

GUITAR



The Guitar Team

As part of a team of 25, there is a strong community ethos among Berkshire Maestros guitar teachers. Each teacher brings a unique set of skills and specialisms and supports colleagues with new ideas, advice, thoughts and suggestions. Maestros has a reputation for high quality teaching and regular, guitar-focused CPD (teacher training) is at the centre of our ongoing development to ensure that all teachers have the most up-to-date teaching techniques. Teachers are encouraged to be the very best they possibly can be.

Lessons

Guitar is one of the most popular instruments in Berkshire with over 1500 pupils learning with Berkshire Maestros each week through individual, small group and whole class lessons. Lessons take place in schools during the day and at our regional music centres in the evenings and weekends. The guitar team at Berkshire Maestros covers a wide range of specialisms including classical, electric and bass guitar as well as lute/theorbo and ukulele.

For many students, their first encounter with the guitar is through our whole class programme, known as In2Music. The aim is to offer primary school children in year 3, 4 and 5 the opportunity to experience practical music-making free of charge. The sessions are lively, exciting and interactive and include concerts and performances. Students who choose to continue from In2Music move into individual and small group lessons where we use our own 'riband' syllabus to encourage progression.

Berkshire Maestros has a long history of inspiring guitarists to continue their musical journey at higher education level and students have gone onto study at almost every conservatoire in the UK, including RAM, RCM, RNCM, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire and Trinity.



Ensembles and Courses

There is a strong belief in the importance of ensembles for guitarists and we work hard to encourage students to avoid becoming 'bedroom' guitarists! Maestros has a classical guitar ensemble pyramid of progression that begins with junior ensembles based locally and progresses through to Berkshire Youth Guitar Orchestra. For electric and bass guitarists, there are opportunities to perform and rehearse in rock/pop bands, jazz bands and other classical ensembles.

There are regular holiday courses too for beginner guitar students to take part in as well the more unusual 'build your own guitar' and 'build your own fuzz box' for the contemporary students.

GUITAR

Guitar Academy

Maestros' Guitar Academy is recognised as one of the few schemes of its type, offering opportunities for gifted, talented and promising young guitarists to help them achieve their full potential. Split into three levels (Debut, Intermediate and Advanced), the scheme provides additional opportunities for learning at every level. There is a focus on using the guitar in chamber music as well as expanding the knowledge of students beyond their lessons.



Previous sessions include flamenco techniques, CAGED chords, early music and figured bass, introduction to ukulele and Choros workshops.

The Guitar Academy works closely with visiting teachers and professors, especially at the Advanced level of the scheme. As well as being inspirational role models, they provide the Academy students with a different approach and a taste of conservatoire life. Over the past few years, visiting professionals have included Craig Ogden, Gary Ryan, John Mills, Mark Ashford, Graham Devine, Carlos Bonnell, Steve Goss, Rafael and Jonathan Preiss.

Berkshire Youth Guitar Orchestra

Berkshire Youth Guitar Orchestra (BYGO) is made up of the finest and most talented young guitarists from across Berkshire. Over the past ten years, BYGO has gained a national reputation for excellence, professionalism and high level of performance.

BYGO provides students with musically challenging repertoire and professional concert opportunities. Their diverse repertoire includes original compositions for guitar orchestra, arrangements of concert repertoire and new commissions. Examples include *English Folk Song Suite* (Vaughan Williams), *Danzon No. 2* (Marquez), *Cordoba, Granada and Seville* (Albeniz), *West Side Story Suite* (Bernstein), *Sonate* (Sor), *Introduction and Fandango* (Bocherini) and *Barber of Seville* (Rossini).

BYGO has been privileged to perform at some of the most prestigious venues and festivals in the UK, including the Wigmore Hall, Royal Albert Hall (premiere of *Kerry Tales* by Gary Ryan), Newbury International Spring Festival (with Craig Ogden), the Bridgewater Hall, Manchester, Henley Business School (in the presence of HM Queen Elizabeth II) and sharing the concert platform with John Williams at The Hexagon, Reading.

In addition, BYGO undertakes a major tour every two years, most recently to China.



"Berkshire Youth Guitar Orchestra is something very special. It's a friendly and supportive environment for learning and music-making of the highest level. The players are all highly skilled and motivated and the staff are inspirational." – Steve Goss, Guitarists and Composer, Surrey University and Tetra Guitar Quartet

"So young, so good...today's musical styles make Berkshire Youth Guitar Orchestra a rare phenomenon. The 29 young players coming on to the stage for their debut Festival performance was quite an awesome sight." – Newbury Weekly News

"You're doing a huge service to the musical (and social) development of your players by making these experiences available. Playing in a guitar ensemble was a huge part of my musical education and it was where I really learned the importance of having strong musical ideas – dynamics, tone colours, rubato and articulations. All of these things come across in the recording of Sevilla. Whatever the future holds for your current students, the time spent playing in the ensemble will provide some of their most memorable and rewarding musical experiences and I'm delighted that you place real importance on this." – Craig Ogden, Guitarist, Royal Northern College of Music

"The Berkshire [Youth] Guitar Orchestra are a motivated and enthusiastic group of young musicians, who give very persuasive and enjoyable performances of demanding repertoire. That they have this commitment and dedication is something to be celebrated, commended and supported. I wish them well for the future." – John Mills, Guitarist, Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama.