

LAYSTON MUSIC

AND THE SINGING CIRCLE

Talena Cuthbert - Music Professional & Vocal Coach



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CAMBRIDGESHIRE AND HERTFORDSHIRE

Newsletter - May 2026



Hello everyone,

I don't know about you, but I am very happy the days are getting longer again.

There's always a noticeable shift around this time of year — students seem more energised, confidence starts growing, and we begin moving towards all the exciting summer performances and events.

There's lots going on at Layston Music at the moment, so here's a quick round-up of what's in this month's newsletter:

*Upcoming holiday dates

*Our next "Sing For Your Supper" event – Movie Magic

*Important information about the Summer Shindig

*New Pricing Choices

*A small favour regarding reviews

*Lesson reminders and studio updates

*A little bit about me for newer families

Term Dates & Holidays

A quick reminder that our upcoming Spring Half-Term break is:

Monday 25th May – Sunday 31st May

There will be no lessons during this week.

Make-Up/Exam week 1st - 7 June

There are no regular lessons during this week.

As always, all lesson dates and holiday information can be found on the Layston Music website and within your My Music Staff portal.

There have been a couple of small changes to some of the holiday dates this year, so please do keep an eye on both the website and your portal calendar.

One important change is that we will now be offering lessons for one week during the middle of the summer holidays in August. [17th-21st]

This week will act as:

- a make-up lesson week
- an opportunity for students preparing for exams or performances to keep momentum going
- a chance for students who don't want to go the full six weeks without a lesson to stay connected to their instrument and routine

Quite a few parents and students have mentioned over the years that six weeks can feel like a very long gap, so we thought we'd trial something a little more supportive and flexible.

If you would like to book lessons during that week, please let me know as soon as possible so I can begin planning the timetable.

I'm also already starting to look ahead at **September** timetabling, as many families tend to have schedule changes with the new academic year.

If you already know of any likely changes to your availability or you know you need to change times for September, please do let me know as early as possible — it really helps with organising lesson slots fairly and smoothly for everyone.

Sing for your Supper

Sing For Your Supper – “Movie Magic”

Tuesday 2nd June

Our next Sing For Your Supper evening is nearly here, and this month's theme is:

Movie Magic

These evenings are quickly becoming one of my favourite things to run because they combine so many things I love — music, community, confidence-building, and people simply having a really good time together.

For anyone new to the idea, Sing For Your Supper is a relaxed social singing evening held at The Chequers in Barley. Each event has a completely different theme, so every month feels fresh and a little bit different.



The evening includes:

- a themed group singing session with harmonies
- a shared supper and relaxed social atmosphere
- a local singer or musician showcase while everyone eats
- a huge group singalong to finish the night

It's designed to feel welcoming whether someone sings all the time or hasn't sung properly in years.

Movie Magic is all about songs from film soundtracks and iconic movie moments, so expect everything from huge emotional ballads to fun nostalgic classics.

Participants must be aged 11+ (under 18s accompanied by an adult).

[BOOK YOUR TICKET HERE: WWW.LAYSTONMUSIC/EVENTS](http://WWW.LAYSTONMUSIC/EVENTS)

Shindigs – Let's Start Preparing



ALL STUDENTS ARE EXPECTED TO PERFORM.

IF YOU ALREADY KNOW YOU CAN'T ATTEND, PLEASE LET ME
KNOW AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

Our **Summer Shindig** is getting closer, and preparations are now properly underway in lessons.

Venue: **The Chequers, Barley**
Date: **Saturday 20th June**
Student performances: **12pm–8pm**

Then from **8pm onwards**, I'll be performing a live set of rock, pop and indie covers to celebrate Father's Day weekend.

The Shindigs are one of the most important parts of Layston Music because performing teaches students so much more than simply "playing the notes".

Performance helps young people develop confidence, resilience, communication skills, preparation and focus as well as the ability to work through nerves and uncertainty.

These are life skills that carry far beyond music lessons.

All students are expected to perform as part of their musical development, and we're already beginning to prepare pieces in lessons now.

