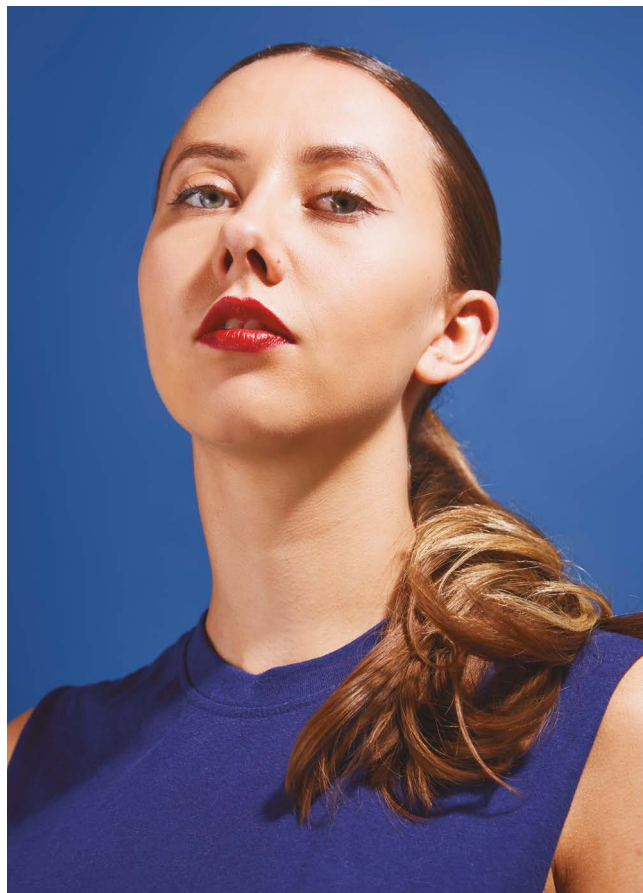


PLAY

The
Guildhall
School
Magazine
2022



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GUILDHALL
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Welcome to the latest edition of PLAY

A very warm welcome to the 2022 edition of PLAY. As we come to the end of my first term as Guildhall School's new Principal, I'm delighted to take this opportunity to briefly share with you our recent news and something of my vision for the future.

As I write this, Guildhall School is on a high – we are ranked the number one institution for Arts, Drama & Music by the Complete University Guide 2023, as well as the number one higher education institution in the Guardian University Guide music league table for 2023.

I'm excited to build on that even further: my vision for Guildhall School embraces the excellence we nurture within our student body, combined with the desire to make our training accessible to anyone, from any background, who has talent and aptitude. I want our graduates to be the new generation of cultural leaders, entrepreneurs and pioneers of change, and I'm committed to building on our success by enhancing Guildhall's international influence further. None of these goals are possible without a growing and flourishing alumni community – so please do consider being part of the future of Guildhall School by getting involved and staying in touch.

In this edition, we take you behind the scenes at Guildhall as we hear from Dan Shorten, Creative Director of Guildhall Live Events. We also hear from several alumni about building their audiences post-pandemic, and the impact of having to learn a whole set of new skills by 'going digital'. Turn to page 18 for our interview with renowned musician Omar; he talks about his experience of changing from studying percussion and piano to jazz, and the positive impact this has had on his career.

At Guildhall we are doing all we can to support our students with the mental health challenges they face and have launched our Welfare & Wellbeing Appeal to ensure all students receive the help they need. Read on to find out more.

Please do let us know your news and successes for the next issue of PLAY.

With best wishes,

Professor Jonathan Vaughan FGS
Principal



GUILDHALL LIVE EVENTS

From giant pigeons made out of parts of a black cab to a 35-piece orchestra performing drum and bass with a live DJ, there's no such thing as a typical day for Dan Shorten, Creative Director of Guildhall Live Events (GLE).

Guildhall Live Events combines innovative and advanced design with a solid experience of creating multi-disciplinary content. Its mission is to support the education of new designers, technicians and production specialists in real world contexts while delivering professional quality projects, creating outstanding work for all audiences.

Shorten says “My job involves exploring new avenues – talking to clients, responding to calls, networking with producers and scanning festivals. The most fun bit is coming up with ideas, thinking about what we can offer that meets a particular need – and sometimes deliberately subverting some things the School is known for.”

Those ideas sometimes seem pretty outlandish, such as OrchestRAM, the orchestra/drum and bass mash up that took place in Milton Court Concert Hall in September this year, celebrating three decades of record label RAM Records, featuring the Guildhall Session Orchestra, the School's professional alumni ensemble. “That flipped people's preconceptions of the School and that venue on its head,” he says. “We had the orchestra, percussionists alongside the label's vocalists and DJs, with lights, lasers and projection mapping. It wasn't about trying to reduce the classical offering but enhance it and open it up to people who wouldn't normally think of accessing it, or thinking it wasn't for them. It was magical – the promoters said they were blown away by the reviews. People did not know what to expect, they'd never been to a classical venue and hadn't ever seen an orchestra, but they absolutely loved it.”



There was also GLE's breakthrough moment in 2019 when it won a commission to design the Museum of London's *Beasts of London* exhibition. “This was a retelling of animal stories from London's history,” he explains. “It contained museum objects, scenographic reconstruction and digital animation techniques, projections, actors, alongside orchestral, digital and electronic music.”



The huge, walk-through nine-room exhibition tracking the history of animals before London even existed, up to the present day, allowed Guildhall students, lecturers and the School's other creative talents to let their imaginations literally run wild. Highlights included a shelf-lined science lab mingling projections with real artefacts, murals of mammoths, a three-metre sculpture of a pigeon made from parts of black cabs, and a debate between a rat, a cat and a flea over who was to blame for the Great Plague – which ends with responsibility being taken by a bacterium voiced by Brian Blessed.

Shorten and his team also brought to life some additional unsavoury episodes, including a visceral video projection depicting the true story of a dog called Tiny, who was placed in a pit in a pub with rats as Victorians looked on and bet how many he would kill in half an hour. Says Shorten: “This type of technology allows you to present both realistic and natural imagery alongside abstracted and illusory elements.”

“My main challenge in trying to win commercial contracts is to convince those clients they'll get the same quality from a conservatoire as from a commercial entity,” says Shorten. “We know they will, but they sometimes need convincing. Then I have to factor in how a project delivers opportunities for student learning and fit that into a commercial timeline.”

Of course, not every project directly involves students. “Curriculum delivery is only one objective – we're also about knowledge exchange, innovation and research,” says Shorten. “Some of these might be done only with staff or external parties but, when it is, the work permeates teaching practice or curriculum development, and that ultimately benefits students.”

GLE does offer obvious opportunities for students to shine. “It's magical when a student sees their work in a large-scale format for the first time. They might have visualised a projection on a laptop, but the moment they see it 30-metres high on a building, and an excited crowd are filming it on their phones, the students' jaws hit the floor. They are lovely moments.”



As well as being an incredible opportunity for the wider Guildhall community, the live events also prepare current students for future employment. “A lot of production and creative work is new in the industry and there's a skills shortage,” Shorten says. “The School has a responsibility to help students develop those skills, not just to keep up with the industry. If we're offering education, it matters that there's a job at the end of it.”

Hearts and minds



Iraqi cellist Karim Wasfi is renowned for bringing music to sites of conflict. Last November he performed for leaders at the International Leadership Association conference in Geneva. Listening to him play, Miriam Gosling Gage (Technical Theatre 2009) found the words of Judy Brown's poem 'Fire' drift into her mind: "What makes a fire burn/is space between the logs/a breathing space".

