

Gillian Blair - Saxophonist

Praised for her *'flawless and accomplished'* performances (Peterborough Telegraph) and *'honest and genuine music-making'* (D'Addario Competition), Gillian Blair enjoys a varied career as a classical saxophonist, chamber musician and educator. She has won first prize in competitions including the International Young Musician Competition at the Llangollen Eisteddfod, the D'addario Single Reed Competition and the RNCM Woodwind Competition. She is an active educator and is on the teaching faculty at the Junior Royal Northern College of Music and the Universities of Sheffield and Huddersfield.

As a soloist, she has performed around Europe, North America and Asia at festivals and concert series' including the BBC Proms, EurSax (Porto), Koganei Miyajigakki Hall (Tokyo), PepsiCo Recital Hall (Texas), World Saxophone Congress (St Andrews, Strasbourg, Zagreb), North American Saxophone Alliance Conference (Arkansas) and several broadcasts on BBC Radio 3. She has appeared as a guest soloist with ensembles including the Band of the Coldstream Guards, Commonwealth String Orchestra, Piccadilly Symphony Orchestra, City of Peterborough Symphony Orchestra, University of Arkansas Saxophone Ensemble, the RNCM Percussion Ensemble and the RNCM Saxophone Orchestra.

Gillian is passionate about chamber music and performs regularly with the Polaris Duo (saxophone and harp) and the Borealis Saxophone Quartet. Both of these ensembles have enjoyed competition success, performances on BBC Radio 3 as 'BBC Introducing Classical' artists, and have appeared in some of the UK's most prestigious venues as well as giving performances overseas. A more recent collaboration with American Saxophonist Nathan Mertens has led to performances and masterclasses in Japan, the UK and the USA. Gillian also enjoys working with larger ensembles including the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra, Orchestra of Opera North, the Royal Northern Sinfonia, the Piccadilly Symphony Orchestra, and the Tenor Saxophone Collective.

As a keen advocate of new music, Gillian has commissioned numerous works as a soloist and for her various chamber ensembles from composers including Gary Carpenter, Lucy Armstrong, Zack Browning, Grace Evangeline Mason, Andrew Boss, Tom Harrold, Lucy Pankhurst, Paul Mitchell-Davidson, and Melissa Douglas.

Gillian holds Bachelors and Masters degrees from the Royal Northern College of Music where she studied with Rob Buckland, Carl Raven and Andy Scott. During her studies she was a finalist in the RNCM's Concerto and Gold Medal competitions and received scholarships from the Oglesby Charitable Trust, the Helen Mackaness Award and the Countess of Munster Trust. Upon graduating, Gillian was awarded the Timothy Reynish Award for outstanding contribution to the RNCM. She has received tuition and appeared in masterclasses with acclaimed international artists and studied at the renowned *'l'Université Européenne de Saxophone'* in Gap, France.

Gillian is a Henri Selmer Paris Saxophones Artist and a Vandoren UK Artist.

www.gillianblair.com Twitter: [@Gilly_Blair](https://twitter.com/Gilly_Blair) Facebook: fb.com/gillianblairsax Instagram: [@Gillian.Blair.Sax](https://www.instagram.com/Gillian.Blair.Sax)

'an impeccable display of technical mastery...her obvious passion was beautifully controlled, and her meticulous artistic attention to detail could be heard in the shaping of every melodic phrase'

- Graham Marshall, Rochdale Online (Concerto with Oldham Symphony)

'A flawless and accomplished performance...she excelled in shaping the long lyrical phrases'

- Joe Conway, Peterborough Telegraph (Concerto with CPSO)