If you already know that you can't attend, please let me know as soon as possible so we can plan accordingly.

More information can be found here:
<https://www.laystonmusic.co.uk/Events>

QUICK REMINDERS

Student Packs

Please remember to bring student packs to every lesson, as this is where we keep sheet music, tabs, lyric sheets and practice diaries.

Zoom Lessons

If your lesson is online, please remember to **enable Original Audio** every time you join Zoom. Without this enabled, we unfortunately can't properly hear your instrument or voice.

Prime Time Lessons (4pm–8:30pm)

Our evening lesson slots operate with a no cancellation policy.

If you can't attend in person, you are welcome to:

- switch to Zoom
- request a video lesson with instructions and exercises
- arrange a swap where possible

If I ever need to cancel for any reason, a make-up lesson offered in our make-up weeks.

Changes to Lesson Payments from September 2026



As Layston Music continues to grow, I've been reviewing ways to make lessons, scheduling and payments more consistent, supportive and manageable for everyone long-term.

From September 2026, all new students joining Layston Music will automatically join through the new **Layston Music Tuition Plan** system.

As an existing family, you will have the choice whether you would like to stay on your current invoicing and billing system or move across to the Tuition Plan from September onwards.

What Is The Layston Music Tuition Plan?

The new system spreads the cost of lessons evenly across the academic year through fixed monthly payments.

Instead of monthly invoices changing depending on the number of lessons in a particular month, the lesson plan divides the yearly lesson total into equal monthly payments.

This creates:

- Easier budgeting
- Consistent monthly payments
- Guaranteed lesson times
- Simpler administration for families

Your child's lesson slot is reserved exclusively for them throughout the academic year.

Because of this, missed lessons are not refundable or transferable.

However, where possible, support will still be provided through:

- Lesson videos
- Practice guidance
- Homework tasks
- Technique exercises
- Digital resources
- Online Lesson Via Zoom

This helps students continue progressing even when unable to attend lessons in person.

If you wish to stop having lessons, we require one months notice.

How The Tuition Plan Works

Weekly students receive:

- 34 x 30/60-minute lessons per academic year

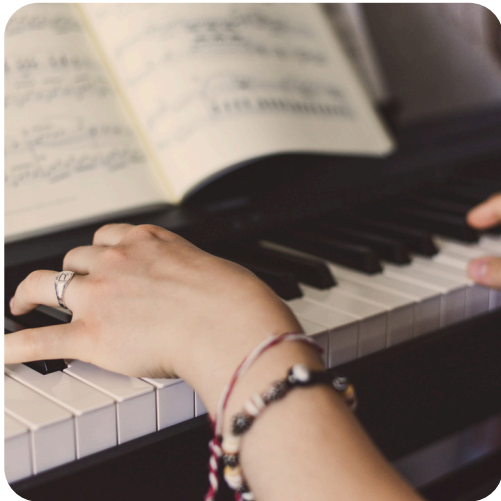
About 6 Lessons per half term

Fortnightly students receive:

- 17 x 30-minute lessons per academic year

About 3 Lessons per half term

Your lesson slot is reserved exclusively for you throughout the academic year.



Summer Holiday Lessons

One change from previous years is that there will now be:

- A week to book lessons during the middle of the summer holidays

After seeing many students struggle returning after a full 6-week break without lessons or regular practice, I feel this is a much healthier and more supportive approach musically.

These summer sessions will help students:

- Maintain momentum
- Stay connected to their instrument/voice
- Avoid losing confidence and progress over the long break

Included Within Your Tuition Plan

All students receive access to the Layston Music MyMusicStaff Portal, including:

Practice notes, Invoices and payment tracking, Homework and lesson resources, Downloadable materials where appropriate, Important holiday dates and studio information, Lesson reminders

I also continue to provide as many learning resources as possible free of charge, including:

Sheet music, Backing tracks, Technique exercises, Lesson materials, Digital resources

Students additionally receive:

Two free Layston Music performance opportunities per year

These include supportive community events such as:

Summer Shindig | Winter Shindig

Advanced students may additionally be offered opportunities to perform at:

Sing for Your Supper, Community showcases, Local live music events, Paid performance opportunities where appropriate

Changes to Terms & Conditions | Part 1 from June 2026:

[1.1] Lessons are provided through the Layston Music Tuition Plan and are reserved across the academic year. Tuition Plan fees are spread evenly across the year through fixed monthly payments.

