

PLAY

**The
Guildhall
School
Magazine**
Autumn/
Winter
2018



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**GUILD
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Welcome to the latest edition of PLAY

This year, students and graduates have continued to excite us with their many successes. The School was delighted to be awarded Gold in the latest Teaching Excellence Framework, a credit to the outstanding work of staff and students in developing a world-leading learning and teaching environment.

We have sadly said goodbye to some treasured staff, including Helena Gaunt, Vice Principal & Director of Innovation, who leaves us to become the Principal of the Royal Welsh College of Music & Drama, and to Christian Burgess, Vice Principal & Director of Drama. We wish them both well as they begin new chapters in their careers. I am delighted to announce that Orla O'Loughlin, Artistic Director/CEO of the Traverse Theatre in Edinburgh, will be joining us as our new Vice Principal & Director of Drama. We are looking forward to hearing from Orla in a future issue of PLAY.

In this edition, we shine a light on some of the lesser known aspects of our industry including the work of casting directors and agents, the contributions of automation staff and teachers, the work of librettists and of our indispensable piano tuner, JP Williams. Demonstrating the success of recent graduates, Paapa Essiedu tells us about his recent performance as the lead in the RSC's *Hamlet* and we have captured many other alumni achievements in Class Notes.

Please get in touch with your own news and successes for the next issue of PLAY.

We hope to see you at Guildhall School soon.

Lynne Williams
Principal



BEHIND THE SCENES

TUNING IN



From first rehearsal through to world-class performance, full-size grand or small upright, Guildhall's 130-plus pianos are continually tuned and primed for use. Maintaining them in their best possible condition is the job of Concert Piano Technician JP Williams.

A piano is as sensitive a musical instrument as a violin. It's also a mechanical wonder with over 5,000 serviceable parts. When I teach the piano students about the history and development of the structure at the start of their studies, a lot of them have never thought about the piano in this way. They think about the keyboard layout and the music, but not about the fact that they're controlling a set of felt-covered hammers that are key-activated. That's the part of the instrument I see and hear – and the bit I have to work on.

For example, in Formula 1 you can have a fantastic car, but if it's not maintained properly it becomes unreliable; and if it's not set up to perfection, you're going to lose speed. My job is to make sure the 88 notes on all the pianos have the very best tonal response and accurate feel of balance weight, and that nothing else is out of kilter. I've got to recognise special characteristics and sense what the pianos are telling me. When I'm tuning one, I listen to the wood as much as I do the strings to find out if it is happy or stable, or about to shift in any way.

I studied piano technology at the London College of Furniture, but I don't think they ever mentioned that piano tuning usually means an early start, every day, before 7am! At Guildhall, all the

performance instruments to be used that day have to be set up. That's up to 12, including in the theatres. I'll regularly have to attend to seven or eight of them before 10am. That means if there's a special performance, I'll do a thorough tuning and prep, which takes anywhere from three to eight hours in the days before, so that on the day I only need to do any final tweaks.



The performance pianos have to be kept at a world-class standard at all times. Then there are the professors' pianos. Timewise, it's not possible to set these up to the same level as the performance ones, but I can set them up to a very high level in recesses and keep them there for the term. And then there are the practice instruments. Every single piano in Guildhall is played constantly, seven days a week. My work is rather like a performance of spinning plates: the first row has to be perfect, you get to the second as soon as you can, and by the back row, if a few fall off, hopefully nobody's watching!

Every student does their exam on a performance piano, and I am passionate about getting that set up to as high a standard as for any of the visiting artists. I'm aware that my work has a huge impact on how they may do in their exam. That's a huge responsibility.

With major visiting performers, I tailor my work to the individual performance, towards both the programme and the artist. I wouldn't ask them to play on a piano that had performed very different

music very recently. It's not just the strings, it's the whole body of the piano. The wood remembers the vibrations – it takes a day or so to recover for something new. And then earlier music may suit a much narrower tuning stretch, whereas more contemporary music may take a much wider one. You work with what you think the pianist needs – more attack, or a brighter sound, or a sound that's much more colourful in the mid-range. You can completely change the way in which that combination of notes is going to bloom. However, too much in any direction may not be possible to restore for someone else.

Once I am happy with what I've prepared, then that's the foundation to discuss with the performer and filter in the practicalities. The piano tuner is often the last person that a pianist or exam student will talk to before a concert. You want to work with what they ask for, but it's essential to work out why they're asking it. Do they want a faster repetition because the piano is slow or their fingers aren't working as quickly as they were last week? Are they jet-lagged or coming down with a cold or nervous? You have to be very attuned not only to the instrument but also to the pianist's body language and world. The only way you can do that is to set up the piano in advance to the best possible standard, so that you can then think about what they are asking, and whether that is feasible and how it will balance out. Your mind is constantly assessing the whole situation, within a very tight timeframe, to come to a decision that you – and they – will have to live with.

And then each performer will come along and make the piano sound like their own. I never fail to find that intriguing. You rarely get thanked for it up on stage, but walking home after an amazing performance that you helped make possible is a great feeling.





School news

Guildhall wins teaching excellence Gold Award

The Guildhall School has been rated Gold in the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF), which was created by the UK Government to measure the quality of teaching in the higher education sector.

Among its considerations, the TEF panel cited the high contact hours and intensive one-to-one tuition Guildhall students receive, the personalised nature of their learning, strong student representation and engagement, and outstanding physical and digital resources, as well as Guildhall's strategic commitment to attracting students from diverse backgrounds.

Lynne Williams, Principal of the School, said: *“We are delighted with this Gold Award, and especially that the citation recognises the employability of our students and their high satisfaction rates with the support we offer. Students’ experience of their time at conservatoire and their ability to make a life in the performing arts are the key factors for any higher education organisation, and we are proud that our commitment in these areas has paid off.”*

The Gold Award came in the same week that Guildhall was ranked as the UK's top conservatoire in the Guardian's University Guide 2019 for Music, and third among all UK higher education institutions for Music.

Orla O’Loughlin appointed as Vice Principal & Director of Drama

Orla O’Loughlin will join the School in January 2019, following the recent retirement of the previous Vice Principal & Director of Drama, Christian Burgess.

Orla is currently Chief Executive & Artistic Director of Scotland’s internationally acclaimed Traverse Theatre, as well as a leading director and theatre practitioner with a strong track record in higher education. She recently supported the University of Warwick on the development of their BA and MA Drama programmes and was a panel member on the review of the BA Acting programme at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. She has also been a visiting director and lecturer at RADA, Royal Central School of Speech & Drama, and a number of universities in Scotland.

Previous roles have included Associate Director at the Royal Court Theatre and Artistic Director of Pentabus Theatre, and as a freelance director Orla has directed productions in the West End and at the Young Vic, West Yorkshire Playhouse and Hampstead Theatre.

Orla says: “I am thrilled to be joining Principal Lynne Williams and the brilliant team at Guildhall School. Theatre and education have always been my dual passions and I am delighted that I will be able to unite them at such a prestigious and progressive organisation.”



Cassandra Miller joins School as Associate Head of Composition

In September, Cassandra Miller joined the composition department as Associate Head of Composition.

Cassandra is a Canadian composer of chamber and orchestral music and has twice received the Jules-Léger Prize for New Chamber Music, Canada’s highest honour for composition.

Julian Philips, Head of Composition, commented, “Cassandra is a wonderfully distinctive and unique composer, and a warm and generous spirited artist. Many of our student and staff composers are already fascinated with her music, and I feel sure she will bring new energies and expertise to Guildhall’s lively composing community.”

Jazz pianist Simon Purcell returns to teach at Guildhall



Simon Purcell, one of Britain’s most accomplished contemporary jazz pianists, has returned to Guildhall in the role of International Chair in Improvisation. Simon previously taught at the School as Professor of Jazz Improvisation and Piano from 1988–2005, before spending 12 years as Head of Jazz at Trinity Laban.

Simon says: “I am excited to be returning to the Guildhall School and

to be part of such a forward-looking institution. I feel honoured to be offered this position alongside such prestigious musicians, both in the Jazz department and across the School.”

