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## **What's Next?**

Top tips for life  
after Guildhall

**GUILD  
HALL  
SCHOOL**

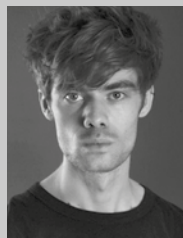
## Featured graduates



**Lewis Daniel**  
Jazz Saxophone



**Alex Knox**  
Acting



**Seth Scott Deuchar**  
Electronic Music



**Rory Beaton**  
Theatre Technology



**Amelia Kosminsky**  
Video Design for Live Performance



**Daniel de Souza**  
French Horn



**Matthew Rainsford**  
Trumpet



**Rebekah Carpio**  
Clarinet



**Isabel Ribbeck**  
Stage Management



**Vahan Salorian**  
Composition



**James Garner**  
Composition



**Katie Macdonald**  
Flute



**Elisabeth Swedlund**  
Vocal Studies



**Rachael Bull**  
Cello



**Maddie Cutter**  
Cello

## What's Next?

Welcome to life after Guildhall.

We're not going to try and tell you what your career will hold because each will be unique. However, we do hope we can help you ask yourself the right questions as you take the next steps in your career. Questions like, "Is it true that tax doesn't have to be taxing?", "Who can help me build a great CV?", "What can I do to secure work?"

We've spoken to the real experts – people who have left Guildhall in the last few years, and asked them about their career experiences (good and bad). Their interviews have been abridged for this booklet, but you can see their full profiles on the Alumni section of the School website, and we'll be adding to the list with more of our graduates in the future.

The support available to you goes beyond this guide too. Our Careers and Employability team will be hosting events and workshops throughout the year to help you take your first or next steps onto the career ladder. Stay tuned for more information from the team.

### Stay in touch

Graduation doesn't have to be the end of your time at Guildhall. The alumni team will be here to support you as embark on your career and beyond. We're here to help you maintain a lifelong connection with Guildhall and with each other, sharing experiences and expertise and enjoying alumni-exclusive offers, events, networking and volunteering opportunities.

Guildhall alumni are a huge community within the performing arts industry, and a powerful network. We hope that the transferable skills you have gained during your time at the School will allow you to contribute to this network and use your creativity in the world of the performing arts or beyond.

You can get in touch with the alumni team using [alumni@gsmd.ac.uk](mailto:alumni@gsmd.ac.uk). We're always happy to promote a project, appointment, or award, or support you in any way we can. Like us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter for Guildhall news, offers and opportunities. We hope you enjoy reading this booklet and that you find it helpful. Please drop us a line if you have any thoughts or feedback.

All the best,

**Tom Steer**  
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Twitter: **@GuildhallAlumni**

[gsmd.ac.uk/alumni](https://www.gsmd.ac.uk/alumni)

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## Where do I start looking?

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### Useful links

Arts Council Job listing – [artsjobs.org.uk](http://artsjobs.org.uk)

The Stage – [thestage.co.uk](http://thestage.co.uk)

Rhinegold Jobs – [rhinegoldjobs.co.uk](http://rhinegoldjobs.co.uk)

Musical Chairs – [musicalchairs.info](http://musicalchairs.info)

Prospects – [prospects.ac.uk](http://prospects.ac.uk)

The Deutsche Bank Awards for Creative Enterprise – [dbace.org](http://dbace.org)

Mandy (formerly Stage Jobs Pro and Casting Call Pro) – [mandy.com](http://mandy.com)

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### Useful books

Natalie Burt – *Acting: Cut the Crap, cue the Truth*

Sara Peacock – *Careers in Music*

Mike Lawler – *Careers in Technical Theater*

Susan Hallam and Helena Gaunt – *Preparing for Success: A Practical Guide for Young Musicians*

Jane Drake Brody – *The Actor's Business Plan*

Rhinegold – *The Musicians' Handbook*

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### Barbican Creative Careers

If you're someone who works or wants to work in a creative industry, join the Barbican Creatives at our monthly sessions that give you the chance to meet leading creatives and artists to discuss the state of the industry and how you can fit into it, shape it and make it work for you.

[barbican.org.uk/creativecareers](http://barbican.org.uk/creativecareers)

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## Lewis Daniel

### Jazz Saxophone 2013

*Lewis writes and arranges for artists including the House Gospel Choir, who have toured UK festivals such as Glastonbury. He also combines session work with his own projects, functions and teaching.*

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#### What sort of work have you been doing since you graduated?

I've always wanted to do different things – to wake up singing one day, doing a session another day, writing and arranging music, and so on, and I think I'm getting there!

I took a teaching job with Merton Music Foundation but I didn't have that many hours, which was a bit of a struggle. I'm now teaching two days a week on a self-employed basis which is great for its flexibility and the control you can have.

