

Programme Specifications: Advanced Diploma in Opera

Updated May 2020

HE LEVEL 8

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| 1 | Awarding Institution: | Royal Academy of Music |
| 2 | Teaching Institution: | Royal Academy of Music |
| 3 | Final Award: | AdvDip in Opera (Royal Academy of Music) |
| 4 | Programme Title: | Advanced Diploma in Opera |
| 5 | Date of Production: | 2011 |

6 Programme Aims

- (a) To provide high-level pre-professional training in opera skills.
- (b) To enhance students' employability by developing professional standards in attitude, work patterns, preparation and performance.
- (c) To provide opportunities to work with professional conductors, directors and coaches.
- (d) To provide teaching and coaching to enable students to develop as interpreters capable of synthesising the complex musical, dramatic and linguistic elements of the medium.
- (e) To broaden students' experience of operatic practice and operatic repertoire through core repertoire acquisition and participation in staged operatic productions and scenes.
- (f) To provide training in different operatic styles and in different languages.
- (g) To develop students' knowledge and understanding of the opera business through professional contacts, an introduction to professional experience, and through careers advice and guidance.

7 Programme Intended Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of the programme students should be able to demonstrate:

- (a) The ability to communicate artistic insight at a level that meets professional expectations in a discipline that is constantly renewing itself.
- (b) An authoritative synthesis in performance of a complex body of knowledge comprising musical, dramatic and linguistic elements.
- (c) The creative capacity to conceptualize and deliver a role through collaboration with directors, producers and/or colleagues.
- (d) Command of the technical skills necessary to deliver performances at an appropriate level and an understanding of the resources available to continue developing these skills.
- (e) The qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and initiative in complex and unpredictable situations.

8 Delivery and Assessment of the Programme

8.1 Learning, Teaching and Assessment Map

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| Learning and Teaching Processes (designed to allow students to achieve the intended learning outcomes) | Assessment methods (designed to allow students to demonstrate that they have achieved the intended learning outcomes) |
| One-to-one Singing Lessons (a,b,c,d) | Opera Scenes and Productions (all ILOs) |
| One-to-one Repertoire Coaching (a,b,c,d) | One-to-one Singing Lesson report (a,b,c,d) |
| One-to-one Opera Coaching (a,b,c,d) | Final Appraisal and Report (all ILOs) |
| Acting (a,b,c,d) | |
| Movement (a,b,c,d) | |
| Language Teaching (a,b,d) | |
| Masterclasses (a,b,c,d) | |
| Opera Scenes and Productions (all ILOs) | |
| One-to-one progress meetings with the Head of Opera (all ILOs) | |
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8.2 Learning and Teaching Processes

The programme uses a range of teaching methods to ensure that students' learning processes are stimulating, challenging, diverse and complementary. The principal modes of teaching are described below:

- Singing Lessons and Repertoire Coaching. Regular one-to-one work with a Principal Study teacher underpins the core aims of the programme. This working 'environment' (which is a defining feature of specialist conservatoire training) is designed to foster the passing on of discipline-specific professional/artistic practices, and to enable students to develop key professional skills that relate directly to their individual abilities and artistry: musical technique, interpretation skills, repertoire building, programme/portfolio building; audition techniques, and so on. The reflective nature of the relationship between teacher and student is a key element in the development of reflective, critical and informed attitudes to performance.
- Opera Coaching specifically prepares students for roles in opera scenes or productions. It is designed to support Opera Productions and Scenes with individually targeted training.
- Language Tuition is provided on a one-to-one basis to support the preparation of Opera Productions and Scenes and to prepare students more generally for the demands of the profession. These sessions are individually tailored to specific developmental needs.
- Acting and Movement classes provide the necessary dramatic training and support to accompany the musical and linguistic skills outlined above.
- Opera Productions and Scenes provide a key synthetic and collaborative focus of the learning and teaching experience. The process of preparation and the

experience of performance bring together all of the aspects of the programme and provide opportunities for students to demonstrate their individual responses to specific challenges.