Farewell to Helena Gaunt & David Foister

At the end of the last academic year the School said farewell to two members of staff whose association with Guildhall goes back a great number of years.

Professor Helena Gaunt leaves the role of Vice Principal & Director of Innovation to take up her appointment as Principal of the Royal Welsh College of Music & Drama. Helena studied at Guildhall before embarking on a career as a professional oboist and member of the Britten Sinfonia. She first taught oboe at the School in 1990, later becoming Deputy Head of Wind, Brass and Percussion and eventually taking responsibility for Research and creating the Enterprise department.

Lynne Williams, Principal of the School, said: “During her years at Guildhall, Helena has brought about a host of impressive achievements. She launched a number of major initiatives including Creative Entrepreneurs, the first business incubator scheme of its kind in the conservatoire sector. Needless to say, she will be sadly missed, but I am sure you will join me in wishing her congratulations on this prestigious appointment.”

David Foister has retired as Audio Visual Manager after 38 years of service. In his work with the AV department and its industry-standard recording studio, David has supported staff and students across all areas of the School and will be a familiar figure to many alumni. David has generously donated a significant number of his personal microphones to the School.

Julian Hepple, Head of Recording and Audio Visual said: “David has served Guildhall School for 38 years, and has taken us from gramophones to iPhones. He’ll be sorely missed and has laid a great foundation for us to build on.”

Lily James visits School for Q&A with acting students

Lily James (Acting 2010) visited the School in June for a Q&A with acting students. The talk gave students an insight into her time at Guildhall and her career since graduating.

Lily spoke about how it felt after graduating and the work and persistence involved in landing acting roles, as well as reminiscing about her time as a student. When talking about how industry professionals reacted to graduates of the School, Lily said: “With Guildhall, there’s a generosity and a bravery that people are aware of and appreciate.”

Since leaving the School, Lily has gone on to huge success starring in films such as *Mamma Mia! Here We Go Again*, *Cinderella*, *Baby Driver* and *Darkest Hour*.

During the visit Lily was presented with her Guildhall Fellowship, awarded in 2016, by John Bennett, Deputy Chairman of the Guildhall School.

Former Vice Principal & Director of Drama, Christian Burgess said: “*Lily was a joy to work with during her training at Guildhall, and it was such a great pleasure to see the range and quality of her work on stage and screen honoured with a Fellowship.*”



Alfred Molina returns to Guildhall

Alfred Molina (Acting 1975) came back to the School in July to be presented with his Fellowship by Vivienne Littlechild, Chairman of the Board of Governors, and Principal Lynne Williams.

He also spoke to the final year acting students after watching a rehearsal for the end-of-year musical, *Fiddler on the Roof*. Alfred was nominated for a Tony Award for his performance as Tevye in the 2004 Broadway production of the musical.

Since graduating in 1975, Alfred has had a hugely successful career on both stage and screen. Highlights have included roles in Paul Thomas Anderson’s *Magnolia* and *Boogie Nights*, Yasmina Reza’s Tony Award-winning play *Art*, and as Diego Rivera in the 2002 biopic *Frida*. Recently he has starred as director Robert Aldrich in FX’s *Feud: Bette and Joan*.

He returned to the London stage this year in Michael Grandage’s production of *Red* at Wyndham’s Theatre starring as Mark Rothko, opposite Alfred Enoch. He received his third Tony nomination in 2010 for his performance in the original production.

World premiere of Mamzer Bastard by Doctoral Composer-in-Residence, Na'ama Zisser

In June 2018, The Royal Opera presented the world premiere of Doctoral Composer-in-Residence Na'ama Zisser's new opera, *Mamzer Bastard*, a co-commission with Guildhall School in association with Hackney Empire. *Mamzer Bastard* tells a story set within the Orthodox Jewish community and merges Na'ama's own musical idiom with the music of Orthodox Hasidic Judaism. Mamzer, a Hebrew word, denotes a person born from a relationship forbidden according to Jewish religious law.

"Zisser's musical coup is to integrate the microtonal ululations of a Jewish cantor, Netanel Hershtik, providing an archaic penumbra that is both comforting and chilling."

–Evening Standard

"Zisser embeds the narrative in a shifting soundscape of darkening harmonies and subtle textual gradations that create evolving patterns of tension and release."

– The Guardian

The opera was the culmination of Na'ama's doctoral residency at the School. Launched in 2013, this collaboration with The Royal Opera is one of the first examples of an opera company and conservatoire joining forces to offer a Composer-in-Residence studentship which leads to a doctoral degree.



New Guildhall partnership offers music training to every Islington child

The Guildhall School and Islington Council have launched a new Music Education Hub, offering every child in the London borough the chance to learn a musical instrument, sing regularly and take part in music ensembles. Students will also be able to engage with the Barbican's arts and learning programme, in the first such alliance between a local authority, conservatoire and arts centre.

The goal of the new Hub is to ensure that all young people in the borough between the ages of 5 and 18 benefit from high-quality affordable music education, with a focus on students living in challenging circumstances.

Sean Gregory, Director of Learning and Engagement for Guildhall School and Barbican Centre, commented, "This is such an exciting opportunity to develop a new model for music education and aligns with the School's vision to help young people find their creative voice. This pioneering cultural alliance between a conservatoire and a world class art centre creates transformative opportunities and will help to equip the talent of the next generation through the new Islington Music Education Hub."

The scheme is part of a wider initiative by the City of London Corporation to work more closely with Islington Council on shared priorities, including music education, and builds on Guildhall's success as the UK's leading provider of specialist music training for under-18s, through Junior Guildhall and Centre for Young Musicians.

In brief...

Three Guildhall School alumni were recognised for services to music in the Queen's Birthday Honours List 2018: composer, pianist and conductor **Dr Thomas Adès, CBE** (Composition 1989 and Fellow); composer and conductor **Professor Debbie Wiseman, OBE**

(Composition 1984 and Fellow); and mezzo-soprano **Alice Coote, OBE** (Vocal Studies 1989). **Vivienne Littlechild, MBE**, Chairman of the Board of Governors at the Guildhall School, for services to culture and heritage in the City of London, and **Gillian Moore, CBE**, Honorary Fellow and Director of Music at Southbank Centre, for services to music.

In May 2018, pianist **Joon Yoon** was announced as winner of this year's Gold Medal for music. The winner of the Acting Gold Medal was **Mhairi Gayer** and the Technical Theatre Gold Medal went to stage management student **Samantha Agnew**. Junior Guildhall's Lutine Prize went to violinist **Sofía Gómez Alberto**.

Seen and Heard

Share, tag and tweet our Guildhall School accounts to be included in the next issue of PLAY.

Email
alumni@gsm.ac.uk

Twitter
@GuildhallAlumni

Facebook
@GuildhallSchoolAlumni

Instagram
@guildhallschool

Meeting up



Fellow @guildhallschool students enjoying the tennis at @Wimbledon @lenniejames.

- **Sir Bryn Terfel CBE** (Opera Studies 1989) via Twitter



What's better than a reunion? An impromptu reunion! Here's to us. Who's like us? Damn few.

- **Peter McGovern** (Acting 2008) via Instagram

Thrilled to have won the pianist's prize performing some of my fave English song @John_Kerr_Award yesterday, congrats @JenniferWitton on your first prize and thanks for such beautiful singing @GuildhallAlumni

- **Ceri Owen** (Piano 2015) via Twitter

Welcoming our new students

Wishing 'break a leg' to all the acting students starting today at my old drama school @guildhallschool - what a crazy 3 year adventure you have ahead. Soak it up. X

- **Andy Nyman** (Acting 1987) via Twitter

35 years ago I was part of a bunch of nervous excited young hopefuls. Seize it! enjoy it!

- **Colin Wyatt** (Acting 1986) via Twitter

Toi toi to everyone starting @guildhallschool today - especially the Opera Makers! Looking forward to finding out your Twitter handles, and seeing what you do!

- **The Librettist Network** (Opera Making & Writing 2015) via Twitter

Memories from the School



@GuildhallAlumni Who has still got one of these? Mine was bought in the early 80s!