"The music was the space between the logs," says Gosling Gage, who today works as a personal development coach and organised the conference. "You could have heard a pin drop as all these people, who had spent the day having profound and difficult conversations about leadership and the future, had the space to just sit with it."

Artists have long used their skills to further the causes they care about, but the urgency and scale of the problems the world faces in 2022 have shot activism up the priority list for many. Multidisciplinary artist Kookie Blu (Performance & Creative Enterprise 2020) is one. Activism is part of her DNA, she says, "because of my ancestors' history and legacy." Growing up in multicultural west London has embedded open-mindedness in her, she says, and a respect for all people and humanity. She was inspired by a host of great leaders and thinkers, including Martin Luther King, Nina Simone, Winnie and Nelson Mandela, Maya Angelou and Bob Marley. "I'm Black British Caribbean, so I've got that heritage. My grandparents were Windrush era but I was born in Britain, so I have that rock/punk culture, too. My household kept me grounded and rooted within my identity, so I know who I am."

When Blu was invited to create a performance piece inspired by the Bishopsgate Archives – a collection dedicated to the lives of people and organisations who have strived for social, political and cultural change – she jumped at the chance. She drew on the Robert Workman Archive, which contains more than 50,000 images, including photographs of the legendary Drag Balls held in west London's Porchester Hall from the 1960s to the 1990s. A riotous celebration of sequins, fur, leather and lace, the images also document the work of drag icon Jean Fredericks, who originally ran the Balls.

"I wanted to celebrate this history and get the LGBTQ+ community involved," says Blu. "I wanted to hear the stories from their perspective and experience, and find out what was important to them when they looked at the pictures and learned about the struggles of the LGBTQ+ community, both in and out of the ballroom. What was important in their hearts? What story did they want to share about their own experiences? We wanted to shed light and start conversations, and pay homage in the right way. They say history repeats itself but it doesn't have to. We can change it."

The result was the Blu Palace Ball, a fantastical cabaret in partnership between Guildhall and the Bishopsgate Institute, drawing in performers across disciplines, from video to dance to drag. Bev, a performer dressed as Fredericks, welcomed people as they came in, and Blu says that sight, and the feeling that Fredericks was there in spirit too, gave her tingles. "It felt a little like Fredericks himself was there, guiding me. In fact, it felt like everyone I'd seen in the archives was just there on that evening."



Maedb Joy (Performance & Creative Enterprise 2020) also felt the weight of history at the Bishopsgate Archives. Her company, Sexquisite, had been invited to respond to the sex worker material from the 1830s up to the present day. "It was so overwhelming and so powerful to see what working-class women had gone through," she says. "And also to discover the sex worker organisations, such as the English Collective of Prostitutes, and activism that had gone before, laying the groundwork."

What she saw also felt familiar. “Growing up in Streatham, south London, you’d see a lot of women and under-age girls doing sex work. It was just so normalised. There’s a lot of prejudice and stigma against it, rather than analysis of the reasons why someone would do that. These attitudes are dangerous. Criminalising someone who may enter sex work from a position of poverty and is doing what they have to do to pay the rent is not the right way to go about it.”

Joy’s own journey to Guildhall inspired her to help others find their voice. Expelled from school, she entered a pupil referral unit that forgot to enter her for GCSEs, so she left school without any. She attempted to start again at college, but was then seriously injured in a road accident. In hospital, she started writing, fell in love with the performing arts, and went back to college. “Which is where my journey to Guildhall began,” she says. “It was the only place I auditioned for and it changed my life forever.”

In her final year, she devised and ran Sexquisite, an event showcasing sex worker artists, as part of a pop-up performance module. It was a big success, and she was then awarded Lottery funding to launch a writing course enabling sex workers to



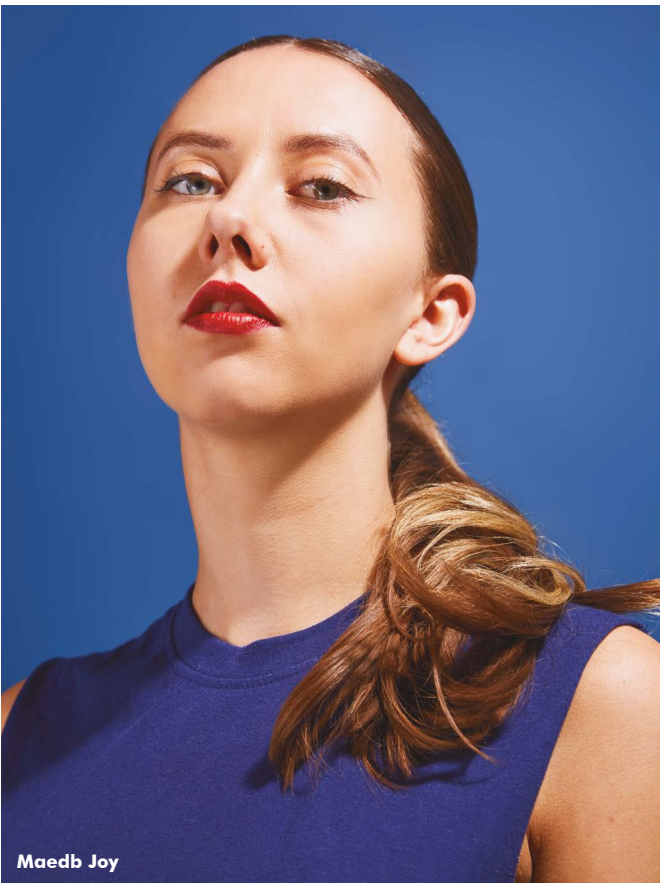
process their experiences through writing. Three years later, Sexquisite is a fully-fledged events and theatre company that runs monthly cabaret events, where sex workers are paid to perform their creative work.



For the Bishopsgate project, Impurity, the team invited other artists to help create a cabaret inspired by different moments in time, but which also contained institutional critique. “We used poetry, song, dance and an aerial hoop – that was used for a piece that looked at all the metaphorical hoops you have to jump through and loopholes in law you have to navigate as a sex worker,” says Joy. “One of our members, who is Black, highlighted how there was no documentation of Black sex workers in the archives. She created a piece about one of the only ones she could find, called Black Harriet, around the erasure of Black sex workers.”

The new generation of activist artists aren’t about preaching. Rather, they seek to start a conversation, provoke a feeling – creating that space between the logs. “Change happens when we make a stand, and activism through art makes a difference,” Gosling Gage points out. She should know: eight years ago, she worked with Invisible Circus, the original Red Army of Extinction Rebellion, and has worked with them since as a member of Extinction Rebellion. “Performers would go on marches – and also suddenly drop down from the trees. That opens up the message to a whole bunch of people who aren’t academic and don’t read the news.”

A former stage manager, Gosling Gage now runs Pelumbra, a consultancy that uses creativity and the arts to help organisations and activists transition to more sustainable ways of working. She is also visiting professor at McGill University in Montreal, where she runs modules on their International Masters in Health Leadership. In one programme, her co-facilitator Ian



Maedb Joy

“A fire / grows / simply because the space is there / with openings / in which the flame / that knows just how it wants to burn / can find its way.”

Sutherland, the Vice-President Pro Tempore (Grenfell Campus) at Memorial University, brings in an a cappella choir, which he proceeds to conduct. Then he hands the baton to participants. Now, they must work out just how he does it: the perfect way to get people thinking about the incredible nuances of human communication and response.

