



EQUALITY, DIVERSITY, INCLUSION

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Liz Kenny
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The Royal Academy of Music moves music forward by inspiring successive generations of musicians to connect, collaborate and create.

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MARYLEBONE ROAD, LONDON NW1 5HT
RAM.AC.UK



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This document follows on from the update sent in January 2021. Added together, they represent a significant and encouraging change to the experience and culture of students during this academic year. There is much to celebrate and inspire us to make further steps together.

BLUEPRINT FOR ALL AUDIT

Blueprint for all has completed our audit. We are grateful to all staff members, students and to Sue Watson and Julie Fenner and their team at Blueprint, for the spirit of open dialogue in which these were conducted, and for the wide range of topics covered in the interviews. We will soon publish Blueprint's executive summary and recommendations on our website. Currently we are building an Equality page, which will draw together information such as our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion reporting, our Safeguarding Review and updates on Access and Participation, so look out for this page on the site. It will be live in time for potential new students to be clearly signposted to our shared values.

CULTURE AND STUDENT EXPERIENCE

A new Code of Conduct has been adopted, with wording agreed by staff and student committee representatives and by the Governing Body. All staff members have responsibilities under the Code. New members of staff will be given the information and training they need to follow procedures put in place to support the Code.

'As a member of the Academy community, I agree to take part in fostering a positive cultural climate where all staff and students can flourish, and where no one will feel compelled to conceal or play down elements of their identity for fear of stigma or retribution. I agree that the musical and personal development of students is our collective priority, and that bullying or harassment of or between staff and students, in any form, has no place in this environment. By signing this Code of Conduct, I agree to familiarise myself with, and to support, the Academy's reporting and complaints procedures.'

Students are signed up to the [CUK's Code of Practice on Respect](#). We have also simplified our documentation around making a complaint, which is available on the Student Information Hub on Blackboard.

Some of the feedback noted with Blueprint concerned microaggressions, or the more everyday extra weight of feeling 'othered', among our Black, East or South Asian or mixed-heritage students. In March we introduced our online Report + Support portal, which we hoped would capture these harder-to-define experiences. So far it has been immensely useful, most particularly in the area of wellbeing, especially in our under-18 community. At the same time, we have noticed that more students and staff are able to voice concerns in informal meetings, conversations or email, as themselves. Nonetheless, it is important to have this safe anonymous reporting space so that we can continue to monitor trends as well as specific incidents.

Blueprint is producing material to help organisations with issues such as unconscious bias and handling sensitive conversations about race. We look forward to this next step, which will complement the online training that has been purchased from Marshall E-Learning for all staff. Blueprint will run workshops for students next year. Online training for students will be a mandatory part of induction from September 2021.

VISITING STAFF

ARTIST DEVELOPMENT

Earlier this month Dr Samantha Ege and Uchenna Ngwe co-hosted a two-hour talk about their work and research.

The Art of the Black Feminist Scholar-Performer – [Dr Samantha Ege](#)
Practice-as-Research, Curation and Today's Musician – [Uchenna Ngwe](#)

OPEN ACADEMY

Freelance musician and scholar [Nate Holder](#) led a session for Open Academy students on the subject of decolonisation of the music curriculum.

COMPOSITION

While I was writing this on site, [Eleanor Alberga](#) was working upstairs with our composers as part of her residency, and a [concert celebrating the variety and depth of her instrumental work](#) over the last 25 years took place on 18 June.

JAZZ

Students are encouraged to approach the following tutors, who are now on our website and payroll, for tuition, balancing hours and allocations according to their own direction. This has enabled us to greatly increase the diversity of the musicians who regularly teach for us. These are found under the Staff tab on the Jazz page of the website, under Staff by Instrument, and are:

Byron Wallen – trumpet
Nathaniel Facey – saxophone
Soweto Kinch – saxophone
Winston Rollins – trombone
Robert Mitchell – piano
Femi Temowo – guitar
Michael Mondesir – bass
Mark Mondesir – drums

This year's Jazz Festival in July features Soweto Kinch, Rachael Cohen, Dave Okumu, Zoe Rahman and Josephine Davies all leading the Academy Jazz Ensemble.

Jazz students have taken part in masterclass sessions with Robin Eubanks, Craig Taborn, Jason Yarde, Kwabena Adjepong, Hannah Vasanth, Jay Phelps, Soweto Kinch, Dave Okumu and Zoe Rahman. White guests have engaged with the paradoxes and history of jazz as a black art form, with Ronan Guilfoyle's Zoom about African roots in jazz music and sessions on Wynton Marsalis and Geri Allen. Dave Holland also spoke very candidly about the racial divides in jazz music, his experiences on arriving in the USA and the importance of continuing to engage with these complex issues.

Ensemble projects have been led by Robert Mitchell, Jason Yarde, Mike Mondesir and Nathaniel Facey.