- **Wendy Boston** (Vocal Studies 1980) via Twitter



Me in about 93 at @guildhallschool... Seems I was always gonna be wearing shorts and a tank top

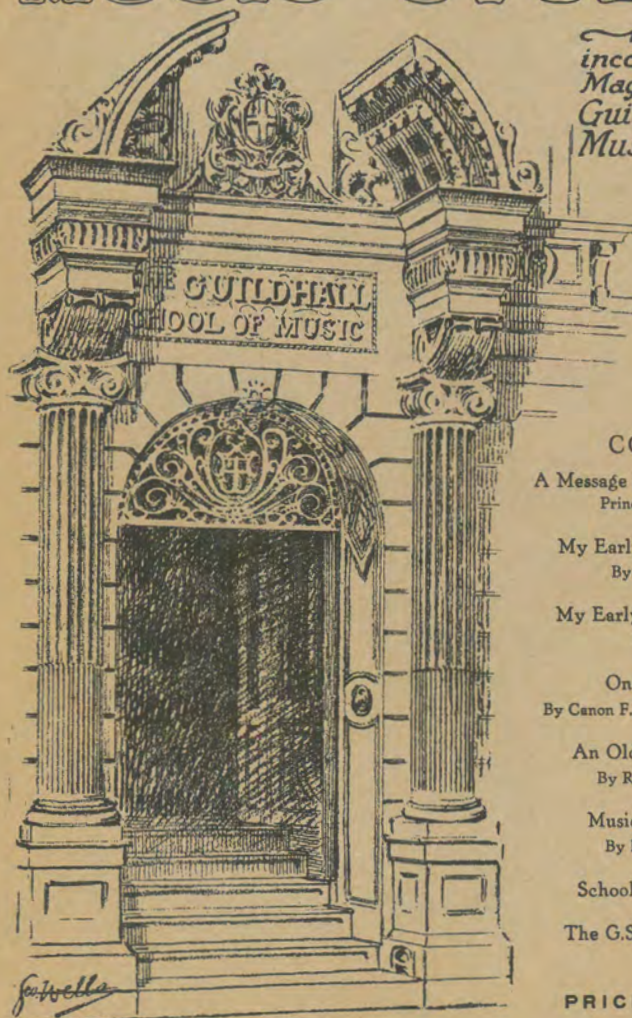
- **Sean Jones** (Acting 1993) via Twitter

Even though time flies, the great memories of @guildhallschool The Gold Medal 2016 will always stay with me! Wish best of luck to the brilliant finalists of 2018!

- **Antonina Suhanova** (Piano 2018) via Twitter

The GUILDHALL MUSIC STUDENT

*with which is
incorporated the
Magazine of the
Guildhall School
Musical Union*



SEPTEMBER
TERM 1924

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Principal of the R.A.M.

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The G.S.M. Musical Union

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Flashback

The Guildhall Music Student from 1924. The opening paragraph asks for "every girl and boy in the school to subscribe for a year in advance. The cost to each individual (1/6) is insignificant, the result would be magnificent."

Do you have any old School publications or merchandise? We would love to hear your stories and see your photographs of your time at Guildhall. Please get in touch at alumni@gsm.ac.uk

Jocelyn Pook

Composer Jocelyn Pook (Viola 1982) has written music for stage, screen, opera house and concert hall, and has worked with artists and institutions including Paul McCartney, PJ Harvey, Stanley Kubrick and Martin Scorsese, the Royal Opera House and BBC. She has won a number of awards, most recently a BAFTA Craft Award for her film score for King Charles III.

My life is divided into time at home and time away – and time away can be very unpredictable. Earlier this year, I spent a month in Adelaide, working very closely with Chris Drummond, the director of *Memorial*, a staging of Alice Oswald’s powerful poem. It’s on a huge scale, with more than 200 people on stage. It came to Barbican in September so I had another chance to work on it.

But while it’s always brilliant to be away, it’s great to get home. Having the freedom to shape my own day is a real privilege. I spent most of my 20s and 30s on the road working as a touring musician, so being able to organise my time in a way that suits me is something I really value.

Back in north London, the day starts around 9am, when my husband and I cycle off to the neighbourhood café, which has become like a second home. I’ll have breakfast – including, without fail, two cups of their excellent coffee – and it takes around an hour. If I have meetings with directors and so on, I’ll arrange them for 9am but at a different café (never at my usual one, that’s sacred), and do several back to back if necessary.

When I get home I’ll go straight to work, but there’s so much admin that I may not get to music until around 1pm, with a break for lunch at around 3pm. My studio is in the house, and I am mostly working at a computer, as well as singing or playing as I try stuff out. Mainly I am on my own, but sometimes I bring people in to work with me. A sound-engineer colleague quite often comes over in the afternoons, and I also work collaboratively with particular singers, so they’ll come over and we’ll work things out together (though they tend to laugh at my singing because I can sound like Florence Foster Jenkins!). I have to try to fit in some viola practice too, even if only for half an hour.

That’s always been my style – I don’t fit conveniently into one particular genre. Collaborative projects, in particular, can take me in a completely new direction from the one I originally expected. One thing sets me off, but I will end up incorporating something completely different. There may be things I played around with for one piece that never get used and I’ll use them again on a completely different project.

That was how I ended up writing the music which ended up being used as a mobile phone advert, which then, in turn, gave me the opportunity for an album. And then – amazingly for me – a choreographer who was working with Stanley Kubrick happened to have my album playing. Stanley called me, which was a bit of a shock. (Fortunately someone had warned me – otherwise I’d have thought it was friends playing a joke.) He wanted to hear more of my stuff, and two hours later a huge car turned up for my cassette, and the next day, for me. I ended up writing the music for *Eyes Wide Shut* – a bit daunting, but a fantastic experience.

My daughter comes back from school around 5pm, so I’ll spend a bit of time with her, do some work and then make her dinner. Then I’ll keep going – it’s all a bit interrupted, as I nag her about homework and her own practice, but I get quite a bit done – and when my husband comes back around 9pm, he takes over. I usually get a really solid hour’s work done, and he cooks for the two of us. On an average day we’ll eat between 10pm and 10.30pm. I’ve worked on a couple of Spanish films and spent quite a bit of time in Madrid, and they have the same sort of hours – it always feels so normal to me.

There are, of course, times when this routine has to go. If I’m absolutely pressed against a deadline, I’ll be working constantly and go back to work after dinner. Sometimes I have to go into central London, either to an editing suite for a film or for a recording day for something I’m working on.

I always feel very short of time, and I guess – as my friends will tell you – I’m not the most organised person. I feel endlessly concerned that I’m very distracted by my work, so in the summer I try to make up for it by spending a month with my husband’s family in Serbia. It’s a lovely contrast to our life in London and I’ll do anything to avoid working then. And that’s also when I listen to music most too. It’s a completely different time.







THE O CAST

ART OF LIGHTING





There can be few words more terrifying – or exciting – to an actor than ‘audition’. And with good reason: auditions mean deciding whether you’re going to be off book (and then learning the lines), stressing about what to wear, arguing with your flatmate about whether the District line will get you there in time and then, of course, at the end of it all, turning up and pretending to be someone else, in a room of people who are all just being themselves.

Yet Anne McNulty, previously Casting Director at the Donmar Warehouse and now freelance, who is Career Consultant at the School, reckons we should all calm down. “It’s no more than a job interview, really,” she says, “A mix of good preparation, arriving on time, dressing appropriately, demonstrating your training and skills, and seeing it as an opportunity to meet people, even if you don’t get that particular role.” Of course it is – so, in that spirit, we present the PLAY guide to the art of casting.

1.

Preparation

Actor Nikesh Patel (Acting 2010) says he spent hours in the British Library reading up on Indian history and society before his first audition for the role of Parsi civil servant Aafrin Dalal in the TV series, *Indian Summers*. He says that doing homework has always been an important part of the audition process for him, and he remembers going to the audition “dressed as I vaguely thought an Indian clerk in the 1930s might. I had some tweedy grey trousers and a waistcoat”. “Was the get-up useful?” – I don’t know if it helped them, but it helped me, he says.

