

PLAY

**The
Guildhall
School
Magazine**
Autumn/
Winter
2017



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**GUILD
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SCHOOL

Welcome to the latest edition of PLAY

Since last writing this column back in April, it seems like so much has happened. The Guildhall pace is a frantic one and there has certainly been plenty of opportunity to get to grips with a multitude of School performances, events and reunions.

The highlight, I have to say, has been meeting with many alumni from around the globe – both on a one-to-one and group basis. It has been a real pleasure to hear all about your experiences of Guildhall. From interviewing Finn Caldwell (P30) and Nina Lainville (P20) for PLAY, to giving a building tour to a Hong Kong alumna, hosting a drama and tech theatre reunion and running an afternoon tea for our legacy pledgers – the alumni community has certainly been keeping me busy!

I am delighted to share that Gregory Wilkinson joined us in October 2017 as Alumni Relations Manager. This is the first time that a post in the Development and Alumni Relations Office will be dedicated full time to supporting the alumni community, so by the next edition of PLAY we will be able to share with you some exciting updates regarding our alumni programme.

I hope that our commitment to, and enthusiasm for, the alumni community is reflected in this latest issue of PLAY. Our features for this edition tackle everything from marketing yourself, the secret of good team work, developing technologies and coping with dark material. So a varied and interesting edition!

In the next issue of the magazine our Principal, Lynne Williams, will introduce her vision for the School over the next few years. No doubt, this will include embedding the institution in the City of London's new Culture Mile (P8), and outlining how the School will continue the creative education of its students, to produce artists that innovate and enrich the society around them.

Happy reading!

Best wishes,
Helen Bradley, *Editor*



BEHIND THE SCENES

A TRIP TO THE MOON



At Guildhall, much of who we are and what we do is shaped by collaboration. In July, Guildhall musicians joined forces with the London Symphony Orchestra and Sir Simon Rattle to perform Sibelius' Second Symphony and the UK premiere of a new children's opera by Andrew Norman in the Barbican Hall. PLAY went behind the scenes to find out what it's like to work with one of the world's most in-demand conductors.



Dimitris Spouras
MPerf Clarinet (Orchestral Artistry)

I played with the LSO in the new Andrew Norman opera, *A Trip to the Moon*. It was commissioned by Rattle and written especially for him. He performed it a few weeks before in Berlin and this was the UK premiere. It's a very beautiful piece.

In previous projects we were doubled up, playing side-by-side, but this time it was just me as second clarinet so I had a lot of responsibility. The string players worked with Patrick Harrild (former Principal Tuba of the LSO) to form an ensemble, but there were just two Guildhall wind players, which meant that we didn't have the opportunity to rehearse with other musicians in sectionals first. So we appeared at rehearsals on the first day with the LSO and Sir Simon Rattle which was quite scary. But it was also a new piece for the orchestra so everyone was discovering the music for the first time. This created a nice atmosphere of helping each other. As Orchestral Artistry students, we are used to working with the LSO on standard repertoire that they know inside out, so it was an interesting process to see it happening from the beginning.

The most important thing about being in an orchestra is adaptation. I had a main part so it was my responsibility to play my best and work together with the orchestra. They've played together for years so you need to learn how to blend, to follow them, to know how this process works.

I also played with Rattle in last year's side-by-side project. He's a special person, because from the very first minute you feel comfortable and relaxed. When he corrects something, he's straight to the point, so the orchestra functions really well. When he enters the room you think, oh my god, it's Rattle, but I think all the students liked working with him and appreciate how he treats the LSO and Guildhall musicians exactly the same way.

Jonathan Vaughan
Vice-Principal and Director of Music,
Guildhall School

One thing I've noticed over the years is the exponential learning these partnership opportunities invoke in our students – there's a real lightbulb moment for some of them as they suddenly realise what they need to achieve by sitting alongside LSO players. It's really critical to them understanding where they need to get to professionally.

I see a different side of the students when they're working on collaborations like this. They come bouncing up to me in the corridors – they're full of excitement and there's such a buzz in the School, it inspires everyone. There are also a number of students not directly involved in the project who are really interested in how Simon interprets the music. They get to watch that unfold in rehearsals, which is a masterclass in itself. Working with Simon is always a joy. He is so generous in his artistic spirit and so attentive to young people – both firing them up in terms of inspiration as well as knowing how to coax the best out of them.

The final performance was breathtaking. Having such a cross-section of generations involved, from children to senior citizens, exemplifies what Guildhall is about. It's not just about making great art or music, it's about how we engage with the world around us.

Sir Simon has all the quality of artistic citizenship that we're trying to imbue in our students. He's every bit as comfortable with the LSO as he is teaching primary school children. His approach, respect and generosity is no different. For our students to see this is so critical to how they become 21st century artists – to improvise, to educate, to entertain, to be ambassadors, and to learn how to engage socially and politically with the world, whilst remaining outstanding artists.

Belinda McFarlane
LSO, Violin

Working with the Guildhall musicians was a great pleasure. As a professional musician of many years standing, it is always a thrill to work with the next generation. It informs my own performance, as it requires an element of continued analysis into the craft of orchestral playing – what it is one does as a part of this big organism that is an orchestra, and how one achieves top class musical results. Finding ways to teach and impart this knowledge is an interesting process. Although the young

musicians are at such high levels themselves, the nuances of orchestral technique required to achieve results constantly surprises me. The students are always eager to discover the ways in which the professionals achieve this.

The final performance was a thrill. Newly formed relationships between students and mentors as they sat side-by-side on stage at the Barbican gave an added dimension to the performance for everyone. Andrew Norman's opera was a magical and imaginatively scored work, with unusual orchestral colours and orchestration. To be on stage creating this experience with performers from the age of 6 to 60+ was very special. To then follow this by covering the stage in an expanded orchestra to perform the exhilarating Sibelius 2 under the baton of Sir Simon was a truly uplifting experience to everyone in the auditorium.

Kathryn McDowell CBE
Managing Director, LSO

The LSO has had a Discovery programme for over 25 years and we believe that it's really important for us to be involved in the wider community. We are the London Symphony Orchestra, so we have a commitment to Londoners, and we want to ensure that our programmes draw in people who wouldn't necessarily come to our concerts. For this project, we had the young musicians of Guildhall, our Discovery choirs, drawn from many diverse backgrounds from East London, and our community choir. To hear them make the transition from their weekly activities to the professional stage is always very exciting, and to see someone of Sir Simon Rattle's calibre enabling everyone to raise their game.

Musically, I thought Norman composed a very fine piece, as it allowed everyone to excel. That's what we're looking for with these commissions – to create something that's a catalyst for people to go beyond what they'd normally achieve.

It is one of the unique points about Guildhall – that students have the opportunity to engage with a professional orchestra and all the other activities that go on in a vibrant arts centre, the Barbican. That's not something that every conservatoire can offer. As a Guildhall student, if you take advantage of these opportunities, you're really immersed in the professional world that you're hoping to enter, rather than that having to be something you need to learn how to navigate after you leave.



Student success

Baritone Josep-Ramon Olivé wins the 2017 Gold Medal

In May, the Guildhall School's most prestigious prize for outstanding soloists was presented to baritone *Josep-Ramon Olivé* at the Barbican Hall. The prize is awarded to singers and instrumentalists in alternate years and this year was the turn of the singers.

Josep-Ramon's winning performance included Mompou's *Jo et pressentia com la mar (Combat del somni, No. 3)*, Schubert's *Du bist die Ruh, D776*, Duparc's *Le manoir de Rosemonde*, Rachmaninov's *O dolgo budu ja, Op. 4 No. 3* and Strauss' *Heimliche Aufforderung (Secret invitation), Op. 27 No. 3* with

pianist Lana Bode. His programme also featured Handel's *Se il mar promette calma* (from *Lotario* HWV 26), Korngold's *Mein Sehnen, mein Wähnen* (from *Die tote Stadt*) and Rossini's *Largo al factotum* (from *Il barbiere di Siviglia*), accompanied by the Guildhall Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Dominic Wheeler.

The other Gold Medal finalists, *Daniel Shelvey*, *Bianca Andrew* and *Samuel Carl* also performed programmes of songs and arias of their choice before a Barbican Hall audience.

Josep-Ramon commented: "I am completely overwhelmed, it's a dream come true to win the Gold Medal. It's a great achievement that is the icing on the cake for my time at the Guildhall School. I would like to thank my family, friends, fellow colleagues at the School and of course my tutor, Professor Rudolf Piernay."

His future plans include The Count in *Le nozze di Figaro* with Clonter Opera; and Le Jardin des Voix Academy with William Christie and Paul Agnew.

In Drama, *Steffan Cennydd* was awarded the Acting Gold Medal and *Oscar Selfridge* was awarded the Technical Theatre Gold Medal. Steffan's acting credits at the School include Bela Zangler in last summer's musical *Crazy For You*. Oscar has worked with the Technical Theatre stage crew on a variety of School productions including Props Coordinator for the world premiere of *The Tale of Januarie* (2017). And in Junior Guildhall, 16 year-old trumpeter *William Thomas* won the Lutine Prize.



School news

Guildhall School opens Venice Open Stage festival with adaptation of King Lear

This summer, Eliot Shrimpton, Head of Academic Studies (Drama) took a company of technical theatre and acting students to open the Venice Open Stage festival with a version of *King Lear*. The company of eleven actors collectively carried Lear's story, each in turn playing a scene as Lear, taking advantage of the fact that Lear enters the stage eleven times (twelve if you also include a re-entrance in one scene). This ensemble approach to storytelling supports a key belief of Guildhall School training – that theatre is made possible through community and the collective integrity of the group.

After a terrific reception in Venice, the production will now move on to China, where it will be performed at the Beijing International Student Drama Festival and World Theatre Education Alliance 2017 International Theatre Festival.

Venice Open Stage is an international festival of university theatre running since 2013, bringing together performing arts universities and academies from across the world to perform in Venice's Cambazzo San Sebastiano open air theatre.



Steffan Cennydd in *Crazy for You* at the Guildhall School



School news

Daniel Craig: 'Turn up on time and do your homework'

In May actor Daniel Craig (Acting 1991) came back to Guildhall and gave a Q & A session for acting students. The talk, arranged and hosted by Guildhall Professor of Text & Poetry Patsy Rodenburg, allowed students an insight into Daniel's time training at the School and his meteoric career rise to become James Bond.