I continued a lot of projects that I'd started during my degree; I knew I wasn't always one of the strongest when it came to the jazz course and had a lot to learn, so I felt early on that I had to find my own lane.

*Get Lifted* was born in my second year at Guildhall. We put on nights throughout Guildhall for people who were unsigned and were writing cool artistic material. I won the Deutsche Bank Award for Creative Enterprise in 2013, and with that we bought equipment and set up a YouTube channel. *Get Lifted* is still going now and has been invaluable to me learning business skills like organising projects, recruiting, and headhunting. Being aware of yourself as a brand and the power of social media are also important. I'm not a networking fiend but social media has allowed me

to show off what I do. I wouldn't say I'm a jazz musician anymore: I use jazz to inform my arranging and playing, but I see myself more as a creative, with music being at the core of what I do.

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#### You've mentioned teaching – how do you find it?

It's a learning process. You have to learn what I call the teaching licks; certain people do the same things and you have to work out what's wrong and how to fix it. It took a long time to get to grips with engaging students who maybe aren't as talented or interested. I like seeing progression but it's hard when you have students who don't want to learn. Certain styles of teaching work and I enjoy them but I don't like whole class teaching and I have avoided it as much as I can!

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#### Lewis's top tips

Make contacts outside of music: you never know what collaborations will emerge. I'm writing music for actors and I've had people help me with website making. In general, the people you meet are happy to help!

Keep developing other skills and finding what you're good at.

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## Alex Knox

### Acting 2015

*Alex is an actor, singer and writer, and has recently started teaching singing on the Acting programme at Guildhall.*

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#### What did you get up to when you left Guildhall?

I had an audition the Monday after we finished Guildhall, which was a tour with a play, and got the job. The run started in September so I had the whole summer to pass. I went on holiday, which was really important, as it was good to have space away from Guildhall.

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#### How do you secure work?

It's important to keep in contact with people: connections help you get work. Directors and casting directors who know you and have seen you perform are more likely to give you a job. I would say 65% of the work that I got early on was work that I found, rather than my agent.

When you're auditioning for people you've never met before, it's just as much for jobs in the future as for now. You might not be right for that role but you need to make a good impression. My mindset has changed about auditions. I don't go in thinking, "I want to get the part", rather "I want to act as well as I can". If you don't get it, it's often out of your control, especially with a recall. Height, eye colour, hair colour, facial hair, it's probably nothing to do with your acting at that stage!

You often get calls for an audition taking place in the next couple of days, especially in TV, as they seem to cast very last minute.

It's difficult but it's something you have to be used to. You'll never get more than two weeks notice for an audition.

In theatre auditions you normally go in with scripts because your early rehearsals will include scripts. For film and TV you are taped, and the tape is sent to the director, so you will generally be off-script. One of the weirdest parts about auditioning is self-taping, where you are sent a bit of a script to record and send back. It can be a massive faff, especially if (speaking from experience) your phone runs out of battery or storage during a scene and you don't realise until the end!

We have *Spotlight*, which is the tool for actors to upload their CVs, and it helps to have a good mix on there: a range of different characters and roles and a mixture of theatre, film and TV.

I also really like teaching, I ran drama classes at my old school for a term and did some directing there, and I'm now covering some singing teaching in the Acting department at Guildhall.

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## Seth Scott Deuchar

### Electronic Music 2015

*Seth studied Electronic Music at Guildhall and is now a sound artist, research assistant, and teacher.*

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#### What have you been up to since you left Guildhall?

I'm part-time employed as a member of Electronic Music staff here at Guildhall and part-time freelance. That freelance work is very split and I rarely find myself doing the same thing from one month to the next. A lot of my freelance work came out of work that I did as a student, which is very encouraging in hindsight! One of my first major pro commissions was for one of the Barbican's foyer projects, which came off the back of my final project at Guildhall.

As well as my job here, I wrote to universities with film and video game courses to introduce myself and offer to collaborate with their students if they needed music written. These were unpaid projects at the time but have led to paid work since.

As a student I was always quite daunted by the 'weird stroke of luck' that successful artists seemed to have had, but looking back you see that those lucky moments are dotted about all over the place. I guess it's a case of always putting yourself out there and being ready to do the job you are offered, and doing it well.

There's a divide between one's own practice and the practice of making a living; a push and pull between a regular wage and your freelance career. For most recent grads there seems to be a nice way to get by; a bit of teaching or a job in a studio provides a guaranteed wage which frees you up to think about what you want to do artistically.

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#### You're now teaching at Junior Guildhall, how are you finding that?

It was an interesting shift. My first experience was group teaching as part of Professional Studies so I wasn't completely green, and I was a deputy teacher at Junior Guildhall for six months so I had a gentle introduction to the job. Doing the Professional Studies module gave me the confidence to accept the job and I do really enjoy the hands-on teaching side of things. I also think working with children will open opportunities in terms of Barbican work and also teaching in schools.