But despite being well prepared, Patel was worried he wouldn’t get the job – because he had a beard. “I was in a play at the Royal Court at the time and needed a bushy beard for the part,”

Gaining as much auditioning experience before you get that dream casting is vital.

he explains. “I was worried they wouldn’t see beyond the beard, but, luckily, they liked me and called me back – asking me to come clean-shaven this time.” The rest is history: Patel landed the role, which he says proved to be career-making.

Sometimes, though, you can be too prepared. Will Hollinshead, agent at Independent Talent, who represents a number of Guildhall alumni, remembers taking a call from a confused producer about an actor who had turned up to audition for a part as a 19th-century beggar woman. “The producer said, ‘There is a woman downstairs who we think might be your client, but she is refusing to talk to the receptionist. She’s dressed in rags and we can’t understand her.’ I cleared up the confusion – but sadly they ended up casting someone else.”

2. Gaining experience

McNulty says that gaining as much auditioning experience *before* you get that dream casting is vital. At Guildhall, she sits in on sessions where students are preparing their showcase choices, both monologue and duologue, for a professional presentation to agents on a West End stage. Young practitioners, directors, writers and casting agents, also come in and audition students. “We all know new talent is the lifeblood of theatre, so everyone wins. And young directors who help young actors in auditioning are honing their own casting skills at the same time.”

Indeed, director Jonathan Munby, who recently worked with McNulty on the current production of *King Lear* with Sir Ian McKellen in the lead, finds that young actors coming from drama school “are wonderfully equipped to step into a rehearsal room and work as an ensemble. Though I always want the casting director alongside me, as another pair of eyes. And preferably a reader as well. Acting is all about dialogue, reaction and interaction, so I want to see what the actor can do with other people.”

3. Self-taping

In fact, meeting face to face, especially for a first audition, is becoming increasingly rare. Hollinshead believes that one of the reasons self-taping has become so prevalent is the sheer number of people involved in the decision-making process – especially when it comes to screen work.

“It used to be just the immediate creative team who made the decisions,” he says. “Nowadays, there are often executives, heads of TV channels or film studios, and financiers involved. The process is constantly evolving. When I first started working we would send out packs of hard-copy CVs to casting directors and fax a list of names. Advances in technology have had a major impact on the decision-making process, especially Skype, and the ability to self-tape from anywhere in the world.”

Patel says that taping also has advantages for actors. “Taping a scene can be liberating,” he says. “You are in the safety of your own home or studio, rather than directly in front of a group of people – and what you leave on tape is what the casting team watch. It can even give you a certain mystique as there is only you to watch.”

At Guildhall, acting students now attend self-taping seminars, often run by alumni (including Patel). Students are set a scene and asked to make a tape, which is assessed. The tapes are then discussed with the group. “We aim for constructive criticism about what works and what doesn’t,” Patel says. “Much of it is technical: for example, finding a good eyeline. The eyes can convey so much information about what a person is thinking, and great screen actors are often able to speak volumes with a look. When self-taping, the actor should find a point of focus that is close to the camera but not straight at the lens.”

The actors who learn to shed their disappointment and frustration tend to be those who do best in the long run.

4.

Face to face

But despite the popularity of self-taping, Munby remains unconvinced. “Personally, I am never going to cast from a tape alone – theatre is about people in the same space, and you can’t get a sense of the actor, including what they are going to be like to work with, unless you are face to face,” he says.

Hollinshead agrees. “Ultimately nothing beats being in the room. In addition to showing what an actor can bring to the role creatively, it shows what people can be like to work with.” Indeed, Munby says that this goes for *both* parties. “I’m open to what an actor might bring to the part, but the audition gives me a sense of whether they will take direction. I want to know this is someone I can collaborate with,” he says. “And while it can be difficult for young actors to realise, they are auditioning us as well. In the end, the only power an actor has is to say no.”

5.

Rejection

Ah yes, rejection. No matter how good – or experienced – you are, at some point everyone experiences it. “I really feel for our actors,” says Hollinshead. “They put a lot of work into preparing for the occasion and then wait for a call that often doesn’t come. But you can’t let it get to you. It happens to everyone.” Not only that, it *keeps* happening to everyone – no matter how successful or well-known.

Indeed, Anne McNulty says that accepting rejection is a key part of being successful. “It’s not just young actors who get nervous, or even neurotic, before an audition or a workshop – old hands do too. Sometimes the first-timers handle it better than those with more experience,” she says. “But the actors who learn to shed their disappointment and frustration tend to be those who do best in the long run.”

6.

Magic bullet

And, as McNulty says, it’s worth remembering that while there is no magic bullet that can guarantee a successful casting, magic does sometimes happen. “It is my job to make sure the actor is match-fit and walks into the audition in a calm state of mind, having put any previous disasters behind them. Then, it’s all about the hard work and preparation the actor has done,” she says. “But sometimes an actor walks in who, through their physical presence and personality, just makes the director see the role in another way – and with them in it.”

Jonathan Munby agrees. “Projects happen in all sorts of ways. In the case of *King Lear*, we knew that Sir Ian, close to his 80th year, wanted to reprise the role. But sometimes an actor can come in for audition and offer an interpretation that is so extraordinary, so unique and so thrilling that not only do I cast them, sometimes against my initial interpretation of the role, but they lead me to see the play in a different light,” he says. “That happened to me when I was casting the part of Portia in a Chicago production of *Julius Caesar*. In came an actress who initially I wasn’t even going to see, because of her past work and because she was so physically different from my image of what I wanted. She transformed my vision of the part – and so of course she got it.”





Setting

words

to music

When Floria sings “*Vissi d’arte, vissi d’amore*” (I have lived for art, I have lived for love) in the second act of Giacomo Puccini’s *Tosca*, audiences swoon – but they rarely remember librettist Giuseppe Giacosa, the man responsible for some of the most emotionally charged words in the repertoire.

And as it was in 1900, so it is 2018: while singers, directors and composers are opera’s stars, librettists are still often overlooked. Which is why opera maker and director Ruth Mariner (Opera Making and Writing 2014) decided something had to be done. Last year, she founded the Librettist Network in association with Guildhall School – a new way to make librettists more visible, more vocal and, vitally, to give them a new way to connect. The Network now numbers more than 340 members and aims to “develop the craft of libretto writing, raise the status of librettists, find new voices within opera and develop new work”. Perhaps unsurprisingly for a profession where economy of expression is prized, Twitter – @LibrettistNet – has proved the perfect medium.

It has certainly launched at the right moment. Opera is on the crest of a wave of creativity, reinvention and youth. And for Mariner, who was part of the first cohort to be accepted on to Guildhall’s MA in Opera Making and Writing, much of that activity is focused on getting out and about. “There is a group of mainly young people working today who see opera as a creative resource, and as a way



Oge Nwosu’s *Octo’s Eternal Act*

of making work rather than as a tradition,” she says. “It still needs a massive public engagement campaign to be seen as public-facing, and if there’s anyone that can do that it’s our generation. But we really need the help of the people within the industry to nurture and encourage us.”

Since graduation, Mariner, along with her company, Gestalt Arts, has taken operatic work to places and audiences well beyond its traditional confines. So far, just this year, projects have included *The Unsung Heroes of the Planet*, the first opera to be performed in the Eden Project biomes; *A Shoe Full of Stars*, a community opera in Huddersfield exploring young people’s reactions to terrorism; and *Refuge in Harmony*, a work in collaboration with the British Red Cross that brings the real experiences of 40 unaccompanied child refugees to

the stage at Opera Holland Park. For her, being a librettist means “you have to create a skeleton that answers artistic questions, most important of which is, ‘What do you want this piece to do in the world?’”

For Stephen Plaice, Professor of Dramatic Writing, this has been one of the great gifts of the Opera Making and Writing course. As he prepares to welcome the fifth cohort, of three librettists and three composers, he points proudly to “the number of productions that our students have gone on to be involved in. The majority continue to work in opera, to make operas in many different contexts – educational, environmental and site-specific, as well as chamber works. Once encountered, many admit, opera becomes their main preoccupation.”