Daniel talked about his absolute passion and determination to be an actor, which led him to move to London when he was 16 and audition for Guildhall three times before he was finally accepted onto the acting course. The actor talked fondly about his training and how the staff at Guildhall created a safe environment to learn, play, and experiment. Patsy, who taught Daniel during his time at Guildhall, praised his courage and his ability to have a creative tussle.

School news

Singing Our Lives

On Sunday 2 July, the Guildhall School's Electronic Music department presented *Singing Our Lives* in conjunction with Mixed Up Chorus, 3FF and Boy Blue Entertainment at Milton Court as part of Refugee Week.

This was a newly commissioned choral song cycle illuminating the stories and experiences of migrants and refugees living in the UK today. The cycle was composed

by Guildhall School's Head of Electronic Music Mike Roberts with libretto by Sarah Grange, in collaboration with refugee and migrant groups and choirs across London. The evening also featured The Royal Opera House Thurrock Community Chorus premiering a new Royal Opera House commission by composer John Barber and librettist Hazel Gould, with baritone soloist James Oldfield. Mikey J Asante and Boy Blue Entertainment presented choreographed re-mixes of the Mixed Up Chorus songs produced with students of

School news

Culture Mile

In June, the School together with the City of London Corporation, the Barbican, London Symphony Orchestra and Museum of London, announced plans for a major destination for culture and creativity: Culture Mile.

Culture Mile is an ambitious and transformational initiative which will create a vibrant cultural area in the north-west corner of the City of London over the next 10 to 15 years. Stretching just under a mile from Farringdon to Moorgate, Culture Mile will have creative exchange, cultural collaboration and learning at its core in an area where 2,000 years of history collide with the world's best in culture.

Over the next decade and beyond, the five partners, led by the City of London Corporation, will transform the area, improving their offer to audiences with imaginative collaborations, outdoor programming and events seven days a week. Links between venues will be improved and major enhancements to the streets and wider public realm will enliven the area which, as Culture Mile expands and flourishes, will be regenerated.

You can read more about the project online: culturemile.london



the Electronic Music department.

The performance was the culmination of months of writing and singing workshops coordinated by 3FF and Mixed Up Chorus with migrant groups including Freedom from Torture, parents and children from Rhyl Primary School in Camden – many of whom are immigrants or refugees – and Islington Refugee Forum. Members of the Mixed Up Chorus, a number of whom are children of refugees or migrants themselves, also played a central role in the workshops.



Student success

Acting alumna Jodie Whittaker revealed as new Doctor Who

Jodie Whittaker (Acting 2005) has been confirmed as the next star of Doctor Who, taking over from Peter Capaldi.

Jodie, who rose to fame in ITV's crime drama Broadchurch, is the first woman to take on the role. Her other credits include; Venus, Black Mirror and recent BBC drama, Trust Me.

Chris Chibnall, Doctor Who's new head writer and executive producer, said: "I always knew I wanted the 13th Doctor to be a woman and we're thrilled to have secured our number one choice. Her audition for the Doctor simply blew us all away. Jodie is an in-demand, funny, inspiring, super-smart force of nature and will bring loads of wit, strength and warmth to the role."

Christian Burgess, Vice-Principal & Director of Drama at Guildhall, said: "Jodie is a force of nature...She seems to have no fear of the camera, or of sharing every fibre of herself with the audience...I am in awe of her talent. She is one of a kind."

Jodie said: "I'm beyond excited to begin this epic journey – with Chris and with every Whovian on this planet. It's more than an honour to play the Doctor. It means remembering everyone I used to be, while stepping forward to embrace everything the Doctor stands for: hope. I can't wait."

School news

2017 Guildhall Creative Entrepreneurs Awards

Creative Entrepreneurs is the Guildhall School's 12-month business incubator for entrepreneurs in the performing arts sector. Each year, the scheme hosts an awards ceremony featuring some of the pioneering new projects incubated through the programme, and giving its entrepreneurs the opportunity to pitch their businesses to a distinguished panel of arts and cultural leaders.

This year's event was hosted by theatre entrepreneur Rosemary Squire OBE in the Milton Court Theatre on Wednesday 28 June. Judging the pitches were Carolyn Dailey (Founder, Creative Entrepreneurs), Sir Howard Panter (theatre entrepreneur and producer) and Joanna Santinon (UK&I Tax Partner in EY).

Four businesses from this year's Creative Entrepreneurs cohort pitched for monetary awards totalling £8000 and the winners were forward-thinking community choir Real Voices, who secured £5000 in funding, and actor support and community website Actorsnet, who secured £3000 in funding.

Further information on the scheme and how to apply can be found at: gsm.d.ac.uk/entrepreneurawards2017

In brief...

Matthew Jones has been made Head of Chamber Music.

Award-winning voice and piano collective **The Prince Consort**, directed by **Alisdair Hogarth**, have been named Associate Artists of the Guildhall School's Vocal Department.

Sa Chen has been appointed as Associate Artist in the Keyboard Department.

Two Guildhall School alumni, **Sarah Lancashire** (Acting 1986) and **Roderick Williams** (Opera 1995), were recognised in the Queen's Birthday Honours 2017 and made Officers of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (OBE). Also honoured this year was composer **Sir George Benjamin CBE**, Honorary Fellow of the Guildhall School, for his services to music.

Letters

Please get in touch with your thoughts and memories for the next edition of PLAY.

Dear PLAY,

I'm responding to the *Tartuffe* photo in the recent edition of PLAY. I feature in the photograph and am still in contact with many of my fellow students from the production.

From the 'Class of 74'; myself (Roger Martin), Lynda Boulter, Mary Eileen O'Donnell, Souad Faress, Juliet Mander, Lesley Nicol, Jan Shand, John Stickley and Christina Thornton – have kept in touch and meet up as often as is practically possible. At this point in our lives we have all had varied careers. Myself, Lesley, Mary Eileen, Souad and Christina are still acting and the rest of the gang have worked extensively in everything from stage management, finance, soft furnishings and film costume.

We all have very fond memories of Guildhall, and the long hot Summer of 1974 performing *Tartuffe* in period costume!

Best wishes

Roger Martin (Acting 1974)

To read this story in full and see the biographies and photographs of those graduates mentioned please visit: gsmd.ac.uk/tartuffe

Dear PLAY,

I am just writing to say that, despite all appearances to the contrary, I was not involved in the production of *Tartuffe* in 1974 which you feature in the Spring/Summer edition of PLAY.

I showed the photograph to family members and indeed to my wife who all thought the actor, centre stage, was me. I think the likeness is extraordinary but should anyone suggest it is me, I thought I would tell you now that I was only nine at the time and not at the school until 1986!

Many thanks

Alistair McGowan (Acting 1989)

Dear PLAY,

I was surprised to read the article in PLAY regarding Professor Sir Barry Ife's knighthood. I believe that he is not the

only Principal to receive a knighthood. Sir Landon Ronald was a well-known conductor and composer in his day and was famously knighted while Principal of the Guildhall School of Music. References to this can be found all over the internet, even in his biog on Wikipedia (that infallible source of truth!). He was, as I mentioned, Principal from 1910 to his death in 1938.

For your reference, you can see this in print by examining an extract from the New Year Honours List of 1922 as published in *The Courier* on Jan 2.

Best wishes

Bryan Kesselman (Vocal Studies 1980)

Dear PLAY,

A big hello from Hong Kong!

I have a confession to make! Since I was busy moving lately, I just managed to unpack boxes of stuff in my new place and found the latest couple issues of PLAY.

Being an alumna, I genuinely appreciate and witness the effort of the Guildhall School on reaching international students. PLAY has a vital role in extending the notion of Guildhall beyond the campus. It is always exciting for overseas graduates to learn about updates and stories from the school, faculty and fellow alumni. In my humble opinion, building a closely knitted community between alumni and their schools is imperative to ensure a successful future for all world leading institutions – Guildhall being one. I tip my hat to PLAY which provides a platform for graduates like us who are still actively pursuing our careers and goals.

Just to share my own recent personal experience, in April I went to a concert by our young alumnus Jean Rondeau, who gave an impressive performance of Bach's *Goldberg Variations* on harpsichord at the University of Hong Kong. So inspiring!

Knowing, from PLAY of course, that there have been some significant changes in the campus and surroundings in the last decade since graduation, I promise myself to drop by next time I am in London.

I look forward to a visit!

Warmest regards

Nicole Ho (Piano 2005)

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alumni@gsmd.ac.uk

Post

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Flashback

Girl Crazy, Summer Musical, 1989

Were you a student at Guildhall during the 80s? Do you recognise any of the familiar faces in the photo? Or did you work on the production? We would love to hear your stories and see your photographs of your life at Guildhall. Please do get in touch: alumni@gsmd.ac.uk

TEA
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W

You only met four weeks ago – and in six more weeks, you’ll be strangers again. But right now, you’re perfectly in sync, a finely calibrated machine. You’re Team Now.

Big deadline. Big emotions. Complete strangers. It doesn't exactly sound like a recipe for success, but being able to work with a team you've never met before, as if you'd known them all your life, is professional bread and butter in the creative industries. Indeed, for many of us, establishing effective, collaborative relationships as fast as possible is what makes the difference between great work and the merely average. It's also one of the hardest professional tricks to pull off – so just how does everyone do it?

“You have to quickly come together to find your collective style,” says Guildhall senior chamber music tutor and wind soloist Joy Farrall. “Sometimes, this process runs smoothly, but there can be personality clashes, typically caused by people not having a really high level of flexibility and empathy.” She should know: when not performing with the Britten Sinfonia, Farrall is often thrown together with other top musicians from around the world to create a performance in just three or four days.

Farrall says that, rather than attempting to engage your usual way of working, it's essential to recognise that the dynamics of every group are different – whether that's about adapting to a faster pace and good overview of the work or rehearsing a piece in intense, detailed, smaller sections before playing it in full. “You have to think, ‘you know what, maybe we would never do that in my group – but here we are and it's working’. I think when it doesn't work, it's because people aren't prepared to have that flexibility and to subjugate ego in favour of energised, resourceful engagement.”

