Strategic Aim 1: Train and educate outstanding young professional musicians, actors and theatre technicians to the highest international standards and prepare them for successful careers in the performing arts

(1) Distinctiveness of the teaching endeavour: past, present & future

The School has over 125 years’ experience of successfully training musicians, actors and technical theatre specialists for professional life. The School intends to build on this success, and its Artistic & Educational Strategy 2008-2013 sets out the School’s aspiration to become “an international centre of excellence and a global leader of creative and professional practice in music and drama”. To achieve and sustain this, like any excellent organisation in a rapidly changing world, a commitment is required to a process of perpetual evolution in its core business of teaching and learning. This evolution can only be enabled through entwining educational and professional practices and through research-led innovation and change. These two activities will empower the School’s staff and students to provide proactive leadership in artistic and educational practice, nurturing artistic excellence and helping to shape next practice within the creative and cultural industries.

The School’s earlier strategic plan, 2005-2010, committed the School to giving its students the necessary technique and craft skills to become technically proficient whilst engaging and developing their intellectual faculties to find their own voice as creative artists, to be “intelligent practitioners”. The School also recognised that for its students to succeed at the highest levels of their chosen profession, they need to work with the best practising professionals, and have experience of working in professional contexts to professional standards. The School will, in the next strategic planning phase, consolidate and enhance its activities. Through creative partnership workings and capital investment in facilities, it will, by 2013, be able to offer students an exceptional range of performance opportunities and venues. Through increased staff development opportunities, particularly in championing teaching enhancement and innovative research paradigms and projects, students and staff will be able to benefit from being part of a conservatoire underpinned by a culture of creativity, reflective practice and research, where curricula are not only up to date but leading the field in professional practice.

Furthermore, the School’s educational interests extend beyond instruction at higher education levels. With the advent of the Barbican Campus and strengthening partnerships (for example with the Barbican Centre and the London Symphony Orchestra (LSO)), the School will be redefining its learning community both in terms of its physical presence and the extent of its intellectual reach. The opportunities to pool resources and share facilities will encourage and foster

“The distinctiveness of the Guildhall approach to teaching resides in the interaction between training and education, the pursuit of professional standards and the exceptional performance opportunities we give our students.”
[Strategic Planning for Peak Performance: Artistic & Educational Strategy 2008-2013]
artistic and educational connections allowing the School to offer a full spectrum of lifelong learning with national, international and cross-cultural engagement. This will include, alongside undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, educational outreach, young artist development, creative space for research and reflection for ‘great performers’, and involvement in some large scale projects that have the potential to benefit the wider community beyond the HE and arts sectors.

(2) Beginnings: igniting aspirations – from sparks to flames

As a global leader of creative and professional practice in music and drama, the School will identify, nurture and challenge the next generation of creative artists and innovators from all parts of British society. The School has had a long standing commitment to working with schools, young people and adults through Junior Guildhall, Connect, and through its summer schools, to recognise and support individual talent and to extend the influence of the School beyond the front door and the profession. This work supports the School’s aspiration to develop both new practitioners (providing a steady flow of talented young people who are then able to benefit from the higher educational experience offered on the School’s undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in music, acting and technical theatre) and new audiences (with the wider social benefits this can bring). The School will continue to seek out talent in established performance modes but will also be looking to attract different types of performer who complement established modes.

It has been a concern that nationally there has been a decline in cultural provision in main stream state schools, particularly in county music services, and the provision of free instrumental lessons. The effects of this have been felt for some time at admissions in the quality of home student applications, and a decline in numbers for some of the “rare-breed” instrumentalists. This is a national problem that the School’s outreach work can only mitigate in part but recent government papers, including The Children’s Plan (December 2007) and Creative Britain: New talents for the new economy (February 2008) provide cause for hope in this area.

The Children’s Plan, published by the Department for Children, Schools & Families (Dcsf), sets out the government’s intention to develop an entitlement for children to take part in cultural activities in two areas that map directly to activities the School already undertakes and wishes to develop:

- “informed spectators (through attending top quality theatre and dance performances, world class exhibitions, galleries, museums and heritage sites); and
- participants and creators (through learning a musical instrument, playing and singing in ensembles, taking part in theatre and dance performances, producing an artwork, making films and media art, or curating an exhibition).”

This national pledge and the associated funding streams provide an opportunity for the School to develop the distinctiveness of the Guildhall educational experience by seeking start-up funding to develop synergies between Guildhall Connect, Barbican Education and LSO Discovery and initiate some innovative programmes. One such programme under development is a cross-arts workshop project, under the Cultural Olympiad initiative for 2008-2012, involving young people from the Olympic and Gateway London boroughs.