Joy points out that Sexquisite is deliberately fun, playful and celebratory. Her audience won’t necessarily engage with legislation or politics, but they’ll go and see a play. “They’ll have a great time and a few drinks at Sexquisite, and they’ll leave knowing why it’s important to fight for the rights of sex workers. Art allows us to have conversations that we wouldn’t be able to otherwise. Theatre, in particular, is a really powerful tool that helps us reflect society. It’s powerful for the audience – and powerful for the performers, particularly if they have lived experience of the issues.”

For Blu, it’s all about harnessing the power of universal languages: movement, music and art. “It’s for everyone; it breaks down barriers. An artist makes a song that travels to places where they don’t even speak the language it’s sung in, but the people know it, they learn it and they sing it. The meaning and soul of it resonate with everyone.” As Brown’s poem concludes: “A fire / grows / simply because the space is there / with openings / in which the flame / that knows just how it wants to burn / can find its way.”

Follow @Kookiepops and @thatqueenbev on Instagram

Guildhall's Guide to the 21st century creative



Vittorio Angelone

Take back control: go digital. There can be little question that technology has put agency back into the hands of creatives. While you can now – in theory – manage your own image, marketing and reach from your phone, grabbing success requires a whole range of other critical skills, from social media manager to producer to marketer to business manager. The pandemic has also changed everything: portfolio careers are now the norm, but there's no blueprint and it's about learning a whole set of new skills when you're already in your chosen career. It's not easy but the rewards are great. We spoke to the Guildhall community about how they have done it.

Build your audience

The thought of competing with Instagram influencers and TikTok stars might seem daunting, but social media offers the chance to take control of your career. "I was very aware that a large part of what you end up doing as a freelance artist is waiting for the phone to ring, and your whole life is in the hands of other people and gatekeepers," says comedian Vittorio Angelone (Percussion 2018). "I had a notion very early on that it seemed much more sustainable and more creatively freeing to build your own audience and not wait for anyone else to allow you to do it."

Angelone has more than 11k followers on Instagram, 13k on Twitter and 21k on TikTok, and hosts a weekly podcast. In the three years he's been posting his comedy content online, he's built an engaged community of fans who helped him sell out his first solo show at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival this year. "It's really about perseverance," he says. "When people ask me, 'What should I do?', I tell them to start putting out videos – and to never stop."

Cuan Durkin, a second year tenor at Guildhall, first started building an audience on YouTube and Instagram a few years ago while busking in Dublin. "People would stop and throw some coins in my guitar case and then they would follow me on Instagram and YouTube." He's since built an Instagram following of 25k and his videos have amassed hundreds of thousands of views on

YouTube – leading to TV coverage and a role in a pantomime.

"You have to work out what other people are doing and then do it differently," says Durkin. "I realised that not a lot of people do certain types of music with a classical tenor voice, so I went down that road. Just try and find one thing that is different."

"Social media has levelled the playing field," he says. "People who aren't as privileged or don't have the opportunities can get in anyway. I'd encourage anyone to go for it. The most important thing is that you have a goal, and that goal shouldn't be about making money or becoming famous, but about sharing what you do with as many people as possible."



Find your niche

Being unique will put you in the spotlight, but to stay there, authenticity is key. "Your intentions when you are starting out are really important," says

18-year-old Camden Stewart, an alumnus of the Guildhall Young Artists programme for school-age children, who is now studying at Guildhall as an undergraduate. "If you're just in it for money, you're not going to get very far. For me it started out with communicating my love for music and the opportunities grew from there."

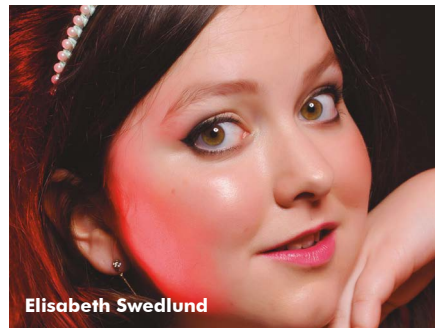
Stewart first started playing the piano in London train stations – at the suggestion of his mum – to get experience ahead of his grade eight exam. Things soon took off. By posting videos of his performances online he has built a following of 336k on Instagram and has had over 400 million views of his videos on TikTok.



"Then I posted a video of *Howl's Moving Castle* (the soundtrack to a popular Japanese animated film) and it went crazy. I gained about 10,000 followers within a couple of days. From there, I posted a video of me playing the theme from *Interstellar* and that did phenomenally as well." As a result of his online popularity, Stewart has been booked for many private events. "My inbox has been flooded with people reaching out for weddings and gigs. It's lovely, but quite overwhelming."

Professionalism matters

A strong and unique visual identity – including a well-thought out website – is also important, as Elisabeth Swedlund (Vocal Studies 2016) can testify. Swedlund is the founder of Ready Singer One – the UK's only choir that focuses exclusively on singing tunes from video games and TV, described by Swedlund as "London's nerdiest choir". Like Durkin and Stewart, Swedlund wanted to do something different when it came to their web presence.



Elisabeth Swedlund

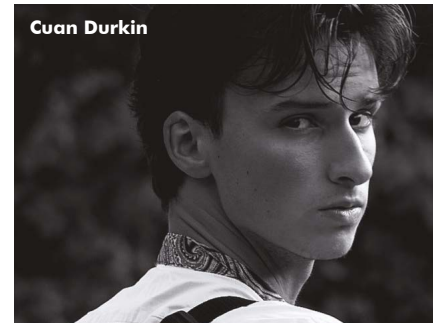
Likewise, she also does her own PR, posting about the choir in Facebook groups and other communities that share common interests. “I think most of the people in the choir joined after seeing our social media posts. It’s about being smart about it and spending time trying things out.”

Turning influence into income

Nurturing your audience is important, says Durkin. “It’s really important that when you start out, and for as long as you can, you reply to people’s comments. That builds a rapport very quickly. It’s not a strategy. It’s something that you should want to do and it’s something that you should care about.”

Follower numbers only tell half the story, says Angelone. “There are people with ten times as many followers as I have, who can’t sell half as many tickets,” he says. “You can put all this stuff online

and build an enormous following, but if those followers are not the type of people who buy tickets and go and see shows, then it’s hard to translate into an actual career.”



Cuan Durkin

A big part of building his fanbase has been to set up a Patreon account, where his fans can donate money each month and gain access to extra perks, such as bonus podcasts. “I have 150 people who support me on Patreon. Some give me £1 a month, some give me £30 a month.



Vittorio Angelone

‘Talent will only take you so far, a lot of people make it because they persisted; formed great relationships and showed that they were willing’

People feel like they’re part of something, like an insider’s club, and the financial support allows me to not have to do stuff that isn’t as artistically interesting, or take gigs I don’t want to. It gives me more time to write. That’s where that creative freedom comes from. I really think it’s the future.”

Durkin and Stewart also have options for fans to support their work via small donations, and both generate revenue from their YouTube accounts by allowing ads on their videos. “Once you get past 1,000 subscribers and 4,000 watch hours, you can monetise your channel,” explains Durkin. “It’s another way to make a bit of money, which is very helpful as a student.”

Communication is key

Despite all the ways marketing yourself and building a career have changed in the digital age, some skills are timeless. “Talent will only take you so far,” says Frankie Kemp (Teaching Speech and Drama 1994), a coach who helps people become better communicators. “A lot of people that make it are there because they persisted; they formed great relationships and they showed that they were willing.”

Great communication skills are vital, even online, so think before you fire

off that casual message. “The way you message people, the way you email people, the way you relate to people – you’re going to leave a footprint and people talk to each other,” says Kemp.