That doesn't mean being meek, however. Over time, Farrall says she hopes she has found a balance between listening to others and putting forward her own opinion. “As you get a bit older, you learn that you don't need to lose your own style or beliefs but they can change and evolve and you can almost always meet in the middle.” And even when a collaboration doesn't work out perfectly, she always takes something from it. “You note to yourself, ‘don't ever do X, Y, Z because

that clearly doesn't work’, or ‘that player was so inspiring I am going to try that’.”

As a soloist, Bianca Andrew (Opera 2017) may have control over her own performance, but collaboration is still a huge part of her work. Indeed, Andrew reckons that the shared desire to create something meaningful means that people working in the arts are more willing to be open and vulnerable, and that allows them to bond quickly. “Even though you may only work together for six weeks, the intensity of the relationships is really significant,” she says. “You're exploring love and betrayal and loss and joy – enormous emotions. To do that truthfully, you have to have a close connection.”

Those close connections, however, don't come about by chance: training and in-depth preparation at the start of each new project provide a vital bedrock. “If you've done the hard slog of programming the music and the technique into your body then you're set free to engage with your colleagues on a more intimate level of drama and communication,” she says.



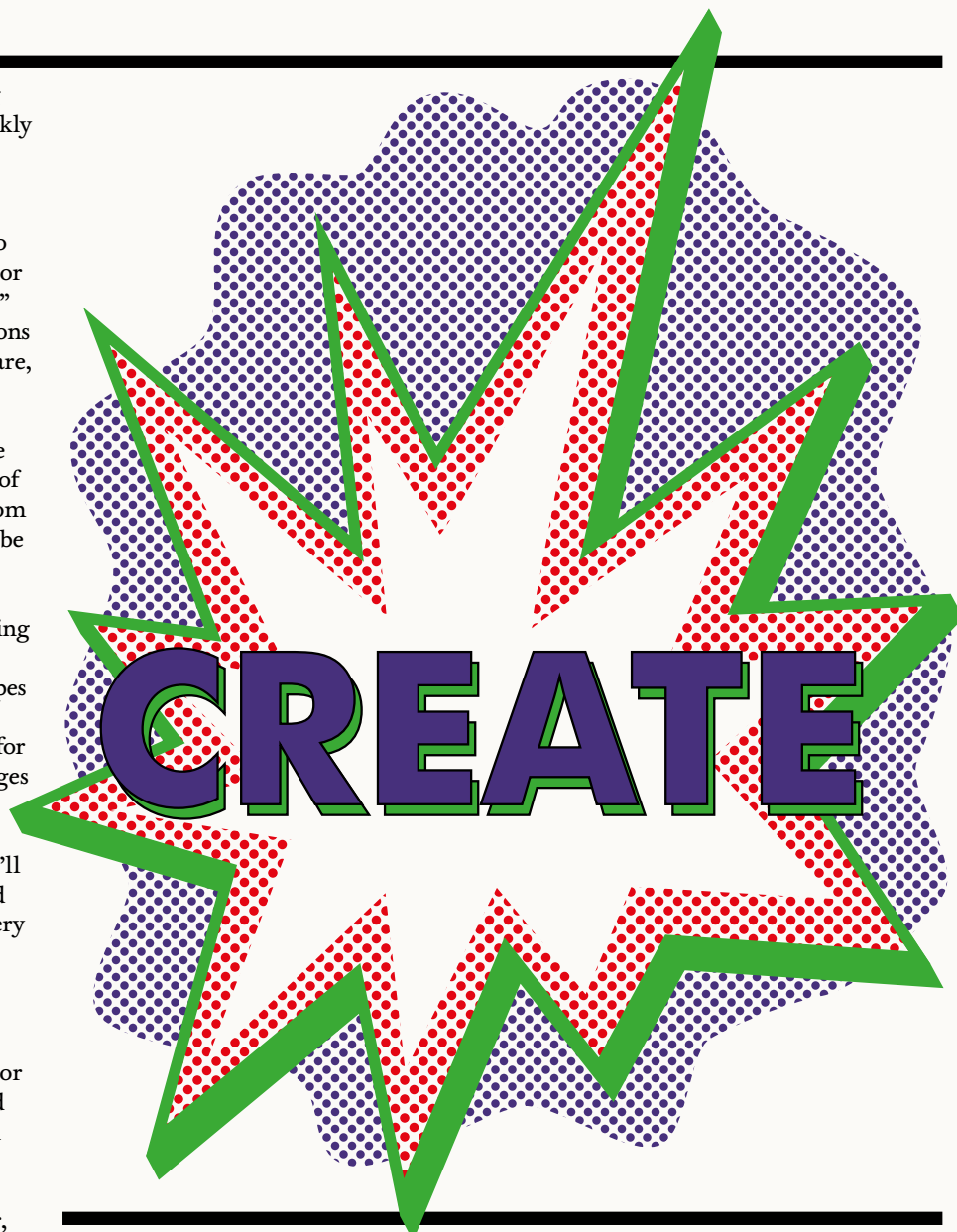
CONNECT

Of course, responsibility for ensuring that a team is up and running as quickly as possible often falls to directors and producers. Junior Guildhall tutor Spencer Down is musical director of Docklands Sinfonia. “I always seem to get a call when something is difficult or needs to be put together very quickly,” he laughs. His last-minute collaborations include a flash mob in Trafalgar Square, a full production of songwriter Mike Batt’s musical *Men Who March Away* – not completed until a month before performance – and a concert in front of a star-studded audience in the ballroom at Buckingham Palace, which had to be pulled together in two days.

Down says he tends to begin by explaining to the new team why he’s passionate about a particular project, what he hopes to achieve, and what he expects from them. But it’s also about making space for conflict and uncertainty: he encourages people to share their ideas and any concerns before and after rehearsals, and if he sees someone struggling, he’ll approach them privately to try to find a way to make their life easier. “I’m very much there to soak up other people’s pressure so they can perform at their best,” Down says.

Professor Ken Rea, Senior Acting Tutor at Guildhall, agrees that directors and producers also need to take the strain and says that encouraging warmth, enthusiasm and generosity of spirit within the team is key. “As a director, I want to encourage a supportive and playful atmosphere from the beginning. I’ll often get people to improvise so they know they can experiment without being judged,” he says. “It’s important to create an environment in which people can take risks, in which they can feel the freedom to fail. That is what enables them to move forward and find the right solutions.”

And there’s bad news for those who find it harder to bond with a new group of colleagues: working in different teams is actually good for you, says Professor Rea. “You’re getting used to working with different types of people, different types of directors. If you work only with one group all the time, you start to feel insecure about working with anyone else. It doesn’t just apply to acting: it teaches



resilience, adaptability and working with optimism rather than pessimism. That’s incredibly valuable.”

As for Down’s ultimate secret to a successful short-term collaboration, he says it’s simple: choose the right people to work with in the first place. This summer, Down produced *A Caretaker’s Guide to the Orchestra*, a new interdisciplinary project designed to introduce children in Tower Hamlets to orchestral music, together with composer Jeremy Holland Smith, children’s author and illustrator James Mayhew and Olivier award-winning choreographer and director Will Tuckett. The work required musicians to yell out lines, use buckets as instruments, and generally be willing to think outside the orchestra pit, which Down

knew wouldn’t suit everyone. “There are musicians who can’t cope with the stress of doing new things, who love to know exactly what they’re going to be doing.” He ran a workshop at the start of the process that allowed him to identify which musicians might be open to working more experimentally and cast them appropriately.

And that perhaps speaks to a broader truth: developing a reputation for being adaptable has benefits beyond the project in hand. When Bianca Andrew – a New Zealander – came to London to audition for Guildhall, former colleagues helped by providing contacts and places to stay. “Those relationships don’t change just because you’ve stopped working with each other,” she says. “That warmth and integrity remains.”



**“It’s state of the art.
They call it a Clavinova”**



In a corner of Guildhall's recording studio, a piece of British electronic music history hides in plain sight. Designed in 1976, the Yamaha CS-80 is lauded as one of the greatest analogue synthesizers ever built. Its distinctive sounds feature in countless records and film scores, and examples now change hands for more than £15,000; but the Guildhall keyboard has a particular claim to fame.

Guildhall's Head of Audio Visual, David Foister, explains: "Ours was actually bought from the BBC Radiophonic Workshop, and it's almost certainly the one used to re-record the *Doctor Who* theme in the 1980s. It's something we're really proud to have, but I don't know the last time it was opened up and switched on. People walk in, see this big black thing on silver legs and just say, 'Oh, you've got a Fender Rhodes [electric piano]'. "

It's a visual reminder of Guildhall's place at the heart of music technology's development, and of its commitment to keeping pace for the last 40 years. For some alumni, this has meant being able to make sophisticated demos and portfolio recordings in the studio. Those with an interest in electronic music have been able to realise their compositions on state-of-the-art MIDI-based systems. And more recently, the same technology has had an impact in the Technical Theatre department.

Foister has been responsible for the recording studio since 1980, when he arrived at Guildhall as a newly graduated Tonmeister. He says: "It was pretty basic when I got here. The studio was in the same space as it is now, but there was only a stereo set-up. It was a specialised environment that you only went into for the engineers to record you."

In 1983, the first multitrack system was installed, allowing students to gain valuable experience of how a professional recording facility worked. Foister says: “We went to 16-track with a custom-built desk, expanded our microphone complement and managed to persuade the School to put a Steinway grand in the studio. We also started acquiring some synthesizers.

“People could learn about overdubbing: working with headphones, and the idea that you could mix after you’d recorded. That seemed pretty essential to us, and we were one of the first music colleges in the country to do it.”

In the Nineties, the studio went digital with a Tascam tape-based system, which was superseded by today’s Pro Tools set-up. Yet for all the changes in technology, one thing has not altered: the studio’s dimensions. Indeed, the live room’s Tardis-like qualities make the *Doctor Who* heritage of the CS-80 entirely appropriate.

Foister says: “The space is small and not always as tidy as it should be, but it can accommodate a ridiculous number of musicians: ask any of the jazz alumni who were involved in big-band recordings. People will remember how sweaty it became in July, when we had an 18 or 20-piece band in there with drumkit, piano and all the mics and stands!”

Back in 1989, two students were key in encouraging the School to establish a studio specifically for electronic music. One was trombone student David Gale – now an Emmy-award winning composer for film, television and other media, and a current Guildhall lecturer. The other was Lester Barnes, himself an acclaimed composer in television, film and advertising.

