

Principal's Public Main report

Introduction

The higher education/conservatoire sector continued to meet with the Minister for Universities to make the case for those students undertaking practice-based courses to be included in the first tranche of students allowed back on campus for in-person teaching and to fulfil their learning outcomes and progression/graduation through performances. We returned to in-person teaching on March 8 which gave us the last three weeks of the spring term to complete outstanding performance work and assessments. We are continuing with a largely in-person programme for the summer term which completes our academic year and will enable final recitals and drama and opera performances to take place. We are currently planning a number of scenarios for limited audience attendance after 17 May.

The postponed Graduation Ceremony from November 2020 took place online on 26 March 2021. This was a completely new undertaking, but staff rose to the occasion and despite the initial misgivings of many graduating students, the event was a joyous celebration, with students attending from across the world and able to be with their colleagues in zoom rooms during the ceremony and for informal celebrations post ceremony. The Lord Mayor added gravitas and wise words to the occasion and Peter Sellars delivered an inspirational address on behalf of the honorands. 275 graduands attended, some with their parents and guests and 1200 viewed the event on the day. My thanks to Deputy Chair, Graham Packham who hosted the event due to the unavailability of our Chair. The Students' Union is considering plans for informal celebratory events later in the year and some graduates will also be returning to take part in events such as the Production Arts Industry Showcase.

Students' Union Elections will take place on 17th May. The Senior Management team are looking forward to continuing our excellent relationships with the SU Executive as we manage the challenges of the pandemic together.

The School Covid Gold Team continues to manage the significant amount of day-to-day decision-making required and to keep students and staff informed of health and safety procedures being implemented. There is a DfE expectation of twice weekly asymptomatic testing now that the students and staff have returned in person. We have obtained home test kits for distribution which should add a further opportunity to that of our local testing partnerships and the increasing opportunities in communities. We have been informed that students will be vaccinated in May and are awaiting further information.

Despite the continuing uncertainties around the lifting of all covid restrictions, planning is well under way for the new academic year commencing September 2021 which will feature some online learning where we have found this to be a positive contribution to course delivery, together with our in-person teaching and performance opportunities which underpin our practice-based approach to education and training. We now have well-developed alternative models of delivery which can be deployed should they be necessary and we are being realistic in our planning that government decisions could require an immediate response to do so at any time in the coming autumn months. It is important to once again acknowledge the huge commitment of staff and students in maintaining excellence and innovation in the

delivery of our programmes through an extremely challenging fourteen months and that many of our staff on the front line are exhausted and in need of an uninterrupted summer holiday.

Work on our Anti-Racism programme is progressing well and a newly constituted Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee has been convened and will meet for the first time on 29th April. Our external consultant Baljit Kaur will chair this committee until we have completed recruitment for a new EDI post. Another initiative being led by external diversity consultant Maureen Salmon, has resulted in a number of recommendations from our acting alumni community and we will be sharing her Summary of Findings very shortly as part of our anti-racist action plan.

On 26th April we held our first on-line supporters evening with a panel of four students, the Principal, and the Vice Principal & Director of Production Arts, Andy Lavender, who chaired the evening. We had over 60 attendees and although we missed being in the same room with all of our committed scholarship donors and supporters, it was important to keep in touch and the resulting feedback was very positive.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Vice Principal, Director of Music Jonathan Vaughan on his recent professorial conferment in recognition of his extensive contribution to the development of music education and training. We will be celebrating with Professor Vaughan in the summer when it is safe to do so.

I would also like to take this opportunity to record the School's appreciation for our retiring chair of the Board, Vivienne Littlechild. The School has been so fortunate to have had such a committed chair for the last three years. Under Vivienne's chairmanship, the School achieved Gold in the teaching excellence awards and has been recognised as Number One Conservatoire in the UK.

Vivienne's commitment to the students and staff has been absolute. Her attendance record at students' performances and presentations has been astounding and she has been a great ambassador for our world-leading community of artists and practitioners. On a personal note, I would like to thank Vivienne for her unwavering commitment to the ambitious vision for the future of the School and for her support for the Principal and Executive Team as we led the School through the extreme challenges of the past fourteen months.

