

Trustee Recruitment Pack

Leeds International Piano Competition

2026



THE LEEDS
INTERNATIONAL
PIANO COMPETITION



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

The Leeds International Piano Competition is a registered charity, no. 1073251

leedspiano.com

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The Leeds is one of the most prestigious competitions in the world. Just to be part of its legacy is extraordinary — **winning it completely changed my life.** It opened doors I never imagined and set me on an incredible journey.

Alim Beisembayev
Gold Medalist 2021



Join Us as a Trustee



Leeds International Piano Competition.
A globally acclaimed platform. A city-wide celebration.
A movement for music with purpose.

Thank you for your interest in becoming a Trustee of the Leeds International Piano Competition.

We are seeking new members of the Board who can help guide a globally respected cultural charity through an ambitious period of artistic, educational and organisational growth. The Board is seeking additional Trustees who will strengthen governance and bring specialist skills to help deliver our mission.

The Leeds is renowned worldwide for discovering and supporting exceptional pianists — but today we are much more than a competition. We champion creativity, learning and civic connection; we bring music into schools, streets and public life; and we are shaping the vision of Leeds as a true Piano City.

As we prepare for the 2027 Competition and major programme cycles beyond, we are looking for Trustees who can guide this next chapter: offering strategic insight, acting as ambassadors for our work, and contributing to our long-term resilience.

Fiona Sinclair
CEO

If you believe in the power of music to inspire, transform and connect — locally and globally — we would love to hear from you.



Key Facts



“This internationally prestigious competition... [is] **one of the world’s trailblazers** in a new breed of music competition.”

GRAMOPHONE
THE WORLD'S BEST CLASSICAL MUSIC REVIEWS

- 10.5 million** global viewers in September 2024
- 60+ years** of launching world-class pianists
- 3,000+ children** reached through recent schools programmes
- 28 public pianos** and award-winning street festival
- Vision: **Leeds Piano City** – from stage to society
- Next milestone: **2027 Competition** and citywide Festival

Why Become A Trustee Now?



“The Leeds stands among the **very top of prestigious piano competitions**, as is shown by the fact that the very best pianists worldwide all want to compete in it...”

The Daily Telegraph

The Leeds is entering a pivotal new chapter — one that combines global reach with deep community impact. Over the next three years, we will:

- Deliver our most ambitious international Competition to date
- Expand our Creative Learning & Engagement work across the UK and globally
- Advance our artist development initiatives
- Strengthen digital innovation and global broadcasting
- Grow philanthropic support and long-term partnerships
- Embed Leeds Piano City as a model for cultural placemaking

As a Trustee, this is an opportunity to shape a bold and inclusive future for one of the world's leading music competitions.

Who We Are Looking For



We are keen to welcome individuals who bring expertise or interest in one or more of the following:

- Fundraising and philanthropy — especially individuals with networks, partnership experience, or an understanding of donor cultivation
- Artist development or classical music industry knowledge
- Law, governance or regulatory compliance
- Finance, risk or audit
- Marketing, brand, digital engagement or communications
- Digital innovation, AI or technology strategy
- Education and community engagement
- International perspectives — especially applicants with global cultural, educational or philanthropic expertise

We are particularly keen to hear from candidates who bring fresh perspectives, diverse lived experience, and a commitment to shaping an inclusive and future-facing arts organisation.

What You'll Gain

This is a unique opportunity to:

- Shape the future of a globally respected cultural institution
- Help empower the next generation of pianists, educators and leaders
- Champion meaningful change in music education and civic life
- Grow your own strategic leadership and governance experience
- Connect with influential networks across the arts, education and philanthropy





A Legacy of Excellence

1963

A Vision Begins

The Competition is founded in Leeds by Dame Fanny Waterman, Marion Thorpe and Lady Roslyn Lyons. A bold platform for young pianists is born.

1978

Royal Patronage

HRH The Duchess of Kent becomes Patron, reflecting the Competition's cultural significance in the UK and beyond.

2005

Damehood for Our Founder

Dame Fanny Waterman is awarded a DBE for services to music, recognising her extraordinary vision and lasting influence.

2018

A New Era of Global Reach

First international rounds, global streaming, and new prize partnerships with major industry leaders transform our reach.

2023

Award-Winning Civic Impact

The Leeds wins the Royal Philharmonic Society Impact Award for its Piano Trail festival – music brought into public life.

