

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION AND BELONGING

UPDATE: FEBRUARY 2023

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This update follows on from one sent in July 2022. Its content has been created by many colleagues across the Academy, and I thank them for sharing information.

As awareness and activity in the area of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging grows across the Academy, I am going to focus on a particular area for each of these updates. Sometimes debates about the curriculum or the 'canon' of repertoire assume that they are fixed entities. Read on and you will find this is very far from the case.

UNDERGRADUATE STUDY

Ruth Byrchmore, Senior Tutor in Undergraduate Pastoral Support and Vice-President of Alumni, uses a wide range of materials in her Aural Skills teaching. Activities have included the analysis of Anna Meredith's *Nautilus*, as well as graphic dictation: of Judith Weir's *King Harald's Saga* in Further Aural Skills and Postgraduate Aural, and Coleridge Taylor and Crawford Seeger in Level 2 Aural. In Free Composition, explorations cover anything from Hannah Kendall to Kendrick Lamar, depending on the class.

ATTENTIVE LISTENING

Associate Professor and Postgraduate Tutor, Roderick Chadwick

A rhythm quiz last week featured some Beyoncé, with *Pray You Catch Me*. The idea originally came from violinist and educator Janell Yeo, who gave a presentation a few years ago on metrical ambiguity in pop intros.

Pauline Oliveros and her Deep Listening concept is an important topic every year. I've just introduced the class to Rose Rosengard Subotnik's *Toward a Deconstruction of Structural Listening*, a pivotal text which identifies the ideological assumptions behind the concept, and how it has held sway over musical training in the West.

Early on in sessions, students listened to Josef Krips's recording of Don Giovanni with the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra. We discussed the timbral qualities of the voices of the female characters, Danco, della Casa, and Gueden, using metaphor in relation to both technique and characterisation.

CONCERT WORKSHOP

As part of a class on communication we watched Christine Sun Kim's TED Talk: *The enchanting music of sign language*. In spring term students devise their own short programmes; this year marimba player Ririka Shimaoka will perform Keiko Abe's *Marimba D'amour* and Evelyn Glennie's *A Little Prayer*.

AURAL WRITTEN TESTS

Academic Lecturer and Aural Skills Coordinator, Christopher Atkinson

Since 2020, all pieces used in Aural Written Tests have been written by women, or by composers of colour: Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, Tōru Takemitsu, Ruth Crawford Seeger, Elizabeth Violet Maconchy, Chevalier de Saint-Georges, Louise Farrenc and Martines, L. Boulanger. Works by these composers gradually fed into classes also as past-paper exercises, and as materials for further discussion.

ELECTIVES

PERFORMING EXPERIMENTAL MUSIC

Lecturer and Analytical Skills Co-ordinator, Alex Hills

The Performing Experimental Music elective allows students to explore music by figures from outside the mainstream canon, and to think about pieces which involve a high degree of agency and creativity for the participants. The classes involve both discussion and playing, and repertoire includes historical figures and brand-new work. The last term has included, amongst others, music by Julius Eastman, Pauline Oliveros, Jennifer Walshe and Juan Carillo.

ANALYTICAL SKILLS

In the last few years, we've updated the materials to include a lot more work by women: many of the introductory harmonisation and counterpoint exercises are by Anna Bon, Isabella Leonardo and Elisabeth Jacquet de la Guerre.

ANALYSIS OF POST-TONAL MUSIC

Later this term we'll discuss music by Ruth Crawford Seeger, Cassandra Miller and Chaya Czernowin.

CONTEMPORARY MUSIC WORKSHOP

Senior Postgraduate Tutor and Associate Head of Research, David Gorton

In these sessions, performers and composers work together in small groups to develop collaborative pieces of music of their own devising. The students bring with them a rich range of abilities, interests and past experiences that contribute to the shaping of the projects. We explored Armenian folk music, Ukrainian poetry, jazz and improvised practices, gender representation in ancient Greek literature, responses to Iranian political events, and evocations of the performance style of Juliette Gréco.

TRANSCRIPTION AND ARRANGEMENT

In these sessions, undergraduate and postgraduate students develop individual arrangements of their own choosing, along with a shared class project. In past years, individual projects have approached a broad range of repertoire including pop, jazz, and film music, alongside classical arrangements.

SILENT FILM IMPROVISATION

Taught by Robert Sholl, the elective Silent Film Improvisation features the analysis of Japanese and Chinese silent films. Additionally, Chinese versions of Phantom of the Opera are viewed and discussed. Students are also given the opportunity to pursue the exploration of their own interests in film.

PERFORMANCE IN CONTEXT

Composers such as Kaija Saariaho, Florence Price and Samuel Coleridge-Taylor are discussed in relation to topics like canon formation, identity politics, performers as curators, and so on.

ITALIAN OPERA: ROSSINI TO PUCCINI

Repertoire discussed by Jennifer Sheppard during these sessions invites thought, discussion and then, hopefully, action in response to the ways certain operas represent difference, including in terms of gender, race, ethnicity, and disability. The ways in which opera practitioners engage with these issues in performance is also discussed. The elective highlights productions that offer creative solutions to some of the more problematic cultural attitudes that some operas may enshrine. A recent student presentation explored the recent production of *Aida* at the Royal Opera House, which has both a diverse cast, and a staging that replaces the traditional orientalist extravaganza with a loosely located contemporary war setting.