One of those increasingly preoccupied with opera is lawyer-turned-librettist Oge Nwosu (Opera Making and Writing 2017), who confesses that she had begun to find herself increasingly drawn to an art form where “singing life” is the norm “even though it seemed such a ridiculous thing to do”. Nwosu was already an accomplished fiction writer: a performance of the chamber opera, *Powder Her Face*, with libretto by Philip Hensher and music by Thomas Adès, sealed the deal for her. “It was a kind of awakening. I was fascinated, and thrilled and amazed. It seemed so fresh and exciting.”

being a librettist means “you have to create a skeleton that answers artistic questions, most important of which is, ‘What do you want this piece to do in the world?’”





The Unsung Heroes of
The Planet, performed
at the Eden project

“the course has done something magnificent. It has electrified opera making ... I think there will be even more very small-scale, intimate opera. I see myself trying to make a sort of opera that I haven’t actually found yet.”

Opera is not, everyone agrees, a play set to music. Nor should it ever try to be realistic. As Mattey points out, “part of the fascination exists in translating something political into something abstract and strange like opera”. Indeed, for Mattey, who as a queer artist closely identifies with the idea that the ‘personal is political’, says that the very act of making something sing is to “make it queer” – to make it striking, uncertain, different.



For director, writer and current Guildhall student Gareth Mattey (*Opera Making and Writing 2018*) it was a live screening of the Alice Goodman/John Adams piece *Nixon in China* that opened the door to opera. “I thought I was going to see a history programme,” Mattey laughs. “Instead it showed me how opera could be both incredibly political and intensely strange.”

is someone who very rarely wrote for music, but all his plays are based around such a clear sense of rhythmic structure. He creates theatrical worlds that are deliberately absurd, but which have a strong fascination with rhythm”.

For Nwosu “the course has done something magnificent. It has electrified opera making ... I think there will be even more very small-scale, intimate opera. I see myself trying to make a sort of opera that I haven’t actually found yet.”

But despite their passion for the form – or perhaps because of it – both agree that the course has been tough. While there was no limit on their artistic ambition, they had to adapt to a ‘less is more’ approach. Six whole sheets of Mattey’s libretto disappeared between the first and second workshops, leaving “just one line that did the same thing”.

Nwosu’s touchstone is *Arbeit Nabrung Wohnung* (Work Food Lodging), a backwards retelling of the Robinson Crusoe story by Marcel Beyer and Enno Poppe. Baritone and Guildhall alumnus Omar Ebrahim (Vocal Studies 1979) sang the part of Freitag in the piece, and told Nwosu that here “rather than words holding meaning, the music frees the meaning and allows the words to be all they can be”. This, she says, “is very much the sort of thing I aspire to achieve”.

She will soon begin a PhD at Guildhall, under Plaiçe’s supervision. Describing her research proposal as “a manifesto”, Nwosu’s starting point is a question: “What would happen if a librettist wrote exactly what they wanted to write?” The page, and stage, is waiting for the answer.

Nwosu arrived at the same conclusion, but rather differently. She confesses that in the early months of the course, “I found it very scary and quite hard to make any words come at all. If I wrote three words and people said, ‘That’s fine’, I didn’t dare write a fourth in case I spoil it!”

But asked which librettists make the words sing for *them*, the answers come thick and fast. Plaiçe chooses Eric Crozier, who “understood how to blend poetic imagery with theatrical structure”, while Mariner admires the way “Martin Crimp can blend different worlds to give a palette of modern and more period writing very seamlessly. It’s very genuine and well-crafted.”

Although neither are librettists, Mattey says that Samuel Beckett and the “queer operatic aesthetic” of Derek Jarman have been particular influences. “Beckett



“It’s all about the character”

**Paapa Essiedu (Acting 2012) tells
PLAY about his work with the RSC,
moving from medicine to drama
and stepping in at the last minute**





Papa as Hamlet is the RSC's latest production

Playing Hamlet: it's an honour that usually crowns an actor's career rather than one which kick-starts it. But not for Paapa Essiedu, who, two years ago, became the first black actor to play the role at the RSC. He was 25. "I had to audition for it, which never happens," he says. "Usually, a famous actor decides to do it and everything else happens around that. I auditioned, heard nothing for three months, and then got an email on a Friday night!"

Ecstatic reviews of the wildly energetic, colourful, West African-inspired production followed. *The Telegraph's* Dominic Cavendish called Essiedu's performance "one of the most captivating Hamlets of the decade", he went on to win the 2016 Ian Charleson Award for his performances in *Hamlet* and *King Lear*, and last year was named one of *Screen International's* Stars of Tomorrow. Along with his theatre roles, both at the RSC and beyond, Essiedu has also recently garnered rave reviews as ex-con Nate Akindele in Channel 4's hard-hitting drama, *Kiri*, as Otto in the BBC's adaptation of bestselling novel *The Miniaturist* and as reporter Ed Washburn in the BBC's *Press*.

Yet Essiedu did not step inside a theatre until he was 15. "I didn't grow up going to youth theatres, or even to the theatre at all. It wasn't a part of my childhood experience. I was going to be a doctor." He won a scholarship to The Forest School, Walthamstow, and it was there that he first took to the stage. "I was a postman in *Me and My Girl* and I had maybe two lines. But the feeling of doing it was infectious, so I continued exploring that."

A-level Drama followed, alongside a stint with the National Youth Theatre, but he was still all set to study medicine. Then he heard that he'd won a place at Guildhall. "I'd never really considered drama school and I'd never even heard of Guildhall until I went to see a tiny fringe production of *The Tempest*. The guy who played Ariel was climbing all over the lighting rig – it was a really physical performance. I thought, wow, that's the kind of performance I'd like to be able to do. I asked him where he'd been to drama school. He said: 'Guildhall.'"

As a young, inexperienced actor, he says, the training he got prepared him well for his time at the RSC. "Guildhall is particularly brilliant at teaching you to work with text. So I felt confident with classical texts like Shakespeare and Chekhov." The people he met, too, became key to his later success. He's still in regular contact with his third-year mentor, actor Deborah Findlay: when he got the call to audition for *Hamlet*, he called her. "We spent about four or five hours chatting about it and doing preparation for the audition. I feel extraordinarily lucky because she's a wonderful, wonderful actress and has been the best mentor for me. I still talk to her regularly."

His agent, Lara Beach at Curtis Brown, spotted him at a Guildhall industry showcase – "She's the only agent I've ever had" – and when he graduated, he formed his own theatre

company, Invertigo, with three friends and fellow Guildhall alumni. This, he says, gave him invaluable experience just after graduation. "I was terrified that I wouldn't get any work," he recalls. "But you have to be positive and have the ability to make things work independently. Creating our own work, going all over the country and forging relationships with writers and directors, was a real baptism of fire, but also a great way for us to learn about the industry."

Slowly, Essiedu began to gain recognition, first hitting the public's consciousness after stepping in at the last minute for Sam Troughton, who lost his voice when playing Edmund in Sam Mendes' production of *King Lear* at the National Theatre. (Mendes called the event "not one but two actors' nightmares".) He nailed it: Mark Lawson wrote in *The Guardian* that his performance was "like seeing a football team still going on to win the World Cup after having a star player sent off".

Right now, though, he is that star player, and *Hamlet* is still taking him to new places. He's just finished up an acclaimed UK-wide tour of the 2016 production with a mostly fresh cast, which culminated at the legendary Hackney Empire. He's also been to New York with the RSC's production of *King Lear* – this time, playing Edmund in his own right – and to Washington with *Hamlet*. "That was a big challenge, to create a world that felt unique and specific to the creatives and artists that we have with us, and not just try and do what we did two years ago," he says. "I've got nothing but love and respect for all the new cast members who brought such vitality, imagination and bravery in their approach."

And Essiedu says he is still finding different ways into this most discussed and dissected of characters. "I try not to emulate anyone," he says. "It's all about the character. What it meant to me. How the feelings and the story resonated for me. We had a nine-week rehearsal, I remember, which is a long time. That process is still going on today, two years on. There are still things that are new and exciting and never-ending. Like the many-faced nature of grief, for example. Grief can manifest itself in so many different and unexpected ways."

