

PLAY

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Guildhall
School
Magazine
2023**

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**GUILD
HALL**
SCHOOL

Welcome to the latest edition of PLAY

2023 has been an especially significant year for Guildhall School as we celebrate the *10th anniversary of our Milton Court site*, home to the largest conservatoire concert hall in London. The building, which also includes a state-of-the-art Theatre and Studio Theatre, has been a game changer for the School and boasts an inspiring history of memorable student and international artists' performances.

This summer, for the second year running, we have been ranked as the UK's *number one university for Arts, Drama & Music* by the Complete University Guide, as well as number one for Music by the Guardian. We also sit within the *top ten global performing arts institutions* in the QS World University Ranking 2023 and were awarded Gold in the recent Teaching Excellence Framework. Alongside our "world leading" status conferred to us by the Office for Students, we are currently rated the UK's number one conservatoire for research in the Research Excellence Framework. On the whole, I'd say we're doing OK!

As one of the largest providers of specialist performing arts training for under-18s in the UK, we are currently investing heavily in expanding our out-of-school provision in response to the growing need for extracurricular music and arts training now that they are no longer priorities within the schools' national curriculum. To help ensure that children from all backgrounds have access to the gift of the arts, we have launched our Guildhall Young Artists Appeal. Turn to the back cover to find out how you can help.

I hope you enjoy reading this year's PLAY, where we speak to Roderick Williams fresh from his performance at the Coronation of King Charles III on page 4. We'll go behind the scenes of this summer's impressive drama production of *Antigone* on page 8 and hear from alumni working at the heart of the UK's streaming industry on page 22.

It's always a pleasure to hear what our alumni are now doing, from Scarlet Halton's late night gigs on page 20 to Billy Marshall's clock repair shop in York on page 28. Whatever your story, we would be thrilled to hear from you, so please do let us know your news for the next issue of PLAY by emailing alumni@gsm.d.ac.uk or calling 0203 834 1592.

With best wishes,
Professor Jonathan Vaughan FGS
Principal



“I said that I would like to be a singer. Of course, me going back to university at 28 was a financial risk, and it was scary”

Roderick Williams

The eyes of the world – not to mention the eyes of the King – were on singer Roderick Williams OBE FGS (Opera, 1995) at the Coronation this May. When PLAY speaks to him today, he’s been performing for a much more demanding audience – a special event for under-5s and their parents created by Concerteenies at the Aldeburgh Festival 2023. “Quite boisterous, but such good fun!” he says with a grin. “I think the highlight for me was singing Schubert’s *Trout* as a bubble machine sent bubbles everywhere.”

Williams clearly thrives on variety. He is a prolific composer and recording artist, won the Royal Philharmonic Society’s Singer of the Year award, and in June 2017 was awarded an OBE for services to music. Just don’t call him a star. “I don’t really recognise that word,” he says. “I can say that I’ve been in constant employment since my Guildhall days and probably a little bit before that. But it’s been a long, slow progression with many wonderful peaks.”

Music has always been a part of Williams’ life, but he never considered it as a career until his late 20s. As a child of musical parents, he was a chorister and followed his older brother to Christ Church Cathedral School in Oxford. “I just didn’t have the imagination to ask the question about whether you could make a career as a professional singer,” he remembers. “It’s all fireman, doctor, airline pilot when you talk about careers. I thought I was going to be a classroom teacher.”

And, indeed, that’s what he was. After gaining his undergraduate degree as a choral scholar at Magdalen College, Oxford in 1987, he became a music teacher. Singing was for weekends but slowly became an increasingly important part of his life. One day, his wife, Miranda Williams, asked him what his ultimate ambition really was. “Scrabbling for an answer, I just said that I would like to be a singer. Of course, me going back to university at 28 was a financial risk, and it was scary, handing in my resignation at my school. It felt quite grown up.”

His first audition for Guildhall didn't quite go to plan. Used to choral singing, he arrived with a big stack of scores. "Johanna Peters, then Head of Vocal Studies, said to me: 'Mr Williams, do you have trouble learning music?' I said no. Then on the way out, the pianist said to me: 'I think she means singing from memory.' I didn't remember seeing any indication that you had to do everything from memory on the application form, because it was just assumed. That was a big takeaway! As a choral scholar, being able to read music and process it quickly is a great skill, but it's not the only skill."

He took the lesson to heart and, the following year, memorised all his audition pieces. Once he arrived at Guildhall, however, more lessons were to follow. "I was among singers from all over the country and all over the world, some of whom probably didn't read music. They certainly had different musical skills, very different approaches to music. They sang from the heart – and moved me to tears."

It had been David Pollard, then Professor of Singing, who suggested that Williams try out for Guildhall, telling him: "If you get in, you will see where you fit in the natural order of things." As a former Oxford choral singer, Williams assumed that would be somewhere near the top. "Lo and behold, that was not the case! There was Gwyn Hughes Jones, Catrin Wyn-Davis... When you hear people like that, you understand what voices are about, as opposed to just singing processing ability. I had not come across the concept of an international voice – a voice that could be on an opera stage anywhere in the world – that was quite a shocking revelation. There's a conversion to be had between the world of choral singing and then the world of opera, and I would have had huge trouble bridging the gap without Guildhall."



Roderick Williams receiving his Guildhall School Fellowship

Indeed, with the honourable exception of a role as a belly-dancer in a school production aged 11, Williams had never acted on stage. At Guildhall, he discovered that he loved it. "I applied to the Opera course because it sounded like a whole pile of fun. Movement classes, combat classes, prosthetics – that really sold it to me. Again, if it hadn't been for Guildhall, I probably wouldn't have realised how much I enjoy being someone else for an evening."

Once graduated, Williams never looked back. What's the secret of his success? Competence, he says. "And by competence, I don't mean to sound like I'm trying to damn myself with false or faint praise. I mean that I have achieved a level of competence that makes me feel confident wherever I go and sing. I don't think people book me to book a big star. I don't think that having my name on a programme causes queues outside box offices or that people could sell an opera on my name alone. That's what a star is to me: someone like Bryn Terfel. I think I may have, in this industry, a reputation for competence, reliability and musicianship. The sort of things that a school like Guildhall teaches."

It's incredibly hard, he says, to single out a highlight from such a varied career. "Because loving it all is part of it for me." But the part of Christus in Peter Sellers' Berlin production of the St John Passion was one of the most extraordinary and powerful dramatic stage experiences of his professional life. "It's not a taxing role. If I sang it to you now, beginning to end, I could probably do it in about six minutes. That left me free to throw myself wholeheartedly into the characterisation, as Peter Sellers pushed me further and further to go deeper and deeper into it. I had a profound spiritual experience singing that role."