“Yamaha had donated an Electone, effectively one of their flagship organs,” says Barnes. “It was a nice gesture, but designed for the home keyboardist, not the professional – it was all about playing a chord with one finger rather than

complex orchestrations. Dave and I were both synth nerds, and we wanted to get it done properly.”

Gale says: “With a large amount of student bravado, we took it upon ourselves to petition the then head of academic studies [and later head of vocal studies], Robin Bowman. We also spoke to my general musicianship teacher, David Epps – he had been a producer at the BBC and had links with the Radiophonic Workshop, so he had an interest in getting this developed.”

Their request was successful. In 1990, around £10,000 was set aside to kit out the basement room now known as B9 as a workspace for electronic music. The set-up included keyboards and modules that were icons of their time, including Korg M1 and Roland D-50 synthesizers and an Akai S1000 sampler. Beats were provided by a Roland TR-626 drum machine, and there was even an Akai EWI controller that wind players could use to control the synthesizers.

All the elements were linked by MIDI, and at the heart of the system was Notator software running on an Atari ST computer. It is a machine that brings back bittersweet memories for Lester Barnes. “The timing of those Ataris was rock-steady, but they broke down all the time and took ages to load disks. I went through about five of them in my own studio.”

As the amount of digital technology at Guildhall increased, so did the number of students using it. Mike Roberts, Head of Electronic Music and music technology, says: “Robin Bowman pushed through this idea that every music student should be exposed to technology, and I was brought on board to deliver two hours of classes a week in 1991.

“By 1994 there was so much activity going on that I was invited to direct the development of electronic music as a contracted member of staff, and in 1997 we offered it for the first time as a principal study discipline.”



‘Today, every student’s laptop is many times more powerful than those early digital systems, so Guildhall’s facilities are geared to providing professional-standard equipment and environments that can extend the reach of their own devices.’

Those who spent long days in room B9 – though not nights, as the School still shut its doors at 10pm – recall its quirks as well as its benefits. “We were in awe of the fact that there was a facility like that for student use,” says Gale. “I look back on those days with great fondness, all those hours of tinkering away and learning how things worked, and often showing the lecturers how they worked.

“On the negative side, the monitoring in the room was shocking. It was just a bare cube, with no acoustic treatment. And an added treat was that whenever the symphony orchestra rehearsed in the music hall, you could hear their sound coming through the air-conditioning system.”

In the mid-Nineties, the original studio was converted into a workstation space, where four students could work simultaneously on their own Atari ST linked to a digital synthesizer. Just along the corridor, in room B4, a new computer music suite took shape.

Gale says: “That room was intended to be a more creative space. In those days, hardware synths weren’t getting much of a look-in, because it was thought that Apple Mac was the way to go. So, Guildhall invested heavily in a souped-up Macintosh system with software such as Digidesign Sound Tools and Turbosynth.”

Today, every student’s laptop is many times more powerful than those early digital systems, so Guildhall’s facilities are geared to providing professional-standard equipment and environments that can extend the reach of their own devices. Mike Roberts says: “When we first set up the course, we were very aware that we had to provide the instruments, in the same way that the piano department has to provide Steinways. Now, our students can effectively afford their own instrument: a top-of-the-range laptop with broadcast-quality peripherals for high-definition music production is comparable in cost to a decent violin.”

A similar story may be found in the Technical Theatre department. Andy Taylor, Head of Theatre Technology, says: “We use the same tech and software that the music students

use, but we use it for sound design and audio production. The advent of digital recording means students can record sound effects on something the size of a smartphone. Then you can top and tail, cut and repeat – the things we used to do by cutting up tape and sticking it back together.”

For some time, MIDI has been used to link lighting and sound desks in live performance, and it’s now proving invaluable in cueing live effects. Taylor says: “There are more and more musical productions, particularly opera, where sound effects are part of the score. So rather than having a separate sound operator who triggers the effects, it’s much easier and more musical to program the effects into a laptop, and the conductor or one of the musicians can play the sound effects using a MIDI keyboard.”

Yet despite the vast power and versatility of digital technology, many musicians are now returning to the roots of electronic sound and again embracing analogue equipment. One of the earliest Guildhall acquisitions was a Roland 100M modular synthesizer – a voltage-controlled machine that resembles an old telephone switchboard, and uses patching cables to link up its different components.

David Gale remembers that in his student days, the 100M suffered the ignominy of being used as a simple metronome in the main studio. “Analogue was out of favour – the Eighties were all about digital. But I’m pleased to say it got rediscovered, and some years ago we acquired a second one. Today, students lust after these analogue synths, both vintage and new, in the same way that I once lusted after flagship digital workstations like the Fairlight and Synclavier.”

And according to Mike Roberts, the next phase in Guildhall’s electronic music provision will be to install a unique bespoke modular analogue synthesizer, bringing music technology full circle. “We’re about to embark on a School project to build our own mammoth Euro-rack system,” he says.

“The students are inspired by analogue, and it’s one area where we can still provide an instrument they wouldn’t otherwise have access.”

Nina Lainville

In addition to her work as a professional actor and singer, Nina Lainville (Vocal Studies 2010) is the leader of the London branch of the Tenovus Cancer Care Sing with Us Choir. The choir is open to anyone affected by cancer. Nina tells us why every voice counts and the vital importance of good biscuits.



I am the choir leader for Sing with Us in London. The project is run by a charity called Tenovus Cancer Care and through their network of choirs they can reach out to people affected by cancer and encourage them to sing. My role is to lead the choir musically and also to provide a level of pastoral support for its members.

The choir is part of a research project with Imperial College London and the Royal College of Music's Centre for Performance Science, which aims to demonstrate the positive physical and psychological effects that singing can have on choir members.

Every Wednesday we meet to rehearse in West London for a couple of hours. During the week, I prepare musically and choose the songs we are going to learn. We have quite a contemporary repertoire and I try to keep it quite light, not always joyful songs but light songs. So at the moment we are learning *I Can See Clearly Now*, *Can't Help Falling in Love* and *I Will Survive* – I was a bit nervous about that one initially, but the choir love it!

I arrive at the space at 4.30pm and make sure its set up nicely. A big part. A big part of the job is caring for the people in the choir; they can often be quite vulnerable as they are going through treatment or they might be bereaved, so part of my job is to really listen to everyone and make sure they know that for the next two hours whatever they are feeling they can channel it into singing.

For the first half an hour there is tea and coffee and I always make sure there are really good biscuits for people to catch up over. This part of the evening is really important; I use this time to welcome new members and get to know their situation and it allows the other members to share their week.

From 6pm – 7pm we do a full hour of singing and I am quite intense with the rhythm. I have to be sensitive to the fact that everyone is at a different level musically and physically, not everyone can stand up or emotionally some people might not feel like singing happy songs.

I have run quite a lot of community choirs and this is a different choir. The level of intensity is huge. Most of these people know that life is very short, it's a very conscious decision for them to come to this choir – they have consciously decided to be there, they are very present with you. The shared experience gives them an identity as a choir and not just as patients.

At the end, there is another chance to chat, and we talk about our upcoming gigs – the choir might perform in hospitals or at support groups to help me recruit new members. This is another aspect to my job.

Katey Warran, our research assistant, will also attend the choir regularly to collect evidence for the researchers, asking the choir to complete psychological, emotional and physical questionnaires and take saliva samples. The project aims to collect the data from over 400 people in two years.

The hope is that the research can demonstrate what the choir tells me they feel; that singing and music can actually empower them to move on, to be more dynamic and say 'well ok, cancer is behind me' or 'I can face it in a more positive way because I have a creative output.'

Participating in community music in addition to my own personal projects is incredibly important for me. Being rooted in a community feeds my creativity and gives meaning to being an artist in society.



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A Hard Day's Night

Day in day out, performers and creatives can explore realities, issues and challenges that even in the most dark places of our minds we cannot imagine. Sometimes leaving it 'all on set' or in the rehearsal room isn't always an option. Alumni and Guildhall staff examine the impact of handling challenging material and identify ways of switching off.



Upsetting. Exhausting. Important. Art exists to explore humanity's extremes and excesses, our joys and brutal pains and the material handled by actors, musicians and other performing artists can be difficult. Somehow you need to access an "emotional lexicon", as Head of Counselling Nick Barwick describes it, to move an audience to tears – and then go home and unload the washing machine. Sounds easy? Of course not. "The process of artistic engagement," Barwick says, "involves a deep engagement with the self: something that is explicit in the drama department's philosophy and implicit in the music department."

Actor Lesley Sharp (Drama, 1982) recently played DC Margaret Oliver in *Three Girls*, the harrowing BBC dramatisation of the Rochdale grooming scandal. "When it's not fiction you have an extra responsibility to represent the situation and characters," she says. "It's above and beyond entertainment – you become a chronicler. These girls were horrifically abused and it affected a whole community. The details were very shocking."

An experienced actor, Sharp is adept at separating her life from that of her character, but she says even the timing of *Three Girls* was affecting. "We were working on it during the Leave vote in June 2016 and it felt like we were mirroring the fractured society that led to that vote. That the girls could be so impoverished – financially, spiritually and emotionally – with so little self-esteem and hope, that the drink and drugs these men offered them for sex seemed like a good idea...It's very sobering."

Actor Carl Stone (Drama, 2016) played SS officer Hans Josthinkel in *Mephisto* while at Guildhall – his most difficult role to date. "It can be terrifying. If you're playing someone who is like you, it can be uncomfortable. If the character is far away, you have to really work your imagination," he says. "I was the only Nazi in a cast of 20. How do you train for that? You can't go around insulting minorities. I had to go to difficult places in my head to try and understand what made that character tick. I imagined being hungry in a miserable place – Germany in the 1920s – and how Hitler could have been seen to be offering a lifeline."

Head of Music Therapy, Ann Sloboda, says accessing other people's trauma,



whether through therapy or performance, can be overwhelming, and can lead to feelings of helplessness and depression. "Music therapy students go into schools and meet disturbed children, they meet dementia patients who have suffered upsetting loss," she says. "The symptoms that things are getting too much might include crying a lot, not being able to cope with hearing any more information, not sleeping or not being able to get on with the tasks of daily life." Barwick says students may present to Guildhall's Student Services with a physical complaint that masks an emotional problem. "Irritable bowel syndrome is a common one. What we can't process with our minds we manage through our bodies. A music student presenting with repetitive strain injury, for example,

may have been practising manically to avoid dealing with a bereavement."