Female jazz leaders have also featured more strongly, with Nikki Iles's big band *Women in Jazz* concert and the leaders in the upcoming Jazz Festival, and students have worked with Maria Schneider, Trish Clowes and Elaine Crouch in masterclass and professional development sessions.

Next year, Dr Nicole Cherry from San Antonio University will explore her research on George Bridgetower in a cross-departmental event that may shed more light on Bridgetower's connections with musical figures active at the Academy in the 1820s and 30s.

In August, Liz Kenny will be joining Abel Selaoe on his debut CD for Warner Classics, and we are planning a workshop and discussion of his unique music-making with the Strings Department next term.

CURRICULUM AND REPERTOIRE

Assessment material for undergraduate academic and skills exams was enlarged to include a more diverse range of examples, following up on those studied during the year.

The Artist Development team will also offer a new 20-week elective, 'Diverse Voices', for the academic year 2021/22, focusing on diverse voices in classical music, seen through the prism of artist-activists. This will be co-hosted by Dr Jessica Walker and Uchenna Ngwe.

In the Jazz Department, first-year students have taken part in a project on Bheki Mseleku, and have worked on Max Roach's 'Freedom Now' Suite.

REPERTOIRE SESSIONS

Next term these will feature an overture by the Chevalier de Saint-Georges, *L'amant anonyme*, and in the spring term Coleridge-Taylor's *Christmas Overture* (or possibly the other way round!), as well as Florence Price's First Symphony.

SET WORKS

The Florence Woodbridge Bassoon Prize set piece was a 200 PIECES commission by Tonia Ko, who adjudicated; the winner, Hugo Mak, will perform it in a wind chamber concert on 24 June. The Leila Bull Oboe Prize set piece was by Helen Grime, who was also the adjudicator; all the repertoire to go alongside it had to be chosen from list made solely of female composers. For the Buffet Crampon Clarinet Prize, the quick study test was also by adjudicator Katherine Lacy. The autumn term's large wind ensemble concert is programmed around *Nightscares* by Eleanor Alberga.

RESOURCES

The Library has started to compile lists of existing repertoire and related study resources in conjunction with a working group consisting of Dr Jessica Walker, Julian West and Dr Adriana Festeu. We are also working with Clifton Harrison on a strategy for purchasing more diverse repertoire, and are grateful for his guidance and research. At postgraduate level we encourage students to pursue their own repertoire directions, and sessions on diverse programming will now be part of the portfolio provision.

Within the Diary of Events, the majority of concerts are student-proposed Tuesday and Thursday performances. The following question has been added to the criteria for assessing applications: 'Does my programme contribute towards getting a greater diversity of musical voices heard at the Academy?'

The Piano Department undertook work with students around composers from the LGBTQ+ community, and more recently, the Piano Festival featured short pieces commissioned from around the world including Diana Arismendi, Georgina Bowden, and our own Marisa Muñoz-López and Ashkan Layegh.

STUDENTS

We're really proud of our students, who have been pursuing their own initiatives and collaborating and communicating with us continuously, despite the ongoing challenges of COVID-19. The Ethnic Diversity Society is energetic and resolute, and has been led this year by Elliott Bailey and Melissa Doody. We're grateful to Elliott as he hands over to his successor, and to Melissa who will be continuing her role next year. With regular conversations with programme leads, Heads of Department, the Dean of Students and student representation on committees such as the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee, we have built an effective team for the long term, keeping each other motivated and accountable. Student CUK groups and the CUK EDI group continue to meet: the next obvious step, which will happen in September, is to link those two groups for cross-conservatoire collaboration, with student representatives on the CUK EDI group.

The Students' Union and three of its societies – RAM Ethnic Diversity Society, RAM LGBTQ+ Society and RAM Feminist Society – curated a festival of three programmes that celebrate female composers, ethnically diverse artists and members of the LGBTQ+ community. These will feature on our YouTube channel and include music by Coleridge-Taylor, Robert Nathaniel Dett, Jessie Montgomery and Fanny Mendelssohn. The world premiere of Judith Bingham's *I Wear the Chain I Forg'd in Life* will be played as part of a Last Songs programme on June 29.

The EDO Collective, founded by double bassist Thea Sayer, programmed Errollyn Wallen's Concerto Grosso alongside Schubert. [Watch the live stream on YouTube.](#)

Angus Bain commissioned a new piece, *Cave*, also by Wallen, for his final recital. Wallen wrote her first part for theorbo for Dean of Students Liz Kenny to play in *Dido's Ghost* for performances at the Barbican Centre and Buxton and Edinburgh International Festivals from June to August.

On the Academy YouTube channel you can find live streams of the following: Sylva Winds programmed Musgrave, *Beach*, Yi Chen (200 PIECES), Nicola LeFanu (200 PIECES) and Valerie Coleman Umoja on International Women's Day.

The 200 PIECES project continues with works by Sohrab Uduman, Mary Bellamy, Tonia Ko, Sally Beamish and Emma-Kate Matthews.

