

## #MonthlyMotivation: Emily Hazrati (class of 2016)



Winning Putney High School's carol competition in Year 8 fuelled Emily's love for composing music and she hasn't stopped since!

### What have you done since leaving Putney?

After graduating with a BA in Music from Oxford, I started an advanced postgraduate degree (MPhil) in Music (Composition) at Cambridge. This has recently given me the opportunity to sing with the world-renowned [Clare College Choir](#) and help organise the second year of the [Cambridge Female Composers Festival](#), both of which I'm extremely excited about.

### What did your undergraduate course entail?

People are usually astounded by the variety of work involved in a music degree. I had to write essays and go to lectures/tutorials, but my work also involved studying scores, listening to music, and writing compositions. During my time, I had the opportunity to work on a song-writing project for

people with dementia, and complete my dissertation on the BBC Proms.

### What else were you able to do at University?

As an undergraduate I frequently performed in orchestras, choirs and chamber groups. I also set up my own College orchestra, revived the Lincoln College Music Society, and was a musical director of productions such as Stephen Sondheim's *Company*. I got to see the East Coast USA on tours and was also lucky to have lots of my own compositions performed and workshopped; often by fellow students, but also by professional groups such as the [Oxford Philharmonic](#) and [CHROMA](#).

### How did you start composing?

In Year 8, I won Putney High School's Carol competition, and my piece was featured in the school's annual carol service. Hearing my music performed at such an early age had a great impact on me, and I haven't stopped composing since!

### What have you been writing most recently?

Recent projects have included an orchestral piece about snowfall, a recorder quartet based on the four elements (earth, water, air and fire), and a composition for vocal consort using extracts from love-letters between medieval nuns. Of course, with Christmas round the corner I've also been working on a few Christmas carols too!

### Tell us a bit more about your experiences as a choral scholar.

Unlike most choral scholars, I didn't apply for a scholarship as part of the Oxbridge application process. It was only when I joined Lincoln College Chapel Choir as a volunteer that I started to really enjoy singing and so in my second year I applied for a choral scholarship.

### What was it about the choir that made you love singing so much?

As well as getting to know some amazing music, I found choir to have the best sense of community out of all the musical groups I was part of in Oxford: it's somewhere you're guaranteed to meet lots of like-minded people and make friends for life.

### What would be your recommendations for students/alumnae who want to do what you do?

Listen to as great a variety of music as possible and be open-minded about what you listen to – even a composer/genre you think you'll hate might turn out to change the way you think about music. Spotify, YouTube and Radio 3 are bottomless resources – make the most of them. I also recommend going to see as much live music as possible: concert halls put on an enormous variety of music and offer generous discounts for students. Immerse yourself in music however you most enjoy, whether that's through performing, composing or reading about it... And finally, take every opportunity you can find. As I've learnt, you'll never know what it might lead to!