Indeed, for Sloboda, the key to not becoming overwhelmed is to focus on the limits of what you are offering. "As a music therapist, you might be providing children with an important opportunity to play," she says. An actor may be creating awareness, sharing what something feels like. "You mustn't overestimate: you can't cure autism or depression, but you can help, within the limits of your role."

Lesley Sharp suggests that not being able to see your limits, or to separate from your character, is an extravagance actors can't afford. "To engage properly you need to be able to step away from it, or you lose perspective," she says. "You are

then blurring the lines between who you are and who the person you're playing is, and for me that's an indulgence. My function is to interpret what someone has written down. I learned that from Max Stafford-Clark at the Royal Court – he believes the writer's words must be honoured. It's a collaboration, it's about how your character fits in with everybody else, otherwise you're getting in the way. You're pretending to be somebody else on stage or in the rehearsal room, not when you're in Sainsbury's buying yoghurts. Mike Leigh [who directed *Sharp in Naked*], for example, would never let anyone refer to their character as 'I' or 'me'. It had to be always in the third person."

"You need to build yourself a switch," agrees Stone. "It can be as simple as finishing 12 hours of rehearsal trying to embody pure evil – and then going for a pint and talking about Remain versus Leave. I might take five minutes with the director to talk things through after a difficult rehearsal, and I have been to therapy as I find it can help to say things out loud. But mainly I go home and have a cup of tea and watch the telly. I lead an open life, I see friends, family."

"Look after yourself so that you can be useful," advises Sloboda. "Go to the gym, cook a nice meal, be with people you're close to. Balance what you're doing with restorative things that give you energy."

Even so, sometimes looking after yourself just isn't enough. Each year, Barwick says, over a quarter of the Guildhall's students ask for counselling, and this reflects the strong link between psychological and artistic struggle. "In music, for example," he explains, "certain expressions can go straight to something inside yourself. They can resonate at such a deep level that the experience evoked can be very disturbing – so disturbing that you may have trouble engaging with it even at a technical level." The artistic subject



Lesley Sharp and Maxine Peake in BBC Drama *Three Girls*

may touch on something in the self that has been successfully repressed until then. As Sloboda says: "Sometimes in music therapy, and in performance, what is happening chimes with your own experience – of mental illness, or suicide, sexual abuse, abandonment – and in that case, you may need therapy to help you through it."

However, artistic expression requires being able to channel even difficult emotions effectively, and during their training students are actively encouraged to let go of certain defences. "We all acquire, unconsciously and over time, physical gestures," says Barwick, "ways of holding our hands, our heads, our bodies – that help us manage feelings of unease, of anxiety. Giving up these habits makes actors more permeable, more able to take on other lives. But it also makes them vulnerable. Similarly, breath work can be overwhelming. There is a normalisation of this experience

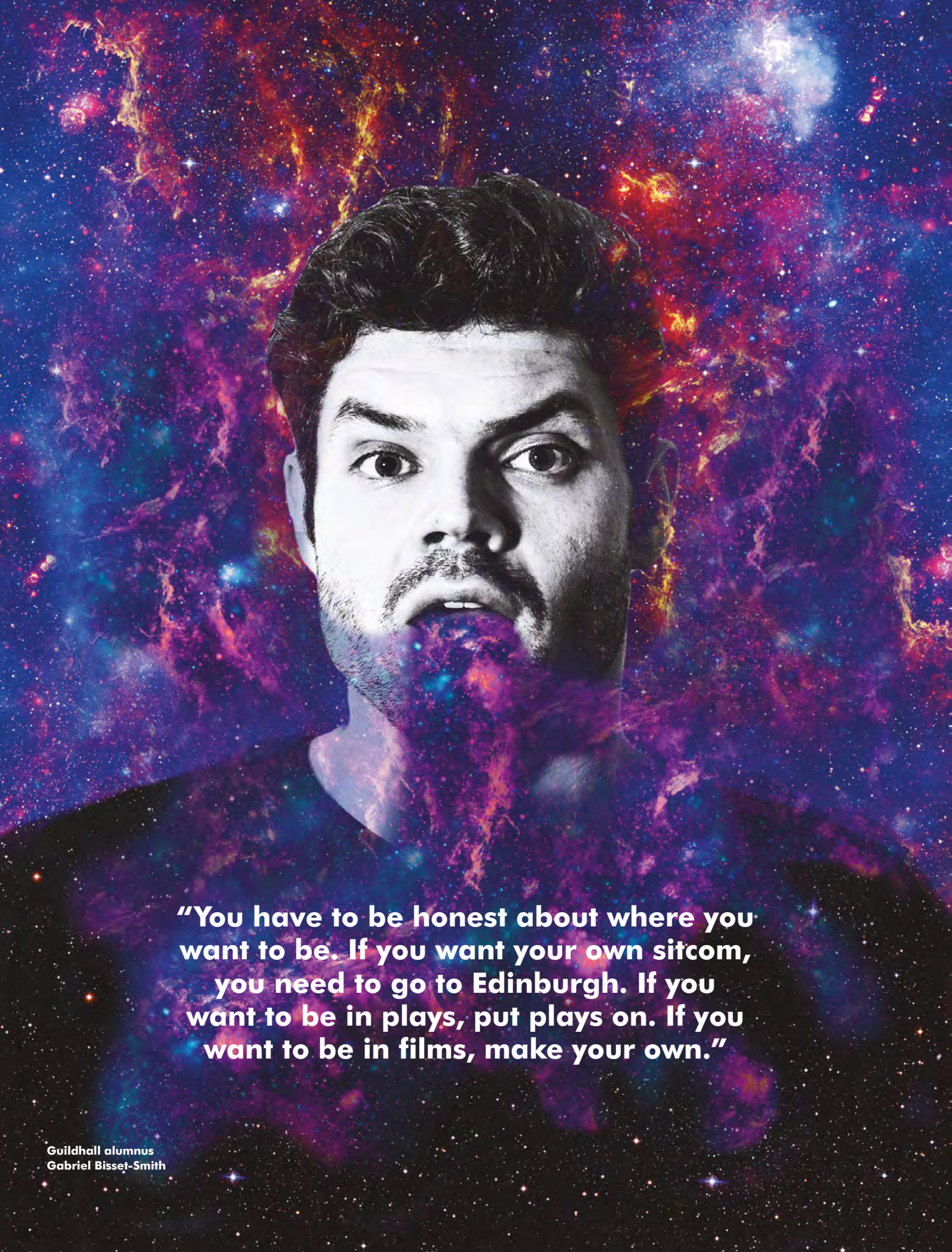
[at Guildhall]. If you are falling apart it's ok if you have created a holding environment, and the counselling service is a support for that."

Indeed, in addition to counselling, Guildhall Student Affairs provides health and welfare advice, physiotherapy, Alexander Technique, disability support and financial services, recognising that performance requires students to be healthy both physically and emotionally.

For Barwick, it is crucial that performing arts students learn to "play without fear". He cites John Keats' theory on creative genius: "Keats called it 'negative capability'. Being able to dwell in doubt and uncertainty without any 'irritable reaching after facts.' 'Play' is vital to psychological development – in counselling, in creative living and in the creative arts. It means exploring thoughts and feelings without being inhibited by persecutory judgments or overwhelmed by the fear that what is being explored will catastrophically damage ourselves or others. To feel murderous, for example, is not to commit murder!"

Yet being able to 'play' is dependent upon feeling you are in a safe setting, which counselling at Guildhall is a part of. "We are born into anxiety," says Barwick. "But a strong 'holding' environment that allows us to make sense of our internal life means we become richer and richer."

'Each year, over a quarter of the Guildhall's students ask for counselling, and this reflects the strong link between psychological and artistic struggle.'



"You have to be honest about where you want to be. If you want your own sitcom, you need to go to Edinburgh. If you want to be in plays, put plays on. If you want to be in films, make your own."

**Guildhall alumnus
Gabriel Bisset-Smith**

GET NOTICED

Want to get a job? Get an agent, right? Well, yes. But also: get gigging, get on YouTube, get a website, write your own work, start a business... In fact, in 2017 there are now so many ways for artists to reach their audience that many of us may feel a bit intimidated by the sheer number of platforms and marketing techniques we need to master.

“We are living in a time when there is so much opportunity, it can be overwhelming,” says BAFTA-nominated writer, actor, director and comedian Gabriel Bisset-Smith (*Acting 2005*). “So, you have to be honest about where you want to be. If you want your own sitcom, you need to go to Edinburgh. It is very unlikely that you will just land in one. If you want to be in plays, put plays on. If you want to be in films, make your own.”

Bisset-Smith is passionate about the value of finding non-traditional ways to succeed. He first started writing when he spent a year and a half out of work. “About six months in, I was going nuts,” he says. “I thought: I cannot sit here waiting for the phone to ring. I’ve got to take control.” He wrote a play and sent it out to every theatre accepting unsolicited manuscripts. The result? Every single theatre he contacted asked him in to talk about the play, and although the play didn’t get commissioned, he was asked to pitch at the BBC and subsequently given an attachment at the Royal Court.

Then, following a successful stint at the Edinburgh Festival, Bisset-Smith decided to make a short film and put it on the internet. It wasn’t a high-tech venture. “I didn’t have access to a digital camera or anything, but a friend of mine was a very good still photographer,” remembers Bisset-Smith. “So, I thought: why don’t we make a film about photography? It’s about photos and someone stalking and sharing. We made it over a weekend. I uploaded it onto Vimeo and shared it – it’s called *Thrush* – and it got a good reaction. Vimeo sent me a message saying I should enter it for its awards. And to my amazement, we won the 2010 Vimeo Best Narrative award.”

Alongside his other film development and performance work, these days, Bisset-Smith aims to make a sketch every week: they’re currently at more than a million views and rising. All of them have virtually non-existent budgets. Most star him and the friends he made at Guildhall. And they’re all shot in-house, a space he rearranges to suit the subject. “Shoot something and get it out there is my advice,” he says. “I have to put material out there rather than sitting and waiting, even if nobody wants to see it, and even if it’s not perfect.”