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## Rory Beaton

### Theatre Technology 2016

*Rory is a freelance lighting designer who has worked with companies such as Danish National Opera, Almeida Theatre, Wexford Festival Opera, Opera Holland Park, Scottish Opera and Chichester Festival Theatre.*

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#### What did you do in the first few months after Guildhall?

I started a job at Chichester Festival Theatre and then lit a production of *Rent* in Coventry, which I got through a Guildhall grad in the year above me. Then I went to Denmark for a month. Everything had a knock-on and both of those shows led to more work in Denmark, this time as a designer rather than associate. Three short operas at Wexford Festival and two pantos took me up until Christmas. I'd worked hard in my third year building a portfolio of design work, having had opportunities within Guildhall that year. I wasn't at all interested in opera while at Guildhall but I've ended up doing a lot of it now, which is great!

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#### What advice would you give about securing work?

Your third year sets you up for leaving. For me, it was about setting up a portfolio of photos of my designs so that I could show people what I'd done. I also worked as a technician at Barbican during my time at Guildhall, and in third year you can do projects for free or cheap to build up reputation and experience.

You have to make your CV look as good as it can be. For example anything you do at Barbican can look really good if you

describe it as 'Europe's largest arts centre'. People worry how their CVs are going to come across but you need to sell yourself.

It's a good idea to write to people and ask them for an 'I'd love to pick your brains' coffee. Write to people who are where you want to be, and ask them how they did it.

I try not to tell people how old I am as people assume that age and experience are proportionate. They almost are but ability isn't always related, especially in design. It's unfair but there's not much you can do about it other than prove to people who do book you that you are capable.

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#### The (other) technical stuff

I use an accountant. I find that easier as I do lots of jobs a year incurring expenses and contracts from foreign countries. They can save you a lot of money, including accounting for their own fee in your expenses. Agents are unusual for people straight out of drama school, but it's great for me because they're experienced and they do all my contracts, an area which can easily be a neglected and problematic area for freelancers. That support is also available from the unions alongside various other benefits including networking events [see page 10].

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## Amelia Kosminsky

### Video Design for Live Performance 2019

*Amelia is a London based visual artist working within different elements of light such as video design, light installations and photography.*

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#### What did you do when you first left Guildhall?

After leaving the course, I began working as a freelance artist. I had been developing a piece of mine during my final year, so continuing that process afterwards didn't feel too different. A great part of the VDLP course is working on external projects where you get to work with real clients, so I found that transitioning from student work to professional work was okay.

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#### What kind of work have you been doing?

During my final year on the VDLP course, I created a solo video design for Gerard McBurney and the Barbican, which ran in Milton Court Concert Hall. Off the back of that project, Gerard asked me to be the projection artist for his next project, working with the Philharmonia Orchestra and Esa-Pekka Salonen at the Queen Elizabeth Hall. Over that summer I met with the Philharmonia Orchestra and then worked with Gerard and Esa-Pekka to develop the project; creating the visuals for the *Weimar: To the Cabaret!* concert.

I have also created a light sculpture which will be going to a few festivals within the next couple of months.

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#### How did your career expectations change during your degree course?

Coming onto the course, I always knew that I was going to pursue a career working creatively, but I didn't know the scope that would encompass. Doing the lighting allocation in my second year allowed me to delve more into my wider interest in light, and, while video is a large part of my current work, it isn't the sole focus of my career. Having the understanding of the fundamentals of light has allowed me to create both light sculptures and video projections since finishing my course.

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#### What advice would you give to new graduates?

Try things out that aren't necessarily directly related to your course or pathway – you never know what interesting new things this might lead to!

## Practical information

### Agents

Some of you may find yourselves attached to an agency. Advice on agents can be found on some of the websites opposite, and actors can also refer to the Starting Out handbook.

### Alumni top tip

#### Ben Lloyd-Hughes, Acting 2011

*Every agent is unique so try not to look sideways at what other agents are doing. You don't have to be best friends with them: it's a business partnership. If you do want to leave or move, be as respectful and professional as you can, as you never know when this person might help you in the future (and because it's the right thing to do!). Sometimes agents take it personally, so (like with a breakup) try not to focus on the negative things or have a go at them and tell them everything they did wrong. I did it by email as it doesn't put them on the spot and gives them a chance to process it and call you (not advisable with a breakup).*

### Professional bodies

Insight from our graduates suggests that joining one or more professional bodies is worthwhile as your career develops. Unions offer support like tax and legal advice and networking events. Behind the scenes they negotiate rates of pay, advise the government, and generally work for the interests of their members.

Professional services like Spotlight, MAS and Morgensterns help you to find and manage your work, while PRS and PPL ensure that your written or recorded work is protected.

