

The Kanneh-Masons

Is this the most talented family in Britain?

This was the question asked by the TV and music producer, Simon Cowell, when six of the seven brothers and sisters were on the TV show 'Britain's Got Talent' in 2015.

The children are often called 'prodigies', but their mother doesn't like this. She knows they are talented musicians, but says that they are **successful** because they work very hard.

In 2016, **Sheku**, one of the two brothers and a **brilliant** cellist, was the BBC Young Musician of the Year. He was just 17 years old. His sister **Isata**, 19, was also a finalist in the BBC competition in 2014. She is a pianist and a violinist. But, amazingly, they are not the only **talented** musicians in the family. Their brother **Braimah**, 18, and sisters, **Konya**, 15, **Jeneba**, 13, **Aminata**, 10, and little **Mariatu**, 6, can all play musical instruments really well.

Isata and Braimah are **full-time** students at the Royal Academy of Music in London. Isata has a scholarship from the singer/songwriter **Elton John**. She plays the piano, violin and viola. Braimah plays the violin. Next is Sheku. He could play the cello when he was six and now attends the junior school of the Royal Academy. He gets up at 4.30 a.m. every Saturday and goes by train to London. His sisters go with him.



The family live in Nottingham, England. Mother, **Kadie**, is from Sierra Leone, West Africa, and the father, **Stuart**, comes from Antigua, in the Caribbean. They are both very musical – Stuart plays the cello and Kadie the clarinet, so you could always hear some music in their home. But they say that their children’s amazing musical talent is still a shock to them and they now have an orchestra in their house. Isata, the eldest, was the first to start playing (the piano), and so when the others were born it was **normal** to hear music in their house. Their home has four pianos, three cellos, four violins, and a viola, and the children practise for two hours a day, sometimes more.

The family aren’t **rich**. Money is always a worry. Instruments are very **expensive** – one cello string costs £80! Their car is very **old** and they never buy new clothes or go on holiday. But the parents are very **proud** of their children. Their father, Stuart, says, ‘A lot of teenage boys, especially, feel it isn’t **‘cool’** to play an instrument.’ He’s really pleased that his children don’t think that.



Sheku at the royal wedding

In 2018, Sheku was a special guest at the royal wedding of Prince Harry and Meghan Markle, where he played three of his favourite pieces on the cello.