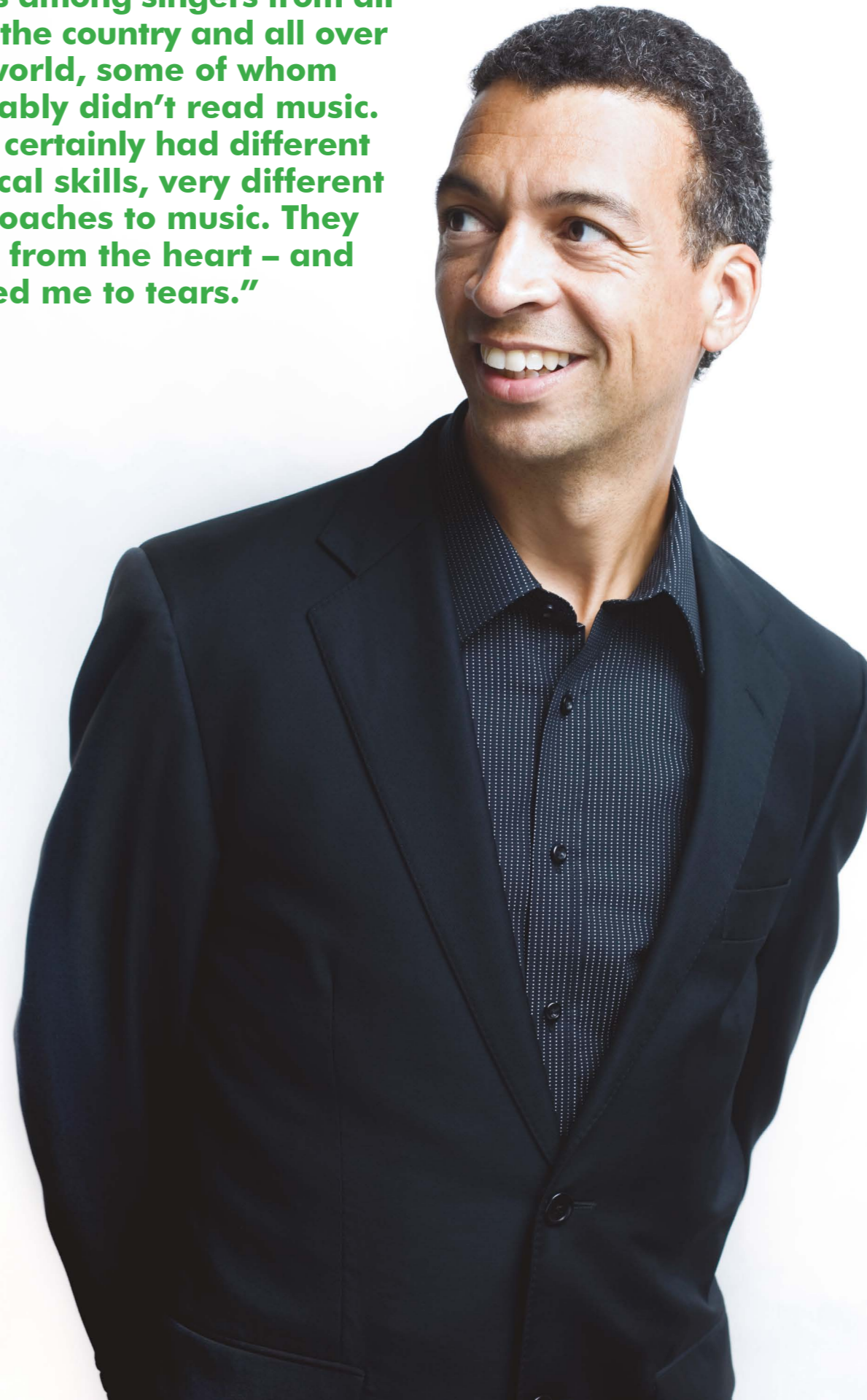
Looking back over his career, Williams says he feels an immense sense of gratitude. "And I want to express that in myriad ways." One way Williams is giving back is through the Roderick Williams and Christopher Wood Scholarship, which will award £15,000 annually to postgraduate students on the School's Vocal and Opera Studies programme over the next decade, providing much-needed support for artists of the future. The Scholarship is generously donated by the Chair of the School's Campaign Board Professor Christopher Wood, a consultant surgeon and composer best known for his sacred choral music.

"I am privileged, with a small 'p', to have had these opportunities come my way," says Williams, "And privileged with a slightly larger 'p' to have grown up in a very lovely North London middle class home with the financial support of my parents behind me. I want to return the favour to the younger generation, particularly those who have not been lucky enough to have the accident of being born in a certain time, in a certain place, to certain people. I understand that it's easier to be generous when you are comfortable yourself. This scholarship expresses my gratitude to Guildhall, to the profession and, of course, to Christopher's generosity too."

Williams' next project is the St Endellion Festival – of which he is this year's artistic director – which will be staging *La Traviata*. After that? Everything that comes his way, he says. "I said to Miranda all those years ago that I'd do this singing thing for as long as it takes for me to realise I'm not enjoying it anymore. At that point, I'll say: 'OK, fine I'll go back to teaching now'. At the moment, I'm still enjoying it hugely. I'm always looking for the next challenge. Choral singing, recital work, composing – everything."

Follow Roderick Williams on Twitter @RGCWbaritone

"I was among singers from all over the country and all over the world, some of whom probably didn't read music. They certainly had different musical skills, very different approaches to music. They sang from the heart – and moved me to tears."



Antigone



Lola Shalam, Amber Gadd, and Nora Knop in 'Antigone'

Brave and heroic: Guildhall's production of *Antigone* at Silk Street Theatre in July may have looked like just another version of the Greek tragedy, but a deeper look showed one noticeable difference – women at its heart. And that was no accident, demonstrating a conviction that was typical of writer Stef Smith's bold reimagining of the Greek tragedy, artfully seeded by director Orla O'Loughlin during rehearsals.

'The original story is really about her uncle, King Creon. But our narrative focus is on the sisters, Antigone and Ismene, and ends with the perspective of Ismene as the sister who survives.'

"It was consciously done, as this is a kind of feminist reclaiming of a story where the women weren't really the centre of the story before," says Orla, Guildhall's Vice Principal and Director of Drama. "Stef has brought characters that were otherwise quite minor in Sophocles' original telling to the centre stage. Although it is called *Antigone*, the original story is really about her uncle, King Creon. But our narrative focus is on the sisters, Antigone and Ismene, and ends with the perspective of Ismene as the sister who survives.



"Everybody else does 'heroic' things – and dies. But is it not more heroic to keep on living, to put one foot in front of the other? That's the argument our play is making. It felt very relevant that this was a play with so much to say about gender, power and citizenship, because there is a live engagement to those themes within this cast. This production brings politics, art and their talent together perfectly."

Women were prominent among both cast and crew. On stage, there were the lead



roles of Antigone (played by Nora Knop), Jocasta (Amber Gadd), Eurydice (Francesca Gilbert) and Ismene (Lola Shalam), while most of the creative team roles were occupied by women too, including writer, director, associate and movement director, designer, intimacy and fight director.

As Ismene, final-year student Lola had many intense and emotional moments, but also got the chance to rediscover her inner eight-year-old for scenes that depict her and her character's siblings as children. "That was hilarious," she says, during a break in rehearsals. "I was wrestling with my brothers (Polyneices and Eteocles, played by Joseph Clark and Prince Owusu), who are two big blokes that could definitely keep me in line.

"This play has felt so specific to us as a company. We know each other so intimately now and so much of the story was told from the perspective of the chorus – that suits a company of actors who have been together for three years. We speak from the same heartbeat."

'So much of the story was told from the perspective of the chorus – that suits a company of actors who have been together for three years.'

Antigone had a huge cast and was performed in the Silk Street Theatre, which has a stage larger than most West End venues, a vast undertaking that's particularly striking given that it was delivered by students who began their training under pandemic restrictions. "They started their studies at home – alone and online," says Orla. "When they did get to school, they had to remain in small groups and to stay one-and-a-half metres apart.

"That experience was the complete antithesis of working as a big ensemble.

We have 18 actors in this company and we did a Greek tragedy – which is about as epic and full of the most primal human experiences and emotions as it is possible to get."

And the end result? Stage Manager Prop Supervisor Qian Yan Tan (Stage Management, 2023), said "It was great being able to watch opening night almost like an audience member," says Qian Yan, "and being able to see everyone's reaction – people cried! I want to work on shows that get reactions from people and make people think as they leave. I realised I might not get that opportunity again for a while after leaving Guildhall, so I really relished it."



And according to Orla: "The production went really well. We had amazing audiences, fantastic industry turnout and feedback, and from a personal and creative perspective the students more than delivered on the potential they had shown in rehearsal. I have seen how they have flourished and grown and continued to raise their game every time. I am privileged to be part of their journey."



Professor Orla O'Loughlin
Vice-Principal and Director of Drama

From pandemic disruption to changes in arts funding, and from the rise of AI to the writers strikes, the past five years have been some of the toughest many of us remember.

FINDING THE CORE

To help our recent graduates, Guildhall Futures Fund – the School’s new funding scheme launched in September 2021 – offers support to graduates for up to five years from graduation, as they find their feet in a rapidly changing world and prepare for what lies ahead. “We want to offer flexible support for graduates who are navigating the world in difficult times,” says Sian Brittain, Head of Innovation. “And we want it to be flexible, responsive – and fun.”

