

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

VICKY CHEETHAM

Vicky Cheetham is Chief Executive Officer of Leeds Heritage Theatres, where she leads the organisation's vision to create vibrant, inclusive and inspiring cultural experiences for audiences and communities across the city. She is responsible for the three venues that make up Leeds Heritage Theatres: Leeds Grand Theatre, City Varieties Music Hall and Hyde Park Picture House.

With over 25 years' experience in the cultural sector, Vicky has built a career defined by bringing together artistic ambition with strong, resilient organisations. She joined Leeds Heritage Theatres in June 2024, following her role as Interim Co-Executive Director at the Royal Shakespeare Company, where she helped lead the organisation through a period of transition and played a key role in shaping its future direction.

Previously, as Managing Director of Tate, Vicky worked at the centre of one of the world's leading cultural organisations. She led a step-change in how Tate connected with audiences, particularly through digital innovation, and helped guide the organisation through the challenges of the pandemic and its recovery.

Her earlier career includes senior leadership roles at Southbank Centre, where she led artistic programming across classical and contemporary music, performance, dance, comedy, literature, spoken word, participation and visual arts, alongside a wide-reaching creative learning programme for schools, young people and adults.

She began her career as a producer at the Barbican Centre, working across classical and contemporary music, large-scale festivals and commercial events, and contributing to major capital projects and the development of technical and production infrastructure.

Vicky began her professional life in music and production after studying Music at the University of Cambridge. She remains passionate about opening up cultural spaces to everyone, supporting creativity at every level, and ensuring that venues are welcoming, relevant and full of life.

Vicky is an external director on the Leeds Conservatoire Board of Directors.

LYDIA DEVENNY

Lydia has held senior finance and leadership roles across the education and skills sector and is currently Director of Finance at the University of Huddersfield. Prior to working at the University, she was Deputy Chief Executive - Services for the Luminate Education Group. Lydia is also a Non-Executive Director at the Mid-Yorkshire Teaching Hospitals Trust where she is a member of the Board and Chairs the Audit & Governance Committee.

A Chartered Management Accountant, with more than 25 years' experience, she also holds a degree in Economics from the University of Manchester.

In her spare time, Lydia enjoys playing violin regularly as a member of Harrogate Symphony Orchestra. She has also joined a local adult beginner group and is learning to play the trumpet. When not performing herself, Lydia enjoys attending concerts of all genres of music, as well as theatre, comedy, and film, with her family and friends.

Lydia is an external director on the Leeds Conservatoire Board of Directors and is Chair of the Leeds Conservatoire Audit Committee.

JENNY HOY

Jenny is an experienced teacher and senior leader. Jenny is the Head of the Centre for Open Learning (Head of School) and Dean for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion at the University of Edinburgh. Jenny's academic background is in Music, starting 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 including FE and HE teaching. Committed to lifelong learning, Jenny taught community classes and short courses for many years and was involved from the beginning of the Saturday Music School (now the Junior Conservatoire) which continues to offer invaluable provision for young musicians, and which was the first in the UK to include music production as a dedicated subject area.

Jenny was the first female percussionist signed to the Black Dyke Mills brass band, she 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 for Corinne Bailey-Rae, drums on a film soundtrack for Netflix, and a mixture of instruments including a plastic bag and bowed cymbals on the Chaotica album as part of Beccy Owen's female collective Refuge. Jenny is an elected Trustee of the Universities Association for Lifelong Learning (UALL), a mentor for Arts Emergency, and Director and founding member of La Banda Ltd, a music and arts Charity in Scotland working with the composer Jim Sutherland.

Jenny is an external director on the Leeds Conservatoire Board of Directors and sits on the Leeds Conservatoire Audit Committee and People & Remuneration Committee.

BILL JONES

Bill was appointed Chief Executive Officer of Luminate Education Group in January 2026. Bill joined Luminate Education Group in 2015 working most recently as Deputy CEO & Executive Principal of Leeds City College. Prior to moving to Leeds, Bill was Executive Director of Planning & Performance of Sheffield College. He has worked in further education for over 30 years; he is passionate about the power of TLA and pedagogy to transform lives. and having started as an English teacher means Bill is a keen advocate of ESOL. Luminate Education Group is a member of the Leeds Anchors Network, through the network Bill and the other members leverage their organisations' collective influence to address poverty and improve life for all Leeds residents.

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

KERANJEET KAUR VIRDEE MBE

Keranjeet is Chief Executive & Artistic Director at South Asian Arts-uk (SAA-uk) based in Leeds. Since 1998 Keranjeet has played a pivotal role in the vision and artistic direction of SAA-uk, developing strong partnerships locally, regionally and nationally with cultural institutes and community organisations and artists.

Keranjeet is an external director 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 Luminate Education Group (Group Board), Chair of the Leeds Conservatoire Board of Directors, a member of the People & Remuneration Committee and a member of the 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. 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 on the Leeds Conservatoire Board of Directors.

CHRIS MILNES

Chris Milnes is a principal lecturer at Leeds Conservatoire in Songwriting and Popular Music, and has been for around a decade. He has also worked as a lecturer at Leeds Arts University on the Music Production Degree, as well as guest lecturing at Huddersfield university, LIPA, Cambridge SVPA and a number of institutions in China and Korea.

Chris is a multi instrumentalist who has been touring the world with Hollow Coves since 2018. Chris plays guitar and bass as part of the four piece band and is also their Tour Manager.

Chris runs a tour management company called Satsuma Touring, who look after high profile international artists such as Ocie Elliott, Ar/Co, IDEMI and Bored at My Grandma's House. Chris also works as a producer and songwriter for his electronic music project, Winemaker, and for a number of other artist projects.

Chris is a staff elected director on the Leeds Conservatoire Board of Directors.

GRACE PRICE

As President of Leeds Conservatoire Students' Union, Grace is a member of 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.