BAPAM (British Association for Performing Arts Medicine) and Help Musicians UK, among others, provide support services as well as some of the advice offered by unions.

<b>Unions</b>	<b>Musicians' Union</b>	<a href="http://musiciansunion.org.uk">musiciansunion.org.uk</a>
	<b>ISM (musicians)</b>	<a href="http://ism.org">ism.org</a>
	<b>Equity (actors/singers)</b>	<a href="http://equity.org.uk">equity.org.uk</a>
	<b>ALD (lighting designers)</b>	<a href="http://ald.org.uk">ald.org.uk</a>
	<b>ASD (sound designers)</b>	<a href="http://associationofsounddesigners.com">associationofsounddesigners.com</a>
	<b>ABTT (technicians)</b>	<a href="http://abtt.org.uk">abtt.org.uk</a>
	<b>Plasa (lighting and sound)</b>	<a href="http://plasa.org">plasa.org</a>
	<b>BECTU (entertainment)</b>	<a href="http://bectu.org.uk">bectu.org.uk</a>
<b>Professional Services</b>	<b>Spotlight &amp; Contacts (actors)</b>	<a href="http://spotlight.com">spotlight.com</a>
	<b>The Actors Centre</b>	<a href="http://actorscentre.co.uk">actorscentre.co.uk</a>
	<b>Musicians Answering Service</b>	<a href="http://maslink.co.uk">maslink.co.uk</a>
	<b>Morgensterns (diary service)</b>	<a href="http://morgensternsdiaryservice.com">morgensternsdiaryservice.com</a>
<b>Copyright</b>	<b>Performing Right Society</b>	<a href="http://prsformusic.com">prsformusic.com</a>
	<b>PPL (recorded music) (free)</b>	<a href="http://ppluk.com">ppluk.com</a>
<b>Charities</b>	<b>BAPAM (free)</b>	<a href="http://bapam.org.uk">bapam.org.uk</a>
	<b>Help Musicians UK (free)</b>	<a href="http://helpmusicians.org.uk">helpmusicians.org.uk</a>

### Alumni top tips

#### Vahan Salorian and James Garner, Composition 2015

*V: I'm registered for PRS (Performing Right Society) from years ago, you only have to do it once. It's something you need to be savvy about, I don't fully know the rules! The ISM puts on workshops for that sort of thing.*

*J: With PRS you always have to check contracts; some contracts sign away your rights. It's worth getting clued up.*

#### Daniel de Souza, Horn 2015

*In terms of professional bodies, a major reason to join is the public liability insurance, which is essential for private teaching: sometimes in schools and definitely at home. You can also get good deals on insurance, and you never know when you might just need to ring someone and ask for help. It's a bit of a painful expenditure but of course it is tax deductible!*

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## Tax

Tax is something that most Guildhall graduates will have to contend with. There's a lot of really useful advice already out there. Have a look at:

- The Government's page on Tax ([gov.uk/tax-help](http://gov.uk/tax-help))
- Union websites (including Equity, ISM, see page 11)
- *The Musicians' Handbook* (Rhinegold)
- Acting: *Cut the Crap, Cue the Truth* by Natalie Burt
- Help Musicians UK (see page 11)

Advice from our graduates suggests that sorting out your accounts in plenty of time is the best approach, and to consider whether an accountant may be worthwhile, as they may be able to save you time and money!

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## Alumni top tips

### Ben Lloyd-Hughes, Acting 2011

*Tax-wise, the sooner you can do it, the easier it is – you're going to have to go through your past year's finances so the quicker you do it, the easier it is to remember. If you've got an accountant they will be more expensive closer to the deadline. Use your free time as well as you can. The best accounts I ever did were when I was in only the second half of a play and spent the first half doing my accounts during the run!*

### Matthew Rainsford, Trumpet 2015

*It might be worth booking an hour or two with an accountant, and don't leave it to the last minute. You've got to keep your receipts together and it's best to sort them as you go, and keep hold of P60s etc. You can do the tax return anytime from April to January for the previous year, but the tax itself is due on 31 January so if you do it late you may have to stump up a lot of cash last minute.*

### Daniel de Souza, Horn 2015

*You may not be earning enough to pay tax when you leave but it's worth registering as self employed as soon as you can. You might have to do backdated tax returns when you sign up so it's better sooner than later.*

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## Daniel de Souza Horn 2015 & Matthew Rainsford Trumpet 2015

*Daniel and Matt are both London-based freelance brass players and teachers.*

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### What did you do first after leaving Guildhall?

**Matt:** After my MPerf I did the LPO Foyle Future Firsts Scheme, which is a fantastic programme aimed at recent graduates. Including roughly a lesson a month and superb sit-in sessions, it's a great way of continuing to learn in a pro setting without the time commitment of college. A summer job is a good thing, or go on holiday, as nothing much really happens over summer. I started doing some extras work for films which was really interesting too. Teaching jobs are advertised around the end of summer term so it's worth keeping an eye on Rhinegold jobs before summer. You can get on Tutorpages for £50 a year, so if you get one lesson out of it, it pays for itself.