Vale

It is with sadness that I report the death of Jane Manning, long term Professor at Guildhall School who died last month. Jane was one of the leading vocal exponents within international contemporary music practice, commissioning and premiering many new works by contemporary composers across many decades. She inspired so many young singers and composers and will be remembered for her exacting mentorship and generosity in sharing a lifetime of experience at the cutting edge of repertoire development. She will be missed by all of us at the Guildhall School.

We are also sad to pass on the news of the death of actor, Helen McCrory, partner of alumni Damien Lewis. The School recognises Helen's extraordinary talent and her

support of the students of the School. Our thoughts are with Helen's family and friends as they adjust to life without her inspirational presence.

Quality of Learning and Teaching

The staff and students of the Music Department continue to rise to the many challenges posed by Covid. Despite the restrictions the community has been industrious and imaginative with its many online projects, teaching observations, broadcasts and ensemble performances. It has been a joy to see the community return to the building this term for face to face teaching.

Following our adventures in low latency broadcasting last year, the Gold Medal returned to the Barbican on 6th May this year. This was the 106th consecutive year of the medal and featured four outstanding singers. Thando Mjandana, Laura Lolita Peresivana, Thom Mole and Olivia Boen.

In the Chamber Music department, The Consone Quartet, current chamber music fellows and BBC New Generation Artists, will return for a second year of fellowship for 2021/22 and will be joined by current student group and winners of the Trondheim International Chamber Music Competition, the Mithras Trio, with the support of the Cosman Keller Art& Music Trust.

In Opera, a full production of Jonathan Dove's Little Green Swallow was filmed at the end of last term and will be broadcast later this summer.

Toby Hession has been appointed Emerging Artist Repetiteur at Scottish Opera. The previous incumbent was Michael Papadopoulos, who recently made his ROH debut as a Jette Parker Young Artist, conducting their acclaimed production of Kurt Weill's "The Seven Deadly Sins".

In the Strings department, in spite of lockdown, year 4 Undergraduates have been creatively engaging with teaching observations both nationally and internationally, realising their own teaching projects online as part of Professional Studies 2. Student projects included a Mendelssohn Octet workshop with students from Bryanston School in February, and shadow teaching in conservatoires in France, Spain and Holland,

Production Arts Highlights

We were delighted to welcome students back into our buildings for the final three weeks of the Spring Term to undertake work on productions. This has also raised some challenges, (which I reflect on below), but the overarching feeling was one of (what a colleague described as) 'quiet euphoria' as we returned to in-person activities in our performance and production spaces – all with covid-safe protocols in place, of course.

Concerts and performances included *The Great British Songbook – the Beatles Reimagined*, presented by Guildhall Studio Orchestra. Supported by the Recording and Audio Visual Department, the event was made possible by way of Guildhall's leading-edge low-latency system – with strings in Silk Street Music Hall, the band,

woodwind and brass in Milton Court Concert Hall, Malcolm Edmonstone conducting from Silk Street G41, and the AV team operating from its studio in Milton Court. The event received over 1500 views. Guildhall Symphony Orchestra enjoyed another performance using our low latency system, presenting a programme that included Symphony No.3 in F major, Op.90 by Brahms, and Elgar's Symphony No.1 in A-flat major, Op.55 – this concert received 1000 views. The significance of this is that it demonstrates Guildhall embedding the low-latency system as a resource to support our public performance programme. And while on the subject of digital infrastructures for live events – following the success of last term's drama performances, GLE (Guildhall Live Events) and the Recording & AV department have been approached to capture a production this term for Royal Central School of Speech and Drama.

The Production Arts department has agreed a new strategic plan that charts some key lines of development over the next phase. These include (among other initiatives) the expansion of opportunities for students to undertake work that foregrounds their own creativity and skill as production artists; the extension of our engagement with digital production (including work in screen drama, motion capture and virtual reality); and ensuring greater diversity in our student recruitment and our staffing. We're delighted to have recruited an Outreach Project Manager to coordinate a range of short courses and other initiatives with colleagues across the School, working with Guildhall Young Artists (GYA), Guildhall Innovation, Short Courses & Summer Schools, and Access & Participation. We're also thrilled to be welcoming into the department ten diverse industry practitioners as mentors, this Summer Term, for our Third Year students. This will be of particular benefit to the students as they make preparations to leave Guildhall and enter the world of work, at a time when the entertainment industry is so challenged by the pandemic, but also as we anticipate that things will start up again with renewed energy and imagination.