Guildhall Futures Fund aims to give artists space to consider their practice, adapt to this new landscape, and maintain sustainable and fulfilling careers. What kind of projects might get funded? Any that support the advancement of creative practice and creative careers, though the criteria has been kept deliberately wide to encourage as many people as possible to apply.

Look at those who have been funded in the past and you’ll see a rich variety of performance, creativity, personal development and community work. In 2022, for example, contemporary folk ensemble The Finn Collinson Band received funding to deliver live community workshops and a digital resource. That same year, the Fund gave artist Luca Manning space to develop and explore their artistic voice and it enabled viola and piano group Duo Fabulae to collaborate with filmmaker



The Finn Collinson Band

‘While training at Guildhall, I worked in refugee camps in Europe and the Middle East at the height of the refugee crisis.’

Radu Rojas to create an audio-visual concert featuring a live performance of Frank Bridges’ *Cello Sonata*.

Guildhall Futures Fund is also there to help existing projects to grow and flourish. In 2021, it supported Compass Collective, the refugee arts organisation co-founded by 2018 Gold Medal winner Mhairi Gayer (Acting, 2018). “While training at Guildhall, I worked in refugee camps in Europe and the Middle East at the height of the refugee crisis,” says Mhairi, who is now the charity’s Co-Founder (Young Persons Co-ordinator and Fundraising). “I felt that we couldn’t build a long-term relationship with the people we were working with. It didn’t sit very well with me that we were able to come to and from these places and the people we were working with weren’t

able to do that. I wanted to set something up which recognised that the challenges don’t end for young people once they arrive in the UK. They need support with that transition.”

The result was Compass Collective, a charity that delivers theatre, music and film projects and arts-led professional development programmes, including creative English classes, to help young refugees and asylum seekers build resilience and integrate into the UK. Originally a series of individual projects, it now employs 11 people, including Executive Director Esbrahim Esmail, who has lived experience as an unaccompanied minor refugee. Young people are embedded into the organisation and trained in facilitation and leadership. “They are the voice of Compass,” says Mhairi.

These young people needed support over and above the creative projects they participate in, Mhairi says. She realised that the charity needed to expand its mentoring skills and applied to Guildhall Futures Fund to train as a coach. When she was awarded the funding, Guildhall’s support didn’t stop there. “Guildhall suggested I do their coaching and mentoring course as well, which I wasn’t even aware of,” says Mhairi (see page 19). “So I did it, and piloted it during our Next Steps programme, which gives young people a mentor, support to write a personal development plan, as well as help with finding opportunities to get work experience, further education or volunteering work placements in their areas of interest. For example, one young man was very interested in fashion: we were able to find him a week’s work experience at French Connection.”

Now she is sharing those skills throughout the organisation. “We implemented them in the second Next Steps programme this year, where I trained another staff member in coaching, meaning we could split into two groups. It has been very effective and, I think, very necessary. We were having to give people a lot of advice and do a lot of problem solving. What we needed to figure out was how to enable young people to become the problem solvers, and how to guide and help facilitate them to make the choices themselves.”



Mhairi Gayer (Acting, 2018)

Guildhall Futures Fund is made possible by Research England’s own knowledge exchange funding – given to support and engage with industry and back both economic and social development. Projects like Compass Collective demonstrate its value. It also allows Guildhall to maintain a connection with alumni, creating a virtuous circle where both can continue giving back to the other.

“We now have people as young as nine coming into our short courses, all the way up to age 70,” says Sian. “And we’re also thinking about people who have been through our degree programmes. What does it mean to step out into the world when you’ve been in a community, a company, a team or an ensemble for years? We want to help our graduates keep that feeling of being part of something.”

The Fund’s impact is profound, say participants. Recent feedback showed that 90 per cent of those funded said that it had allowed them to grow and develop

their business and creative practice, while every single respondent said that it was “very effective or effective” as a platform to both develop their skills in applying for funding opportunities and to support the development of innovative and experimental new artistic work. 82 per cent of successful applicants intend to develop their project further.

One practitioner praised the Fund’s accessibility, in particular: “I have always faced barriers to funding applications because of my neurodiversity,” they wrote. “Guildhall Futures Fund accepting video submissions was an absolute game changer! I felt that my proposal was accepted in a way that I most naturally communicate. This funding being accessible has been a crucial stepping-stone to being able to translate my ideas to the rigid formats of other funding opportunities.”

The Fund is just one part of a whole ecosystem of support that is being constantly revisited and updated. Guildhall has just launched a free online video resource, Starting Blocks, for new graduates and early-stage practitioners who are starting to take charge of their own practice, covering everything from how to budget and fundraise to the value of a growth mindset in your career. A partnership with the New Diorama Theatre will kick off at the end of 2023 with a programme supporting early-stage theatre practitioners.



“We’re working with people and organisations who are seeing the challenges that emerging and new practitioners face,” says Sian. “For example, New Diorama are seeing that people who have started their practice during Covid or soon after Covid haven’t had the same lived experience in their career that people had before. We want to change that.”



Sian Brittain, Head of Innovation at Guildhall School

It’s during times of adversity, says Sian, that the arts come into their own. “Having access to high quality art – for public audiences, for communities – is just so important. We have spent years training our artists to the highest level of their skills. Now we want to help them bring those skills – whatever they might be – to a world that desperately needs them.”

Mhairi agrees: “As a graduate of Guildhall and as someone who’s had to be entrepreneurial and expand my skill set in order to run Compass Collective and work professionally as an actor alongside that, it’s been a massive learning curve. We need to think broadly about how we utilise our skills coming out of Guildhall. That’s when the journey really begins. It’s vitally important to create pathways for people graduating from Guildhall to continue their artistic journey. I’ve had so much joy and fulfilment from the work I’ve done with Compass Collective. It’s about being able to action things yourself – not waiting for opportunities to come to you, but creating opportunities for yourself and others.”

The 2023 Guildhall Futures Fund is now open for applications at gsmd.ac.uk/futures-fund and you can learn more about previous recipients at gsmd.ac.uk/2022-futures-fund-recipients

To find out more about the Compass Collective, visit compasscollect.com

And you can access the Starting Blocks resource here gsmd.ac.uk/starting-blocks-1

PRIZES GOLDEN HIST



Sir Bryn Terfel won his in 1989; Jacqueline du Pré hers in 1960. It's been more than 100 years since Guildhall launched one of the most prestigious awards in music – the Gold Medal – and the competition has become an institution. Just as with the Gold Medal in Acting and Production Arts, winning the Gold Medal in Music can be the launch-pad to a sparkling career – as this year's winner, Greek mezzo-soprano Alexandra Achillea Pouta, hopes it will – but what does it take to win this most respected of prizes? We spoke to recipients of the music award to find out what the Gold Medal has meant to them.

Alexandra Achillea Pouta being awarded the 2023 Gold Medal for Music



Alexandra Achillea Pouta (Opera, 2023) was this year's winner of Guildhall School's Music Gold Medal, with an impressive performance that showcased five languages, including Greek, Hungarian and Polish. Since winning the Gold Medal in May she has begun a Junior Fellowship at the School, and has had time to reflect on the evening that changed the course of her career.

"Winning the Gold Medal was an experience beyond words. At times, it still feels like a surreal dream! Each piece I performed held a special significance, a dedicated purpose, culminating in a profound sense of closure as I bid farewell to my studies.

It has been a pivotal milestone. Almost immediately, I was offered the opportunity to embark on a European tour alongside the legendary pianist Martha Argerich as part of the Peace Orchestra Project by Federico Gad Crema, under the baton of Ricardo Castro. The pinnacle of this journey was performing at the Grande salle Pierre Boulez at the Philharmonie de Paris a memory I will forever cherish. Moreover, the award brought me to the attention of a wider audience, conductors, and fellow musicians, opening the door to further opportunities that are gradually filling my calendar for the upcoming year. As for what lies ahead, time will tell."