[1.2] Tuition Plan invoices are issued monthly in advance for both PRIVATE and GROUP lessons. Weekly payment arrangements remain at the discretion of Talena Cuthbert.

[1.3] Monthly payments must be received in full on or before the first (1st) day of each month unless otherwise agreed in writing.

[1.4] Tuition Plan payments reserve a dedicated lesson slot for the student throughout the academic year. Because this lesson time is held specifically for the student, payments remain payable whether the student attends lessons or not.

[1.5] The Layston Music academic year is structured around:

- 6 half terms
- An aim of approximately 4–7 lessons per half term depending on calendar dates and scheduling
- 1 weeks of make-up/extra lessons during the summer holidays and make-up weeks through the year.

This structure provides flexibility throughout the year for timetable planning, teacher illness, make-up sessions and academic calendar variations.

[1.6] Where holidays or unavoidable absences are booked and communicated in advance, a make-up lesson may be offered during designated make-up weeks.

[1.7] Where possible, lesson videos, practice guidance and/or homework may be provided in cases of student absence, provided notice is given before the lesson start time.

Students are also welcome to attend lessons via Zoom if unable to attend in person.

[1.8] If Layston Music needs to cancel a lesson, replacement sessions will usually be offered during designated make-up weeks, at the end of half terms, or during additional summer lesson weeks. Teacher cancellations will not reduce the student's yearly lesson allocation.

[1.9] All students receive access to the MyMusicStaff student portal, including lesson schedules, invoices, practice notes, downloadable resources, lesson reminders and important studio information.

[1.10] If accounts fall into arrears by two months or more, Layston Music reserves the right to suspend lessons and offer the lesson slot to another student.

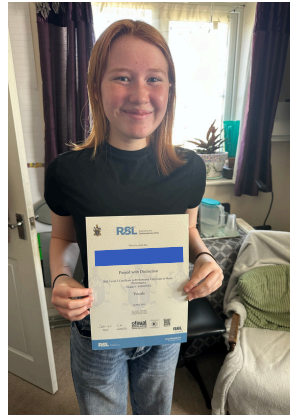
[1.11] Ad-hoc lessons require a minimum of 48 hours' notice for cancellation. Lessons cancelled with less than 48 hours' notice will be charged in full.

There is absolutely no pressure to move across immediately, however I do feel this system creates a much better long-term structure for both families and the running of Layston Music.

Please let me know if you would like to stay on your current billing and invoicing by 31st July 2026. Thank you.

Reviews

A Small Favour – Reviews Really Help



If your child is enjoying their lessons, Or you have been to one of my events, I would be so grateful if you could leave a quick Google review.

It genuinely makes a big difference for small local businesses like mine — helping other families find us and feel confident choosing lessons.

You can leave one here:

<https://g.page/r/Ca8PkSEiqacMEBM/review>

Thank you so much to those who already have — it really does mean a lot.

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If you can't attend in person, you are welcome to:

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- request a video lesson with instructions and exercises
- arrange a swap where possible

If you know you will be away, please try to book the time off before the month begins so the slot can potentially be offered to an Ad-Hoc student.

If I ever need to cancel for any reason, a make-up lesson or account credit will always be offered.

About Me

Talena and Cuthbert



For newer families, I'm Talena Cuthbert (BA MCMA) — vocal coach, piano teacher, music mentor, singer-songwriter and music practitioner with over 20 years of teaching experience.

My background includes a BA (Hons) in Popular Music & Recording, alongside additional training in sound therapy, music therapy approaches, ASD awareness, and children and young people's mental health.