**Dan:** I work at Paxman's [the horn shop] so I did lots of shifts there after leaving. You have to keep yourself busy. Do anything: I've been a chaperone, worked on music courses, in a shop, and teaching is the big one which provides a consistent income. I also did way more practice after leaving.

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### What did you do to secure work?

**M:** Writing to people is good. I would write to orchestral players and ask for a lesson or to come and play for them.

**D:** There's a weird stigma around it, it feels cheeky to ask for a work but otherwise people won't know you exist. You don't always get a response from the orchestra but then suddenly you might get a call with some work months later. I would write to the orchestral manager, with a letter to the principal player enclosed.

**M:** I went down to see the Musicians Answering Service (MAS) in Dorking. They're good with recent grads as they want to recruit people, so they will give you free advice. I met with the manager and she said it was a bit soon at the time but I joined when I had more on my CV. They're good at helping with CV layout and as they deal with fixers they have definitive insider knowledge of what a CV should look like. [See page 11.]

**D:** They're not an agency so they won't actively seek you work, but they will know who on their lists is likely to be free. It's a necessary but worthwhile expense, and of course it's tax deductible. You get a free online CV which people can search, whether they book through the MAS or not.

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## Further studies

Just in case your studies to date haven't sated you fully, here are the postgraduate courses that are available at Guildhall. You can find more information about them on the Guildhall website. (Courses at other institutions are also available.) Don't forget that if you apply for postgraduate courses while a final year student, the application fee is waived.

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### Postgraduate Degrees

- Guildhall Artist Masters in Performance or Composition
- Artist Diploma (post-postgraduate)
- Advanced Certificate
- MA in Opera Making and Writing
- MA in Music Therapy
- MA in Collaborative Theatre Production and Design
- PGCert in Performance Teaching
- Doctoral Programme

Check out the Fees and Funding section of the School website for information on funding for postgraduate courses. Current students can visit The Alternative Guide to Postgraduate Funding and obtain a login using your School email address. Head to [postgraduate-funding.com](http://postgraduate-funding.com) and then request login details.

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### Other options

- Fellowships (music only, see the Music section of the Intranet or talk to your Head of Department for more information)
- Creative Entrepreneurs (see page 20)

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### Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

Continuing Professional Development at the Guildhall School enables students, teachers and practitioners to meet their professional needs within a personal time frame. Our offer includes a range of courses reflecting disciplines across the School, so check out [gsmd.ac.uk/cpd](http://gsmd.ac.uk/cpd) for more information.

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## Rebekah Carpio

### Clarinet 2015 & current doctoral student

*Rebekah, a clarinetist on Guildhall's Orchestral Artistry pathway 2013–2015, is now in the fifth year of her research PhD.*

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### How did you get into Research?

While doing my undergrad in the US and starting the Orchestral Artistry course here, I did not envision a doctorate in my future. But my perspective completely changed during my two years in OA. I got involved in numerous education and outreach projects working with LSO Discovery and other organisations, and found a real passion for this work, which is now the basis of my research. Attending the Doctoral Open Day and ResearchWorks events over the year also helped me see what the Research side of Guildhall is all about.

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### How do you apply for the doctorate?

You put together a research proposal outlining your research questions and area of enquiry. I discussed a draft of my proposal with my WBP Heads of Department, and also had feedback from the Head of Research, Dr Newark, before submitting. I then had an interview with Dr Newark and Helena Gaunt [then Vice Principal and Director of Guildhall Innovation].

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### What's it like on the course?

The first year builds up research skills and refines research goals through full day seminars on Mondays. The course lasts four years, with three years of hands-on research and data collection, and the fourth year of writing-up your final 80,000 word dissertation, which can differ for other doctoral students. There are also checkpoints along the way: in first year, submitting a revised proposal which is more developed and fleshed out than for entry, and in second year submitting your upgrade (which is like a mini dissertation around 15,000 words) and having a mock viva to prepare for the final.

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### What sort of work exists for doctoral students?

There are lots of possibilities for doctoral students. Many students pursue doctoral studies in order to go into higher education teaching and academia, especially in the US where a PhD is almost a necessity for that career pathway. The research degree programme encourages you to further develop the skills you have, to research in great depth your area of enquiry, and can train you in lots of transferable skills for after graduation.