On 17 June the Salix quartet played George Walker's String Quartet No 1 alongside Schumann. [Watch it on YouTube here.](#)

Final recitals are still ongoing; a sample of repertoire shows that students are making informed choices over a broader range of music. Female composer representation has increased notably, and while there is clearly room for more composers of colour, the list below provides an interesting snapshot and a start from which to build. It is not comprehensive.

Eleanor Alberga, Sally Beamish, Judith Bingham, Katrien Bos, Lili Boulanger, Nadia Boulanger, Il Nam Chang, Rebecca Clarke, Andrea Clearfield, Yvonne Desportes, Madeleine Dring, Cheryl Frances-Hoad, Sofia Gubaidulina, Katherine Hoover, Toshio Hosokawa, Cong Liu, Elizabeth Maconchy, Grace-Evangeline Mason, Toshiro Mayuzumi, Kate Moore, Shunzo Ohno, Roxanna Panufnik, Dora Pejačević, Kaija Saariaho, Clara Schumann, Dobrinka Tabakova, Tōru Takemitsu, Jane Vignery, George Walker, Errollyn Wallen, Hildegard Westerkamp, Hakjun Yoon, Takashi Yoshimatsu.

Lavinia Scarpelli (cello) and Lynne Henderson (horn) programmed entirely female composers, and Eunji Han's Advanced diploma recital, *Sur le pas de Lili*, was devoted exclusively to Lili Boulanger.

OTHER NEWS FROM ACROSS THE ACADEMY

ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION

Redressing the lack of opportunity for meaningful musical education for all is a bigger task than any single organisation can realistically tackle, so we are building more partnerships with other music education organisations and hubs across London and beyond, as well as running our own initiatives that address barriers to progression in the early years of a musical life.

So far in 2020/21 we have run both online tasters and in-person full programmes of the Jazz and Composers' Clubs, with the same group of 15 and 10 students respectively (a slightly smaller group than we would have wished due to COVID precautions).

These young people are between 13 and 18 years old and are recruited from Brent, Dagenham, Haringey, Bermondsey, Walthamstow, Ilford and Newham, with the largest ethnic group being White British and the second largest group being Black British and those of multiple ethnic heritages. Overall, there are slightly more participants from Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic and multiple heritage ethnic backgrounds compared with those from a White ethnic group. There were slightly more male than female participants but at a ratio of 2:3, and our Jazz Club was devised and led by inspirational Black British female composer Cassie Kinoshi.

Three young people from our initial Jazz and Composers' Clubs have continued to work with us – one each in the Jazz and Composers options of Junior Jazz and one within our Mentor Club, a programme that supports young people with bespoke teaching, information, advice and guidance to help them fulfil an ambition to enter Junior Academy, and perhaps onwards to a conservatoire education at a later stage. Four of our Jazz Club participants applied to Junior Academy, and three from Audition Club. Some succeeded first time around, others are being mentored and helped to develop their skills for next time. It is important for us that our programmes are sustained rather than being one-offs, and we are linking across departments to develop ways of keeping in touch with children and their carers and families, should they wish, from the earliest stages. All Club participants who audition for any stage of Academy training are offered audition fee waivers.

We will continue to ensure that the clubs reflect the population of London (from where we are currently recruiting), focusing on the breadth of ethnicities in our city; we will also make sure that young women are supported to participate until they match or even exceed the number of male participants. Finally, we will aim to make sure our teachers and assistants come from similar backgrounds, economically, ethnically and culturally, to these targeted participants so that the young people involved feel included and see possibilities for their future.

SONY SCHOLARSHIPS

Sony's Music UK Social Justice Fund has confirmed that they will support two scholarships, in conjunction with Alexis Ffrench, for Black Undergraduate students, especially those interested in cross-departmental skills such as piano and composition or production, starting in the 2022/23 academic year.

MUSICAL THEATRE JUNIORS

This programme has been postponed but is still in planning. The continuing pandemic has made meaningful outreach problematic and we have decided to continue outreach online in existing disciplines, but to wait until we can be in-person for this new programme. The bursary structure will remain as planned, to enable one third of participants to attend free of charge.

FIRST STRING EXPERIENCE (FSE)

We are **currently advertising for a Director** to run this programme on a Saturday, and also in its new Community FSE guise, at Corpus Christi Primary School in Brixton. The Community scheme is funded by our Widening Participation budget, so will be almost free to all participants. The school has a broad range of socio-economic and ethnically diverse groups; the more affluent families contribute in order to enable opportunities for all. This is a powerful model from which we are learning much. Once the Director is in place, we will be able to recruit other members of the team including student Teaching Fellows; for all new Academy posts we are especially seeking applications from Black, Asian and mixed heritage backgrounds.

MENTAL HEALTH

We continue to monitor the scale and scope of the psychological support team, which has enlarged significantly this year. The team is now one of the most diverse in the Academy, and receives very positive feedback from students from all backgrounds.

As ever, this is one slice of a very rich picture: keep in touch with your thoughts, ideas, achievements, corrections and constructive criticism as we continue to learn and progress together.