Another could be the opportunity for Junior Guildhall to link with the LSO On Track project, seeking to provide inspirational opportunities for young instrumentalists in East London in the build-up to the Olympics.

Internally, the School will be looking for closer working between Connect and the Junior Guildhall so that from an early age students acquire the skill sets which are relevant to their own aspirations, and are exposed to innovation and next-practice ideas. Connect and the Junior Guildhall will be tasked with joining up their different opportunities to create personalised pathways for talented individuals, and to combine formal and informal learning environments. Similarly, the closer integration of Junior Guildhall music department and the senior school has already begun with the appointment of named instrumental liaisons from the senior school working with the junior departments on areas of collaboration and matching standards in teaching and assessment so that Junior Guildhall becomes a stronger feeder to the School’s undergraduate programmes.

**Key actions and performance indicators**

- Flexible integrated teaching and learning programme for Junior Guildhall and Connect by start of 2012/13. This will include personalised learning pathways for young talent who will be the next generation of innovators and great artists.
- Benchmarking of the School’s and Junior Guildhall’s applicants and intake in terms of under-represented groups – ie state schools or colleges, National Statistics Socio-economic Classification (NS-SEC) categories 4 to 7, low participation neighbourhoods by end of 2008.
- Representation at the cultural olympics 2008 to 2012.
- Initiation of programme of development for rare breed instrumentalists by the end of 2009.

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(3) Developing talent (undergraduates)

Admittance to the Guildhall School is based strictly on ability, regardless of school or social background and the School continues to be proactive in raising aspirations and removing obstacles to admission to higher education in under represented groups through its outreach work. It is also recognised that outreach work is a long-term commitment and does not necessarily translate into undergraduate applicants knocking at the School’s door. In fact, aspiring musicians and actors who have benefited from the Junior Guildhall or Connect may choose to further their study elsewhere.

Key to the long-term success of the projects outlined in section 2 above will be translating this activity into talented applicants to the School’s programmes by ensuring that there is natural progression across activities. For instance, subject to additional student numbers from HEFCE being available and a feasibility study, the development of a new principal study pathway for the BMus programme for multi-skilled live musicians working across a range of musical genres and environments would link to the work undertaken by Connect with the added benefit of helping to broaden the social mix of the student body. The audition process can also be a daunting experience for applicants who have not had the benefit of conservatoire-influenced teaching, and for overseas applicants where the costs of the audition may seem prohibitive when the outcome is uncertain. Therefore, the School will be looking at the viability of offering a short music audition summer School for potential applicants.

“If we have a fair admissions system, then success will not depend on connections, money or influence but on talent and motivation. This is a goal worth working towards.”

[Schwartz report, 2004]
applicants to the School and other conservatoires, with a distance learning option for overseas students by way of video conferencing.

In addition to recruiting the best students in terms of their ability in their chosen field, in music the School also needs to recruit a balance of instrumentalists to ensure the School can offer the full range of ensembles. Although during the next strategic planning phase student numbers for existing activities are expected to remain at current levels (see appendix A), the School will, through targeted marketing and recruitment activity, be rebalancing the number of vocal and instrumental principal study students; this includes additional marketing for specific instruments and for strings in particular, boosting Junior Guildhall as a feeder to the undergraduate programme, and a preparatory scheme for undergraduate applicants (viz conditional offer subject to improvement following principal study lessons at the School prior to enrolment).

To enhance the School’s international presence, targeted recruitment will be taking place overseas in both music and drama. The Drama Department is already actively recruiting from North America (New York and Los Angeles) but also attracts students from other English-speaking nations. In music, auditions for all principal study pathways (undergraduate and postgraduate) took place in New York for the first time in 2008 and promotional visits and professorial exchanges in North America and the Far East are planned.

The success of the marketing and recruitment activity will be dependent upon the appeal of the educational experience on offer and the removal of barriers to entry. Alongside the state of the art facilities being developed on the Milton Court site (which will provide a very useful marketing tool for 2011 entry), the School will be seeking to keep its curricula equally attractive and their delivery responsive to the needs of the performing arts industry, maintaining the embedded, proactive and specialised careers guidance for students that has been recognised by the QAA as a feature of good practice. In addition, research activity within the School will have a direct bearing on the values, techniques and teaching methods employed, and will assist the School in being a leading player in the cultural evolution of creative and professional practice. The granting of degree awarding powers, an objective of the School, will give the School greater flexibility to incorporate these new developments in content and delivery into its programme offer.