## Your transferable skills

Transferable skills are a set of skills that you acquire which are relevant and useful in a variety of fields. They are valued highly by employers and have become really hot property in the world of work. Over the course of your studies at Guildhall, you will have picked up skills which you could use in any field of work. They include:

Skill	Description
<b>Self management</b>	the ability to accept responsibility, to be flexible, resilient, to demonstrate appropriate assertiveness, time-management and readiness to improve performance based on reflective learning
<b>Team-working</b>	the ability to negotiate, co-operate, delegate, persuade but also to be aware of the individuality and interdependence of all the team members
<b>Business and customer awareness</b>	an understanding of the drivers for business success (innovation, calculation of risks) and the need to provide customer satisfaction and build customer loyalty
<b>Problem-solving</b>	the ability to apply critical and creative thinking to assess problems and develop innovative and relevant solutions to complex issues
<b>Communication and literacy</b>	the ability to express and convey messages or ideas clearly in both clear, structured written and spoken communication and give effective presentations to digital or non-digital audiences
<b>Numeracy</b>	the ability to interpret and explain data and the application of mathematical awareness in practical contexts
<b>Application of information technology</b>	basic IT skills, including familiarity with word processing, spreadsheets, file management and use of internet search engines
<b>Planning</b>	project management and the ability to demonstrate organisational skills
<b>Initiative</b>	the ability to be resourceful and to introduce a new course of action, to think for yourself and a readiness to work autonomously and independently when required
<b>Resilience</b>	the ability to perform under pressure, be adaptable to changing situations, cope with uncertainty or ambiguity, and deal positively and pro-actively with set-backs and criticism

Source: Association of Graduate Recruiters (2016). The AGR 2016 annual survey.

Ask yourself how ensemble/company work has developed your ability to **work as part of a team** and to **communicate effectively** with colleagues. Working with directors, designers, conductors, pupils, parents, teachers, librettists, audiences, agents, and so on all require excellent communication skills which will help you in any line of work.

**Self management** skills are vital in relation to private practice, personal development and meeting deadlines, which are significant elements of many of the programmes at Guildhall. Similarly, the ability to **plan effectively** and **manage projects** may well have been required as part of your course, for example Independent Performance Projects, Graduation Projects, etc.

**Problem-solving** could be anything from a technician working out how to relocate an oversized prop, or a musician mastering a particularly tricky passage, to an actor honing in the delivery of a particular accent. Consider a few examples of how you've solved or overcome problems in an innovative way, as this will impress potential employers, and give you something to talk about in an interview!

In terms of **literacy, numeracy** and **IT skills**, think about how you have presented work during your studies. Many assessments require the use of word-processing or presentation software, or you may have spent some time working on your online marketing.

Check out the learning outcomes in your Programme and Module Specifications for more on transferable skills. You can view them all online at [gsmd.ac.uk/programme-specifications](http://gsmd.ac.uk/programme-specifications)

### Alumni top tip

#### Daisy Evans, Voice 2013

*I did a degree in Classical Singing, and spent a year as President of the Students' Union. Since leaving the School I've worked at a creative agency, architectural interior design studio, and currently I'm at a tech start-up. I'm a Project Manager coordinating new website builds for charities which need, among others, the core skills of communication, collaboration, time management and leadership that you develop as a musician. On top of any skills you develop at the Guildhall School, the work ethic that you develop ensures you'll do well whatever you do next.*

#### Joshua Chapman, Voice 2011

*I use the skills I developed at Guildhall every single day, such as communication, negotiation, teamwork, leadership, organisation, time management, selfstarting, dedication, and motivation (to name but a few!). Your training is about understanding and working with people, understanding how to work on your own, discipline, initiative, and hard work, so you have to highlight these transferable skills in your applications and interviews.*

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## Izzy Ribbeck

### Costume 2018

*Izzy is a freelance dresser and wardrobe assistant that has worked on a variety of West End shows, most recently The Lion King and Jesus Christ Superstar.*

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#### What did you do after you left Guildhall?

Over the last year most of my work has been freelance dressing/wardrobe work in and around the West End.

The first thing I did to secure work was to print and post my CV and cover letter to as many London theatres as I could. I sent signed letters addressed to the relevant Head of Department and I contacted as many people as I could think of to ask about advice or opportunities they had, or any job vacancies. Facebook groups, WhatsApp chats and job sites such as *Mandy* and *The Stage* are also a great way to keep an eye on work opportunities.

I contacted a number of people I had worked with previously and went from there. Something I learnt very quickly was that it is your former colleagues, students and friends that will get you work, and so it's really important to keep in touch with them.

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#### What advice would you give to Guildhall students/graduates?

The best advice I can offer is to communicate. Everyone you come into contact with could be a future employer or a reference for you. It's a very small industry, so work hard, be positive and talk to people. Confidence is so important. Remember that everyone in this industry is in the same position and contacting people about work opportunities is very normal. Be brave and don't think that you're being cheeky, we all do it!

Having your CV and cover letter ready to send out at a moment's notice is vital. Always have a copy on your phone/emails that you can forward on. There are plenty of people that can help you get your CV to be the best it can be, so just ask if you're ever unsure. Make sure it's always up-to-date and that someone else has proof read it.