The rapid turnaround of the internet, he says, compensates for the glacial pace of more traditional TV and film development. “It’s taken me a while to realise that. I’ve chased projects before and spent a year and a half on them, and they’ve fallen flat on their face. And I’ve realised: I should have just put on my own show.”



Dominic Sedgwick performing at the Guildhall School

“I focus on doing fewer things better”

Baritone Dominic Sedgwick (Opera 2017) agrees that with so many potential ways to gain exposure, it's vital to be clear about exactly what you want to achieve and how you want to achieve it. He will join the Jette Parker Young Artist Programme at the Royal Opera House from the start of the 2017/18 season and has realised that building a career involves choosing your projects accordingly – in his case, for steady, sustained development.

Competitions, for example, can be a great springboard for a young singer: Sedgwick was a semi-finalist at the 2017 Kathleen Ferrier Awards and a finalist in the 2016 Stuart Burrows International Voice Award. But, Sedgwick says, you need to enter them at the right time, and for the right reasons. If you burst onto the scene via a competition, you must be ready to take on more engagements and a higher profile.

“While competitions are a great way to be heard by casting directors, agents and conductors, I think it's better to do them

when you feel ready, not because you feel obliged to enter. There's a lot of pressure to do it and it took me a while to learn how to prioritise. Now I focus on doing fewer things better, rather than having a scattergun approach and entering all the competitions that are open. I did too much when I was a postgraduate. I said yes to everything because I thought opportunities would never come around again.”

And while opera remains primarily all about being heard live, Sedgwick says an online presence is important. He's “not great” at self-publicity, he says – “It's a skill I need to work on. I tend to type a tweet and then delete it because I think it sounds sarcastic” – but nevertheless, he has a website and it is easy to find. “That's often the first impression people will have of you, and actually it's really important to have that. You don't have to have a massive online presence. But if people see you in a concert, or in a small role, they will look for you online, and it's important you can be found easily.”



“Enjoy that feeling of having a new idea. And don’t be afraid.”

Starting your own thing doesn’t have to be a full-scale production: it might be a business. Rachael Perrin co-founded Soundcastle after graduating with a Master’s in Leadership in 2011. She and her co-founders and fellow Guildhall alumni, Gail Macleod (Leadership 2011), Jenni Parkinson (Leadership 2011) and Hannah Dunster (Leadership 2011), had a vision: to bring grassroots music-making back into urban communities.

“We had a very similar agenda, but we weren’t quite sure what that was or how it would manifest,” she remembers. “But we had a sense of identity about our practice and wanted to continue music facilitation together as a unit. We felt like the way we were thinking about it wasn’t that common and didn’t really exist – there were no positions that we could go into and do this.”

The social enterprise is now in its sixth year and has grown from the original team of four to 18. It’s been a very organic

growth, says Rachael, with the co-founders picking up skills and learning along the way. The project initially got off the ground thanks to an award from the Deustche Bank Pyramid scheme, which also provided training, and all four co-founders undertook the Guildhall Creative Entrepreneurs course.

For Rachael, it’s important to find pathways that are true to you. “If you have a vision of something realistic that you want to achieve, be open and ask questions,” she says. “Let yourself ask questions and don’t strive for world domination. It’s OK if it’s slow, it’s OK if it’s gentle; it’s part of your practice. I’ve met a lot of young entrepreneurs who aren’t interested in a project unless it can sustain them financially within a year. Soundcastle is part of my practice, it’s an element of what I do. Put your voice out there in all kind of contexts. Talk to people. See what response you get from them. Enjoy that feeling of having a new idea. And don’t be afraid.”



The Lorax at The Old Vic,
original 2015 company

THEN & NOW

Since graduating from the acting course in 1999, Finn Caldwell has worked as an actor and director, before forming his own puppetry company Gyre & Gimble. Here, he talks about how his classical training allows him to breathe life into some of the biggest characters on stage.

When I was doing my GCSEs, I spent a lot of time trying to work out if there was a job I would be willing to do every day for the rest of my life. What I really wanted to do was explore new worlds and new characters and this led me to decide that I wanted to be an actor.

I hankered after a classical training, I wanted to learn the craft of acting and theatre and that is why I auditioned for Guildhall. Arriving at Guildhall I felt like it was a place with a heart. I was really nurtured and nourished. One of my favourite projects was attending the drama festival in Italy in the second year. After spending twelve-hour days locked in a windowless corridor, we devoured the theatre, sunshine and fresh air. The experience there made us all realise how thorough the Guildhall training was; the technique and craft installed in you and the amount of contact time you get means that everyone blossoms incredibly.

I was very lucky, my first job out of drama school was with *Cheek by Jowl*. I had the first lines of the play and I was absolutely terrified! Then I went to the RSC and did some West End work, a brilliant addition to the Guildhall training.

About five years in I woke up and thought 'I am so lucky, this is so great, so why doesn't this feel right? Why am I not doing the visual, physical stuff I love?' At Guildhall, I had always enjoyed using my body to tell a story. While at the School I was making masks, studying Commedia d'art and formed a small company with fellow students which devised physical theatre pieces. I wanted to go back to this way of working.

It was around this time that director Tom Morris was working at the National Theatre on a show called *War Horse*, and

he contacted me to be involved. What captured the imagination in *War Horse* was that the puppet was the emotional centre of the play; the puppet cared about people and people cared about them.

After it launched, I performed in *War Horse* for about two and a half years, then they asked me to step outside the horse and become associate puppetry director. While I was working on the show I met Toby Olie who was also an associate puppetry director and we formed a company, Gyre & Gimble.

We have had a lot of fun creating different characters. From life-size ghostly elephants in our show *Elephantom*, to our first talking character in Dr Seuss's *The Lorax* at the Old Vic Theatre. This was incredible as for the first time we had a puppet as a central character that spoke. Suddenly we had this animal – this little magical gerbil – that absolutely has to be able to hold centre stage and talk. As soon as we started rehearsing we realised that for every thought, every intention the puppet has, you need a movement to go with it. So the puppetry was amplifying the thoughts and emotions already present in the text; this meant that he was able to rapidly move between big emotional states like a living cartoon.

We have even puppeteered a human, Rosalie Craig, in the National Theatre's *The Light Princess*. The main character floats, she doesn't have any gravity, so instead of putting her on wires we had this group of very strong puppeteers, who were puppeteering Rosalie around the space, climbing on things to give her height, so in the end she was 20ft up in the air looking like she was floating, all being done by hand. We could give her a quality that she would have never been able to get on wires.

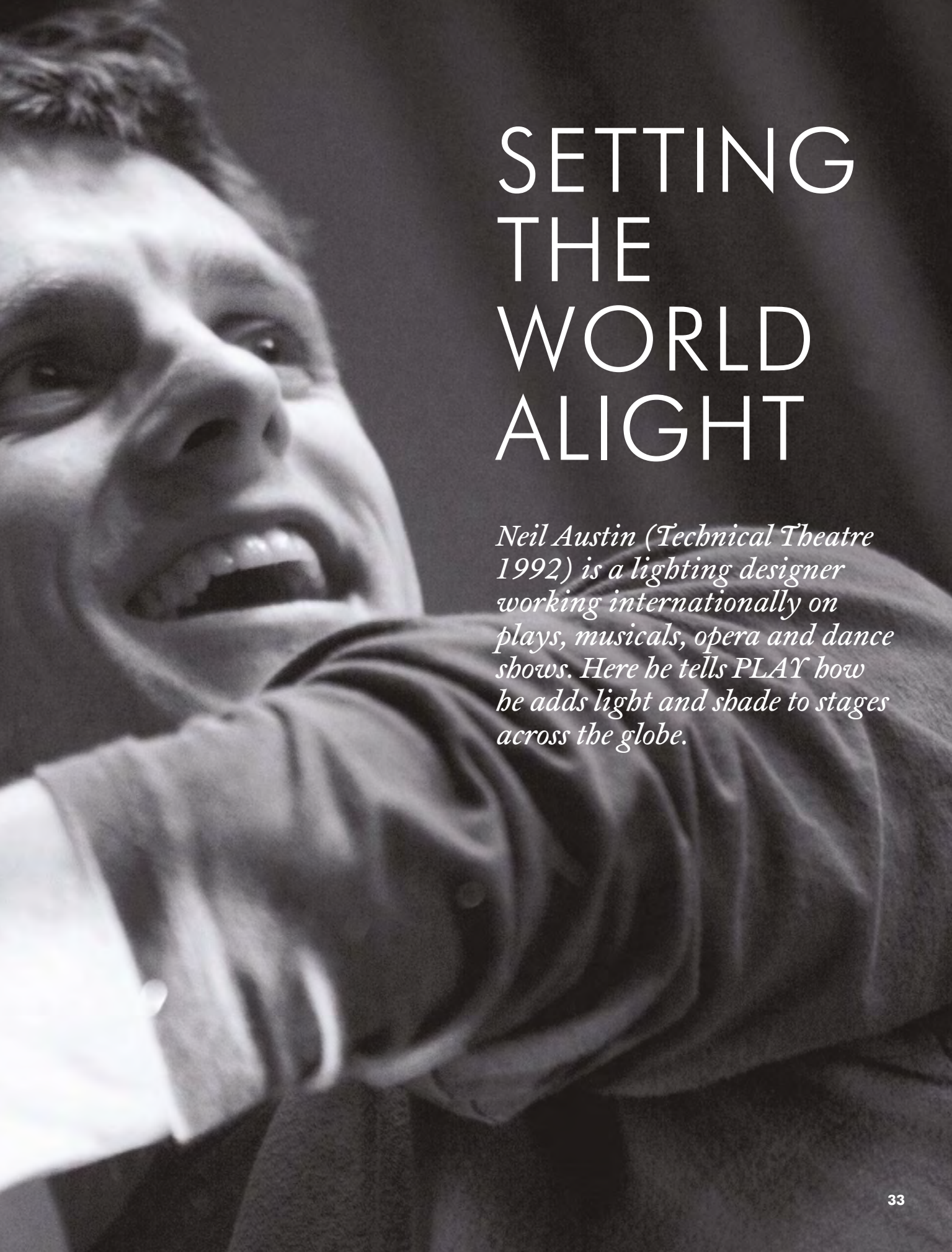
At the moment, Toby and I have been working on a tale called the *Hartlepool Monkey*, a dark comedy about a chimpanzee who's mistaken for a French spy. This will be the first show made by us that will go on tour and create a wider audience for our work.