The recently revalidated BMus programme introduced health and wellbeing into the music curriculum. Over the next few years the School will be monitoring the progress of this development and the uptake of related electives. It will also be identifying additional ways to promote a holistic approach to achieving peak performance, and to contribute to a cultural change in the music profession from crisis health management to prevention. Across all programmes, the School will ensure space for constructive reflection and use integrated personal development planning to assist students in becoming reflective practitioners. A review of contact time and assessment load will be conducted during the next scheduled programme reviews to identify the space, as appropriate to the programme, for individual practice and reflection. A start has already been made in the newly revalidated BMus programme with the removal of some assessment points and the realigning of credit values. The School also intends to complement personal development planning with personalised learning and will, as it reviews its programmes, consider whether a particular curriculum suits the introduction of independent study units, or pathways that offer less mandatory components and more electives. This will support excellence in both the traditional professional practice pathways (where students are often already developing
professional careers), and in pathways for those students who wish to innovate and push boundaries, or work in cross-arts settings. All curricula developments will take place in the context of the research undertaken in the School on the key aspects of student learning, eg how students’ aspirations and motivations change during their study, what skill sets they require for the profession, and how they internalise and embed their learning within their own practice.

During the next five years, the School will continue to look closely at the curricula and how opportunities arising from the School’s new facilities can enhance delivery. In Technical Theatre, the new facilities will have an immediate impact on the undergraduate curriculum. Greater student numbers (a 50% increase) will be required to support the additional performance spaces and build time in the curriculum for personalised learning, reflection and involvement in wider School activities. However, the School will not just be adding numbers to the current programme. The development and revalidation of the BA in Stage Management & Technical Theatre programme is to be postponed for a year, pending a wide-ranging consultation with industry on future workforce needs. The redefining of the undergraduate programme will then suggest areas for higher level study to complement the Postgraduate Diploma in Costume Supervision due to come on line in 2011.

If the product is attractive, then the School should have no difficulty in attracting applicants. However, music and drama education is an intensive area of study and there is little time for students to seek outside employment to support themselves during their studies. Financial considerations can be both a deterrent to study and a deciding factor in the choice of institution for applicants. The School aims, as far as is practicable, to ensure that no student offered a place is prevented from taking up a place for financial reasons. The School’s Access Agreement with HEFCE confirms this commitment by establishing a bursary scheme for UK students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds but, unfortunately, the School’s direct competitors have much larger endowments and are able to offer a wider range of scholarships and bursaries. The School intends to increase the amount of funding available for scholarships and bursaries via proactive fundraising in this area as well as improving the availability of sound financial advice at admission.

Key actions and performance indicators

- Dedicated Student Funding Officer post to be established by start of 2008/09.
- Personal development planning embedded in new Guildhall Artist Masters programme supported by stronger processes of reflective practice and mentoring research.
- Recruitment to student numbers model, Appendix A, by 2013
- Review of contact time and assessment load, for acting and SMTT during revalidation processes 2008 to 2010 based on professional standards; for music, review of contact time and assessment load, and of flexibility of the programme (timeframe to be determined) to facilitate personalised learning and professional engagement.
- New technical theatre programme starting September 2010 and annual intake of 36 by 2010/11.
- Feasibility study for new BMus pathway.

“Diversity enriches our society and communities. But it is also a creative and business imperative. The creative industries suffer when they cannot draw on our creative people, whatever their ethnicity, gender or location.”

[Creative Britain: New talents for the new economy, Department for Culture, Media & Sport, February 2008]
(4) Emerging artists (postgraduates)

In Music the majority of the taught postgraduate programmes have been repackaged as a multi-pathway Guildhall Artist programme. Guildhall Artist seeks to encapsulate the School’s philosophy in respect of education and training: technical ability, creativity and imagination, and preparation for professional life. Over the next few years, the School will consider how these key components can be reflected elsewhere in the School’s postgraduate provision. A cohort of postgraduate Guildhall Artist actors, operating as a graduate theatre company (rather than registered on a programme of study), is under consideration for the opening of a second theatre for the School on the Milton Court site. One of the exciting concepts in discussion is how collaboration between actors and musicians may in turn play a role within the undergraduate curriculum. The Music Therapy Department is also intending to develop connections with the wider School, eg in utilising the therapy students’ improvisation skills in wider contexts.