Frankie Kemp

She says people shouldn’t get too stuck behind their computer, either. “Getting lots of likes can be wonderful and add credibility, but it doesn’t always translate into commercial success. Likewise, if you don’t get those kinds of results or feedback, it can feel very demoralizing. Getting out to meet people, whether you’re successful on those online platforms or not, will turn it into something more concrete.”

Her advice for successful networking, whether digitally or in-person, is to not get too caught up in yourself, but to show interest in others. “Ask open questions, such as ‘How did you get into this?’ and

‘What do you like about it?’ People love talking about themselves and they will remember the conversation.”

Play the long game

When it comes to building a following online, forget instant gratification. “It really does take time,” says Durkin. “That’s why it’s so important that you enjoy it.”

However, there are things you can do to give you a better chance. For Angelone, that means making it easy for people to find you. “I have a QR code on my keyring – when I finish a set, I stand at the door so people can scan it.” For Durkin, it’s about targeting a specific audience. “Think about the people who you want to watch the videos. I pretty much dissect every single millisecond of my videos to make sure that they’re not boring. It is your little corner of the world and you want it to be a place for people to visit.”

Consistency is important too, says Stewart. “At the beginning, I used to post once a week, just for fun. Now I post roughly three times a week. I try and stay as consistent as possible because the Instagram algorithm favours consistent accounts. There will be highs and lows, and sometimes you’ll feel like giving up, but it’s kind of a long game. Go for it and don’t let anything stop you.”

STAY CREATIVE. KEEP WELL



It's been quite a year for Nicky Spence (Opera 2009): he got married, broke both his legs falling down the stairs, was named BBC Music Magazine Personality of the Year, recorded a TV show for Sky Arts and is starring in Welsh National Opera's The Makropulos Affair. Yet one thing has remained constant – his visits to a therapist.

“Due to various life events, I’ve been having therapy since I was a child,” he says. “I just think that if you’ve got your own manual to yourself and how you function, then you’re going to be a better colleague and give much more as an artist.” He’s delighted to be singing Janáček again, a composer whose honesty he loves: “His work is never about goodies or baddies. Everybody is capable of both repugnant things and glorious things, which is something I’ve learned through therapy as well.”

Whether in therapy or not however, many performers in the world of arts know only too well the toll their craft can have on their mental health. In 2022, Equity published a review of 111 academic studies that found a clear trend for increased mental health concerns across the performing arts. While one survey of mental health and wellbeing in England, as part of a scoping review

from Equity, found six per cent of all individuals experienced anxiety in any given week, that figure leapt to a whopping 60 per cent of actors, 52 per cent of acting students and 32 per cent of opera singers who reported anxiety symptoms.

The review identified a range of contributing factors, including a culture of unstable work, antisocial working hours, time away from home, and financial fears, which Equity’s new Mental Health Charter calls on the industry, government and education to address. While she agrees with the charter, Marianne Rizkallah (Music Therapy 2013), director of North London Music Therapy, believes other factors may also be at play alongside those mentioned in the charter.

“From experience within my practice, I would also suggest that musicians, actors and performers are the sorts of people who have ‘toughed it out’ to reach where they are. These are people who have some life experience to draw on – feelings and events they can put into their art and creative practice,” says Rizkallah. “A by-product is that, even if you can sublimate it and use it in a healthy way, it can also cause depression and anxiety.”

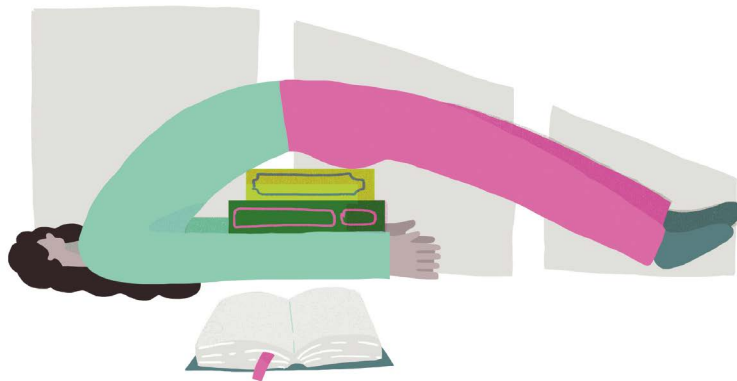
“musicians, actors and performers are the sorts of people who have some life experience to draw on – feelings and events they can put into their art and creative practice”



While no one expects certainty from a career in the arts, it doesn’t mean that managing your mental health and wellbeing is easy, as actor Paige Sandhu (Acting 2014) knows only too well. “Sometimes I think that job security would be so good, but at the same time I can’t think of anything worse than a nine to five job. You have to embrace that fear and see the positive sides of it,” she says.

Sandhu recently left her role as Meena Jutla, a serial killer, in the ITV soap *Emmerdale*, having been named Best Leading Performer at the 2022 *British Soap Awards*, but admits that at the start of her career, she was assailed by anxiety – feelings that she’s worked hard to address.

With hindsight, she says, the anxiety was rarely absent while a student at Guildhall, but it was after she finished studying and returned home that it became so severe she had to act. “I either couldn’t sleep or had recurrent nightmares,” she recalls. “I had this feeling that the world wasn’t safe: not that someone was going to harm me – it was more mental than physical – the world felt like a very scary place. Home felt like the safest place to be, so I just didn’t want to leave it.”



Sandhu turned to a range of therapies, including acupuncture, Reiki and meditation, before discovering tools that worked for her. “Yoga was a huge thing for me. It gave me this feeling of peace – which wasn’t normal for me then – but the biggest change came from reading self-help books because they changed the way I thought,” she explains. “I’ve learned how important it is to take care of myself – physically, emotionally, mentally and I’ve learned to love myself, believe in myself and have confidence.”

Rizkallah extolls the virtue of music therapy. Having worked with charities, the NHS, schools and private settings as well as with children and adults – at one point her youngest patient was 18 months old and her oldest had just got a telegram from the Queen – she believes it’s for everyone, musicians and non-musicians alike. But like all therapy, it can be challenging. If you’ve never played a musical instrument, music therapy can be liberating, while for orchestral musicians wedded to the score, improvising can help remind people of their autonomy. Either way, using a musical instrument can help articulate difficult feelings and explore them in a safe way.



“When you’re in music therapy – or any kind of therapy – it is crossing the Rubicon to allow yourself to be vulnerable, and express yourself in whatever way you see fit, whether it’s through your words or your music,” Rizkallah says. “As with any therapy, there is a certain amount of bravery in being in a room and doing the thing – picking up and playing an instrument.”