A lot of the things that we were taught at Guildhall about storytelling, about how theatre works, has really given me the skill set to produce a performance, and think about the impact for the audience. I feel my training has influenced everything that I do today.



THE INTERVIEW



A black and white close-up photograph of Neil Austin, a lighting designer. He is looking upwards and to the left with a slight smile, his mouth slightly open. He is wearing a dark, long-sleeved shirt. The background is dark and out of focus.

SETTING THE WORLD ALIGHT

Neil Austin (Technical Theatre 1992) is a lighting designer working internationally on plays, musicals, opera and dance shows. Here he tells PLAY how he adds light and shade to stages across the globe.

It's a hot, weekday afternoon and the Royal Festival Hall is buzzing. The café is overflowing with the mix you'd expect on London's South Bank: wide-eyed tourists, parents chasing shrieking toddlers and entrepreneurial types discussing startups over flat whites. Multi-award-winning lighting designer Neil Austin arrives just as a children's community orchestra finishes its performance in the foyer with a flourish, prompting wild applause from the watching parents. Carrying only a cycle helmet, and wearing jeans and T-shirt, he looks entirely at ease – as if he's just got home. In a way, he has. Austin has lived and breathed London and its theatres since he was a child.

“There have been many fortuitous things in my career, but the first one has to be having parents who love theatre and live in London,” he says. The young Austin accompanied them to everything from ballets at Sadler's Wells to *Song and Dance* and *On Your Toes* (both staged in the Palace Theatre where *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child* is currently playing, featuring his award-winning lighting). So a career in the theatre seemed logical. “Growing up, going to the theatre was normal. Yes, it was a special occasion, but it was a regular occurrence.”

But Austin never wanted to be on the stage. Rather, he was fascinated by everything that went on behind it. When his school built a new theatre, Austin found his calling. “Everyone who had done the technical stuff previously had left,” he says.

“None of the masters were interested. So I was in charge of the lighting department. I didn't know what I was doing!” After his two-year diploma at Guildhall (Technical Theatre 1992) he spent several years working in whatever backstage capacity he could while trying to make the leap into lighting design.

It wasn't easy: there was no big break. He remembers coming up to the West End and wandering around the theatres, writing letters to lighting designers and leaving them at the stage door, asking if he could shadow them. “It was pre-internet – I didn't know how you found out who their agent was or how to contact them. Three months later, nobody had answered. Six months later only three out of the 30 answered and they were all ‘no’. It was a series of little steps – someone needs a person who can operate this kind of desk, someone remembers you from that, a friend introduces you to a director, and so on.”

More than 20 years and countless projects later, Austin is a Fellow of the Guildhall School and has won numerous awards – Oliviers for *The White Guard* in 2011 and *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child* in 2017, and a Tony for *RED* in 2010 – and been nominated for countless more. He's worked everywhere from Broadway to the Almeida and from the Donmar to the National Theatre, on ballets, musicals, operas and plays, and is frequently namechecked by critics.



Harry Potter And The Cursed Child at the Palace Theatre

“Nonetheless, lighting is not an easy discipline to explain”, says Austin. “It’s the most impossible thing to talk about, because you’re trying to explain something that is completely intangible until it hits something else,” he says. “So it’s quite hard to describe in advance. You’d be surprised by how few conversations there are about it: you’re hired for your eye, your imagination and your previous oeuvre. And for having an open mind when the director says: ‘Ah, but not that!’”

When he started work on *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child*, 13 months before the opening, Austin had never read any of the books or watched the films. Should he read them, he asked director John Tiffany? “He said: ‘Don’t. You’ll be the only member of the production team that knows nothing about it. And that’s going to be very useful because we all know too much.’ So I represented, say, the grandparents who are bringing their grandchildren for a special treat but don’t know anything about Harry Potter – because it has to appeal to normal theatregoers as well as the fanbase.”

The result was lighting design which *Time Out* called ‘stupendous and absolutely key to the success of the magic’. It’s the piece of work he’s probably the most proud of, he admits. “It’s really a lovely piece of theatre. It looks remarkably low-tech while under the surface it’s not so much two duck legs paddling, but a huge outboard motor! There is so much going on. Technology has moved on so much in the last 20 years. I was commissioning new hardware, new software and new types of lights to solve the problems I was going to encounter.”

But he feels strongly that lighting design is part of a whole: lighting designers aren’t unsung backroom heroes but team players. “Director, actors, writers, set designer, the costume designers and so on – we are all attempting to do one thing, which is to tell a story. The most important thing is that we are telling that story in the style in which we have all agreed it needs to be presented, whatever that may be; and presenting it as clearly as possible to an audience, and supporting the performers who are doing that every night.”

To that end, good lighting design, he believes, should be seamless and unnoticeable. But that doesn’t mean it should be bland. “I like it to be a dynamic, beautiful, arresting image that makes me concentrate on what’s being said,” he says. And it should never pre-empt what’s in the script: Austin points to a jarring scene in Roberto Benigni’s 1997 Oscar-winning film *Life is Beautiful*. A man is cycling home and everything is normal – except the music, which suddenly turns menacing just before he makes a terrible discovery. “I thought: there is a perfect example of a director and a composer not working together to tell the same story,” says Austin. “The music pre-empts what the action is doing. It tells the audience what to think before anything untoward has happened.”

Getting to that point is the challenge: the lighting designer must not only bring their own ingenuity and imagination to the production, they must also find a way of referencing that intangible vision in terms that the director and designer will recognise. “A lot of the time a director’s references will be to the art world,” says Austin. “Every student should be going to galleries of every type. You should be going to see photography, performance art, sculpture, as well as the classic Renaissance paintings. All these things are ways of referencing light.



Ink at the Almeida Theatre

Renaissance paintings, in particular, are wonderful at showing you how to sculpt a body with light. Caravaggio was the greatest artist with light who ever lived. He understood how to highlight the things in the painting that you should be looking at, using light, and send everything else into this wonderful, crepuscular, chiaroscuro background.”

“I think it’s possible to get pigeonholed as a lighting designer. I’ve tried very hard to keep the selection of work I take as diverse as possible so you don’t end up doing the same thing time and time again – you do a mixture of the abstract and the naturalistic and the whimsical. You need to find your inspiration on each project.”

And those projects keep on coming: the most recent, *Ink*, James Graham’s love letter to old Fleet Street, opened at the Almeida in June. He’s looking forward to lighting Graham’s next play, political comedy *Labour of Love*, starring Martin Freeman. Plus, there’s the small matter of *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child*’s move to Broadway next year, creating all the challenges of a new space – and attracting new theatregoers, something Austin is passionate about.

“I’ve seen one statistic that says 60 per cent of the Harry Potter audience isn’t on any other booking lists for any other theatres,” Austin says. “Of course, there could be many reasons for that. But the idea that this is getting first-time theatregoers through the door – that’s very special. It’s providing inspiration for the industry. And I hope some of that new audience might come back and try something else because of it. It’s a great example of what theatre can be.”

MUSIC

Yolanda Bruno (Violin 2015)

Yolanda was awarded the First Prize and the Audience Choice Prize at the inaugural Isabel Overton Bader Canadian Violin Competition, organised by the Isabel Bader Centre for the Performing Arts at Queen's University in Ontario. This national competition was open to Canadian violinists aged 18 to 29.



Dr. Óscar Colomina i Bosch (Composition 2006)

Óscar took up the post of Director of Music at The Yehudi Menuhin School in September, becoming only the sixth Director of Music since the school was founded in 1963.

Daniel Kidane (Composition 2017)

Daniel will have one of his compositions premiered by the Royal Scottish National Orchestra (RSNO) in November as part of their Composers' Hub. This will include performances at Usher Hall, Edinburgh and the Glasgow Royal Concert Hall.

Adam MacKenzie (Bassoon 2004)

Adam has been appointed Principal Bassoon at Opera North.

Lauren Reeve-Rawlings (Horn 2013)

Lauren has been appointed Third Horn at Scottish Opera.

Benjamin Rimmer (Composition 2016)



Benjamin has been named as one of the seven winners of Classic FM's 25th Birthday Commissions, in partnership with the Royal Philharmonic Society, as selected by a panel including Classic FM's Composer in Residence and Guildhall alumna, Debbie Wiseman. Benjamin has also received commissions from Ballett Im Revier Gelsenkirchen and from internationally-acclaimed harpist Eleanor Turner.

Ting-Ru Lai (Violin 2017)

Ting-Ru has been Principal Violist of the ensemble Esperanza, based in Liechtenstein, since it was founded in 2015. In January, the ensemble was awarded the Special Achievement Award by the International Classical Music Awards (ICMA).

Amarins Wierdsma (Violin 2015)

Amarins has been selected as the winner of the £2,500 RPS Emily Anderson Prize for violinists, 50 years after the first prize was awarded in 1967. She is currently studying on the School's Artist Diploma scheme.

Raymond Yiu (Composition 2014)

For 2017's Manchester International Festival Raymond set the text from six Anthony Burgess poems into *The World Was Once All Miracle*, a major symphony song cycle given its world premiere by baritone Roderick Williams and the BBC Philharmonic.



Raymond Yiu

The Pélleás Ensemble: Oliver Wass (Harp 2017); Henry Roberts (Flute 2015); Luba Tunnicliffe (Viola 2015)

The Ensemble has been awarded the Elias Fawcett Award for Outstanding Chamber Ensemble at the 2017 Royal Over-Seas League competition, and the Royal Philharmonic Society's Henderson Chamber Ensemble Award.

Welsh National Opera

Edward Griffiths (Horn 2013) has been appointed Third Horn and **Sarah Bennington** (Flute 2007) has been appointed Second Flute at Welsh National Opera.

DRAMA

Tom Glynn-Carney (Acting 2016)

Tom recently appeared in the Royal Court production of *The Ferryman* and now features in the Christopher Nolan epic *Dunkirk*.



Tom Glynn-Carney in *The Ferryman*

Claudia Jolly (Acting 2016)

Claudia was cast as Katherine Draper in The Old Vic's production *Girl from the North Country* by Connor McPherson with music and lyrics by Bob Dylan.