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#### Izzy's top tip

Enjoy yourself! Say yes to opportunities and make the most of them, have a good work ethic and be approachable. It's a great industry to work in with a lot of fun to be had!

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## Vahan Salorian & James Garner

### Composition 2015

*Vahan is a freelance composer currently working on his second opera commission, and a music teacher and workshop leader in east London. James is a composer and teacher currently writing 'Much Ado' for a 2020 premiere by Opera McGill in Montreal.*

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#### What did you first do when you left Guildhall?

**James:** Tête à Tête commissioned me to write a new 45-minute opera. They're one of the few opera companies in the UK that have an inclusive policy of engaging with young, female, BAME, and LGBT composers.

**Vahan:** The opera I wrote in third year was also taken up by Tête à Tête. We also both do teaching work. Every Child a Musician (ECaM) in Newham is a really good company. They provide free music tuition to every primary school in Newham so they always need teachers. Composition teaching jobs are not very common so for composers it's worth keeping your instrumental skills honed.

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#### How do you go about getting work?

**V:** There are lots of competitions and courses, although I've never entered any. There are open calls for scores but they're not always ideal as they expect you to write to a new thing which might not get picked or you have to write something for a specific ensemble, so it relies on you having a portfolio of stuff that has never been played but is already written.

**J:** I always steer clear of competitions that you have to pay to enter because you could fritter away money without getting any response. A lot of the ones with big fees are international, and 'young composer' competitions go up to 40 years old, which means many people who win these competitions are already professors.

**V:** You also have to keep your CV up to date, and not be afraid to big up the things you've done. The idea of brand is really relevant for composers.

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#### So what sort of work do you do now?

**V:** A lot of the commissions seem to come from opera, though I did do an orchestral thing up north. When your work is performed you've got to make sure you invite industry people, and make sure people know you've written it!

**J:** I've never done much commercial work, but you need to be competent with music technology. The sector can be quite a closed world; you need to commit to that industry through networking and establishing a showreel while still at Guildhall. (Networking is what it's all about!)

**V:** I also work in hospitality as a bar manager. Hospitality is the most flexible field of work. The late nights aren't great for writing but it does mean you have a lot more of your daytime free. I take Mondays off so I have a dedicated composition day.

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## Guildhall Creative Entrepreneurs

Guildhall Creative Entrepreneurs is a one-year part-time (one day per week during term time) business training programme which offers personalised teaching, mentoring and guidance to help you turn your creative idea into a sustainable, long term enterprise. Our partnership with award-winning social enterprise Cause4 means we can offer a unique combination of artistic, professional and business expertise specific to the performing arts.

Over the course of the year, you will combine expert-taught seminars and peer discussions covering the fundamentals of entrepreneurship with tailored 1-1 mentoring and guidance. Topics covered include developing your business plan, marketing & PR, pitching & presentation, legal guidance for entrepreneurs, and more.

The entrepreneurs we support are typically performing artists themselves (across dance, drama, music) or those with a business idea in the sector (producers, event managers, digital entrepreneurs). For more information, visit [gsmd.ac.uk/creativeentrepreneurs](http://gsmd.ac.uk/creativeentrepreneurs)

*“Guildhall Creative Entrepreneurs has certainly given me the skills, tools and confidence to make the orchestra work. Since starting the course our donations have increased ten-fold year-on-year.”*

Spencer Down, Founder and CEO of Docklands Sinfonia

*“We learned so much in terms of practical business skills and developing our company identity. We left having a clear idea of our mission as well as how we were going to move things forward.”*

Timothy Allsop and Francesca Wilding, Directors, Turn of Phrase

*“The programme helped us develop a business strategy that protected our core values. I realised that you don’t have to compromise your art to make money, just refine it.”*

Gavin Roberts, Artistic Director, Song in the City

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## Katie Macdonald Leadership 2018 & Elisabeth Swedlund Vocal Studies 2015

*Katie is a freelance performer, writer, creator and facilitator of classical, jazz and folk music, specialising in socially engaged settings. Elisabeth spends her time enthusiastically hopping between singing projects, working as a magician, and directing the Wind-Up Penguin Theatre Company.*

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### What sort of work did you do after you left Guildhall?

**Elisabeth:** I spent two months with our theatre group the Wind-Up Penguins in Germany, Belgium and India. I also do a bit of teaching and work as a magician!

**Katie:** I went to Brazil with the Penguins the summer after I graduated and then gradually picked up teaching work over a few months, teaching flute in a school and working with really young children and special-needs children doing music classes.

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### So what led you towards Creative Entrepreneurs and Leadership?