Anna-Liisa Bezrodny, 2006 (Violin, 2006)

Though she was aware of how prestigious the award was, 2006 Gold Medal recipient Anna-Liisa Bezrodny never put pressure on herself to win it. "When you enter the Guildhall building for the first time, you see all those amazing names on the wall, but I never made a big deal out of it for myself," the violinist explains.

"I just tried to prepare as best I could and see what happened, because there were some phenomenal musicians in my year."

Even when she was selected as a finalist, the old cliché of 'it's the taking part that counts' still held true. Indeed, it was the chance to perform a piece she loved with an orchestra that excited her most. "At that time I was learning the Shostakovich violin concerto, which was very close to my heart," says Anna-Liisa. "Some pieces just speak to you in a certain way and you feel immediately connected to them, and that's what happened for me. I just loved learning it."

Anna-Liisa worked with conductor Sian Edwards to prepare for her performance. "The concerto I chose is extremely complex for an orchestra, and the way she put it all together was wonderful. It was a privilege to be a part of."

Performing as a soloist with an orchestra wasn't a new experience for Anna-Liisa – but that didn't stop the butterflies when it came to the final. "It wasn't a negative nervous feeling though, it was more like an anticipation of something positive," she says. "I do remember one specific thing very clearly: for some reason my mind was focused on which shoes to put on just before going on stage."

She went with the gold shoes – aptly, as she was crowned the winner of the Gold Medal that evening. "Winning gave me opportunities that I maybe otherwise would not have had," she says. It also came in handy when, returning to Guildhall to teach, she forgot her ID card one day. "I pointed at the wall and said: 'That's me!'"



Ashley Fripp, 2012 (Piano, 2013)

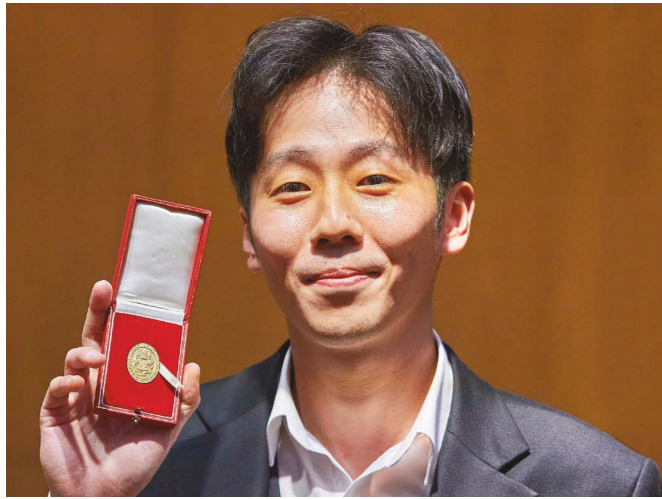
The Gold Medal may be an individual prize, but 2012 winner Ashley Fripp's abiding memory of the experience is of the collaboration involved. "One of the most striking things for me was how incredible the orchestra was," he says. "James Judd was conducting and I played Liszt's *Totentanz*, a piece that needs a really engaged orchestra and conductor to bring it alive – and they all did that."

Ashley's teacher was Guildhall's Head of Keyboard Studies, Professor Ronan O'Hora, who helped him prepare for the big day. "Ronan was fantastically supportive. I had three or four lessons a week in the fortnight running up to the final, and at least three rehearsals with the orchestra. Back then it was still fairly early days for me to be playing big halls, so it was a really important learning curve. It's not just that the playing itself has to be bigger; your convictions have to be that much stronger and more strongly communicated."

While Ashley was well aware of the prize's history, he tried to put that out of his mind. "Obviously you know that big names have been through that mill before, but the most important thing is just to focus on the music."

His mother, grandparents and many friends attended the final at the Barbican, and hearing his name announced as the winner was, he remembers, "hugely exciting." However, such was the camaraderie between the finalists that the evening felt more like a celebration of excellence than a fierce competition. "Any one of the finalists could have won it because the standard was that high," says Ashley, "and it's a tremendous privilege and a very nice accolade, of course. The Gold Medal is a prestigious prize that is known around the world, so I'm very proud to have it on my CV."

Since winning the award, Ashley has attended several Gold Medal finals – from the far less stressful viewpoint of audience member. "When you've got a young orchestra like that they often play with so much more intensity and enthusiasm, so the concerts are really worth going to."



Soohong Park, 2020
(Piano, 2020)

Pianist Soohong Park had a chance to attend a Gold Medal concert at the Barbican in 2016, a few months before starting his own studies at Guildhall. “What I loved most about it was the atmosphere,” he says.

“It felt more like a big festival than a competition. All the students were enjoying it and very encouraging of each other.”

But as a result of Covid, his own experience as a finalist in 2020 was quite different. “No-one knew whether the Gold Medal was even going to happen. It would have been easy for the school to cancel, but there was a real determination to continue the tradition and everyone worked together to make it happen.”

To allow for social distancing, the finalists’ performances took place across four different spaces and two buildings, and synced using ground-breaking technology that allows musicians in different spaces to play with virtually no delay in audio and video. “That the School was able to adopt the new technology to make this work shows, I think, that Guildhall is both traditional and innovative,” says Soohong.

The finalists could see the conductor on a screen and hear the other sections of the orchestra on a headset. “It was tricky at first because I’m used to watching string players’ bows or woodwind players’ breathing in order to be together when playing, but because we were in separate rooms, we had to rely mostly on our ears.”

Soohong’s winning performance was Rachmaninov’s *Piano Concerto No. 2 in C minor*, accompanied by the Guildhall Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Richard Farnes. “I had a strong sense of myself, the orchestra and the conductor working really well together,” says Soohong. “Even though we were sitting in separate rooms, everyone was on the same page. I thought it was the best performance I could have done – and that was the most important thing for me, more than winning.”



Benjamin Luxon CBE FGS, 1963
(Vocal, 1963)

In his illustrious career, the now retired Ben Luxon sang with most of the world’s major symphony orchestras and leading opera houses, made over 100 recordings and was awarded a CBE for services to music, but he almost didn’t become a singer at all.

When Ben moved to London from Cornwall in the late 1950s to do a teacher training course, music was a great passion, but he didn’t know it could be more than a hobby. “I did not realise that the people I was hearing sing in Sadler’s Wells were earning a living by doing this,” he says.

It was the soprano Marion Studholme who heard his voice and suggested he study at Guildhall. “I applied – and to my surprise was accepted. At that time, you could get into Guildhall by having a beautiful voice or being able to play an instrument well, despite not really knowing very much about music.”

Guildhall was then based in London’s John Carpenter Street and Ben’s teacher was Walter Gruner. “In my first lesson, Walter told me I had one of the most impressive voices he’d heard in the School for a long time,” says Ben. “Before I left the room he demanded to know what I was going to do – become a teacher and sing as a hobby, or make a living as a professional singer. I blurted out ‘I want to sing!’” It was a moment that changed the course of Ben’s life.

He won the Gold Medal in 1963, three years after cellist Jacqueline du Pré, with whom he had performed recitals. “I knew it was very prestigious but I didn’t think about things like that then,” he says.

“I just wanted to sing. When I was at Guildhall, many singers would only do a recital if they absolutely had to as a part of their course. I did lots of them because I just couldn’t wait to get on the stage. I loved my time there.”

To read about this year’s Gold Medal Winners in Acting and Production Arts turn to page 32

Looking to ignite your performance?

Guildhall School recently launched Guildhall Ignite, our executive and professional training consultancy coaching in and through the performing arts. The only initiative of its kind, Guildhall Ignite offers a suite of programmes enabling leaders from a broad range of industries including the arts, education and business to respond to the contemporary challenges of today.

This includes one-to-one Executive coaching, bespoke partnerships and leadership courses accredited by the European Mentoring and Coaching Council.

Upcoming Courses*

- Advisors, Mentors and Teachers from 15 January 2024
- Executive Coaching - Advanced from 30 January 2024
- Leaders and Managers from April/May 2024

‘The most practical management and leadership training I have had.’ *Course Participant*

Find out more at ignite.gsmd.ac.uk or connect with us at ignite@gsmd.ac.uk – what will you spark?

