

AARUSH VIR KHARBANDA
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MUSIC EDUCATION & EXAMS

Sep 2013 – Present

Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music, Piano: Working towards Grade 8 Exam & ARSM Diploma in Piano.

Trinity College London Rock and Pop, Drumkit: Grade 7 Exam passed, working towards Grade 8 Exam.

Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music, Music Theory: Grade 1 to 5 completed, Grade 5 Exam Passed.

GCSE Music: Grade 9/9 (A*), 30/30 marks in Composition, 30/30 marks in Performance.

A Level Music: Currently pursuing qualification – predicted A* grade.

PERFORMANCE EXPERIENCE

National Youth Orchestra (NYO) of Dubai

Sep 2024 – Present

- Principal percussionist for Senior Orchestra: lead a team of 7 percussionists.
- Marimba, Glockenspiel, Xylophone, Timpani, and Concert Snare Player.
- Performed three concerts at the Dubai Opera Main Stage to audiences of 6000+ combined.
- Performed marimba solo at Dubai Opera Studio as NYO Concerto Competition Finalist.
- Performed at Carnegie Hall as part of the 2025 Viennese Masters Invitational Concert.

Dubai College Symphony Orchestra

Sep 2022 – Present

- Youngest Lead Percussionist of Dubai College's Senior Orchestra.
- Glockenspiel, Xylophone, Timpani, and Concert Snare Player.
- Performed twice at the Dubai College Senior Showcase to audiences of 500+ combined.

Dubai College Jazz Band

Apr – July 2025

- Pianist for the DC Jazz Band.
- Performed at the Dubai College Summer Showcase Concert to audience of 100+.

Dubai College Concert Band

Sep 2022 – Present

- Lead Percussionist of the DC Concert Band.
- Performed twice at the Dubai College Senior Showcase to audiences of 500+ combined.
- Drumkit, Timpani, Glockenspiel Player.

Poor Form Band

Sep 2023 – Present

- Founded Poor Form: rock and pop band at Dubai College.
- Performed 6+ gigs at school to audiences of 1000+ combined.
- Performed at DC's Music Charity Love (MCL) to raise money for UWS Jaisithok, a school that provides education to underprivileged children in Nepal.

PERFORMANCE MASTERCLASSES

Orchestra Masterclass, Helen Cha-Pyo

Jun 2025

- NYO Dubai Masterclass with Helen Cha-Pyo (Director of the NJ Youth Symphony) during our New York Tour 2025. Performed *Toccata and Fugue* (Bach) and *Symphony No. 5* (Beethoven).

Piano Masterclass, Melanie Spanswick & Andrew Smith

Dec 2024

- Piano Performance Masterclass with Melanie Spanswick (RCM) and Andrew Smith (RAM) in preparation for the Young Musicians of the Gulf (YMoG) competition. Performed *Malaguena* (Albeniz) and *Andaluza* (Granados).

PERFORMANCE REPERTOIRE

Solo Marimba

- *Czardas* – V. Monti; *Andante* – F. Carulli; *Sonata No. 1 in G Minor: Presto* – J.S. Bach; *Introduction and Rondo Capriccioso* – C. Saint-Seans; *Waltz in Ragtime* – H. Breuer; *Joplin on Wood* – H. Breuer.

Solo Piano

- *June (Barcarolle)* – P. Tchaikovsky; *Andaluza (Danzas Espanoles no. 5)* – E. Granados; *Rumores de la Caleta* – I. Albeniz; *Sonata in D Major (K.492)* – D. Scarlatti; *Sonata in D Major (K.443)* – D. Scarlatti; *Poem* – Z. Fibich; *Waltz in E Minor* – F. Chopin; *Malaguena* – I. Albeniz; *Malaguena* – E. Lecuona (Piano Duet).

Solo Drumkit

- *Superstition* – Stevie Wonder; *Toxicity* – System of a Down; *Rosanna* – Toto; *Seven Days* – Sting; *50 Ways to Leave Your Lover* – Paul Simon; *Fire* – Jimi Hendrix.