A Centre for Orchestra (C4O), a major international centre for orchestral training and mentoring, developing new repertoire and audiences and studying the history and future of the orchestra, is one of the lead projects emerging from the School’s new relationship with the Barbican Centre and the LSO. It is expected that this will bring educational processes closer to professional and research processes and open up the opportunity for some new professional programmes, eg a Postgraduate Diploma in Orchestral Management. Through other partnerships similar innovative programmes will be developed. The development of a Masters in New Audiences & Innovative Practice in collaboration with four other European conservatoires is already well progressed, and the possibility of a collaborative Masters in Visual Arts and Music is being explored with the Royal College of Art.

In acting, efforts will be concentrated on the existing MA in Training Actors and the graduate company with the possibility of offering some continuing professional development (CPD) classes to acting alumni. In technical theatre, the new facilities at Milton Court will open up opportunities for the development of specialist postgraduate or CPD courses, eg in specialist sound engineering or using the power flying equipment on the new stage.

During 2008, the School had its first doctoral programme validated, the DMus in Composition. It is expected that the School’s educational provision at doctoral level will be expanded to match the School’s research strategy, encompassing repertoire (including composition, improvisation and creative performance); performance practice (both historic and contemporary); and artistry (enabling performers to gain access to tacit knowledge beyond their technique).

Key actions and performance indicators
- Repackaging and revalidation of taught postgraduate music provision as Guildhall Artist programme for September 2008.
- New doctoral pathways matching research strategy by 2013.
- 30 doctoral awards (with partner(s)) by 2016.
- Feasibility study for graduate acting company.
- New specialised professional postgraduate programmes.

Artistry is “the ability to reach beyond a set of professional knowledge, to extend beyond rehearsed skills, to access tacit knowledge and to bring this to bear in a situation (usually unfamiliar in some way) which generates a leap forwards, a new solution to a problem, an innovative idea, an exciting piece of art, an individual and gripping performance, meaning which communicates.”

[Helena Gaunt, Assistant Principal]
(5) Professional development (alumni and staff)

As the School matures, it will need to ensure that all teaching staff are engaged in the pedagogic development of their discipline and have development opportunities to enhance their professional competence and artistic lines of enquiry. This is a particular challenge in respect of the many part-time staff within the School and their relatively low contact time with the School.

However, there is much to be gained by exploring the mutually beneficial association between the School and its staff. The School wishes to engage directly with the professions and the professional international standing of many of its professors is key to this engagement. For staff, the sustained contact with the School (which may not otherwise be easily available professionally, for example for free-lance artists), access to its facilities and exchange with other performers and teachers, offer the opportunity to experiment and innovate as artists and educators, to use the School as it intends as “a laboratory for education and research in the performing arts”.

Three distinct activities support the creation of an environment that experiments and innovates, one is induction, the second is continuing staff development, and the third research activity. The latter is considered in detail in the School’s Research Strategy. Discussion with staff across the School indicates the need for a more systematic approach to induction and academic staff development. Induction needs to take place during probation both to inculcate the School’s ethos and culture as a learning community and to provide an element of teaching support to those who may not have taught before in higher education, however experienced as practitioners.

In terms of staff development, there is already considerable activity going on: the City of London offers a range of opportunities, for example relating to IT; in the last few years academic staff have been involved in a range of activities including programme and module development, conference attendance, external examining, Erasmus opportunities, and peer observation. In the immediate future a training seminar is to be provided on developing the individual artistic voice utilising critical self-reflection and action learning in support of Part 2 of the Guildhall Artist programme, and another seminar is to be offered on research supervision in support of the DMus. There are also a number of projects with external bodies like the Institute of Education, Polifonia and LCACE, which have a focus on staff development. All could form part of a recognised programme of development in conjunction with greater exploitation of the professional skills of IT and library staff. In the context of an application for degree awarding powers the emphasis on staff engagement with the pedagogic development of their discipline and how this informs and enhances their teaching will be critical, and the School will need to be proactive in building these training sessions into a more organised programme.

Once the School has taken a view on what the academic staff development programme should comprise, consideration will need to be given to how the School’s induction process and other continuing staff development opportunities fit within the UK Professional Standards Framework for possible accreditation under The Higher Education Academy’s professional development scheme and/or whether external training or outsourcing may be required. It is a requirement within the higher education sector that all new teaching staff will receive accredited training by 2006 and the School is somewhat behind in building this into its induction process.