- Masterclasses provide students with opportunities to present work to a leading visiting artist, normally in an 'open' setting (open to other students and members of the public). Masterclasses complement one-to-one tuition by widening the range of interpretative judgment to which the students are subject. They are designed to expose students to the very highest international professional standards and provide additional high-profile performance opportunities.
- Visiting Opera professionals (such as casting directors and agents) will provide students with current advice on how to navigate the practicalities of entering the profession.
- Regular progress meetings with the Head of Opera will provide students with ongoing holistic feedback on their work and will help to focus their wider professional preparation.

8.3 Assessment

Two precepts underpin the programme's assessment strategy: (i) the function of assessment is to enable students to demonstrate that they have achieved the programme's intended learning outcomes at an appropriate level; (ii) assessment promotes and supports student learning.

In keeping with other programmes at FHEQ level 8 components are not given a numerical mark. The principal modes of assessment are described below:

- One-to-one meetings with the Head of Opera. These will be regular and will provide the student with on-going and detailed formative oral feedback on their progress. Satisfactory engagement with these meetings will be noted on the End of Year 1 report form.
- Opera Scenes and Productions. These will be assessed by the visiting director/musical director who will provide a report on the student's engagement in the rehearsal process and their final performance. This will provide an external perspective on the student's work.
- Final Appraisal. At the end of the Spring term of the second year, students will undertake a viva (c.30 mins) with the Head of Opera and Programme Tutor to discuss their work over the programme and to acknowledge that all of the requirements of the programme have been met. This will be documented in a short report written by the Programme Tutor.

9 Programme Structure

The Advanced Diploma in Opera is a two-year full-time programme of study. There is no provision for part-time study. Progression to the second year is dependent on satisfactory progress as documented in the End of Year 1 report form.

10 Student Support

Students receive an induction programme which includes: an induction into library and IT facilities; guidance on health and safety (including audiometric testing);

registration; international student meetings; introduction to senior staff with programme responsibilities; tutorial meeting. Students are supported in all aspects of their subsequent life and work at the Academy throughout the duration of the programme in the following dedicated ways:

- 10.1 Head of Opera (with responsibility for the Opera Department and for overseeing the specific needs of the student in consultation with the Tutor)
- 10.2 Designated Tutor (with responsibility for academic and pastoral support)
- 10.3 Dean of Students (oversees student support, learning resources, recruitment and admissions plus our access and participation activities)
- 10.4 Library (staffed by subject specialists who can advise on sheet music, instrumental and vocal parts, musicological materials, reference works, on-line resources, and materials from the Academy's special collections)
- 10.5 IT Helpdesk
- 10.6 Counsellors (who provide confidential pastoral support as trained professionals)
- 10.7 Disability Advisor: The Disability Advisor and support team are responsible for the implementation of the Academy's Disability Equality Policy and Action Plan
- 10.8 Alexander Technique co-ordinator: The Alexander Technique co-ordinator and support team teach Alexander Technique – an established method to improve posture and prevent repetitive strain injury.
- 10.9 Artist Development Lecturers; provide one-to-one consultations with students and can help with issues such as creating a biography or CV, writing letters to promoters, sourcing funding and contractual issues.
- 10.11 Estates Manager, who advises on student accommodation issues
- 10.12 The Royal Academy of Music Students' Union
- 10.13 The English Language Support team and Helpdesk

11 Distinctive Aspects of the Programme

The Academy's focus on excellence in musical performance and creativity is reflected in four distinctive aspects of the programme:

- 11.1 Owing to its competitive entry and international reputation, the programme attracts a cosmopolitan, strongly motivated, and very talented student body which gives participants a realistic sense of the demands required to be at the top of the profession.
- 11.2 The Academy's teaching is delivered by leading professional figures, whether in weekly lessons or in high-profile public masterclasses, so that students are educated in a culture that engenders the highest professional standards in relation to artistic interpretation and technical discipline.
- 11.3 The programme is designed to enable students to make the most of the educational opportunities afforded by being at the cultural heart of Europe's leading city for classical music. This is reflected in the outward looking aspects of the Academy's musical life (including public concerts, research events and the work of Open

Academy).

- 11.4 The Academy's world-class collections of string and keyboard instruments, music manuscripts, early printed materials, and other musical artefacts, together with the Galleries and Collections programme of exhibitions and events, provide a rich resource to support and enhance the student learning experience.