National Youth Orchestra (NYO) of Dubai, Percussion

- *The Nutcracker Suite* – P. Tchaikovsky (Glockenspiel); *Symphony No. 6* – P. Tchaikovsky (Glockenspiel); *Symphony No. 8* – F. Schubert (Glockenspiel); *Ensemble of Peace* – I. Darwish (Glockenspiel); *Toccata and Fugue in D Minor* – J.S. Bach (Marimba); *Pirates of the Caribbean* – K. Badelt (Marimba); *The Snowman* – H. Blake (Vibraphone); *The Skaters' Waltz* – E. Waldteufel (Concert Snare); *All the Good Things* – J. Barrett (Concert Snare); *UAE National Anthem* – S.A. Wahab (Concert Snare).

Dubai College Symphony Orchestra, Percussion

- *The Nutcracker Suite* – P. Tchaikovsky (Glockenspiel); *Waltz No. 2* – D. Shostakovich (Glockenspiel); *Carol of the Bells* – M. Leontovych (Glockenspiel); *Pequena Czarda* – P. Iturralde (Concert Snare); *Piano Concerto No. 1* – L.V. Beethoven (Timpani).

Dubai College Jazz Band, Piano

- *Take the A Train* – D. Ellington; *Ja Da* – B. Carleton; *Song for San Miguel* – M. Steinel; *All of Me* – L. Armstrong.

Poor Form Band, Drummer

- *Dakota* – Stereophonics; *Fluorescent Adolescent*, *Mardy Bum* – Arctic Monkeys; *Chelsea Dagger*, *Whistle for the Choir* – The Fratellis; *Rude* – MAGIC!; *Smokin Out The Window* – Silk Sonic; *Forget You* – CeeLo Green; *Love Song* – Sara Bareilles.

PERFORMANCE HONORS AND AWARDS

- **Performed at Carnegie Hall Stern Auditorium with NYO Dubai** **June 2025**
- **NYO Dubai Solo Concerto Competition Finalist (Marimba)** **April 2025**
- **Young Musicians of the Gulf (YMoG) Lifetime Percussion Award** **February 2024**
- **Dubai College Year 11 Music Prize** **July 2024**
- **Dubai College House Music Competition Finalist** **October 2024**

MUSIC, SCIENCE, & TECHNOLOGY EXPERIENCE

Cambridge Centre for International Research (CCIR)

Dec 2024 – Present

- Built software (Python/Tkinter) that uses Markov Chains to generate original melodies from MIDI input. Software also included music steering tools – some of which affected melody generation and others of which were placebo (had no effect on melody generation).
- Applied the software as a research tool to conduct user study with N=12 participants (high school music students and teachers) to investigate agency, control, and authorship in AI music systems. During interviews, participants were given 4-bar melodies and asked to complete each melody using the software as composition inspiration. Participants interacted with both the Control and Placebo Systems.
- Conducted qualitative thematic analysis on the interview transcripts. Findings summarized in paper titled “The Illusion of Control: Perceived versus Actual Control, Authorship, and Agency in Generative Music Composition Systems”. Presented paper at the CCIR Symposium at Kings College, University of Cambridge.

EpiMuse

Sep 2024 – Present

- Conducted study at Neuropedia (Dubai’s leading pediatric neuroscience center) to investigate the effects of listening to Mozart’s K.448 on the EEGs of patients of epilepsy. Collected primary EEG data of N=13 participants.
- Participants were divided into two groups: music group (N=4) and control group (N=9). All participants underwent a 60-minute EEG. Participants in the music group listened to Mozart’s K.448 during their EEG, whilst participants in the control group had no music playing. EEG data was analyzed, and the following results were identified: a) music group participants fell asleep faster, b) there were fewer recorded artifacts in the EEGs of music group participants.
- Using the insights gained from this study, I built EpiMuse – a Python webapp that provides personalized music therapy for patients of epilepsy. Built my own dataset with metadata on 180 classical pieces of music from scratch. Designed the UI using Streamlit, used a KNN recommendation algorithm, and the Muse 2 headset to record a user’s EEG. Presented paper at MIT Undergraduate Research Technology Conference (URTC) 2025.

Extended Project Qualification, Project

Jul 2025 – Present

- For my Extended Project Qualification (EPQ), I am currently working on “Sound of a Story” – a system that converts input text into short original pieces of music using Markov Chains and Natural Language Processing.

MUSIC, SCIENCE, & TECHNOLOGY CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

- MIT Undergraduate Research Technology Conference (URTC) October 2025
- CCIR Symposium at Kings College, University of Cambridge July 2025