The future is no doubt bright, but Essiedu is trying not to project too far. Right now, he says, he just wants to carry on doing work that gets people thinking and challenges their view of the world. "I try to only do work that challenges me, and challenges the audiences who come to see it. If I can get to a stage where I can do that, that's important to me. Things are amazing and exhilarating. High-stakes situations can be terrifying. But they're only terrifying if you take yourself outside the moment and start thinking what it might mean for your career. I focus on the present: what am I trying to do today, in this room, with this piece of writing? That helps."

And wherever his talent takes him, a big part of that work will continue to be supporting young actors who come from a similar background. "I've got a lot of time and love for them, and many are facing greater struggles than I do," points out Essiedu. "You've got to work hard. You've got to find a way to foster a belief in your ability and talent that comes from yourself. You don't need validation from other people. Try not to find it in what is told you by an agent or a casting director or a producer. Continue developing your craft. Realise that you are on a lifelong journey to get better and better and better. It never stops. That journey is curated by yourself."



As Edmund in the
RSC's King Lear



Make

it

move

Desks that rise through the stage. Walls that disappear before your eyes. Blackboards that slide downstage by themselves. Objects – and, even more impressively, people – that swoop and glide through the air. This is the magic of theatre in 2018 – and it is brought to amazed audiences through the skill and technical know-how of the scenic automation team.


Take Disney's *Aladdin*. The show guarantees gasps of wonder every night with a wafer-thin magic carpet that glides through the air, and at one point flies across the stage, actors aboard, against the backdrop of a giant moon. In fact, the carpet has become so important to the show that it takes a curtain call alongside the cast. How is it done? "That remains the subject of feverish speculation," says Martin Wade (Technical Theatre 2015),

deputy head of automation for *Bat Out Of Hell The Musical*, currently on at The Dominion. "The cast and production team are contractually obligated not to reveal the secret. Illusion designer Jim Steinmeyer has said that it uses a classic method from the early 20th century, that the equipment takes up a lot of technical real estate, and that he turned to rock 'n' roll experts Tait Towers for help. But that's all we know!"

Automation is now a core part of how shows are conceived, so much so that it alters the way directors, producers and designers think. "Automation means we can place items on stage very precisely in terms of time and space," says Andy Taylor, Head of Theatre Technology at Guildhall. "It's not just in theatre – I show our students a YouTube video of the artist Pink doing a show where she flies across a space

the size of the O2 to be placed down on a tiny podium. She lands on the same spot every night – because it's computer-controlled, you can be exact. That would have been unthinkable even a few years ago."

At Guildhall, theatre technology students often start their degree with very limited experience of automation – but they get to start pushing the boundaries almost immediately. "We're lucky enough to have a fully automated theatre in Milton Court, with the latest stage technology system," says Taylor. "When students see the potential of what we can do with the set, it's like science fiction to them. Suddenly, pieces of scenery can be moved not just up and down, but through 3D. And they learn how to programme the flying system, not just operate it."



I hope we never get to the stage where we say, 'That can't be done'.

Which is lucky, because in 2018, the automator's biggest challenge is responding to a director's wish list. Joshua Colenutt (Technical Theatre 2016), currently working as Automation No.3 for *Tina: The Musical* at the Aldwych, explains: "The director says, 'It would be great if this piece of scenery could do that' and it's your team's job to make it happen. Audiences increasingly expect the wow factor and the aim is for them to watch and think 'That's cool', not think about how you made it work."

But while the effects of automation – and the technology itself – are highly creative, the job itself is closely focused on safety and precision. Indeed, aside from the ability to programme complicated stage technology systems such as eChameleon (the system used at Guildhall and many West End theatres), it's vital that a stage automation operator can keep cool under pressure, as Martin Wade points out.

"The cast are the main variable and there are always 10-15 seconds of unpredictability in any show, where you have to keep your head," he says. "You can have fun with the job, but at crucial times you need to switch into safety mode."

Safety starts with checking, as Wade explains. "We check all the mechanical pieces, going up on to the trusses to check the cables, nuts and bolts are tight," he says. "If there are flying pieces, or people, then we go into the grid and check the steel wire ropes and that the rigging is in the right place. Preventive rather than reactive maintenance is vital. You don't want to be the person who didn't check something properly."

Ensuring that everyone involved in the production remains safe is one of the reasons why flying people remains the stage automation hand's biggest challenge. "If you are flying an inanimate

object, it doesn't matter so much if you drop it, as long as it is not on someone's head," says Taylor. "But obviously flying a person brings a whole new dimension of health and safety and risk assessment. We train people in rescue in case there is a power failure and someone gets stuck in the air."

That rigour is even more important in 2018: while many of the older West End theatres still have traditional ropes, pulleys and a counter-weight system in place, new technology is transforming the way they are used. "Where once a person would be operating a winch, now we press a button to make it happen," Colenutt says. "Of course, if you press the wrong button, you can hurt someone. But you can also always press the red button to stop everything moving – which you may need to do quickly if an actor is in the wrong place on the stage."



Colenutt says he has found himself in a position where “something disastrous was about to happen. You learn to anticipate the mistakes actors can make and deal with them calmly, usually by slowing everything down.” And, as Wade points out, “as an 18-year-old you think you can do anything. Being able to learn in the safe space of Guildhall means you soon learn to take responsibility for everything you do.”

But while West End theatres putting on big shows can afford the investment required for full automation, the cost remains a struggle for smaller regional theatres. As Wade points out, having to adjust the show to accommodate different theatres on a tour also brings a whole new set of challenges for the automation team. “When I was working on the *Matilda* tour, we had to make subtle changes for each venue. In London, the desks come out of the stage on little lifts,

but clearly that is impractical for a theatre you are only going to be in for a few days.”

So what does the future hold for automation? Theatre audiences have short memories and have quickly come to expect dramatic onstage effects, placing increasing pressure on directors and producers. “Every new show coming to London will be expected to have one or two new ‘tricks’ in automation,” Wade says. “It’s easy to forget this is still a very young industry. I hope we never get to the stage where we say, ‘That can’t be done’. Today, there are certainly effects that are not physically possible but I am sure we will be able to do five or 10 years down the line.” Colenutt agrees. “Cost has to come into it,” he says, “but technically the potential is huge. I am sure in a few years we will see drones flying around the stage.”

However advanced the technology, the ultimate test is always: does the audience believe it? For most of us, the defining moment of Cameron Mackintosh’s West End revival of *Miss Saigon* is the arrival of a rotor, a tail light and a cockpit – projection, sound and lighting make it feel like a real helicopter has just landed on stage. And for Andy Taylor, that’s ultimately the only thing that matters.

“For me, the best effects are where you completely believe the magic, and we still have some way to go,” he says. “The opportunities are very exciting, but we teach that automation must always be used in collaboration. It should enhance the performance rather than becoming a stand-alone attraction. The best stage effects come when you get seamless integration of artistry and technology. And the best piece of technology is the one the audience doesn’t notice. It’s simply the magic of theatre.”



THEN & NOW

Iestyn Edwards (Vocal Studies 1986) is best known for his cabaret act, Madame Galina, Ballet Star Galactica. He has performed on cabaret stages across the world – and even in a war zone.

When I turned up at Guildhall in the eighties to study classical singing there was a small problem – I was already hooked on ballet. The great Joan Kemp-Potter, sadly no longer with us, once said to me, beadily, “More of the Schubert, duckie, less of the Sugar Plum...” But my evening job, head usherette at the Royal Opera House, allowed me to watch ballet obsessively. And each night in the foyer, I would entertain fellow staff members and latecomers with my ‘lumpen but curiously graceful’ imitations of ballerinas. I hankered to play Odette, the Swan Queen. In March 1986, opening the first ever Rag Week Revue, opposite Peter Snipp as the prince, I got my wish and Madame Galina was born – using a ballet style based on prima ballerina Natalia Makarova and behaviour on my madder Welsh aunts.

