

Helene Gjerris' Speech to the Graduates at the 2026 Summer Concert

Dear graduates,

You have chosen this. You have chosen music. Most likely a long time ago.

The completion of your studies marks an important transition in your lives.

Many of you are about to step into the unknown, and that can feel both daunting and full of promise.

You should be immensely proud of yourselves. Together and individually, you carry a wealth of music and art, knowledge and expertise with you into the world.

Over the coming years, you will discover that one never truly finishes understanding music. It continues to reveal new possibilities, new truths and new questions – whether we perform it, create it, teach it or simply listen to it.

You may be surprised by just how vast it's universe really is. And you will discover that the music itself will continue to teach you and develop you throughout your life.

When we work with music, we work through a fusion of bodily, emotional and intellectual understanding and skill. We analyse, we decode, we solve problems, we listen, and we contribute our individual expertise to collaborative settings in pursuit of a shared result. We never give up. We practise more. We find solutions. We are ready on time. Always. Because the audience is waiting on a specific date and at a specific time.

This way of working, this discipline, and this understanding of process will serve you well in many different professional contexts.

You will most likely find yourselves building careers that take many different forms – even within the music profession itself. At times, this may feel overwhelming and stressful. But after many years of living that kind of professional life myself, I can tell you that it can also be wonderful, invigorating and inspiring.

You will draw inspiration from many different experiences, different colleagues and different physical environments. And a working life that may sometimes appear fragmented can be remarkably rich.

Some dreams and ambitions may not come to fruition. But the music and your musicianship will always remain with you. When a musician is between jobs, they are still a musician. They will still practise their instrument, explore new repertoire, attend concerts, and your identity will not disappear, no matter what.

When you look back on your years here, I hope you will not only remember the lessons and the concerts. I also hope you will remember one another.

The people who sat next to you in theory classes, played chamber music with you, shared moments of doubt with you, and celebrated successes alongside you.

I strongly encourage you to hold on to these networks. They may well become future artistic collaborations, friendships and supportive communities.

During your study time here, you have come to know how it is to work in an international community. I hope this will help you remain open to the wider global community you are now becoming part of.

Wherever your careers may take you, you are joining an international artistic community that is both remarkably diverse and surprisingly small.

I hope you will encounter working environments characterised by fairness, transparency, trust and respect for the value that you bring to society.

And you yourselves must help strengthen those values wherever your paths may take you.

Music helps us understand who we are. It sharpens our attention. Music allows us to explore and reflect the full spectrum of what it means to be human.

And you will make an essential contribution to that sense of shared humanity that every society needs if it is to remain reflective and inclusive.

Thank you for being here.

Thank you for trusting us with your talent.

Thank you for all the concerts you have given to our audiences and to one another throughout your time here at RDAM.

Congratulations – tillykke - on your degrees, and congratulations on the choice you made a long time ago – a choice that will now truly come to life.

I will miss you!

I look forward to following your journeys.

There is something that we often do before entering a stage like this – something we say. Tonight, I will say it to you from the stage from which you will now enter the world stage.

Pøj pøj. Toi toi toi.

Thank you.

– Helene Gjerris, president