Access to training for fractional and hourly staff can be seen as problematic and staff will need to be convinced of the longer term benefits as well as, perhaps, being paid for their time. However, development and preparation (non-contact) time is embedded in the hourly rate and there is some room for ensuring that this time is used constructively.

Once students and staff have left the School, there will still be opportunities to remain part of the School’s learning community through access to continuing professional
development activities (CPD) and engagement in School-run networks. There is already significant CPD activity undertaken in the School, for instance in music therapy and through the Reflective Conservatoire conference series, and these provide opportunities for maintaining connections generally and promoting the life-long learning agenda. School-run networks, like the Double-Reed Network, again promote connections but also provide a forum for the knowledge exchange of next practice ideas.

**Key actions and performance indicators**

- Academic and staff development programme to be developed with induction module in place by September 2009.
- Training in supporting critical reflection and action research for postgraduate students in place by September 2008.
- Doctoral supervisor training seminar series in place by September 2008.
- Web presence for existing CPD activity available to external participants by September 2008.
- Review of communication with staff in relation to professional development and research opportunities, by September 2009.
- Survey of staff engagement in the pedagogic development of their discipline during 2008/09.

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(6) Underpinnings

6.1 Learning infrastructure and resources

The School recognises that it is behind many of its competitors in respect of utilising the latest technologies in its teaching. The new facilities at Milton Court will, in part, resolve some of these issues and also open up space in the Silk Street building for redevelopment. As a bare minimum the School will agree the basic specification for a teaching room and endeavour to roll this out within the Silk Street building, together with projectors and screens in the large teaching spaces and one of these with a second interactive white board. In addition, staff will be encouraged to explore, and share with each other, use of new technologies in teaching for instance using the web and Moodle to make it easier for students to access learning, especially at a distance; to facilitate submissions for assessment (Moodle and Mahara); and to assist in personalised learning and building up portfolios (Moodle and Mahara).

However, the School also needs to agree on the shape of the academic year for all programmes so that students have equal access to facilities, time to reflect, and time to engage in cross-School activities including sports and social clubs. This will necessitate an agreed working week (eg bank holidays or not) for acting and technical theatre students, movement towards ten weeks of defined teaching within a twelve week term for music, and a universal break in teaching each week for all students (along the lines of the Wednesday afternoon in the rest of the higher education sector).
Key actions and performance indicators

- Further wireless connection in the School for students, staff and guests, to include studios on 1st and 2nd floors of the waterside front, and on the Waterside itself by September 2008.
- Additional projector and pull down screen installed in room 149 by September 2008.
- Minimum teaching room specification agreed for September 2009.
- Video recording easily available within teaching rooms (and for juniors).
- Universal two-hour teaching break agreed for the start of the 2009 academic year.
- Adoption of ten week defined teaching, one week for reading and one week for projects in each twelve week term in music for the start of the 2010 academic year.
- Alignment of the teaching week for acting and technical theatre, in line with professional standards by September 2011.

6.2 Quality assurance & enhancement

As the School has developed its higher education provision, its validation partners and their corresponding quality frameworks have allowed the School to grow in confidence in its ability to manage its quality and enhancement processes. However, as the School’s processes have matured there has been an increasing desire within the School for greater independent control of its programmes and the associated academic awards. As well as the time and cost savings that withdrawing from validation will bring, independence through degree awarding powers will give the School greater flexibility to design and deliver its own degrees without being constrained by the validating partner’s strategy or possible competing activities. Higher education is currently a highly competitive arena and the School must be positioned to respond to demand in the manner most appropriate to its own ethos and strategy.

Strategic quality enhancement over the next five years will be centred on the curriculum and staff developments outlined above and preparing the School for autonomous use of its own degree awarding powers. This will require the School to have a comprehensive regulatory and quality framework of its own from programme approval to review, with the quality processes of the validator becoming ‘add-on’ or supernumerary. A key task will be identifying those aspects of the current framework and practice it wishes to keep, those it wishes to change, the areas for cross-School harmonisation and those areas suitable for local diversity. Once the new framework has been established, a wide-ranging programme of dissemination and training (and testing) will need to be implemented to embed the new framework.

Key actions and performance indicators

- Complete, School-based regulatory and quality assurance framework by September 2009.
- Two internal themed academic audits by end 2008/09 as a means of training staff in academic quality evaluation.
- Taught degree awarding powers by start of 2012/13 academic year.

KML/June 08
Appendix 1:

For latest modelling see Strategic plan