After Guildhall, I worked in the Royal Opera House bookstall, taught singing at Guildford School of Acting and continued with my own singing lessons. When I realised I was bitter about my pupils being on stage, I stopped teaching at Guildford and moved to Aldeburgh. There, club booker Emily Latham saw me perform as Madame Galina at a private party and arranged for me to audition at Murray’s, Soho. Two weeks later, I was on stage in front of Jude Law, Madonna and Kate Moss.

Meanwhile, Auriol Marson, president of the Aldeburgh Music Club, overheard me practising – singing, not ballet – the day their baritone soloist cancelled for a performance of *H.M.S. Pinafore*. Libby Purves was at the show, and later asked me to sing sea songs at the annual Whitebait Supper in Greenwich, which led to my first military gig. Accompanied by harpist, Louisa Duggan, I sang on HMS Victory, in the presence of Her Majesty The Queen, at the naval dinner hosted by First Sea Lord, Sir Alan West, to mark the 200th anniversary of the Battle of Trafalgar.

Sir Alan recommended I audition for Combined Services Entertainment (CSE). But it turned out the CSE wanted Galina, not singing, insisting that I “pull colonels onstage to dance with you!”, I signed up expecting to perform for Officers’ Mess in the Park Lane Hilton – but CSE wanted to know how I thought I would cope with desert conditions, camel spiders and insurgency attack. In Iraq.

I did four tours of Iraq and Afghanistan. Performing on the outlying bases, bedding down behind the wire with squaddies, eating with them, swapping stories (but mainly listening to theirs), travelling by armoured car and helicopter, being mortared. Stacks, the toughest, warriest Royal Marine, took exception to something I said onstage at my very first show and hoiked me out of the venue over his shoulder to dump me on the turret of what he called the ‘naughty tank’. We’re the closest of friends these days; and he taught me to drive. In a Saracen armoured car.

I’m currently touring literary festivals with my new book, *My Tutu Went AWOL*. My ‘talk’ combines stand-up, Madame Galina and song. As Madame Galina, I’m resident at the Café de Paris. The management often ask me not to pick on the VIP table – hardly surprising because, as the newspapers declared, it’s a performance which “takes the ‘I need a volunteer from the audience’ conceit and knocks seven merry bells out of it!”

Iestyn’s new book, My Tutu went AWOL is published by Unbound.



MUSIC

Nick Charters (Vocal Studies 1994)

Nick is now Deputy Vice Principal and Co-Course Director of Musical Theatre at Performance Preparation Academy in Guildford, which is celebrating its tenth anniversary this year, marking the success of its alumni in the West End, UK and international tours, and film and TV.

Ras Dia (Vocal Studies 2010)

Ras has been appointed Executive Director of the New York City Master Chorale, as well as Special Advisor on Arts and Advocacy for Humanitarian Causes to the United Nations Association of El Salvador.

Matt Dickinson (Percussion 1996)

Matt has been appointed percussionist for the orchestra of *The Phantom of the Opera*. He is the second musician ever to hold the post, replacing David Locke, who held the position from when the show opened in 1986.

Malcolm Edmonstone (Jazz Studies 2003 and Head of Jazz)

Malcolm arranged and conducted the BBC Concert Orchestra for *Friday Night Is Music Night with Rick Astley* at the Palladium, performing songs from Rick's new album *Beautiful Life* and some of his biggest hits of the past 30 years.

Elisabeth Flett (Recorder 2017)

Elisabeth will perform her one-woman show, *ROOTS*, at Lewisham Fringe Festival in November. Her show uses a mixture of spoken word, Scottish traditional folk tunes and songs, archive material and her own original composition, and explores the theme of displacement through her personal experience.

Laura Forrest-Hay (Performance and Communication Skills 1991)

Laura Forrest-Hay's new piece, *Coldfall Wood Cantata*, was performed at the Royal Albert Hall by 2000 young musicians from the London borough of Haringey who belong to ensembles run by Haringey Music Service.

During the composing process, Laura worked with students of Coldfall Primary School, who wrote 90 poems that helped to make up the lyrics of

the piece, and she also ran composing workshops with the students, which informed some of the music.



Nicole Ho (Piano 2005)

Nicole has recently organised a concert, entitled *Les Favoris*, for the prestigious Le French May arts festival with Hyun Ae Lee (Violin 2008) and Tae-Mi Song (Cello 2006).

Nicole says: "I am so grateful for the teaching of our professors and all the opportunities that were offered to us in Guildhall to meet, explore, love and share. Time zooms and on this day, I treasure the opportunity to share some of our favourite chamber music in French repertoire plus more!"



Shabaka Hutchings (Clarinet 2007)

Shabaka's band, Sons of Kemet, were nominated for the 2018 Hyundai Mercury Prize for their album *Your Queen is a Reptile*. Shabaka also won Jazz Innovation of the Year at this year's Jazz FM Awards for his multiple award-winning projects.

Zara McFarlane (Jazz 2008)

Zara was named Jazz Vocalist of the Year at the Jazz FM Awards for the second time, following the release of her third record, *Arise*.

Toms Ostrovskis (Piano 2004)

Toms has been appointed Head of Performing Arts Department at Jāzeps Vītols Latvian Academy of Music.

Susanna Stranders (Répétiteur 2001)

Susanna has been appointed to the permanent music staff at the Royal Opera House. Susanna was previously Head of Music at Garsington Opera for six years and is a Senior Opera Coach at Guildhall School.

Jonathon Swinard (Piano 2012)

Jonathon has been appointed Head of Music at Garsington Opera. Jonathon was previously Artistic Director of the Scottish Opera Young Company and is a faculty member for the Georg Solti Accademia di Bel Canto and Lyric Opera Studio Weimar and a visiting vocal coach at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland.

Raymond Yiu (Composition 2014)

Raymond was nominated for a Royal Philharmonic Society Music Award 2018 in the 'Large-Scale Composition' category for *The World Was Once All Miracle*, a major symphonic song cycle given its world premiere at the Manchester International Festival, performed by the BBC Philharmonic and baritone Roderick Williams (Opera Studies 1995).

DRAMA

Marcello Cruz (Acting 2016)

Marcello is performing in the Natural History Museum's first ever play *The Wider Earth*, about Charles Darwin's voyage on HMS Beagle.



Natasha Gordon (Acting 1999)

Natasha was nominated for 'Best Writer' at The Stage Debut Awards for her debut play *Nine Night*, which opened at the National Theatre in April. The play, which received critical acclaim, concerns the traditional Jamaican Nine Night Wake and will transfer to Trafalgar Studios in December. The production also stars Franc Ashman (Acting 2006) and Hattie Ladbury (Acting 1996).

Shirley Henderson (Acting 1986)

Shirley won the award for 'Best Actress in a Musical' in the 2018 Olivier Awards for her role in *Girl from the North Country* at the Old Vic Theatre.

The production also featured Claudia Jolly (Acting 2016) and sound design by Simon Baker (Technical Theatre 1992).

Amber James (Acting 2015)

Amber was cast as Cressida in the RSC's upcoming production of *Troilus and Cressida*.

Francesca Regis (Acting 2014)

Francesca is currently part of NYT REP and is starring as Lady Macduff in Moira Buffini's adaptation of *Macbeth* at the Garrick Theatre in November. She will also be in *Victoria's Knickers* at the Soho Theatre this autumn, directed by Ned Bennett.

Edwin Thomas (Acting 2012)

Edwin starred as Robbie Ross, opposite Rupert Everett, in the Oscar Wilde biopic *The Happy Prince*.

Zach Wyatt (Acting 2018)

Zach made his professional debut in *I AND YOU* at Hampstead Theatre, opposite *Game of Thrones* star Maisie Williams.

PRODUCTION ARTS

Rory Beaton (Technical Theatre 2016)

Rory was nominated for the Knight of Illumination Award for Opera for his work on *Così fan tutte* with Opera Holland Park.

Ben Cook (Technical Theatre 2018)

Immediately after finishing his course, Ben was appointed as Deputy Stage Manager at English National Opera.

Emma Livingstone (Technical Theatre 2011), Matt Hoy (Technical Theatre 2013) and Alex Durrell (Technical Theatre 2013)

Emma, Matt and Alex are all working on the West End production *Hamilton* as ASM/Book Cover, ASM and Automation No 3 respectively.