*Discounted places are available for those working in the arts, education and charity sectors.



Scarlet Halton

(Fazz, 2022)

“I’m a night owl. Always have been, always will be. It’s just how I work, which is pretty lucky considering what I do.”



Like most musicians, there’s one feature of Scarlet Halton’s often chaotic daily schedule that never changes – the late nights. The vocalist, multi-instrumentalist, composer and arranger admits that even if she’s not out catching friends’ gigs, she’ll often get so caught up in her own projects that 3am swings around and she’s still at it. “Right now, I’m in the process of learning how to mix music, and once you get stuck into the mix, you can fall down a big rabbit hole,” says Scarlet (*Jazz*, 2022).

She admits that one of the big things she’s learnt recently is just to “get over myself”. And that means being more open to collaboration, a message she’s keen to share. “Making music has always been a bit of a solo pursuit for me, but recently I’ve been working with more people.

“I used to struggle collaborating, because I was very particular about the way I wanted things to be. But I’ve sort of gotten over myself as I’ve looked into exploring and working with other people. It’s been so beneficial, considering the results that we can create and the things that I can learn from it.”

What has she been totally into recently? There was the “dream job” reworking Belinda Carlisle’s *Heaven is a Place on Earth* for the BBC Concert Orchestra’s Piano Room series – “a really cool experience”. A concert at Cadogan Hall is about her favourite, “because of the atmosphere and the history behind the venue”, while she’s been doing one-off arranging jobs for any number of private clients.

And then there’s the “creative snippets” for Instagram, a process she regards as “killing two birds with one stone: I’m practising but I’m also creating something that could be useful at some point in the future.” Not surprisingly, Scarlet says social media is the lifeblood of her work. “Instagram is a musician’s LinkedIn these days,” she says. “So I’m focused on creating little snippets of things.”

Her Instagram feed is full of visually arresting videos that show multiple versions of the artist playing several instruments at once. Scarlet favours keys and bass, but also has drums and guitar in her repertoire and enjoys integrating them all into her social media content. “Somebody will spot something that I’ve posted and will get in touch about a session,” she says. “I’m putting myself out there and people are seeing me and thinking, ‘she’d be good for this’.”

It was as a result of this ‘online portfolio’ that her current job, playing bass on tour with singer-songwriter Jo Hill, came about. “This gig came to me through word-of-mouth, but Jo also had to see what I was about, and that was through my Instagram.”

Playing with Hill has offered a nice contrast to Scarlet’s usual modus operandi as a jazz performer: “We have quite a rigorous rehearsal process, which is very different to jazz where you get given a chart with a bunch of chords on it and you just play.

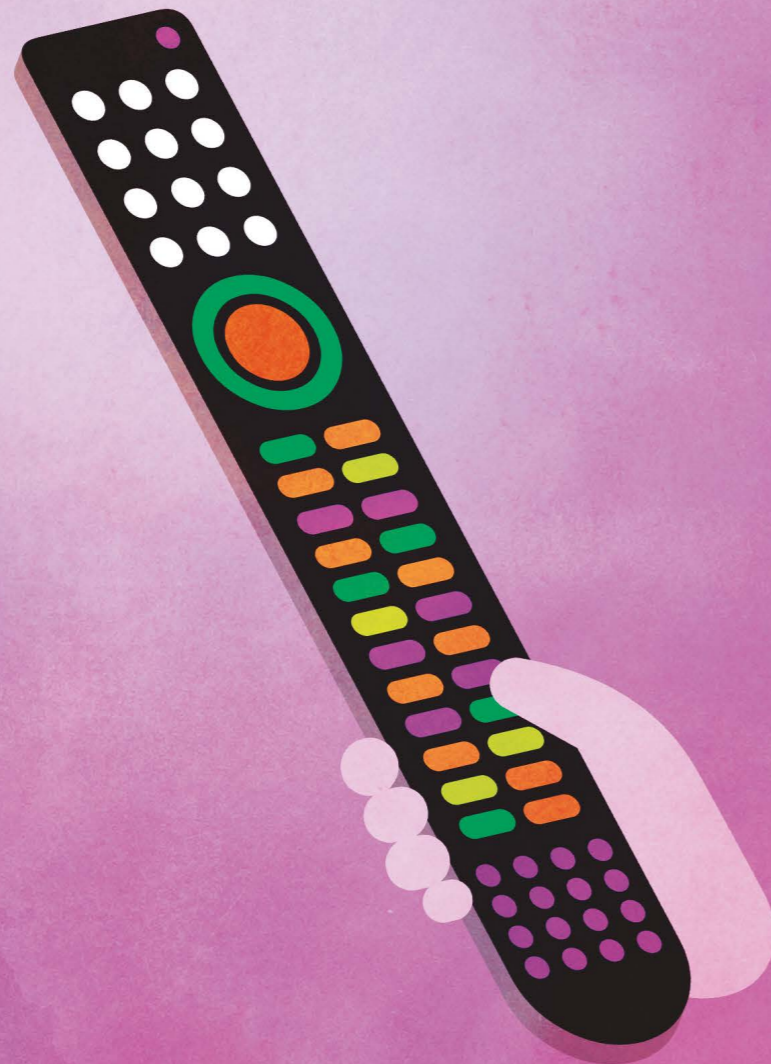
“It’s been a really cool process, rehearsing and tightening up all these different areas and learning about the process of creating a live band arrangement off the back of a heavily produced record.”

The late nights – which involve a fair amount of celebrating after shows, she admits – can be tiring, but Scarlet is taking it in her stride. “I’m a night owl. Always have been, always will be. It’s just how I work, which is pretty lucky considering what I do.”

Check out Scarlet on Instagram @scarlethalton and scarlethalton.com



NAVIGATING THE STREAMING REVOLUTION



In the 25 years since Assistant Director Ben Howard (Stage Management and Technical Theatre, 1998) graduated, he's gone from a runner on Mike Leigh's *Topsy Turvy* to working on major films such as *Wonka* (2023), *The French Dispatch* (2021) and *The Grand Budapest Hotel* (2014). Television and film have changed out of all recognition, he admits, but the one thing that stands out for him is how the explosion in streaming services has changed the landscape. "The industry is completely saturated with work," says Ben, who has also worked on movies for Netflix and Amazon Prime. "When I started out, there just wasn't anything like the same amount of work around."

Netflix was an early streaming pioneer in 2007, but both Apple TV+ and Disney+ launched in 2019, Paramount+ followed in 2021, and Warner Bros. unveiled Max earlier this year. Naturally, all of these platforms need programmes, leading some experts to claim we're in an era of "peak TV" (more than 817,000 shows were available to stream in the US in 2022). In the midst of this ever-changing streaming landscape, here are five good reasons to be cheerful.



New growth

"Frankly, from 2017 onwards, the UK became the hottest place on earth to make content," says Adrian Wootton, CEO of Film London and the British Film Commission. "We're building four million new square feet of studio space in London, Yorkshire, Scotland, Northern Ireland, Wales and Bristol, which means we need at least another 20,000 people in the workplace over the next few years – at a minimum."

In 2019, Netflix and Amazon both doubled the amount they spent on British-made TV shows; by 2021, records were broken again when £4bn was spent making UK productions. However, rapid growth can cause problems. In the summer, nearly 12,000 Hollywood writers (seeking fairer compensation from streamers) and 160,000 American actors (complaining of low royalty payments and voicing concerns about their image rights in the era of Artificial Intelligence) went on strike.

Adrian does not deny that there are challenges in today's landscape – in particular, he is watching keenly as the industry wrestles with AI regulation, and he notes that virtual production (real-time rendered computer-generated imagery) has "become a very big thing in a very short period of time." But whatever the long-term result of the strikes, Wootton is nevertheless encouraged by the fact that pay rates for crew in particular have risen in recent years, and that better practices have already been put in place.