Alongside technical teaching, I specialise in helping students build confidence, creativity and emotional connection through music. Lessons are designed not just to help students improve musically, but to help them feel safe to express themselves, perform, and grow.

I am also, admittedly, slightly chaotic at times — but I care deeply about every student, and I genuinely love helping people discover what they're capable of.

Thank you, as always, for being part of the Layston Music family.

It's a real privilege to teach your children and watch them grow — not just as musicians, but as confident, expressive young people.

See you in lessons,

Warm wishes,

Talena Cuthbert



Join us for a relaxed community celebration of music featuring performances from **Layston Music students** from our local community.

Summer Shindig

celebrating the creativity and dedication of our young musicians.

SATURDAY 20TH JUNE 2026
STUDENT PERFORMANCES
12:30 - 7:30PM

LIVE POP & ROCK VOCAL SET
FROM TALENA
8PM - 10:30PM

The Chequers Pub, London Road, Barley, Herts

FIRST TUESDAY OF THE MONTH



Sing for your Supper

LAYSTON MUSIC

SING. EAT. DRINK. LAUGH. SOCIALISE



THE FIRST
TUESDAY OF
EACH MONTH

DIFFERENT THEME
EACH TIME
WITH GUEST SINGERS

TICKETS FROM

£12.50

INCLUDES SUPPER

THE
CHEQUERS
BARLEY

WWW.LAYSTONMUSIC.CO.UK/SING-FORYOUR-SUPPER

2026

Term Time Lessons

Rest Weeks/Holidays

Make-Up/Extra Lesson Week/Exams /Workshops

Shindigs/Performances

JANUARY

WK	M	T	W	T	F	S	S
				1	2	3	4
	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
14	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
15	26	27	28	29	30	31	

FEBRUARY

WK	M	T	W	T	F	S	S
							1
16	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
17	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
18	23	24	25	26	27	28	

MARCH

WK	M	T	W	T	F	S	S
							1
19	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
20	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
21	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29
	30	31					

APRIL

WK	M	T	W	T	F	S	S
			1	2	3	4	5
	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
23	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
24	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
25	27	28	29	30			

MAY

WK	M	T	W	T	F	S	S
25					1	2	3
26	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
27	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
28	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
-	25	26	27	28	29	30	31

JUNE

WK	M	T	W	T	F	S	S
MU	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
29	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
30	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
31	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
32	29	30					

JULY

WK	M	T	W	T	F	S	S
32			1	2	3	4	5
33	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
34	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
MU	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
	27	28	29	30	31		

AUGUST

WK	M	T	W	T	F	S	S
						1	2
	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Ex	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
	31						

SEPTEMBER

WK	M	T	W	T	F	S	S
0			1	2	3	4	5
1A	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
2B	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
3A	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
4B	28	29	30				

OCTOBER

WK	M	T	W	T	F	S	S
4B				1	2	3	4
5A	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
6B	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
MU	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
	26	27	28	29	30	31	

NOVEMBER

WK	M	T	W	T	F	S	S
							1
7A	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
8B	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
9A	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
10B	23	24	25	26	27	28	29
11A	30						

DECEMBER

WK	M	T	W	T	F	S	S
11A		1	2	3	4	5	6
12B	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
13A	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
B	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
A	28	29	30	31			

Spring Term 2026 A

Mon 19th Jan – Sun 15th Feb

Week 14 – 17

Make-Up Week -----

Spring Term 2026 B

Mon 23rd Feb – Sun 29th March

Week 18 – 22

Make-Up Week -----

Summer Term 2026 A

Mon 13th Apr – Sun 24th May

Week 23 - 28

Make-Up Week 1st June

Summer Term 2026 B

Mon 8th Jun – Sun 19th Jul

Week 29 - 36

Make-Up Week 20th July

Autumn Term 2026 A

Mon 7th Sept – Sun 18th Oct

Week 01 - 06

Make-Up Week 19th October

Autumn Term 2026 B

Mon 7th Nov – Sun 20th Dec

Week 07 – 12

Make-Up Week 4th Jan '27