

MY SCHOOL DAYS

LAURE CHAN

The acclaimed violinist, composer and alumna of the Royal College of Music fondly reflects on her time at Francis Holland, Regent's Park

Your school in three words?

Transformative, challenging, and understanding.

Who was your best friend?

I'd say I had a group of friends in school rather than a single best friend. I'm still in touch with some of them today: Helena, Tara, Aanya and Mansi.

What did you want to be when you grew up?

A concert violinist — I feel lucky to have been supported in pursuing my passion.

Most embarrassing moment?

I once fell down in a game of tag chasing a classmate, and thought I almost dislocated my shoulder. Luckily my friend helped me up and it turned out to only be a strain!

Play any pranks?

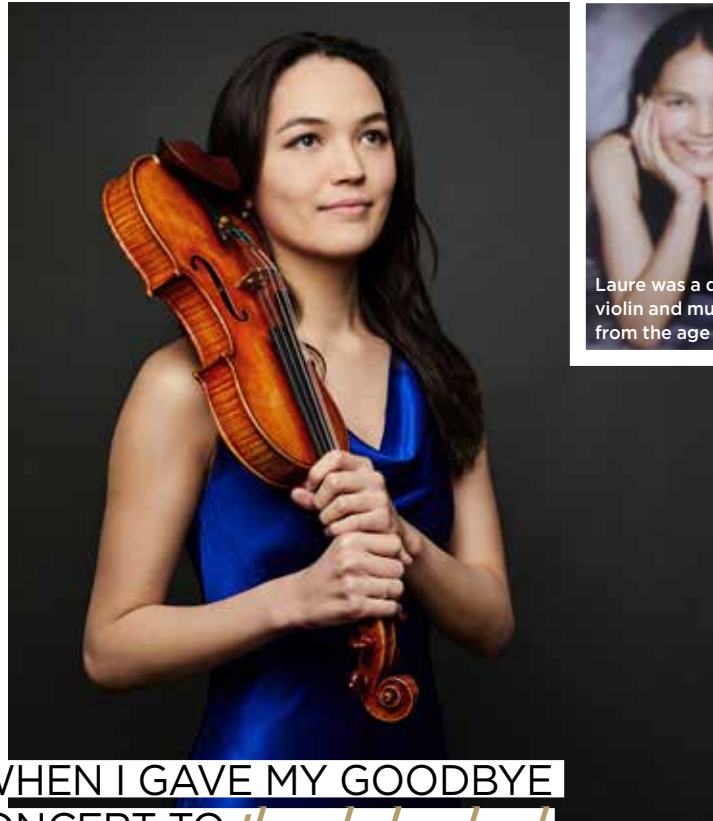
Not a prank, but I remember having a water fight in a classroom during a break with a classmate who was winding me up. I wasn't amused though!

Let's talk about the food... worthy of a Michelin star or...?

I don't tend to eat in Michelin star restaurants, so I couldn't make a fair comparison — I did appreciate the salad bar as well as our hot meals however!

Where was your favourite place at school to hang out?

I think the courtyard by our classroom was a nice outdoor space to hang out with friends.



Actually, my mother got me a pair of cricket gloves to protect my fingers in case of rough sport!

Did you win any prizes at school?

I was a music scholar there.

Did you have a favourite teacher?

I have fond memories of Miss Francis, my maths teacher and my music teachers, Mr Thorne and Mr Smith. Also, my headmistress and not my teacher, Mrs Durham was always very supportive and understanding about my career and I'm extremely grateful to her — we've kept in touch since my school days!

What advice would you offer your school-age self?

Stay true to who you are, even if people don't understand you. In turn, show compassion and understanding towards others.

How would your teachers describe you?

I'd have to ask them! Not sure what they'd say but I think everyone understood that I was seriously committed to my music and knew what I wanted to do early in life. This meant I had to be disciplined and focused in order to strive for my goals. When I gave my goodbye concert to the whole school assembled in the main hall, a few teachers shed a tear. I was deeply touched! 🥹

"WHEN I GAVE MY GOODBYE CONCERT TO *the whole school assembled in the main hall*, A FEW TEACHERS SHED A TEAR"

Teacher's pet or always in the detention room?

I think it depended on the teacher... but I wouldn't say I was a teacher's pet per se. I do remember once in geography, I turned around to ask a classmate if I could borrow a rubber and I ended up in detention due to a misunderstanding with my teacher. We're on good terms now though!!

Lone wolf or a team player?

I've often felt like quite an

independent learner, although I do enjoy working in a group if the environment is encouraging and balanced.

All-star sports captain or outside field lingerer?

Somewhere inbetween. I was very sporty in my childhood before I decided to dedicate my time to becoming a violinist (at the ripe old age of nine years old!), so I had to be careful in choosing which sports I could do by the time I went to secondary school.