We're not necessarily going to reach the heights of 2019 in 2024 but we're not going to go back to 2013," he says. "Studios have spent hundreds of millions in new bricks and mortar. They've built very deep foundations here." Adrian says the UK now has "an incredibly strong package" of infrastructure, talent, and facilities. "We're definitely in a better position than we were a decade ago," he says, "and I don't see us falling off a cliff."

More opportunities

It's clear that there are now numerous opportunities for graduates that didn't exist even five years ago. It's a reassuring landscape, but one new starters have to be equipped to navigate.

“There’s a risk in being too geared around customs and practices we’re familiar and comfortable with,” says Professor Andy Lavender, who has been Vice-Principal and Director of Production Arts at Guildhall since 2020. He stresses that, as well as teaching students to be competent at their craft, Guildhall wants to enable them to be “resilient and adaptable”, key skills in an ever-changing industry.

Andy says the pandemic accelerated digital development at the School; when he started, students had to produce an opera remotely – scanning costumes, recording themselves on their phones and broadcasting the production online. Producing performances in a time of social distancing enabled students to master “two parallel workflows,” – creating work for both the stage and digital broadcast simultaneously.

According to Andy, “In the arts today, we’re seeing quite a lot of people moving more fluidly across different art forms,” meaning that Guildhall is deliberately extending its production activity and improving infrastructure “to give students good opportunities for ongoing employment.”

‘It moves so fast now, you have to work really hard to keep up, literally, you’d phone a post-production house and say, ‘Can we use this piece of machinery?’ and they’d go, ‘Oh, we don’t have that anymore, we use this.’”

For example, in May, Guildhall was awarded £900,000 by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, a “game changer” that has allowed the School to procure new audio-visual motion capture systems, including a stYpe optical tracking system and a HOLOSYS volumetric capture system for green screen environments. The new kit will allow students to create virtual reality and extended reality productions.

A chance to shine

After a number of people left the industry during the pandemic, graduating students have been “hoovered up” and are able to accelerate into senior roles more quickly. How exactly can graduates stand out and earn these promotions?

Ben Howard says the rise of high-end TV (single episodes can now have the same budget as a blockbuster) means there are chances of success for those who are prepared to grab them. “Streamers are putting down foundations for a future in this country and they seem to be continually churning out work,” he says. “You’ve got a lot of young people coming into the industry who are continually employed on a James Bond film, and then they work on *Fantastic Beasts*, and then they’re on *Game of Thrones*, and then they’re on *Fast and Furious*.”

While you wouldn’t be able to tell the difference between a production being made for a streaming service or a more traditional output just by looking at the set, the increased number of productions being made in the UK has changed the working atmosphere, says Ben. “You have to be able to react quickly to new requirements”. Because the industry is so busy, it can be harder to secure extra crew or equipment at short notice. “So much of what we do is assessing a situation and being able to react to it quickly, so you need to have your head screwed on. You need to think two or three steps ahead of what might be your immediate situation on a film set,” he says.



Development of technology

Carrie Fletcher (Stage Management and Technical Theatre, 1981), a freelance production consultant who was among the pioneering female senior staffers in the TV management sector, has experienced the changes first-hand. During her time working on such high-profile programmes as *Whose Line Is It Anyway*, *Drop The Dead Donkey*, *Bremner, Bird and Fortune*, *Alistair McGowan’s Big Impression* and Channel 4’s *Dispatches*, she has learned how important it is to keep pace with advances in technology.

“It moves so fast now, you have to work really hard to keep up,” Carrie says, “Literally, you’d phone a post-production house and say, ‘Can we use this piece of machinery?’ and they’d go, ‘Oh, we don’t have that anymore, we use this.’”

Carrie says it’s easy to let technological developments “pass you by” if you’re not camera, sound or editing crew, “but you need to understand it, you need to know what’s being discussed in technical meetings because otherwise you just get left behind.” Tech can affect everything from budgets to the number of hours on set, and young graduates must never be embarrassed to ask questions. “No

one will think you’re stupid if you say, ‘What’s that abbreviation for?’ It’s much better to ask and understand.”

Standing out isn’t always about mastering new-fangled skills or bits of kit. Carrie says core skills “are pretty much the same as they always were”, and Ben looks for hires who are smart, confident and polite.

Better training

Ben chose Guildhall over other stage management schools as a teen because of the hands-on nature of the course, “providing real world experience for learning on the job.” And he says having to sign in at 8am and sign out at 6pm five days a week at Guildhall helped him build a work ethic and “understand what it takes” to make a drama.

The need for these key skills won’t ever change, he admits, no matter how many streaming services are about. What advice would he give to entry level employees? It’s fairly straightforward, he says. “Don’t be a tool, turn up on time, be really nice to everyone and be confident.”

Beyond the production arts, things are also changing for actors. Andy is particularly proud of the work Guildhall students are currently developing as

part of the School’s new screen drama production unit, where they will act out five-minute screenplays set in moving cars. This, he says, helps acting students understand the performance discipline of working with cameras, while also providing music students with the opportunity to create scores.

“We haven’t offered screen drama as a formal part of the curriculum previously,” Andy says. While training for live performances equips students with the skills they need for many different forms of production, Lavender says this new addition to the curriculum was “an obvious thing to do” in an age where “long form dramas have really come back with a vengeance” thanks to streaming services.

“Technology is going to remain complex and evolving over the next few years,” says Adrian, arguing that the UK needs to rise to the challenge by investing in skills and training to ensure we have “the best people.” This is already underway – Adrian is on a national skills task force and the British Film Institute is backing seven new skills clusters that connect talent to employment across the UK. “I don’t think any other country in the world has even started to do this in the way that we’re doing,” Adrian says.

Sandeep Gurrapadi: Understanding the crossroads where community music and theatre intercept

Born in America, but brought up in India for his teenage years, Sandeep Gurrapadi (third year PhD student) has always been passionate about both Western and Indian classical music.

An operatic tenor and a jazz vocalist, he has performed as a soloist at Beijing National Stadium, the Royal Opera House of Mumbai, the Southbank Centre and the Welsh National Opera, and is also an accomplished music educator and composer.

Now, he is melding those passions with community music and theatre, aiming to create a framework for music education in India by encouraging people to create their own works. “And maybe, one day, we could end up with something like the Indian *Hamilton!*”

How is he doing this? One key element is Sandeep’s free workshops for people in India, encouraging them to think of music not as ‘Indian’ or ‘Western’ but as the noises, sounds and silence that surround them. They are then guided to create an original composition incorporating music, singing and acting from their own voices and narratives. “It’s an incredibly interesting and democratic way to create theatre,” says Sandeep.

Running the workshops has been a huge learning experience, he says. “It’s been fascinating to facilitate this process of people coming together from disparate places, and sometimes disparate socioeconomic conditions.

It’s also been fascinating to navigate the tensions – the institutional tension of wanting a finished, polished product and the tension of me being perceived as a Western person coming in. Even though I speak various Indian languages, it can still come across as a hierarchy of disseminating information.”

Contemporary music education institutions in India, he says, are often modelled on Western systems – but with the recent economic growth in India, it’s a huge opportunity for those who love the arts to think differently. “How do you facilitate with individuals to find their own voice, rather than putting groups of people into a box? I’m thinking that if I’m able to incorporate some of these thoughts into Indian institutional thinking, they’ll start to think of different, more unique, more interesting projects to support right from their inception. Of course, I value the classical arts. I am in love with the art form and beauty of opera and Indian classical music – but I’d like to look at it through a more ethical, more democratic and more contemporary lens.”

He hopes that his research will help to create a model of music education for institutions seeking a way to find collaborative meaning for both the participant and the institution. It’s absolutely not, as he puts it, “a colonial saving mindset”. “That’s what I want to get away from. I want to find a way for Western institutions to have meaningful dialogue. There is an ethical, non-colonial way of entering an institution in India to find meaning within the cultural setting and for an Indian audience. Imagine coupling a rich Indian tradition of folk and classical music with valuable Western institutional logistical frameworks, putting that through the lens of an Indian institutional perspective, and seeing what happens. That would really be something.”