ARTIST DEVELOPMENT

Senior Lecturer in Chamber Music, Anna Wolstenholme and Senior Lecturer in Artist Development, Jess Walker

The Artist Development (AD) strand has continued to diversify its elective strands of talks and projects. So far this year, 560 students across all programmes signed up to sessions on topics

from tax, preparing for their graduate future, working in Europe, funding for projects and future study to recording, how to practise and how to pitch ideas to festivals and venues. All the AD schemes offer the opportunity for student-led creativity. So far, over 100 students have successfully applied to participate in projects on improvising, the Multi-Story orchestra, Glyndebourne director Stephen Langridge, Opera Makers, October House Records and not least with the Artist in Residence at the Southbank, Daniel Pioro.

DIVERSE VOICES

The Diverse Voices elective has inclusivity at its heart, inviting students with a variety of interests and identities to express themselves freely in a collaborative environment, and to discover and articulate their own unique artistic practice.

PRINCIPLES OF CHAMBER MUSIC

The six-part elective Principles of Chamber Music has diversified its offering this year with an increased focus on the performer-creator model. This model supports students wanting to research specific repertoires and present them in new ways, including advice on how to set up and curate their own chamber platforms.

DIVERSITY IN PROGRAMMING

Postgraduate Tutor, Briony Cox-Williams

In undergraduate assessment, programming emphasises under-represented composers and repertoire in recital. Students also write a concert review. Meanwhile for postgraduates, there is a flexible model, where discussion and real-world issues are the basis for class contribution.

MMUS PROJECT

Senior Postgraduate Tutor, Sarah Callis

The research project is all about the student, and it should have their artistic identity at the heart of it. Students' project ideas are entirely their own and they are expected to take full ownership of the process. The MMus tends to attract those who are looking for a space to develop ideas that are outside the mainstream, and this often means the classes, of about 20-25 students each year, come with explicit questions about identity. Projects include promoting Black composers, microtonal opera to explore 'otherness' in gender identity and neurodiversity, jazz harpist Dorothy Ashby, exploration of non-binary identity in composition, and more.

STUDENTS CREATE FESTIVAL

Our second Students Create Festival was a huge success. These important parts of our calendar are receiving ever-greater engagement from the general public, staff and students. A shortlist of 120 students presented 18 original creative projects to a total of over 1500 audience members in just two days.

Forthcoming 22-23 AD projects include working with movement director Valentina Ceschi and the Courtauld Institute.

OPEN ACADEMY

Open Academy continues to introduce students to a rich range of contexts in which they can use musical creativity to work with diverse communities. One long-standing relationship is with the Centre for Learning Disability Education at the City Literary Institute. Academy students regularly visit the Percussion Orchestra as part of their elective programmes, working alongside and learning with the orchestra members.

Plans for our future include working in a care setting for residents with dementia. Head of Open Academy, Julian West, is a leader in the field of Arts and Dementia research. From 2016-18, Julian was a co-director of Created Out of Mind, a research project aimed at shaping perceptions of dementia through the creative arts. Open Academy is also working towards developing a project with Connection at St Martins, a front-line organisation working with people living with homelessness or encountering an experience of homelessness, with a focus on supporting the individual towards resettlement. Our new lecturer, researcher and workshop leader Jackie Walduck will lead this new project. Jackie has led high-profile work with the Academy of St Martin's-in-the-Fields orchestra's creative work with homeless adults since 1999.

TRAINING

We're pleased that the student enrolment system is now integrated with student training modules. All students completed modules on Bystander Intervention, consent on Campus and Unconscious Bias as part of their enrolment.

Staff uptake on a larger range of safeguarding, equity and harassment modules is also improving.

WIDENING PARTICIPATION

Our Widening Participation department continues to engage with around 500 young people in Clubs and activities from ages 4 and 5 through to pre-application mentoring for teenagers.

Here are a few images from our first ever Royal Academy Summer School and Springboard activity, which took place in August 2022.



Access and Participation manager Claire Cooke connects with young people in the ABRH



Mobilising the Collections to engage young visitors

All photos by Becca Hunt.

Our Ukrainian students played a programme entitled *Music Will Live* which was organised by Rehina Hanzenko. It featured music by Kolodub, Skorulskyi, Filtz, Lyatoshynskyi, Verikivskyi, Kolomuika, Demchyshyn, Paylyuchenko, Kos-Anatolsky, and Nadenenko, in addition to a Ukrainian folk song arranged by Andrasyuk. We saw memorable and moving performances by Rehina Hanzenko (soprano), Oryna Veselovska (mezzo-soprano), Alex Ilvakhin (baritone), Serhii Udod and Dmytro Fonariuk (clarinet), Yuliia Sozanska (violin) and Maksym Levytskyi, Diana Gordiienko and Mariya Saakayan (piano).

We are reminded to believe in music as a force for solidarity, hope, sadness and change.

WHERE TO FIND INFORMATION AND UPDATES

[Inspiring Change | Royal Academy of Music \(ram.ac.uk\)](#)

GET INVOLVED

It starts with students. I am always happy to hear your ideas, and help you progress them.
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