**E:** Although I love singing and performing, I didn’t want to get myself into a rut of unsuccessful auditions or not having work. There will always be singers who want to do opera festivals but if we didn’t put on Penguin projects then we’d never reach all of the children who benefit from our visits.

**K:** I’ve always been really interested in music, but also in working with people and with having lots of different aspects to my work. My four years at Guildhall gave me many skills that I’ve been able to use in different situations and which have been channelled into different avenues.

Though I had never wanted to do the Leadership Course while I was an undergrad, I had worked with Leadership students through the Workshop Skills elective and started to take part in Creative Learning projects. So after a few years out of Guildhall, when Sigrun Griffiths [Head of Leadership] got in touch, I decided to apply and audition for the course.

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### You’re now both part of the Creative Entrepreneurs incubator with the Wind-Up Penguins. Can you tell us about that?

**E:** I think the power of entrepreneurship in musicians is really underestimated but is so important. Creative Entrepreneurs is a great opportunity for someone who has a concept in mind. Most people are doing it for financial reasons. Our main aim is not to pay ourselves but to grow the Wind-Up Penguins and make it as beneficial and sustainable as possible. They give you lots of tools on refining and defining your model, pitching, and giving your ideas direction and conciseness.

**K:** As well as all that, it’s great to be in the loop and know what’s going on in the creative business through the other participants and alumni.

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## Rachael Bull & Maddie Cutter

### Cello 2016

*Maddie is now performing in London theatres, teaching, working as orchestral manager of Parallax Orchestra, and touring and performing with composer/producer Anna Meredith. Rachael works as a Music Officer for Junior Guildhall and as a freelance performer.*

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#### What sort of work have you been doing since you left?

**Rachael:** During my undergraduate degree I worked for Junior Guildhall on Saturdays and was able to continue this after I graduated. I began to pick up gigs and started a duo with a friend, playing for events and local recitals. We created a website and played at several wedding fairs to secure work. They were a bit hit and miss and we found we had to tailor our repertoire to the attendees at different fairs – but on the whole it was a really good thing to do.

I'm now working for Junior Guildhall full-time. I'm really enjoying it and still have the time to work as a freelance cellist. All sorts of work has started to turn up, from playing background music at the Barbican to recording soundtracks for films.

I do like the working life. You don't have to go home and feel guilty for doing whatever you want!

**Maddie:** I've been performing with [composer and performer] Anna Meredith and doing a lot of European touring this year. I've seen a load of new countries and cities, and also spent lots of time on planes, which has been quite an experience with a cello. The gigs are reasonably paid (and the pay improves the more well known the

artist becomes, too) but the gigs are so much fun and we all get on so well, that money doesn't really factor in that much. I've also played in the band at the Globe Theatre.

I'm a founding partner and co-run the Parallax Orchestra, which provides musicians for bands for live concerts and sessions.

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#### You've both been teaching, how do you find that?

**M:** I've found it really interesting. You notice your own habits, and I found myself repeating a lot of what my teacher was saying! I started off doing 1:1 teaching but since then I've been doing parent and baby music classes. They're really adorable and obviously their practice routines are less intense.

**R:** It came quite naturally, as I was still being taught myself when I started. I had been to a few lectures on teaching while I was studying but you have to learn by doing really. I have definitely improved as a player after drumming technique into all my pupils each week too!

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## Final words

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#### Alumni top tips

##### Daniel and Matthew:

**M:** *Take everything that you reasonably can. If you get offered unpaid work, think about what might be in it for you.*

**D:** *Sort out some teaching before you leave, even if it's only one pupil.*

##### Vahan and James:

**V:** *Use the facilities that Guildhall has while they're still free. We both put on an opera and without having the studio and rehearsal space we wouldn't have been able to do that after graduating. As a composer, realise the benefit of having a pool of players who are willing to play for you. Use your friends!*

**J:** *Don't be afraid of doing outside projects while at college. The work you do alongside your degree could be the thing that sparks something after you leave.*

**Rebekah:** *Be open and broad minded and take advantage of every opportunity. Get out of the practice room and try new things. You might find skills you never knew you had!*

##### Rachael and Maddie:

**M:** *The most important thing is just to be nice! The industry can be quite competitive but it's much better to be nice; try not to complain about stuff and you'll end up getting more work. You'll get booked if you're reliable, do a good job, and are good company. And it's fine to take some days off to do nothing!*

**R:** *Don't be on one channel. There are so many different avenues and you need to do different things to make up a career. Everyone is thinking "what on earth am I doing" and that's okay!*

**Alex:** *Have a creative outlet that is not acting, like writing. Find time away from everything: some sort of pursuit that gets you out of your head.*

**Ben:** *Have confidence in your own worth.*

**Seth:** *Be proactive. Don't expect work to just come to you and don't wait to put yourself out there – you are ready to go!*



Guildhall School is provided by the City of London as part of its contribution to the cultural life of London and the nation.