Follow Sandeep on Instagram @9sandeep6 and check out his website to learn more sandeepgurrapadi.com



Sandeep performing in 'The Everyman Project' 2023



Workshop facilitated by Sandeep



THEN & NOW



Billy Marshall (Horn, 2019), owner of Marshall Clocks in York

There have always been two passions in my life – music and clocks. I thought my career would be in music and that I'd just have horology in the background as my hobby, but, for now at least, the tables have turned. I love having people come to me with these damaged pieces that hold such memories – and I find a way to mend them.

I think my two loves developed in tandem in childhood. I started playing the French horn when I was 11 and, around that same time, my father, who I learnt my horology skills from, gave me my first clock. It was a 1930s Whittington 'chime nine gongs' which was quite a standard piece. I remember it had been knocked off a shelf and was all smashed up. I had my own stool in my father's workshop and worked on it there. When I fixed it, my father gave me a nod of approval and I kept it in my bedroom afterwards.

'I really learnt so much more than music from my course. It taught me how to work on my own and in a group, honed my communications skills and threw me into the industry, kick-starting my career. It was such a fantastic experience. It just didn't feel like studying at all, because you learn so much about life.'



I'm sure it took me a long time to repair. These days I appreciate the importance of working smarter not harder – Guildhall taught me that. Being able to apply that attention to detail in a disciplined manner is such an amazing skill to have. I've come to realise, since graduating, that a lot of the things I learnt transfer very easily into other careers.

Although I now run a successful clock repair business in York, music still remains very much part of my life. I think it was my time at Guildhall that gave me the skills to balance both my passions. While studying I was tinkering with clocks in the background, buying old ones at auction, fixing them and selling them online – but I really learnt so much more than music from my course. It taught me how to work on my own and in a group, honed my communications skills and threw me into the industry, kick-starting my career. It was such a fantastic experience. It just didn't feel like studying at all, because you learn so much about life.



I graduated just before Covid hit, playing the French horn and working for a major London clockmaker. Then the pandemic happened and everything stopped. The whole music scene ground to a standstill, but my studies had taught me the discipline and perseverance to find a way through – to find the balance and understand the importance of making both my passions work for me.

When I think about it now, I realise that I came to Guildhall for the fantastic teachers and an open-minded approach, but what I left with was an experience and skills you just don't get on a conventional university course.

Find out more at marshallclocks.co.uk and Instagram @marshall_clocks

Milton Court at 10

On 25 October we celebrated the 10th anniversary of Milton Court with a special evening of music from the Guildhall Chamber Orchestra, under the baton of Joshua Weilerstein. Guests, including many alumni who studied, taught or performed professionally at Milton Court, were treated to the world premiere of a newly commissioned piece by Hollie Harding, Associate Head of Composition at Guildhall School, as well as the chance to experience our latest developments in Production Arts, including an Augmented Reality Headset and TV Studio complete with a car and full green screen.

Milton Court opened in 2013, home to a 608 seat Concert Hall with fully adjustable acoustics, extendable platform and innovative audio and digital broadcast system. The hall was designed to host classical and contemporary music presented by the Barbican and its artistic partners, and sits alongside a 223 seat Theatre and Studio Theatre.

Since opening, Milton Court has been home to over 208,000 hours of rehearsals, shows and events – from symphony

orchestra concerts to drum and bass, from jazz to baroque opera and contemporary theatre. This Autumn we have celebrated its anniversary with a season of events, including performances from Britten Sinfonia, Sir Simon Russell Beale and The Academy of Ancient Music.

Visit gsmd.ac.uk/miltoncourt10 to watch our official Milton Court 10th anniversary film and full interviews with alumni and special guests.

“My time at Milton Court really helped prepare me because of the facilities we have on offer. You feel like you can just walk out of here straight into a job. No matter what venue you go into, no matter what size, whether it’s a big show or a small show.”

Tash Holdaway
(Stage Management, 2019)

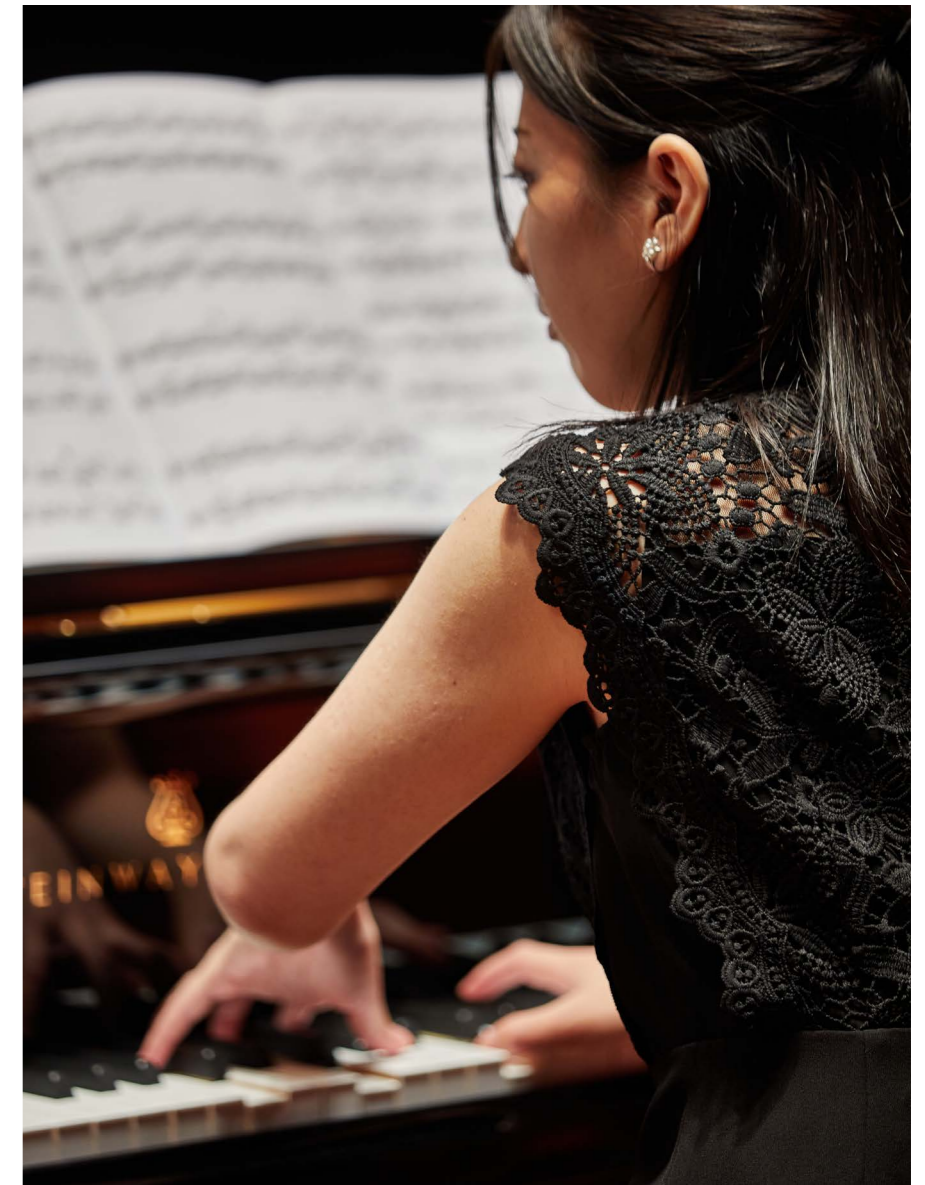
NEWS

Guildhall School tops 2024 University League Tables

Guildhall School is the number one higher education institution for Music in the 2024 Guardian University Guide music league table, the only institution scoring 100/100 in the Guardian’s rating of excellence for music and the second year in a row it has topped the table.

In the drama & dance league table, the School was placed 8th, receiving an excellence score of 92.7 for Production Arts and Acting programmes.