The pandemic, of course, has been a massive factor. Spence admits he found

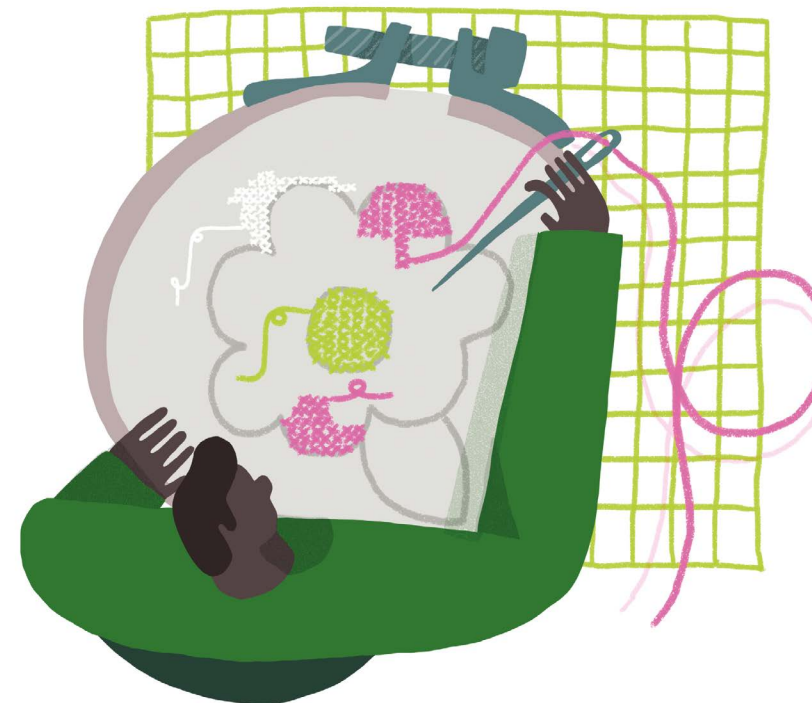
the period “emotionally challenging”, though he recognises that it was even harder for less well-established singers and actors. He learned full opera roles only to have them cancelled or rescheduled as rehearsals began. “The amount you invest – emotionally and financially – into learning a role is huge. So much of your heart goes into it. And slowly, it’s like little bits of your soul go out with the process,” he recalls.

Instead, he gave more time to helping young artists and to voluntary work, including as an ambassador for Help Musicians, the charity whose support enabled him to train at Guildhall. “They were a complete force for good during the pandemic. They helped people at grassroots level pay their electricity bills and their mortgages, and they run this fantastic helpline, Music Minds Matter,” he says. “It’s there in your darkest hours during a performance or if you’re not working at all and just need to talk things through. It’s an incredible resource.”

He also wrote a blog – ‘A musician’s mental health during lockdown’ – for the Incorporated Society of Musicians. “A lot of people weren’t saying how they were feeling, so I wanted to open up the arena for people to say, ‘I’m not OK, I’m not coping well with this’,” Spence explains. “I’ve got no issue with saying I’m scared or not feeling 100 per cent, so I didn’t hold back because I thought that might be helpful for other people.”

While the pandemic taught him some useful lessons – his work-life balance is better – he’s less easily distracted by “the glittery wonders” of social media, and he’s strict about not replying to emails in the evening – he also likes to laugh at himself. “There’s this feeling that because we do an art form – which is like a calling, a priesthood almost – that you have to devote your whole life to it but actually you need to be sure to take your ‘vitamin P-pill’ – your play time – because that’s what feeds your daily work. It’s important to have that balance,” he says.

“In a letter to his brother, Keats said that creative genius is the capacity to dwell in uncertainty and doubt, without any irritable reaching after fact or reason”



“I got to spend more time with my gorgeous husband and our pets. We got a lockdown dog – what a cliché – and I got massively into crafting. It wasn’t real if it wasn’t cross-stitched in my house. Crafting is good for the mind.”

Relationships between creativity and anxiety, therapy and artistic development are central to Professor Nick Barwick’s practice as a psychotherapist and Head of Counselling at Guildhall. Since arriving at Guildhall in the late 1990s, Barwick has expanded the counselling service from two staff working just eight hours a week each to a dozen part-time staff providing one to one and group work using a variety of approaches.

Despite this expansion, the service is at capacity; whereas 12 per cent of Guildhall

students sought counselling in the 1990s, today that’s closer to 30 per cent, a proportionate increase in requests in line with, or slightly lower than, the higher education sector generally. It’s a complex picture and a challenge to keep up with more demand, but increasing uncertainty – personal as well as professional – plays a key role.

Like many other psychotherapists, Barwick believes Keats expressed this well. “In a letter to his brother, Keats said that creative genius is the capacity to dwell in uncertainty and doubt, without any irritable reaching after fact or reason,” he says. “For me, that summarises something common in creative activity, which is that you have to bear uncertainty for quite a while. That’s a challenge – and it produces anxiety.”

Because creativity and anxiety are entwined, we need to address uncertainty both politically and personally. “Instead of just looking at the person who’s feeling anxious, we might also look at what society is doing – whether that’s the gig economy, environmental crisis or war, there is actually plenty to be anxious about. Those who are likely to be more sensitive – or less defended – may feel it on behalf of others who are actually madder by not thinking ‘What the hell’s going on!’”

It’s also incumbent on us – as a society reliant on artists to create culture – to ensure that creative artists have the support they need to work safely. “The therapeutic environment, and what one learns there, is so tied up with one’s development as an artist, because you have to use the self for artistic communication,” he concludes. “Talking about experiences of anxiety and vulnerability help us all to communicate, reduce shame and become stronger.”

For details on Music Minds Matter, visit musicmindsmatter.org.uk; and for more information about support for theatre professionals, see theatresupport.info

At Guildhall we are doing as much as we can to support our students with the mental health challenges they face. With demand increasing, we have launched our Welfare & Wellbeing Appeal to ensure all students receive the help they need. Find out more from the PLAY cover letter or our webpage gsmd.ac.uk/appeal.



OMAR

When Omar released his first single, 'The Postman', back in the 1980s, it wasn't quite the breakthrough he'd hoped for. "I had to perform it after Five Star, who were massive at the time," he says with a grin. "All the kids came to see them, not me. I'd be walking on stage, and the audience would be leaving. And I hated the song. But after that, I decided I would never again sing something I hated."

That determination to go his own way proved to be a great career move. A few months later, rifling through his dad’s record collection, Omar came across a song called *Heaven Must Be Like This* on an album called *Skin Tight* by 1970s funk band Ohio Players. “It had bass, drums, keys, guitar and a beautiful orchestra,” he remembers. “It blew me away. I thought: ‘Why is nobody doing this?’ It was 1988: acid house and hip-hop were everywhere; all samples and synthesisers. I wanted a more acoustic sound.” Inspired, he wrote a slow, soulful song, *There’s Nothing Like This*, which became his biggest hit. “Which was good, because I liked it! And I liked being famous. I’ve always been a show-off. I used to do body popping in Canterbury town centre to get some pocket money. I’m built to take compliments and adoration. But I work for them!”

Omar’s been doing that work all his life. At eight, he started to play the cornet, then went on to the euphonium and the tuba. Alongside that, he learned piano and guitar. “I was doing all kinds of rehearsals – on holiday, after school, at the Saturday morning music school in Maidstone.” He won a scholarship to Chetham’s School of Music and went on to Guildhall, initially studying percussion and piano.

“But after a term of doing orchestral rehearsals, sitting there for two hours waiting to play the triangle on bar 87 (and they’re going over bars 64 and 69 with the horn section for an hour) – well, I just walked out of there,” he remembers. “And I told that story when I went to pick up my Ivor’s Academy Gold Badge at Guildhall years later!”

He switched to the jazz course and started releasing his own music. “Everything I was learning, I was doing on the job, and Guildhall was great in helping me achieve what I wanted to do in terms of learning composition or production, working with other musicians, and experimenting with them. It was a formative time for me and I loved it – but that didn’t stop me complaining about how far the Student Union was from the main hall!”

“Everything I was learning, I was doing on the job, and Guildhall was great in helping me achieve what I wanted to do in terms of learning composition or production, working with other musicians, and experimenting with them.”

Originally, he planned to be a session musician. “I heard you could get £250 an hour and I thought, ‘That’s me.’ It was always going to be music, whether it was mine or someone else’s. I was quite hungry to learn how to play most instruments, and I’d always have a go.” He started writing songs, using two tape recorders to lay down the tracks. “I didn’t look for someone else to sing: I thought, I’ll do it myself. I once asked my dad how he knew I was going to be a singer. He said he just knew it. It’s all a process of finding out what goes with your music and what your strengths are. I like reggae singers like Dennis Brown, John Holt and, of course, Stevie Wonder, who is my biggest influence – with him, it’s not just the vocals, it’s the harmonies, the production, the arrangement, the instrumentation.”