2024

21st Competition attracts record applications and broadcast audiences, with 10.5 million views in 123 countries and 2.5 million live engagements in Leeds

Past prize-winners include Murray Perahia, Radu Lupu, Mitsuko Uchida, András Schiff, Lars Vogt, Sofya Gulyak, Eric Lu and Jaeden Izik-Dzurko.

Our Journey



Lang Lang
Global Ambassador



Murray Perahia
Global Ambassador

Founded in 1963, The Leeds International Piano Competition has grown into one of the world's most prestigious platforms for young artists – and a bold cultural force for good.

'Today, The Leeds is... much more than a global top-3 music competition. We are a cultural movement – bringing music to streets and schools, empowering the next generation, and redefining what classical music can mean in the 21st century.'

Fiona Sinclair
CEO

Our Work Includes:

- The triennial Competition, discovering and launching exceptional artists
- A year-round Artistic Programme and career development offer
- A growing Creative Learning & Engagement strand reaching thousands of children, teachers and schools
- Public-facing initiatives like the award-winning Piano Trail, festival and Leeds Piano City

As we prepare for our next major cycles in 2027 and 2030, our strategic priorities are:

- Empowering Exceptional Talent
- Inspiring the Next Generation
- Igniting Discovery Locally
- Enhancing Long-Term Resilience



What Trustees Do

As a charitable organisation and company limited by guarantee, our Trustees provide vital oversight, insight and advocacy. All Trustees are expected to:

- Contribute to strategic planning and organisational direction
- Support strong governance and uphold our legal and financial responsibilities
- Champion our mission and values
- Participate actively in Board meetings and subcommittees
- Share professional insight and perspectives that strengthen our decision-making
- Act as advocates and expand the organisation's networks

Time Commitment & Terms

- **Term:** Three years, renewable once (maximum six years)
- **Time commitment:**
 1. Quarterly Board meetings (in-person or hybrid, typically in Leeds)
 2. Subcommittee involvement
 3. Key events and ambassadorial duties

Reasonable expenses will be reimbursed.

Governance Structure

Sub-committees include:

- Finance and Risk
- Fundraising and Partnerships
- Nominations and Appointments
- Creative Learning and Engagement

[View Our Charity Commission Profile](#)

How to Apply



“What greater and more touching pleasure is there in life than giving a young and beautiful talent **a little lift in the direction of the stars.**”

Dame Fanny Waterman
Co-founder

To express interest in the role of Trustee, please email...

Chair of the Recruitment Panel, Edward Appleyard
edward.appleyard@thackraymuseum.org

...with a short statement outlining your interest in the role and a CV or link to your professional profile.

We actively encourage applications from people of all backgrounds, particularly those currently under-represented in leadership within the arts and classical music sectors, and those whose lived experience reflects the communities we serve — in Leeds, across Yorkshire, and internationally.

We are committed to inclusive recruitment and welcome applications in alternative formats. If you would find an informal conversation helpful before applying, or have specific access needs, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Our journey continues. We hope you'll join us.



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Principal Partner



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Trustee Role Description

Leeds International Piano Competition

Role Title: Trustee

Term: Three years, renewable once (maximum six years)

Role Purpose

Trustees of the Leeds International Piano Competition play a vital part in shaping a world-leading cultural institution that combines exceptional artistic standards with meaningful community impact. Working collectively, the Board ensures the organisation remains strategically ambitious, financially resilient and artistically distinctive, in line with its mission to champion emerging pianists, inspire communities, and strengthen Leeds as a Piano City.

Trustees provide strategic insight, oversight and advocacy, supporting the executive team as the organisation prepares for the 2027 Competition and future programme cycles.

Core Responsibilities of All Trustees

Strategy & Governance

- Contribute to the development and approval of organisational strategy, ensuring alignment with mission, values and public benefit.
- Support strong governance, risk management and compliance with charity and company law.
- Ensure the organisation maintains high standards of financial stewardship, sustainability and accountability.
- Take part in regular Board and subcommittee meetings, offering clear, constructive challenge and professional insight.



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- Champion an inclusive Board culture and contribute to ongoing Board development.

Oversight & Support

- Provide guidance to the CEO and executive team through strategic discussion, specialist insight and professional experience.
- Keep abreast of sector developments in culture, education, digital engagement and philanthropy.
- Contribute to succession planning across Board and subcommittees.

Advocacy & Networks

- Represent the charity with confidence and credibility across cultural, civic, philanthropic and educational spheres.
- Support fundraising and partnership development through ambassadorial activity and network-building.
- Attend events, concerts, festivals and programme activity as appropriate.