On that note, we're seeing our graduating cohort of 2020 getting their first jobs as the industry comes back to life. For instance, Ellie Banfield has been employed as a Production Runner on *Peaky Blinders* (BBC) and Georgia Dacey as a Deputy Stage Manager with Opera Holland Park.

Innovation and Engagement Highlights

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

- Recruitment of the newly re-formed EDI Committee has concluded, and the first meeting took place on Thursday 29th April. Due to the high level of interest, a two-stage process was run to enable staff to apply, and three students representing Welfare, Diversity and the African Caribbean Society were put forward by the Students' Union. We have now invited 21 people to join the Committee from across the institution. They represent a range of protected characteristics, and/or have specific experience of working with people from these groups.
- The Committee is now in the process of establishing its working practices and how it will drive and maintain progress against the Anti-Racism Action Plan recommendations, which came out of the Task Force towards the end of 2020. This will involve the formation of various working groups that will interface with individuals and other faculty working groups across the School.

Likewise, the Committee will also be holding senior leadership to account for EDI progress and ensure transparent governance.

Barbican Guildhall Creative Alliance

- The Creative Alliance Working Group has now met twice and is proving to be an effective forum for the exchange of ideas to facilitate joint planning of bridging projects.
- Following input from the Working Group, the 2020-21 Creative Alliance projects are being updated and/or changed for 2021-22 to reflect the changing priorities over the past year.
- The new programme is currently undergoing consultation / sign-off with Joint Directorate and will be reported back to both Boards in due course (for information).

Open Programmes

- Two online courses in Music Theory and Music Therapy took place during the Easter holiday.
- 15 online and 10 in person short courses are being delivered for the Summer programme. Bookings for in-person Summer Schools will officially open on Monday 26 July.
- The piloting of short courses with the Barbican continues. Following the success of the first course on Brutalism, two more evening courses (Photography and Performance Art) will run in the summer term. Planning is also underway for Autumn 2021 / Spring 2022 courses.

Partnerships & Programming

- The Moor Lane community garden launched in March with a short film created by an alumni and a number of current students. [The Moor Lane Community Garden - Free Festival in London - Culture Mile](#). The garden in Moor Lane can also be visited in person.
- A new partnership for Music Bank (our musical befriending project) is being developed with Age UK East, having delivered a successful programme with Age UK Camden. A pilot in-person service will start in July with their memory group.
- DISRUPT received over 250 applications to be a part of the commissioned programme. 16 have now been selected and a programme is being constructed for the July festival. The website launched in April - <https://www.disruptfestival.org>

Guildhall Live Events:

- The team are currently working on a major collaboration with the University of East Anglia - Creative 50, celebrating their innovative creative writing programme through installations, exhibitions and digital events. The programme launches in May 2021.

Under 18

Guildhall Young Artists (GYA)

- All 7 GYA physical centres with 1,400 students and nearly 300 tutors have successfully moved learning back to full in-person or blended learning for the start of the summer term having been entirely online for the spring term. Every centre has welcomed new recruits which bodes well for growth once social distancing restrictions are further lifted.
- Recent data tracking showed 46 students (nearly 40% of leavers – Years 13+) from the 2019/20 cohort of GYA students moving onto higher education to study music, and in 1 case drama; 6 to Guildhall school to music and drama courses, 24 to other conservatoires and 15 to other universities.
- The 2020 GYA Transitions programme, established by the Access & Participation team, which seeks to encourage those from unrepresented backgrounds to progress to Guildhall School and other Conservatoires/HE has also seen positive results for autumn 2021 entry. 13 GYA participants (59.1% of those on the programme) applied to a BMus programme; 9 via the Supported Application Scheme. Guildhall School made 6 offers and 1 reserve offer.
- The new Guildhall Young Artists (GYA) Online centre has seen the new Young Composers course fully booked each term and an individual instrumental course also launched. Applicants have come from South Africa and Hong Kong. As a result of the positive uptake, this on-line initiative has exceeded its profit targets for 2020/1.