Ever since then, there’s always been a new song to write. “As long as I’ve got the excitement and the fire in my belly!” he says. He reckons he’s had a hand in more than 300 songs, whether that’s vocals, production, songwriting or playing, and revels in the production process: the structure and the feel of putting something together. “And it’s an achievement, particularly when you see the looks on people’s faces and their reaction which proves you were right. I want to make something that’s not just for myself. We’re still listening to Marvin Gaye and Donnie Hathaway – I want people to be listening to me in decades to come.”

“I got a call one day and it was Stevie. I didn’t believe it was him, so I got him to sing something down the phone. And that resulted in the song ‘Feeling You’. It’s like working with God.”

He’s collaborated with an incredible array of musicians and singers, including Stevie Wonder, Erykah Badu, Courtney Pine, Lamont Dozier and Terri Walker. “Collaboration is all about luck, about trying it out. I’ve been in the studio with Kanye West, John Legend and Common at the same time. You’d think something would happen just because of those people, right? But it didn’t, and that’s fine. Easy come, easy go.”

Working with Stevie Wonder was one of the highlights of his career, he says. “I’ve been bumping into Stevie since 1984. His

manager gave him my second album and he loved it. He said he wanted to write me my first Number One. I said: ‘Who cares where it goes! It’s Stevie Wonder!’ It took another eight years, but I got a call one day and it was Stevie. I didn’t believe it was him, so I got him to sing something down the phone. And that resulted in the song *Feeling You* on my album *Sing What You Want*. It’s like working with God.”

In 2012, Omar was awarded an MBE for Services to Music, presented to him by King Charles (then the Prince of Wales), who asked him to drop off a copy of his new album once it was finished. It was an emotional moment, he says: the first time that he’d had official recognition for his work, “because I’m not mainstream. OK, I’ve had a hit, but I’ve never paid attention to mainstream hits. I know there are people who are against honours but to be able to tell my parents was something else. The day we went to the Palace, they dressed up in their best Rastafarian gear. They looked like kings and queens.”

“And then I’m chatting up Sam Mitchell and I’m in the Queen Vic playing the piano and having a singalong! Perfect for me! Such a great, great experience.”



And alongside his music, Omar has also built an acting career, something he’s been doing since school days. This year, he took on his most memorable role yet – in *Eastenders*, as Avery Baker, Mitch Baker’s older brother. In July, he made a grand entrance to Albert Square, driving a Bentley, smoking a cigar and sporting a three-piece suit. “And then I’m chatting up Sam Mitchell and I’m in the Queen Vic playing the piano and having a singalong! Perfect for me! It was very fast paced, very intense, and everyone was so professional. Such a great, great experience.” Was it hard to build a second career? “It’s exciting, but it can be soul-destroying, of course. I’ve been for lots of things which I haven’t got. But that’s par for the course: it’s just about getting used to rejection and moving on.”

Omar certainly has no desire to slow down. His acting career is on the up – he’ll star as Uncle Chuma in the upcoming ITV drama *Riches*, alongside Hugh Quarshie, and he’s looking forward to getting back to live performances. His ninth album is on the way – featuring guest appearances by the likes of Paul Weller and India Arie – and he’s working on a musical based on his time at Chetham’s. “And I’ve got lots of other exciting things coming up that I’m not allowed to talk about,” he says. “It’s time to go to the next level. Time to kick ass and take names.”



THE GODS OF THE GAME

Football and song have gone hand in hand forever. Wherever you go in the world, football fans sing songs of support for their teams and derision for their opponents, but the results can be as hit and miss as the efforts of the players on the pitch.

Italian football fans, for example, pioneered the setting of football songs to the music of opera. 'The Triumphal March' from Verdi's 'Aida' is an established favourite among supporters, taken up by fans around the world. The relationship was formalised during the 1990 World Cup in Italy when the Three Tenors (Luciano Pavarotti, Plácido Domingo and José Carreras) gave an official concert to an estimated global television audience of 800 million people.

In the British context, however, the relationship between football and song has been somewhat less illustrious, typified by some terrible team appearances on Top of the Pops in the 70s and 80s. However, that could be about to change, with the new football opera 'Gods of the Game'.

Created for Grange Park Opera, Sky Arts and Factory Films by a team of five Guildhall composers, the piece integrates a chorus of football fans from across England, and was timed to precede the football World Cup in Qatar. “The desire to bring together the worlds of football and opera in a UK context begs all sorts of interesting questions,” says Professor Julian Philips, Head of Composition, who has written the musical score alongside Guildhall graduates Lucy Armstrong, Abel Esbenshade, Blasio Kavuma and Aran O’Grady.



“We’ve tried to make a show that’s got a broad appeal, that’s funny, but that leans strongly towards musical theatre at some points,” says Philips. The result is a story of two childhood friends, now footballing icons, who join forces to front their nation’s bid to host a World Cup tournament in the face of a nefarious world of bribery and corruption.

“high-end musical theatre meeting contemporary opera”

The actor and director Kwame Kwei-Armah, who played an important role in the early stages of the project, says it is “high-end musical theatre meeting contemporary opera”. For Philips, that’s a perfect way of describing the score. “I’ve never seen opera as a pure form,” he says. “It’s an interesting place to reconcile all kinds of different registers.”

The idea of writing the piece as a collective came from a chance meeting between Philips and another senior member of teaching staff at Guildhall, vocal studies teacher John Ramster, who pointed out that the opera *The Philosopher’s Stone* was written by a team of five composers including, most famously, Mozart.

So, a quintet of composers was assembled and a meeting arranged with librettist Phil Porter. Porter outlined the narrative and the characters (for the most part people, off the pitch as well as on, who shape the modern game). The Guildhall team, in turn, agreed on a division of compositional labour between themselves.

“We decided it would remain anonymous as to who had written what”

“We decided it would remain anonymous as to who had written what,” says Esbenshade (Opera Making & Writing 2020). “We split the libretto up by character, so that each composer got one character or a pair of characters.” Likewise, certain action sequences were entrusted to particular composers.

The anonymity of each individual’s work means the opera can be seen as a single entity, a complete work for which the group is collectively responsible. “Normally, as composers, we’re so isolated,” says Armstrong (Opera Making & Writing 2018). “With this, it’s been really fun to approach it as a team. We’ve been interacting with each other’s music, sending things back and forth, sometimes even writing in the same room.”



The range of experience has brought different, exciting elements to the table. “I’m very new to writing opera,” says Kavuma current research student. “For me to come in on a project like this has been an extremely sharp learning curve. Having a team of people there to give feedback and support has been really important for me.”



Porter was the perfect choice of collaborator, adds Philips. “He’s a big football fan, so he’s brought lots of specialist knowledge.” Not only that, but Porter is an experienced writer for theatre, who has also worked in opera in the past. “I think he’s found it quite hard being a librettist collaborating with five composers at the same time, when it’s usually a conversation with one,” Philips acknowledges. “But I think we’ve managed that pretty well.”



Crucially, it was important to the team that, whatever the shifts in tone and style within the score, it had a sense of coherence and integrity. The relationship between the individual composer and the collective was such, says Armstrong, that, “we were able to play to our strengths” while respecting Philips’s early injunction to keep the opera “pacy”.



