

Leeds Conservatoire Board and Committee Member Profiles (A-Z)

DUNCAN ABRAHART

Duncan Albert Thornton Abrahart is a classically trained composer and trombone player who recently completed their undergraduate studies at Leeds Conservatoire. Duncan has a strong interest in ludo musicology and game audio production.

Duncan has been a member of the forthe100 campaign group, and has participated in parliamentary events around duty of care in higher education. Duncan has been elected as President of Leeds Conservatoire Students' Union 2023/24 after formally running the Students' Union Gaming Society for four years.

As President of Leeds Conservatoire Students' Union, Duncan is a member of the Leeds Conservatoire Board of Directors

COLIN BOOTH OBE

Colin was appointed as Principal and CEO of Leeds City College in 2015 before the change to become Luminate Education Group. Prior to moving to Leeds, Colin was Principal of Barnsley College for seven years where he steered the college to an Ofsted rating of outstanding. He has worked in the further education sector for over 35 years; his background is as a teacher and manager in Skills for Life and provision for students with disabilities or learning difficulties. He has also worked as a part-time inspector for Ofsted and the Adult Learning Inspectorate.

Colin was awarded an OBE for services to further education in the Queen's 2015 New Year Honours list.

As Group CEO Colin is a governor of the Luminate Education Group and sits on each board within the group's governance structure; he is also a member of the Finance Committee, Governance & Nominations Committee and Property Strategy Committee

ELISE BROWN

A consultant and project manager in the classical musical and ballet industry, Elise has over 15 years of experience in music management, spanning a 25 year career in the arts, music and entertainment businesses.

Elise combines her interests in culture and the arts with a desire to assist her immediate and wider community. As well as spearheading her own voluntary initiatives, Elise is on the Development Committee for Clean Break, is a trustee for United in Hammersmith & Fulham and is the founder and Chair of Mama Haven, a charity she created to address socio economic barriers.

Elise is an external director on the Leeds Conservatoire Board of Directors

JENNY HOY

Jenny has extensive teaching and senior leadership experience, most recently as Head of the Centre for Open Learning (Head of School) within the University of Edinburgh. Jenny's academic background is in Music and she will be a familiar face to many, having started her teaching career at 18 whilst she was a student at the conservatoire, leaving in 2015 to take up her post in Edinburgh.

During what was an almost 20-year period of involvement with the conservatoire, Jenny's influence included the early development of the Junior Conservatoire programme which continues to offer innovative provision for young musicians and which was the first in the UK to include music production as a dedicated subject area.

Committed to inclusion and a firm believer in the transformative power of education, Jenny continues to perform and record as a percussionist whenever she can and has enjoyed gigs everywhere from a squat in Sheffield to the Oslo Opera House. In recent years, Jenny has recorded vibraphone on Corinne Bailey Rae's last album, drums on a film soundtrack for Netflix, and a mixture of instruments including a plastic bag and bowed cymbals on an album as part of Beccy Owen's Refuge female collective. Jenny is a founding member of La Banda Europa - a 36-piece ensemble, put together to celebrate music and culture across the European continent.

Jenny is an external director on the Leeds Conservatoire Board of Directors and, as a governor of the Luminare Education Group, sits on the Group Board and Group Remuneration Committee

CHRISTOPHER LAWSON-QUICK

Chris is a multi-instrumentalist published composer, performer and business entrepreneur with a BA (Hons) in Popular Music and a Masters degree in Music Composition. Chris is an Academic Manager in the conservatoire's School of Popular Music and Voice.

Chris is the staff elected member on the Leeds Conservatoire Board of Directors

CAROLYN LORD

Carolyn is a partner at Clarion Solicitors and has spent all of her life in Leeds and Yorkshire. In a career spanning over 30 years, she has advised on some of the most significant development schemes in Leeds, as well as projects across the UK, and has been appointed to external roles to deal with areas of governance of local authorities in West Yorkshire. She is also a trustee of Yorkshire Sculpture Park.

With nine years as a governor at Leeds Trinity University and further two years as a member of the Board at Leeds Conservatoire before taking the Chair role in January 2022, Carolyn is passionate about opening up opportunities of Higher Education (HE) to the widest diversity of students and helping to ensure the long-term success of the specialist HE institutions that add to the region's cultural richness.

