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| <b>Committee(s):</b>  | <b>Date(s):</b>     |
| Board of Governors of the Guildhall School of Music & Drama   | 9 February 2015     |
| <b>Subject:</b> Gold Medal Competition  | <b>Public</b>       |
| <b>Report of:</b> Principal   | <b>For Decision</b> |
| <p><b><u>Summary</u></b></p> <p>The Guildhall Gold Medal for music reaches its centenary in 2015. This report discusses options for revising the format of the competition and the number of prizes to be awarded:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">A) - no change</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">B) - more prizes</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">C) - one prize</p> <p><b>Recommendation:</b><br/>That the Board reviews the options and advises the School on its preferred position.</p> |                     |

### **Main report**

1. The Guildhall School awards three gold medals, for music, acting and technical theatre, plus the Lutine Prize for Junior Guildhall. The Gold Medal for music was founded by Sir H Dixon Kimber in 1915 and celebrates its centenary this year. Unlike the drama gold medals, the music Gold Medal is awarded following a public competition in the form of a concert in the Barbican Hall.
2. The Gold Medal is awarded in alternate years to a singer or an instrumentalist. The winner also receives a cash prize of £1,000 donated by the Musicians' Company. The runner-up receives a glass trophy donated by the Glass Sellers' Company. In years when the finalists are singers, a cash prize, kindly donated by Alderman Andrew Parmley, is also awarded to the best accompanist.
3. Following the competition in 2014, a question about the competition was asked at a meeting of the Court of Common Council. The questioner noted that in that year the third-placed finalist had been left empty-handed at the end of the evening. In reply to the question, the Chairman undertook to look into the merit of awarding a third prize.
4. After discussion and consultation with the Director of Music and the Head of Music Administration, the School has identified three options for consideration by the Board:
 

**Option A – ‘do nothing’**
5. The principal argument against awarding a third prize is that there are frequently more than three finalists and, in years when the finalists are singers, there are

usually four finalists. A third prize would therefore quickly prompt the question of why there is not a fourth prize.

6. It has been the School's practice to award the Musicians' Company silver medal to the third-placed finalist after the event. The silver medal is not officially part of the Gold Medal competition but is awarded separately. It is not awarded during the ceremony on stage because a silver medal could be taken to imply second place, when in fact the runner-up is awarded the Glass Sellers' trophy.

**Option B – 'all shall have prizes'**

7. This option builds on option A and would entail, in any one year, providing as many prizes – either in the form of a trophy or a cash prize, or both – as there are finalists in that year. The principal arguments against taking this route are that:
  - a) the addition of more trophies, with or without cash, would further complicate the existing mix;
  - b) would result in the need to provide a cash prize for the runner-up; and
  - c) would risk devaluing the competitive element of the evening which, for many of the audience, is one of its main attractions. The silver medal would also fit uncomfortably in this scenario.

**Option C – 'winner takes all'**

8. For many years, there was only one prize – the Gold Medal. There is an argument for reverting to this position in order to maintain and enhance the prestige of the competition: the medal is struck from solid gold, weighs 20 grams and therefore has high inherent as well as symbolic value. This option would involve approaching both the Musicians' and the Glass Sellers' companies to gauge their willingness to continue to support the event in an alternative format that preserves their own long-standing sponsorship of the competition. Under no circumstances would we wish to cause offence to such loyal supporters of the School.
9. A variation of this option might be, additionally, to award a larger cash prize to the winner at a level commensurate with comparable competitions elsewhere.

**Recommendation**

10. No change is recommended in 2015, but the centenary does provide an opportunity to revise the format of the music Gold Medal for 2016 and beyond. The School's preferred position is Option C, with or without a larger cash prize. The current arrangements are somewhat diffuse and the addition of more prizes would make them less focussed. In the School's mind the Gold Medal is rather like the FA Cup – there is only one cup and there should only be one winner.
11. If this option were acceptable to the Board, the School would take the opportunity to review the management of the announcement and the presentation, to ensure that all finalists were on stage during the ceremony and able to receive a well-earned accolade.

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