

Review

Cambridge Early Music: Renaissance week

Sara Liber Salloum – Lute

I am a principal study lutenist at the end of my undergraduate degree at the Royal Northern College of Music, and I was so grateful to receive a bursary to attend the Cambridge Early Music Summer School's renaissance week from 4th-11th August 2019. This year the course was focused on music of the French Renaissance and tuition throughout the week varied from large-scale group sessions to focused chamber coaching from all the course tutors.

Being a lute player, I was keen to attend all of Jacob Heringman's classes which brought lutenists and singers together to explore music from the 16th century French court. During these classes I learnt many lute accompaniments in order to accompany a variety of singers, and I gained so much knowledge about the style and form of French *air de cour*. I also had fun playing many French lute duets with another participant on the course. These skills were directly related to my studies and so it was very valuable to receive tuition in these areas throughout the entire week. I also thoroughly enjoyed performing in the final student concert on the final day of the course. It was wonderful to be able to perform music with new-found friends, and that we had learnt in such a short – but intense! – space of time.

In addition to building on skills relating to my lute playing, the renaissance week also gave me the opportunity to begin learning the viol and to learn to sing improvised canons in a renaissance style. I am very grateful to Uri Smilansky for offering these more unusual classes -- they were a highlight of the course for me. It was not only educational, but incredibly fun, to try out something entirely new and I feel I have gained skills that I will continue to work on!

Another highly memorable aspect of the course was that it included two exquisite concerts by The Courtiers of Grace. I was so inspired by the performances and it was wonderful to hear the music we had been focusing on during the week performed by such extraordinary musicians.

The renaissance week presented the opportunity for me to meet so many wonderful people who share my passion for renaissance music. I have gained lasting friendships, particularly with the other bursary students I met on the course. During my education at a music conservatoire, I found I had limited opportunity to network with young musicians who were interested specifically in music of the 16th century. Typically, when it came to performance opportunities within the historical performance department, there were few pre-baroque music projects to get involved in. The Renaissance Week at Cambridge Early Music was therefore been the most perfect course for me to experience. Overall, the course has been incredibly valuable to my development as a musician and I very much hope I will have the opportunity to attend again in the future.