In addition, Carolyn has a life-long love of music which she has passed on to her three sons. She has sung in many choirs and was a founder member of St Peter's Singers in Leeds in her teenage years. She has also sung in or been associated with Leeds Cathedral Choir since the 1980s.

Carolyn is a governor of the Luminare Education Group (Group Board), Chair of the Leeds Conservatoire Board of Directors, a member of the Group Remuneration Committee and a member of the Group Property Strategy Committee

CLUNY MACPHERSON

Cluny was Chief Officer, Culture and Sport at Leeds City Council between 2013 and 2020 where he managed 31 cultural and sporting venues, including the largest city museum service in the UK. He led Leeds' bid to become European Capital of Culture 2023 and, when Brexit prevented the UK taking part, he set up Leeds Culture Trust to deliver a 'Leeds 2023' anyway.

Before that he was Director, Yorkshire for Arts Council England, and also worked as a musician for 10 years.

Cluny is an external director of the Leeds Conservatoire Board

BENJAMIN SAUNDERS

Benjamin Saunders was organ scholar of Downing College, Cambridge University and Assistant Director of Music at the cathedrals of St Giles' Edinburgh, Blackburn and Chester. Since 2002 he has been Director of Music for the Diocese of Leeds, carrying overall responsibility for the largest church music programme in the UK.

Ben has been engaged by many external bodies as a consultant in the management and development of music programmes with particular expertise in fundraising and organisational structure, especially addressing access in marginalised or deprived communities. He was appointed a Director of Leeds College of Music (now Leeds Conservatoire) in 2013 and Visiting Professor of Music at the University of Notre Dame, Indiana in 2015.

As an organist, he has performed to HM the Queen, Princess Anne and US President Carter and worked with conductor Carl Davis and jazz virtuoso Dick Hyman. He has given solo organ concerts in France, Italy, Holland, Germany, Austria, Slovenia, Russia and the United States and records as a soloist for Brilliant Classics and Herald AV. Ben has also been a drummer in two rock bands, keyboardist in the Edinburgh International Jazz Festival and is now studying the Classical Accordion - developing a project to introduce this new instrument to children across West Yorkshire. From January 2021 he is leading the roll out of the National Schools Singing Programme across the UK.

Ben is an external director on the Leeds Conservatoire Board of Directors

DR AMANDA WILCOX

As University Secretary at Durham University, Dr Amanda Wilcox is a member of the University's Executive Committee and is responsible for the University's corporate and academic governance and regulatory compliance, assurance services, information governance and legal services.

Amanda joined Durham in October 2022 with extensive experience in a wide variety of roles in institutions and sector bodies (including HEFCE, OfS and QAA). She has a background in academia, with a PhD in parasitology and immunology. After some time as a postdoctoral researcher, she began working in the FE sector where she spent 8 years, ultimately as Director of Higher Education for an FE college. She then moved into HE, with managerial positions including academic registrar at the University of Hull and strategic advisor for the Pro Vice Chancellors. More recently, Amanda worked for York St John University as the Pro Vice Chancellor (Governance & Student Life) and for the Office for Students (formerly Higher Education Funding Council) as Head of Student Engagement / Regional Consultant: North East, Yorkshire and the Humber.

Amanda is an external director on the Leeds Conservatoire Board of Directors and Leeds Conservatoire Audit Committee; Amanda is also Vice Chair of the Audit Committee

PROFESSOR JOE WILSON

Joe Wilson's career incorporates extensive experience within the music and creative industries; not least as a founding member of the band Sneaker Pimps, but as a producer, artist and educator too. By the late 90s, Joe was an active producer for Mute Records, Creation Records and One Little Independent, and was still touring and performing with Sneaker Pimps, who by then had sold two million records around the world.

Professor Wilson moved into music education in 2010, after being recruited to design a Popular Music degree for the University of Gloucestershire, and joined Leeds Conservatoire in 2013 as Director of Curriculum. Within four years, five courses with 900 students grew into a portfolio of 27 courses with 1,300 students. Joe became Vice Principal in 2018, and is now the conservatoire's fifth Principal.

As Principal of Leeds Conservatoire, Joe is a member of the Leeds Conservatoire Board of Directors