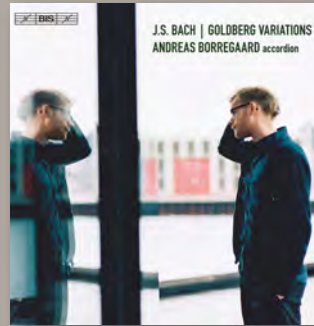
Olivia Whittaker (Technical Theatre 2016)

Olivia is now a Production Runner for *Star Wars: Episode IX*.

Recent Releases



Bach
Benjamin Appl
(Vocal Studies 2015)
Sony



J.S. Bach | Goldberg Variations
Andreas Borregaard
(Leadership 2008)
BIS Records



Your Queen Is a Reptile
Sons of Kemet with
Shabaka Hutchings
(Clarinet 2007)
Impulse!



Brilliant Brass
The Locke Brass Concert,
conducted by Leslie Lake
(Trombone 1966)
Self Produced



Haydn: Piano Sonatas
Paul Lewis
(Piano 1994)
Harmonia Mundi



Brahms: The Three Violin Sonatas
Tasmin Little
(Violin 1986)
Chandos



Angel of Fire
Katerina Mina
(Vocal Studies 1998)
RPO Records



Sunless Loves: Vocal Cycles by Brahms, Prokofiev and Mussorgsky
Lenia Safiropoulou
(Opera Studies 2006)
First Hand Records



Dreams and Songs
Sir Bryn Terfel
(Opera Studies 1989)
Deutsche Grammophon



Be In Today
Giles Thornton
(Jazz Composition/
Arranging 2018)
FMR Records



Blood & Bone
Joanna Wallfisch
(Jazz Singing 2012)
Self Produced

In Memoriam

G rard Trevett

1933 – 2018

(Piano, Clarinet & Flute 1955)

G rard was born on 24 June 1933 in Taunton, Somerset. He was educated locally at St George’s Catholic School and Upcott Hall School before commencing his musical studies at Guildhall School, where the teacher he most revered was Yvonne Catterall. G rard went on to become an acclaimed music teacher and examiner and always remembered with great fondness the people and musicians who had shaped his life.

He returned to Somerset in the mid-1950s and from then onwards taught generations of students at Queen’s College Taunton, King’s College Taunton, Taunton School, and Dartington Hall in Devon. He also had many private pupils and his lengthy teaching career was characterised by great enthusiasm and a remarkable empathy for his students. He gave his last lesson a week before he died.

Some of his students went on to become distinguished professional musicians, including the organist David Ponsford, the violinist Ruston Pomeroy, the pianist and teacher Benjamin Davey and the composer and pianist Richard Sisson. Far more numerous were those who pursued other careers but for whom, thanks partly to G rard, music remains a central part of their lives.

G rard also worked as an examiner for the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music and his examining duties took him all over Great Britain, as well as to Malaysia, Singapore and Hong Kong. On his trips to those countries he liked to follow the practice of a fellow examiner, the composer Herbert Howells, who would say to nervous candidates: “Play me the scale which most delights you.”

Aside from his teaching and examining he was widely admired for the evening chamber music recitals he mounted in the house that he built in the garden of his parents’ home, designed with ample room for a grand piano.

A devout Catholic, G rard approached life with cheerful determination and a

great generosity of spirit. His ability to listen and to entertain ensured he was much loved. G rard is survived by his two siblings, Bernard and Marguerite.

Patricia Adkins Chiti

d. 2018

(Vocal Studies)

Mezzo-soprano and musicologist Patricia Adkins Chiti passed away suddenly and unexpectedly on 12 June 2018.

Born in England, she had performed in public since childhood, completing her studies at Guildhall School and the Teatro dell’Opera, Rome, where she made her operatic debut in 1972.

Her long and highly successful international career included numerous performances at festivals, opera houses and on television (including her own series) but she will also be remembered for her key role in promoting female composers and musicians worldwide and granting them equal rights and opportunities.

In 1978 Patricia created *Donne in Musica* (Women in Music), as a movement promoting and presenting music of all genres composed or created by women worldwide. In 1996 she created the *Fondazione Adkins Chiti: Donne in Musica*, building an expanding network of women composers, musicians, educators and musicologists in over 100 countries.

Patricia spoke a great number of languages and spent many years living in Italy with her husband, the composer and pianist, Gian Paolo Chiti. She was a member of the Italian Commission for Equal Opportunities for Musicology and Performing Arts and, in 2004, the President of Italy honoured her with the title ‘Cavaliere Ufficiale’ of the Italian Republic.

During her career she published over 500 scholarly articles about the history of women in music, and edited publications of baroque and eighteenth century music. Through *Donne in Musica* she created a project called *Music for the Mind* which worked with female musicians and composers in developing countries and in countries at war. In 2012 she supervised the collection of materials for the Conservatory in L’Aquila after the earthquake there.

In recent years, her activities included the production of an opera for the

International Mozart celebrations in Vienna and the publication of a book on the history of women in jazz. Her legacy will live on, thanks to the commitment of the numerous friends with whom she collaborated over her 40 years of dedicated work.

John Barton

1928 – 2018

(Honorary Fellow)

Director, playwright and actor John Barton was born in London on 26 November 1928.

Educated at Eton and Cambridge, he threw himself into student drama and became president of Cambridge University ADC, the largest dramatic society in the university, using the skills he had learned from his accountant father to get rid of its deficit and taking part in tours to America of outstanding student Shakespeare productions.

In 1954, having graduated in English, he became a fellow of King’s College, Cambridge, but in 1960 was swept away from academia when his close friend Peter Hall invited him to be a founder member of the Royal Shakespeare Company. John was a leading light in performing Shakespeare and over the years taught actors including Judi Dench, Donald Sinden, Ben Kingsley and Patrick Stewart. He did not teach interpretation of roles, but rather ways to handle the text and see how indications and stage directions embedded in it could guide actors.

As a director his signature play was *Troilus and Cressida*, which he directed in a sandpit decor in 1968 and even more savagely in 1976. His productions, notable for their verbal acuity and visual flair, shed new light on some of the least fashionable Shakespeare plays and on a spectrum of world drama, from Calder n through Restoration sex comedy to Ibsen. As a playwright he was inspired by classical Greek drama and has two ten-play dramatic cycles to his credit.

He became the longest-serving company member of the Royal Shakespeare Company and was awarded an Honorary Guildhall Fellowship for his contribution to theatre and teaching.

John passed away aged 89 on 18 January 2018 and is survived by his sister, Jennifer.

Forthcoming events

Wednesday 9 January 2019, 7pm
Milton Court Concert Hall

Guildhall Studio Orchestra

Mark Lockheart saxophone/composer
John Ashton Thomas conductor
John Parricelli guitar
Liam Noble piano
Tom Herbert bass
Seb Rochford drums

Thursday 24 January 2019, 7pm
Milton Court Concert Hall

Guildhall String Ensemble

Andrew Watkinson director
Purcell *King Arthur*
Shostakovich *String Quartet No 8*
Tchaikovsky *Serenade*

Friday 1 – Tuesday 12 February 2019
Milton Court Theatre

Fury

by Phoebe Eclair-Powell
Nicole Charles director

Monday 4 – Thursday 14 February
2019
Milton Court Theatre

Detroit

by Lisa D'Amour
Charlotte Westenra director

Monday 11 – Thursday 14 February
2019
Milton Court Studio Theatre

Towers

Ameera Conrad director
Susannah Henry designer

Monday 25 February – Monday 4
March 2019
Silk Street Theatre

Britten: A Midsummer Night's Dream

Dominic Wheeler conductor
Martin Lloyd Evans director

Wednesday 20 March 2019, 7.30pm
Barbican Hall

Guildhall Symphony Orchestra

Vassily Sinaisky conductor
Dvořák *Symphony No 8*
Shostakovich *Symphony No 10*

Friday 22 – Wednesday 27 March 2019
Silk Street Theatre

Orestes

by Euripides
Charlotte Gwinner director
Simon Daw designer