For his part, O’Grady (Opera Making & Writing 2020) finds it, “kind of hilarious that a football opera has been

written by five people.” The group is, he says, very much like a five-a-side football team. “Julian’s the goalie”, he continues. “Lucy’s the striker, and Blasio, Abel and I are the midfield. It’s all been done in this very organic way. We’ve been passing scenes back-and-forth.”

If the writing process has been very much like the way a five-a-side team approaches a match, O’Grady sees another parallel. Football may be a team game, but it must also allow space for the showcasing of individual talent. Likewise, he observes, in writing a piece of music collectively, each composer wants their time to shine. “It’s the act of putting it altogether that is where the team play comes in.”

After an intensive period of compositional work, then, the opera played to enthusiastic audiences in October. Amanda Holloway of *The Stage* praised the production’s “terrific staging”, while Alexandra Coghlan,

writing in the *Daily Telegraph*, enthused about the ensemble. “Under the efficient direction of PJ Harris, the performances are winners,” she wrote. Following this successful kick-off, *Gods of the Game* will now change ‘ends’ as it transfers from theatre stage to TV screen for a broadcast on Sky Arts.

The relationship between opera and popular culture may not be an obvious one, but if *Gods of the Game* is any indication, it’s a cultural game that may well be about to go into extra time.



Friends Reunited

Judy Craymer



JUDY CRAYMER AND PHILIP EFFEMEY

‘Back in 1999 Craymer and Effemey were first and foremost massive ABBA fans’

When Judy Craymer CBE (Technical Theatre 1978) created *MAMMA MIA!*, she had no concept of the global phenomenon it would one day become. Today, Craymer’s masterpiece is a global phenomenon, but back in 1999 she and almost-contemporary Philip Effemey (Technical Theatre 1981) were first and foremost massive ABBA fans.

“Some of my happiest and most special times were at Guildhall,” says Craymer, who studied at the former John Carpenter Street building before moving to Silk



Street in 1977. “It was a great education: you got to live and breathe theatre. Working with somebody from Guildhall now creates a special experience. I have worked with other alumni and we all have that association – those same quirks.”



Effemey, who started just as Craymer left and now works as General Manager at theatre producers Littlestar (founded by Craymer in 1997), says the pair always reminisce about the location. “The Barbican was still a building site. We have the same memories of student digs, favourite pubs and Whitecross Market, where we all went for cheap food and, of course, we share stories about the course. It was a pre-degree course then, and very practical. We were taught lighting and sound, and we learned how to use a sewing machine, iron shirts and tie bow ties.”

While Effemey pursued an interest in opera after leaving Guildhall, Craymer became a stage manager in theatre, working as the assistant stage manager on the original production of *Cats* in 1981 before becoming assistant to Tim Rice. It was through Rice, who was working on the musical *Chess*, that she met Benny Andersson and Bjorn Ulvaeus of ABBA, sparking an idea to create an original story-book musical inspired by ABBA’s songs that would eventually become the groundbreaking musical *MAMMA MIA!*

Effemey remembers first hearing Craymer’s name when he was teaching part-time at Guildhall in the 1990s. “She was starting to carve her way into

a notable career,” he says. “I was already a secret ABBA fan, but around this time I found out that my students were really getting into *ABBA Gold*.”

It was April 1999 when Craymer and Effemey started working together on *MAMMA MIA!* Craymer’s seed of an idea to build an original stage musical not only became a smash hit in the West End but also on Broadway and internationally, with productions continuing to open around the world today. In 2008, Craymer produced the hugely successful film *MAMMA MIA!* starring Meryl Streep, Pierce Brosnan, Julie Walters, Colin Firth, Christine Baranski and Amanda Seyfried. The sequel, *MAMMA MIA! Here We Go Again*, opened in 2018, with Cher joining the star-studded cast along with notable Guildhall alumni Lily James and Josh Dylan.

“Philip is a brilliant general manager and so integral to the production,” says Craymer. “We are a very small unit, and to maintain the show’s high standards he has to be involved in every single aspect. He has to be very strong but with a lot of empathy.”

Effemey sees similar qualities in Craymer. “She is the most extraordinary woman to work for,” he says “She remembers everything and she loves to treat people well. As a result, we are like a family. We have that shared Guildhall experience and shared training, and lots of our stage management are Guildhall alumni because we both know they’ll have the skills, experience and training that we so value.”



Philip Effemey

Katie Paterson: Staging hidden experiences of hormonal contraception

Katie is a theatremaker and a third year PhD candidate researching hormonal contraception through performance-making; what we can learn by exploring contradictory, embodied experiences through live encounters and why contraception doesn't usually appear on the stage. Here she reflects on beginning a practical PhD during the height of lockdown.

Those of us who embarked on the doctorate in September 2020 have a unique relationship with the school that houses us. Much that we might have taken for granted has become precious; long afternoons in the library, time in the studio, and spontaneous coffees with colleagues. The slow emergence from lockdown has been reflected in the audiences available for my practical work. The first sharing, of a piece entitled *First Bite*, took place behind the closed doors of the Barbican with only supervisors in attendance alongside my extraordinary colleague Anna-Helena McLean, also sharing her practice. A scratch night at Camden People's Theatre the following year had slightly fewer restrictions, but it was in anticipation of a run at VAULT Festival 2022; shortly before the Festival was due to start in January, the organisers found themselves with no choice but to cancel. The uncertainty of Covid meant it was impossible to guarantee the safety or indeed the presence of audiences and performers alike. All this to say, it was nearly two years into my ostensibly practice-based doctorate that the metaphorical curtain finally rose, in an intimate cabaret-café in Waterloo, and the stories I had been so desperate to share began to be heard.

Many people are quite understandably confused when I explain that my Drama PhD is actually about contraception. While I am yet to nail the fabled one-sentence-summary, as I stare down my third and final year I am beginning to find a rhythm. It's theatre-making about hormone-taking, I quip at social gatherings. It's contraceptive cabaret, medical comedy. It's a howl of frustration, wonder and apathy at the miraculous and the mundane, and at the maltreatment that permeates the history of reproductive medicine. I have found that the discourse on contraception is characterised by extremes, a duality I considered in a paper at the Material Selves: Health Gender and Performance Symposium held at UCL Institute of Advanced Studies earlier this Summer. In its double life, the contraceptive pill exists as a miraculous liberator of women and as a sinister medical intrusion, an agent of regulation with pernicious side effects. Neither of these narratives is particularly useful; what I am concerned with is the reality of living on hormonal contraception, a profoundly intrusive medication that is taken for years, sometimes decades, without a societal second thought. One of the themes that arose from interviews I conducted was the sheer youth of contributors when they went on the pill; that for better or worse we are not the selves we might have been, had we not started so young. This embodied ambiguity is what I find fascinating, and where I believe that post dramatic performance in the queer feminist tradition has a contribution to make. The experiences involved are contradictory, hazy, uncertain and ambivalent, so my practice works in the realm of the absurd and the inclusive; in comedy, cabaret, camp.



Saied Silbak

Palestinian-born Saied Silbak (Lute 2016) takes great pride in introducing the uninitiated to the oud. A short-necked, eleven-stringed instrument sometimes referred to as the “grandfather of the lute”, the oud is central to medieval and modern Arabic music – and also central to Silbak’s sense of self.

“It’s part of my being,” the composer says. “If I don’t have it on my back, I feel naked, like I’ve forgotten something. It’s who I am.” Not that everyone he meets is quite so aware. “I’ve had people on the tube asking what the instrument is. Once a lady came up and said ‘I think your guitar is broken’, so I explained what it was and gave her a quick demonstration. Then people gathered round and I ended up doing a little impromptu underground concert!”