Claudia Jolly and Sam Reid at The Old Vic

Tyne Rafaeli (Acting 2006)

In June, Tyne directed the Geffen Playhouse Los Angeles production of *Actually* by Anna Ziegler which was a co-world premiere with the Williamstown Theatre Festival.

Ben Schnetzer (Acting 2013)

Later this year, Ben will appear in *The Grizzlies*, an indie drama set in a remote Arctic town. In 2018 Ben will also go on to star in *The Death and Life of John F. Donovan*, alongside Kit Harington and Natalie Portman.

Barney Walsh (Acting 2017)

Barney features as Young Arthur in *King Arthur: Legend of the Sword*, directed by Guy Ritchie.

Drama graduates cast in Harry Potter and the Cursed Child



In May two recent Guildhall graduates made their professional stage debuts when they joined the new West End cast of *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child*.

Samuel Blenkin (Acting 2017) plays the part of Scorpius Malfoy and **Rupert Henderson** (Acting 2017) takes the role of James Potter.

TECHNICAL THEATRE

Alice Barber (Technical Theatre 2013)

Alice is now Stage Manager at The Watermill Theatre.

Davey Barrett (Technical Theatre 2004)

Davey is currently based in New York working as a Director at the Museum of Sex and also as a freelance themed attraction specialist. Prior to his current position, he spent twelve years working in numerous roles for Merlin Entertainments.

Louise Cook (Technical Theatre 2016)

Louise is Assistant Lighting Designer on *Dreamgirls* at the Savoy Theatre.

Sebastien Matthews (Technical Theatre 2014)

Sebastien is Automation No.2 on *The Book of Mormon* at the Prince of Wales Theatre.

Hollie Anna Trist (Technical Theatre 2015)

Hollie is Junior Production Assistant at Baby Cow Productions Ltd.

Sunny Smith (Technical Theatre 2016)

Sunny is Freelance Scenic Artist and Prop-maker at King's College London.

Recent Releases

CDs



Heimat
Benjamin Appl
(Vocal Studies 2015)
Sony Classical



The Late Trane
Denys Baptiste
(Saxophone 1993)
Edition Records



Changing of the Seasons
Bruno Heinen (Jazz Piano
Fellow 2008) and Camerata
Alma Viva
BB Records



**Nordic Suites –
Ensemble Esperanza**
Ting-Ru Lai (Violin 2017)
ARS Produktion



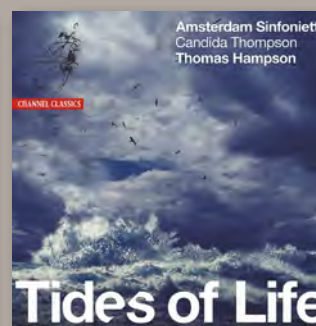
The Piano Album
Alistair McGowan
(Acting 1989)
Sony Classical



**Mozart & Schoeck –
Serenades**
Roberto González Monjas
(Violin 2013)
Claves



**For All We Know –
The Remixes**
Nao (Jazz Voice 2010)
Little Tokyo Recordings



Tides of Life
Thomas Hampson,
Amsterdam Sinfonietta,
Netherlands Female
Youth Choir, and Candida
Thompson (Violin 1990)
Channel Classics



Ammut
Justin Percival and Guy
Wampa (Jazz 2007)
WW Recordings

In Memoriam

Ken Bennett-Hunter 1947 – 2017

(Technical Theatre 1968, Fellow and External Examiner)

Ken was born in Belfast on 4 February 1947 and went on to become one of the most experienced and well-respected figures in British theatre over the last half-century.

It was during his time at Trinity College, Dublin that Ken's interest in drama began; he involved himself with the Dublin University Players, becoming its chair and eventually winning an award for his production of Tom Stoppard's *The Real Inspector Hound*.

Ken graduated from the School's technical theatre course and started his professional career as a stage manager with the Lyric Players Theatre, Belfast. Highlights of his career included the inaugural season of the Haymarket Theatre in 1973; and joining the newly formed English Music Theatre at Sadler's Wells in 1975. His time at Theatre Royal Stratford East is regarded as the catalyst of his career, which saw him rise from production manager to administrative director to co-chair of the board.

Ken passed away on 20 March 2017, aged 70 and is survived by his wife Janice, whom he met while studying in Dublin, and his son, Guy.

Terry Chandler 1961 – 2017

(Facilities Assistant 2006 – 2017)

Terry was a familiar face to staff and students across the School. He joined Guildhall in February 2006, working as a Client Services Assistant, a Facilities Assistant, and also acting up for a period as Facilities Manager.

The Facilities team describes Terry as having a 'big personality'; he always had a cheery greeting, and knew a huge number of people at the School by name. Terry also practiced mindfulness and was always interested to share his thoughts on the subject with staff and students. He will be particularly remembered for his passion for football, namely Chelsea FC, and his pride and

love for his family: his daughter Hayley, and his son Terry (Junior), who recently began work in the IT department here at the School.

Following Terry's passing, a book of remembrance was available at the Front Desk in Silk Street for staff and students to share their memories, and a one-minute applause was held in the Silk Street foyer in celebration of his life and to show the staff and students' appreciation for his work.

John Leslie Clement 1938 – 2017

(Music and Drama 1959)

John was born on 12 March 1938 in Newcastle upon Tyne. After attending Ackworth School on a scholarship, John studied both music and drama at Guildhall.

After graduating, John taught in England for ten years before relocating to Prince Edward Island, Canada in 1971. While teaching he met his future wife and lifelong music partner Jenet Evers, and they married in June 1979.

Prior to their wedding, John and Jenet started the music programme Singing Strings, which has seen hundreds of students in its forty years, many of whom have gone on to become world-renowned musicians.

John retired from the school system in 1999, but after his retirement he still continued to direct Singing Strings and teach private music lessons. His last public performance as a conductor was on 1 January 2017 as part of the Singing Strings appearance at the Lt. Governor's levee, which was where the programme began back in 1978.

John is survived by his wife, children, and grandchildren who take comfort in the knowledge that he will be remembered by the many lives he touched.

Gene Parseghian 1944 – 2017

(Acting 1964)

Gene passed away on 16 March 2017 after being diagnosed with cancer.

Born in Oneonta, New York, Gene's love for the arts began when he studied theatre at Antioch College. Gene then continued his studies at Guildhall before going on to achieve an MFA in acting

from Stanford University.

Gene spent his early career as an actor, but his true calling was discovered when he became an agent.

Upon leaving the William Morris Agency in 1999, Gene's career hit its highest success when he and Johnnie Planco formed Parseghian Planco, a management and production company in New York. It was with Parseghian Planco that he managed the careers of Eddie Redmayne, Kit Harington, Kathleen Turner, Rufus Sewell, Hugh Dancy, Olympia Dukakis, Christopher Abbott, Billy Connolly, and Michael Ballhaus, solidifying his stellar reputation as an agent.

John Noakes 1934 – 2017

(Drama 1955)

John was born in the village of Shelf in West Yorkshire on 6 March 1934. Although he excelled in cross-country running and gymnastics, he left school without qualifications, as a result of which he was turned down as a pilot by the RAF and decided he wanted to become an actor.

He attended Guildhall in the 1950s, financing the lessons by working as a liftboy in a hotel and doing early morning cleaning work. After graduation, he joined a touring repertory company and was spotted by *Blue Peter's* editor, Bidy Baxter, who employed him as a presenter.

Along with his dog Shep, he went on to be one of *Blue Peter's* biggest personalities. During his 12 years his daredevil can-do attitude led him to complete some extraordinary challenges, one of the most memorable being in 1977, when he climbed Nelson's Column without a safety harness.

After *Blue Peter*, John was not short of work. He presented *Go With Noakes*, a BBC children's show featuring him in various outdoor adventures, such as motor racing, rowing, aerobics and painting, accompanied by Shep. It lasted for five series from 1976 until 1980. In 1979 he published a book of stories for children, *The Flight of the Magic Clog*.

In 1998 he returned to *Blue Peter* for a programme celebrating 40 years of the show, and was back again in January 2000 when Singleton, Purves and Noakes dug up the *Blue Peter* time capsule they had buried in 1971.

John passed away on 28 May 2017 and is survived by his wife, Vicky.

Forthcoming events

Monday 16 – Saturday 21 October
Milton Court Theatre

The Cherry Orchard

By **Anton Chekhov**, in a version by
Tom Stoppard
Christian Burgess director

Tuesday 17 October, 7pm
Milton Court Concert Hall

Guildhall Studio Orchestra

With special guest **Dave Arch**

Thursday 26 October, 7.30pm
Milton Court Concert Hall

ALUMNI RECITAL SERIES

The Flautadors

Monday 30 October – Monday 6
November, 7pm
Silk Street Theatre

The Consul

Music and libretto by **Gian Carlo Menotti**
Timothy Redmond conductor
Stephen Medcalf director

Saturday 4, Sunday 5 November,
7.30pm
Milton Court Studio Theatre

Swansong

Devised by **Iain Burnside**

Monday 6 November, 7.30pm
Milton Court Concert Hall

FACULTY ARTIST SERIES

Decoda: The Veiled Voice

Yonah Zur violin
Sæunn Thorsteinsdóttir cello
Catherine Gregory flute
David Kaplan piano and harpsichord

Thursday 16 November, 7.30pm
Milton Court Concert Hall

ALUMNI RECITAL SERIES

Guitar Spectacular

Jørgen Skogmo-Jens Franke duo
Housden-Tarlton duo
George Tarlton
Isabel Martinez

Wednesday 22 November, 7.30pm
Barbican Hall

Guildhall Symphony Orchestra

Esa-Pekka Salonen conductor
Adrian Leaper conductor

Esa-Pekka Salonen *LA Variations*
Mahler *Symphony No. 5*

Thursday 23 – Wednesday 29
November
Milton Court Theatre

Post-Mortem

By **Noël Coward**
Lucy Bailey director

Tuesday 19 December, 6pm & 8pm
Milton Court Concert Hall

ALUMNI RECITAL SERIES

The Nutcracker and I by Alexandra Dariescu

For full information and booking, visit gsmd.ac.uk/events
To find out about priority booking for Guildhall Circle
members, visit gsmd.ac.uk/circle