

## Women conductors @ Morley

In early 2014 discussions in the media regarding the lack of women conductors prompted academics in the music department at Morley to respond, by introducing a pilot course for women conductors. The Women Conductors Pilot Programme was designed for women aged 16-19 as an introduction to conducting, to give them the confidence and leadership skills needed to follow this career path.



Due to generous funding a range of trusts and foundations including Arts Council England, Morley is able to continue after the initial pilot with a series of weekend workshops, to be held at conservatoires, universities and at Morley College, London throughout 2015/16. The project is open to female music students aged 16-25 who are in full-time music education either at conservatoires or universities, or in the sixth form and planning to study music full-time.

The workshops cover topics including; conducting technique, leadership, body language and communication. Led by acclaimed conductor, Alice Farnham, participants will have the opportunity to work with professional pianists, orchestral string players and a movement and body language coach.

The second phase of this programme will include a series of workshop weekends for professional female musicians (all ages 19+) focusing on different areas of conducting. They will be led by leading women conductors including Jane Glover, Sian Edwards, Julia Jones, Andrea Quinn, Jessica Cottis, Sarah Tenant-Flowers, Rebecca Miller and Andrea Brown.

### **Morley College**

Morley College is one of London's largest and most successful centres for adult learning, and is located near Waterloo in Central London, close to the capital's cultural centre, the South Bank.

We offer over 2,500 courses covering a broad range of interests, from art & design, fashion, dance, drama, music and humanities to languages, health, English & maths, business & enterprise and access to higher education. Courses are offered at a range of levels from beginner to advanced, and are taught part-time during the day, evening and weekend to provide stimulating, flexible learning experiences for all.

Morley has been providing high-quality education for over 125 years and has a rich history. Today, our tutors are experienced practitioners and leading experts in their own fields, and together with our extensive range of courses, excellent facilities and lively programme of concerts, exhibitions and performances, continue to meet the needs of Londoners from all walks of life.

[www.morleycollege.ac.uk](http://www.morleycollege.ac.uk)

### **Morley Music Department**

Morley Music department has a long and distinguished history, boasting some of the leading musicians of the time having taught at the college including; Gustav Holst, Ralph Vaughan-Williams, Cornelius Cardew and Michael Tippett.

The music department continues this long legacy through the classes, choirs, orchestras and ensembles it offers today from gospel to opera, classical to blues, soul, pop and rock. The department uniquely leads on innovative projects such as the international Sound Art exhibition, 'The Engine Room', and the ground-breaking 'A Choir of our Time' collaboration.

<http://www.morleycollege.ac.uk/womenconductors>



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