



BENSLOWMUSIC  
INSTRUMENT LOAN SCHEME

1932 - 2022

Over the past nine decades, Benslow Music Instrument Loan Scheme (BMILS) has offered thousands of aspiring young artists the opportunity to borrow high quality instruments to enhance and further their musicianship.



#### WHO IS THE LOAN SCHEME FOR?

The scheme is available to UK resident students between the ages of 7 - 25 currently in full-time education and taking a course of musical instruction.



#### WHAT INSTRUMENTS ARE AVAILABLE FOR LOAN?

- The current collection has over 800 instruments including high quality violins, violas, cellos and double basses of all sizes, selected woodwind and brass, plus a small number of pedal harps
- Approximately a third of the collection is out on loan at any one time

#### HOW MUCH WILL IT COST?

- Borrowers pay an annual loan charge of 5% of the instrument and/or bow value capped at £400 (bursaries are also available)
- A deposit of £200 is also required for each loan
- Borrowers must take out specialist musical instrument insurance within 24 hours

#### HOW LONG CAN I LOAN AN INSTRUMENT FOR?

- The initial loan period for students is three years – during this time it is also possible to apply for instruments upgrades and larger sizes
- After the initial three years loans are reassessed annually, and students can continue borrowing while they are still in full time education up to the age of 25
- In very special circumstances, and at BMILS direction, loans can be extended up to the age of 30

#### HOW CAN I APPLY?

To apply you will need:

- A completed application form
- A reference from your current instrumental teacher
- The required financial information

## WHAT HAPPENS AT MY APPOINTMENT?

After you have made a successful application to the scheme, we will arrange for you to visit our facility at Benslow Music Trust in Hitchin, Hertfordshire.

You will have a one-to-one appointment with a member of our staff who will have made a selection of instruments and bows from the collection for you to try out and to choose from.

## I HAVE AN INSTRUMENT I WOULD LIKE TO LOAN TO THE SCHEME

Lending to Benslow Music Instrument Loan Scheme means that a young talented musician can really benefit. Your generosity in loaning the instrument can help to break down barriers to access and development of musical talent, leading to a more diverse generation of musicians in the future.

BMILS welcomes loans of high quality hand-made instruments of all makes and ages. Specifically regarding string instruments: as a guide these should have a minimum insurance value of c. £3500.

We encourage all our borrowers to keep in touch with the instrument owner, keeping them updated on their musical progress. Borrowers are also obliged as part of our loan agreements to complete an annual update form which is then passed on to the owner by BMILS.

“ There should be no barrier to young people pursuing their musical dreams, and at BMILS we strive to make ourselves visible and available to potential borrowers from all backgrounds and we aim to help as many young musicians as possible. Seeing a young player’s face light up when they first try an instrument of significantly better quality than previously available to them is priceless! A whole new world of sound opens up. ”

*Etta Dainty, Head of BMILS*

Whilst on loan to Benslow Music Instrument Loan Scheme, the instrument remains the property of the owner. While stored at BMILS’ facility items are covered by our insurance, and once taken out on loan must be insured by the borrower within 24 hours on a specialist musical instrument policy.

## HOW IS BMILS FUNDED?

BMILS is funded entirely by annual instrument loan charges and generous donations.

## WHERE ARE BMILS BORROWER ALUMNI TODAY?

BMILS borrowers include in their ranks several BBC Young Musician of the Year finalists, an RPS award winner, a BBC Guardian Young Composer award winner, musicologists, teachers and conservatoire professors.



They perform as soloists and with orchestras and chamber ensembles throughout the UK and as far afield as Los Angeles and Mexico including:

**The Academy of Ancient Music, Barbican Trio, BBC Concert Orchestra, BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, BBC Symphony Orchestra, Britten Symphonia, Camilli Quartet, Carducci Quartet, Chineke Orchestra, Dunedin Consort, Escala, Hallé, Irish Chamber Orchestra, London Mozart Players, Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Manchester Camerata, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Orchestra of the Royal Opera House, Philharmonia, RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra among others.**

## THE WOMEN WHO FOUNDED THE LOAN SCHEME

The brainchild of two pioneering and remarkable women; violinist, conductor, teacher and author, Editha Knocker, whose own pupil’s included Sidney Griller, Gerald Finzi, Basil Cameron and Sybil Eaton; and fellow violinist, forward-thinking music teacher and philanthropist Edith Croll.



Knocker and Croll’s letter to The Times in 1932, calling for “Good Violins lying Idle” to be repurposed for use by young musicians who could otherwise not afford superior instruments, was a ground-breaking egalitarian

plan and was endorsed by leading music figures of the day including Sir Henry Wood. Thousands of young artists have since benefitted from borrowing from the scheme and this has had an impact on shaping British cultural life.

## OUR HOME

Our modern bespoke facility, the ‘Aston Building’ provides a monitored, secure environment for the instruments, try-out studio, a workshop for on-site luthier Marco Matathia as well as office and practice space.



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[benslowmusic-ils.org](https://benslowmusic-ils.org)

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