Guildhall School was also ranked first in the Arts, Drama and Music Complete University Guide League Table 2024, and in September was awarded an overall rating of Gold in the Teaching Excellence Framework 2023, a key indicator of teaching quality on undergraduate programmes across UK universities.



Meet the 2023 Gold Medal winners for Acting and Production Arts

Alongside mezzo-soprano *Alexandra Achillea Pouta*, who we heard from on page 16, *Abdul Sessay* and *Thomas Jack Licence* were announced as the winners of the Gold Medal for Acting and Production Arts in August.

Abdul Sessay, a 2023 graduate of the BA (Hons) Acting programme, was awarded the Gold Medal for being the student that staff felt had most embraced the spirit and ethos of the training at Guildhall School.



Abdul Sessay (Acting, 2023) performing in 'Macbeth'

During his time at Guildhall, Abdul played Ross in *Macbeth* (dir. Ashley Zhangazha), George Gibbs in *Our Town* (dir. John Haidar) and Knowledge/Fellowship in *Everyman* (dir. Katherine Nesbitt). Outside of the School,



Thomas Jack Licence (Stage Management, 2023)

Abdul took the lead role in Nike x Patta's *The Wave*, a series of short films celebrating the reimagining of Nike's iconic Air Max 1 silhouette, directed by Mahaneela with Steve McQueen acting as creative director and mentor.

In Production Arts, *Thomas Jack Licence* was this year's winner, having just completed the BA in Production Arts (Stage Management pathway) where he was judged to have surpassed all expectations across a variety of roles and made a significant contribution to the department.

In his final year Tom was Deputy Stage Manager for the autumn opera triple bill (Massenet *Le portrait de Manon*, Smyth *Fête galante*, Rota *I due timidi*), Stage Manager for the summer opera double bill (Holst *Sāvitri*, Judith Weir *Blond Eckbert*) and Costume Supervisor for drama *Attempts on Her Life* by Martin Crimp. For his Graduation Project, Tom designed and created a Cinderella 'peasant to princess' costume reveal, where the performer pulls a cord and switches costume in three seconds. After graduating, Tom headed straight into the industry as an Assistant Stage Manager on the UK tour of *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory – The Musical*.

Huge congratulations to Alexandra, Abdul and Tom.

Guildhall School introduces Guildhall Young Artists: six centres dedicated to performing and production arts training for young people

In last year's PLAY Magazine we were thrilled to tell you about the success of Guildhall Young Artists King's Cross. Earlier this year Guildhall School announced the full Guildhall Young Artists network of centres providing inspiring performing and production arts training for children and young people. Alongside the centre in King's Cross, Guildhall Young Artists (GYA) is now formed of: Centre for Young

Musicians, Junior Guildhall, Guildhall Young Artists Norwich, Guildhall Young Artists Taunton and Guildhall Young Artists Online.

Each GYA centre is run and overseen by Guildhall School, in partnership with arts venues and local providers of education, including schools, local authorities and Music Hubs. These partnerships ensure that children and young people attending GYA centres have access to opportunities to develop and enrich their experiences as creative individuals.

Over 1500 students currently participate in GYA centre activities, including weekly Saturday courses and orchestras. Bursary support is offered to nearly 20% of participants across all GYA centres and almost 40% of participants are from the global majority. Students come from over 700 schools nationally, and from 23 counties, to attend each

week. Regardless of their ultimate career direction, the professional artistic environment of Guildhall Young Artists provides students with valuable life skills and the means to develop their individual talents to the full.

Guildhall Young Artists network has been endorsed by some inspiring artists and industry professionals including Judith Weir, Composer and Master of the King's Music, Naga Munchetty, a Journalist & Broadcaster who studied at the Centre for Young Musicians, and Actor Barney Walsh, who said that attending Junior Guildhall "was one of the best experiences of [his] life".

Please turn to the back page to find out how you can support Guildhall Young Artists at a time when affordable arts opportunities for children are in decline.



Kalungi Ssebandeke (second from left) with, from left, Rob Drummer and Jordi M. Carter, Co-Artistic Directors & CEOs at Boundless Theatre; and David Linton, Head of Acting and Programme Leader at Guildhall School of Music & Drama



Big Boundless Show Prize announces first winner

Kalungi Ssebandeke (Acting, 2019) has been announced as the inaugural recipient of the 2023 Big Boundless Show Prize, a joint prize presented by Guildhall School of Music & Drama and Boundless Theatre, in association with the Museum for Youth Culture.

His winning play, *Black Terror or Looking For Bill* (working title), is inspired by Bill Richmond, the world's first black boxing superstar and will be staged by Guildhall students.

Speaking about coming back to Guildhall in this new capacity, Kalungi said: "To return to

Guildhall as a writer is really exciting – I always felt like I came to the School to train as an actor but left as a multidisciplinary person: a director, an actor, a musician. It's partly why I chose Guildhall, as I was able to rub shoulders with opera singers and actors and writers and production arts students. Coming back also feels surreal. I was a student here from 2016 to 2019, just learning and being open to new experiences. And now I'm bringing all of that into the writing process, working with the students, some of whom I know from my time here. It's a full circle moment. It's like coming home."

Remembering Wyn Jones, 1952 – 2023



Wyn Jones directing

Guildhall School was deeply saddened to hear of the death of Wyn Jones, former Director of Acting, who passed away in September after a period of illness.

Wyn read Drama at the University of Hull and then worked as an actor in repertory theatre around the United Kingdom until 1985.

As a freelance director, his productions included *The Winslow Boy*, *Murder Is Easy* and as Associate Director, *Shadowlands* in the West End. National tours included *Peace In Our Time* to celebrate the 50th anniversary of VE Day and *Shadowlands* (nominated as Best Touring Production UK 1992 TMA/Martini Awards). Regional theatre productions included *Mrs Klein* (nominated Best Overall Production UK 1992 TMA/Martini Awards) at Northampton, *Toyer* (Farnham), *Rat in The Skull*, *The Price*, *A Time and A Season* (Plymouth), *Hard Times* (Cheltenham and tour), *The Towers Of Trebizond* (Edinburgh Festival) and *The Hollow Crown* (Leatherhead). Wyn founded Southern Lights Theatre Company which ran the New End Theatre in Hampstead for two years, directing *Rutherford and Son*, *Talk To Me*,

Above All, Courage, Made In Spain and *A Night Of Passion On Buttermoor Drive* for them.

After several years working as a freelance tutor Wyn Jones joined Guildhall School as Head of Acting in 1992, becoming Director of Drama in 2004 and Director of Acting in 2008, until his retirement in 2018. A three-year professional training in acting has long been at the core of Guildhall Drama department's work. During Wyn's time at the School the training was converted into a degree programme, without sacrificing its vocational nature, offering the United Kingdom's first BA (Honours) degree in Acting in 1993. Wyn directed 31 final year productions between 1992 and 2019 for Guildhall, beginning with *Broken*

Pieces by Michel Tremblay. In addition, he delivered core first year teaching and many first year Chekhov and second year Twentieth Century texts projects. Wyn also played a key role in the planning, design and eventual opening of Milton Court which celebrates its 10th anniversary this year, and his production of *The Three Sisters* by Anton Chekhov opened the new Milton Court Theatre. His final production for the School was *Red Velvet* by Lolita Chakrabarti in the Milton Court Studio in 2019.

Our deepest condolences are with Wyn's friends and family. As part of the 23/24 season, the Drama department will be dedicating a production of a classic text later this year to his memory.

'The Three Sisters', directed by Wyn Jones at Milton Court Theatre, 2013



Guildhall Young Artists Appeal

Every child deserves the life-changing magic of the performing arts.

Amid declining affordable arts opportunities, Guildhall Young Artists invests in all children.

Exceptionally high demand spurs expansion, and our vision is to offer bursaries for all in financial need.

Your vital support can make this a reality. Join us by giving a gift of any size and, together, let's bring the arts to everyone.

Ten gifts of £25 will fund a term's Music or Drama Discovery Course. Donate now and spark a passion: gsmd.ac.uk/appeal or phone 020 4582 2415.



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