Time Commitment

- Quarterly Board meetings (in-person or hybrid).
- Participation in at least one subcommittee.
- Attendance at key public events, Competition activity and stakeholder engagements.

(Reasonable expenses reimbursed.)

Person Specification (All Trustees)

We welcome interest from people with a wide range of backgrounds, perspectives and lived experiences. You may not see yourself reflected in every part of this description, yet still feel you could make a meaningful contribution – if so, we would be very pleased to hear from you.



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What We're Looking For

- Strategic judgement, with the ability to think clearly, ask thoughtful questions and contribute to collective decision-making.
- An interest in charity governance and a willingness to support strong oversight, accountability and long-term sustainability.
- Confidence communicating with a variety of stakeholders, and an ability to act as an ambassador for our mission and values.
- Curiosity about the arts, education, culture, digital innovation or philanthropy, or experience working in organisations where collaboration and public engagement are central.
- A supportive, constructive approach to working with the CEO and fellow trustees.
- A commitment to advancing equality, diversity and inclusion across all aspects of our activity, and sensitivity to the global nature of the Competition.

Person Specification (Specific Roles)

1. Trustee (Brand, Communications & Digital)

We are looking for someone who can help us strengthen our profile nationally and internationally, and who enjoys thinking about how organisations build influence, visibility and meaningful connections.

Additional Responsibilities

- Offer insight on brand positioning and how we communicate confidently to global audiences.
- Provide perspective on strategic messaging and our reputation across cultural, media and digital sectors.
- Support thinking around major partnerships – for example with broadcasters, digital platforms, record labels and international cultural bodies.
- Encourage fresh approaches to digital engagement and how we share our work through broadcast, filmed content and online channels.



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This is a strategic, non-operational role for someone interested in reach, reputation and the opportunities created by strong partnerships.

2. Trustee (Finance)

We are seeking someone who can bring high-level financial insight to support the charity's long-term sustainability and strategic growth. This role suits someone with experience of evaluating complex organisations, assessing risk, and guiding decision-making at board level.

Additional Responsibilities

- Offer strategic perspective on budgets, forecasts and long-range financial planning.
- Support Board discussions on financial resilience, organisational risk and the sustainability of major programme cycles.
- Provide clear, high-level insight into investment considerations, income diversification and overall financial strategy.
- Help ensure financial decision-making is robust and aligned with our artistic, educational and global ambitions.

This is an advisory governance role – not an operational finance position – well suited to someone who brings strategic judgement, analytical strength and a long-term view.

3. Trustee (Fundraising & Partnerships)

We're seeking someone who naturally brings people together and enjoys encouraging others to take an interest in meaningful work. This role suits someone who thrives on conversation, hospitality and sharing genuine enthusiasm.

Additional Responsibilities

- Help introduce new people to our work through warm, engaging conversations.



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- Offer guidance on how we can extend our networks and connect with individuals, businesses and communities who may be interested in our activities.
- Encourage long-term relationships by helping us create meaningful and enjoyable encounters for supporters.

This role focuses on connection, not operational fundraising.

4. Trustee (Legal)

We're seeking someone with legal expertise who enjoys helping organisations feel well-prepared and confident in their responsibilities. This is a supportive advisory role for someone willing to share perspective when needed, without taking on day-to-day legal tasks.

Additional Responsibilities

- Offer high-level insight on governance, contracts, compliance or risk when required by the Board.
- Help ensure we think carefully and clearly about our legal responsibilities as a charity and company.
- Provide accessible guidance that helps fellow trustees feel informed and assured.

The emphasis is on perspective and clarity, rather than operational legal work.

5. Trustee (Artistic, Artist Development & Creative Learning & Engagement)

This role offers the opportunity to work closely with some of the most remarkable pianists on the world stage and contribute insight that shapes both their artistic journeys and the future of the Competition. It suits someone who is confident speaking about the piano – its repertoire, traditions and possibilities – and who cares about the impact music can have both globally and in local communities.



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Additional Responsibilities

- Offer artistic perspective that helps guide our vision for the Competition and supports outstanding young pianists at pivotal moments in their careers.
- Contribute insight on performance, repertoire and the wider classical music ecosystem.
- Support thinking around music education and how we inspire the next generation through our Creative Learning & Engagement work.

This is a role for someone who enjoys thoughtful artistic conversation and is motivated by the chance to influence musicians' lives and creative futures.

Governance Structure

Subcommittees include:

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Application

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Thank you!