Music Education Islington (MEI)

- Of 68 Islington schools, 51 have now signed a Service Level Agreement with MEI. Schools get access to online resource Charanga, network meetings, CPD, projects and events. Delivery of instrumental/singing tuition spans 16 schools and reaches c2500 children.
- As part of MEI in partnership with Islington Council Children in Need (CiN) services to collaborate on Islington Covid-19 response work, we have developed a series of projects and activities for the least engaged students at secondary school level, including 'My voice and me' led by Bad-Lay-Dee and Jermain Jackman, as well as music production in secondary schools and Islington's medical Pupil Referral Unit (PRU).
- The two MEI Music Centres have continued online and have reached pre-lockdown participation (131 students pre-lockdown, 135 students summer term 2021). The increase is due to a) the introduction of a new course aimed at younger students in year 2 and 3 and b) continuation of students beyond the primary school years.
- In partnership with Islington's youth organisations and music organisation, MEI ran the 2nd Lockdown Live #2 event, led this time by young people in core areas of the project. The final playlist includes 16 original tracks by young music makers in Islington. The playlist can be accessed [here](#). 'Legacy' activities will allow all young people who uploaded a track to access industry-orientated workshops.
- The summer term will also see the re-union of our 11:11 Collective: Music Maker Lab, which started as a collaborative partnership with Arsenal FC.

Advancement

- Graduation took place successfully online in March adding 200 new graduates to our alumni community. Fellowships were awarded on the day to American theatre director Peter Sellars, former Vice Principal and Director of Production Arts, Ben Sumner, and alumni Natasha Gordon, an award-winning writer and actor, and successful lighting designer Prema Mehta.
- Many events planned for our digital spring events season had to be postponed or cancelled due to government restrictions imposed in early January; however, a number of events were able to go ahead, some with students creating and performing from home, and some in-person at the School once students returned. The two most viewed broadcasts were Pieces of Us, a devised work by Acting, Production Arts and Electronic & Produced Music students, and the Guildhall Studio Orchestra's The Great British Songbook – The Beatles Reimagined concert, attracting over 6,000 views between them. As a whole, the spring season of events reached audiences in 95 countries across the world.
- Our annual Supporters' Evening took place online in April involving a Q&A with the Principal, Vice Principal and Director of Production Arts and 4 students. There were over 80 attendees including donors, governors, trustees, staff and students.

Prizes and Awards

It's been a very successful year for 2nd year Undergraduate violist Ami-Louise Johnsson. After winning the Max&Peggy Morgan prize in the autumn, in March she was named one of two Junior Award winners of the Hattori Foundation <https://www.hattorifoundation.org.uk/award-winners.html#>

4th year Undergraduate violinist Sophia Prodanova performed at Wigmore Hall March 26 as a member of the early music ensemble Arcangelo, with soloist Alina Ibragimova. Sophia has been one of three young artists named in 2020 to Arcangelo's *New Ensemblists* scheme for a two-year apprenticeship. Sophia has also joined the professional Pasqualati string quartet, led by Florence Cooke (Guildhall Alumna), Max Mandel (principal viola of OAE) and cellist Christoph Richter (professor at RAM).

Victor Braojos (Artist Diploma, Piano) has been added to the roster of featured artists at the Keyboard Trust.

Staff

Simone Ibbett-Brown (Opera) was the winner of the **Women of the Future Awards**

Alumni

Recent Artist Diploma graduate violinist Pablo Hernán-Benedí (MPerf, Junior Fellow, BMus) performed April 14 and 15 at Wigmore Hall as long-standing member of the acclaimed Chiaroscuro Quartet.

Alumnus violinist Jenna Sherry is currently developing a chamber music programme for the Young Talents Programme at the Conservatoire of the Hague. Jenna is also the founder and artistic director of [The Birdfoot Festival](#), which celebrated its 10th anniversary this year with highly innovative online events, including the signature participatory events [the kitchen table, backstage of backstages](#).

Michaela Coel (Graduate 2012, Acting)

- Winner of a Royal Television Society Award
- Nominated for BAFTAS (- 8 nominations for 'I May Destroy You' - including leading actress, mini series, director)

Kingsley Ben-Adir (Graduated 2011, Acting)

Nominated for an EE British Academy Film Award: Rising Star Award

Report author

Lynne Williams, Principal

principal@gsmd.ac.uk