Silbak’s love of music began in his hometown of Shafaa’mr in Galilee at the age of four, when he started learning classical piano. As he developed, he became frustrated by the piano’s lack of quarter tones – “the notes between the notes” – which were a feature of music from his native Palestine. The oud was the answer.

When he eventually landed in London and Guildhall, he remembers being shocked initially by the challenge – being encouraged by one tutor to find a “new sound” from his oud using an Oyster card, for example – but revelatory. “Having the chance to work with dancers, jazz musicians, actors, painters, spoken word artists and many more has helped shape my collaborative character,” he says. “And the course I did (known at the time as the Masters in Leadership) exposed me to so many different groups of people that I can now confidently lead creative workshops for groups of any age. It all helped broaden my musicianship and my approach to my instrument.”

It also fuelled a lifelong obsession that has seen him playing and composing around the world, and today finds him putting the final touches to a new album. *The Small Things* – “a reminder of the small things that warm our hearts and lift our spirits, that we often forget” – features five instrumentals and two songs. Unusually, it was previewed in a live performance at the EFG London Jazz Festival, before being recorded in a studio the next day.

“It was so exciting to choose any instruments and musicians I liked,” says Silbak. “My ensemble is an Austrian percussionist, a Palestinian clarinettist, an Australian pianist and a British bass player – a beautiful mix of people I admire. We rehearsed for three days, performed it live and then spent three days recording. I can’t wait to share it with people when we tour in the spring.”

As a result, his days are busy. “There is no typical day,” he says. “The only constant is Arabic coffee with cardamom! I perform gigs and do tours, I run music workshops and do anything exciting that comes along. I recently composed music for Ken Loach’s *The Old Oak* (due for release in 2023) and had the enormous honour of working with George Fenton. I’m even in the film!”

As he chooses not to have an agent, preferring to learn how to do everything himself, much of Silbak’s day is spent in his London home, video-calling musicians, booking studios, talking to technicians and arranging venues.

And, of course, making time to compose. “The most difficult thing for a creative artist is to find the energy to keep creating. I used to go with the flow and wait for the muse to strike – and it is very important to just open your mind and heart to it, but to be productive, you need to treat it as a job with a calendar and a schedule.”

Not that he’ll ever be found too far from his beloved oud. “Other musicians are fascinated by it too and it’s great to collaborate with people. At Guildhall I was the only oud player. I think it’s important that there is that diversity of people who speak different musical languages.

“Any instrument follows the mentality of the player. Of course, it has its limitations but, while it has its own personality, it follows the character of the musician and how open minded they are. It can lead you to all sorts of interesting places.”

Saied Silbak



Upcoming events

Wednesday 11 January, 7pm
Milton Court Concert Hall

Guildhall Studio Orchestra perform *Scorched*

Scott Stroman directs *Scorched* by Mark-Anthony Turnage and John Scofield – the synthesis of two composers' highly individual but ultimately compatible musical worlds.

Friday 20 January, 7pm
Milton Court Concert Hall

Guildhall String Ensemble

A programme of British and American works directed by Jonathan Morton, including Elgar's *Introduction and Allegro*, Tippett's Concerto for Double String Orchestra and music by Jessie Montgomery.

3–14 February
Milton Court Studio Theatre

Macbeth

by William Shakespeare
Ashley Zhangazha director

6–16 February
Milton Court Studio Theatre

The Gift

by Janice Okoh
Ola Ince director

13–18 February
Milton Court Theatre

Dance Nation

by Clare Barron
Paul Foster director

27 February – 6 March
Silk Street Theatre

Dead Man Walking

Music by Jake Heggie
Libretto by Terrence McNally
Martin Lloyd-Evans director

Wednesday 1 March, 7.30pm
Barbican Hall

Guildhall Symphony Orchestra

Roberto González-Monjas conducts Mahler's Symphony no 1 and Humperdinck's *Hansel and Gretel* Suite.

24–29 March
Silk Street Theatre

Attempts On Her Life

by Martin Crimp
Emma Baggott director

29–31 March
Barbican Pit Theatre

The Mountains We Climb

A collection of short, stand-alone solo performance works, written, directed and performed by Guildhall's final-year Acting students.

Thursday 30 March, 7pm
Milton Court Concert Hall

Guildhall Studio Orchestra: The Unsung Voices of the Great American Songbook

A celebration of the unsung composers, arrangers and lyricists responsible for creating the Great American Songbook.

Friday 31 March, 7.30pm
Milton Court Concert Hall

Guildhall Big Band celebrate Art Blakey

A tribute to one of the all-time drumming greats.

News

Guildhall Young Artists King's Cross launches six courses in music, drama and production arts for 5-18-year-olds

In September, we launched Guildhall Young Artists King's Cross, a brand-new performing and production arts centre. The centre offers an exciting range of Saturday classes, performance opportunities and one-to-one instrument tuition in music, drama, production arts and backstage skills for 5–18-year-olds.

Based at Elizabeth Garrett Anderson School, young musicians, singers, actors, designers, and stage managers can develop their creativity and access high-quality training with top practitioners and industry professionals, across a variety of styles and genres.

Performance opportunities will be at the heart of Guildhall Young Artists King's Cross, with music, drama and production students coming together to create innovative performances. These will be staged at the centre and other arts venues. Visits from Guildhall School students and tutors will give students the opportunity to further develop their skills and ask any questions they might have.

With no auditions or previous experience necessary and bursaries for tuition and travel, Guildhall Young Artists King's Cross is a great way for children and young people to access Guildhall School's world-class training, make friends and have lots of fun.



Guildhall School tops the Guardian University Guide music league table

Guildhall School is the number one higher education institution for Music in the 2023 Guardian University Guide music league table, the only institution scoring 100/100 in the Guardian’s rating of excellence for music. In the drama & dance league table, Guildhall received an excellence score of 92.8 for Production Arts and Acting programmes.



Graduation Day 2022

Graduation Day 2022: Guildhall School names new Fellows and Honorary Fellows

Congratulations to the Class of 2022, who were presented with their degrees and prizes at Guildhall School’s annual Graduation ceremony in the City of London’s Guildhall on Friday 4 November. The School also awarded Fellowships to a number of honorands, over two graduation ceremonies attended by graduands, honorands, prize-winners, guests and staff.

This year, those made Fellows of the School were:

Monica Dolan (Acting 1992), **Katharine Lewis** (Secretary & Dean of Students at Guildhall School between 2018 and 2022), **Zara McFarlane** (Jazz Vocal 2009), **Dr Eliot Shrimpton** (Head of Acting Practice at Guildhall School), **Gemma Tonge** (Stage Management & Technical Theatre 2002), **John Paul Williams** (Guildhall School’s Concert Piano Technician), **Lynne Williams** (Principal of Guildhall School between 2017 and 2021) and **Armin Zanner** (Interim Director of Music & Head of Vocal Studies at Guildhall School).

Those made Honorary Fellows were:

donors **Michael Hoffman**, who was also a member of the School’s Board of Governors and the Guildhall School Trust, and **Dr Michael Shipley** and **Philip Rudge**; and composer **Judith Weir CBE**.

Guildhall Short Courses

10% off online and in-person selected short courses for Guildhall alumni

Courses are led by experienced Guildhall School teachers and industry-leading guest tutors. Ideal for those who are looking to learn something new or brush up on existing skills.

To redeem your discount please email shortcourses@gsmd.ac.uk with the course you are interested in, as well as the course you studied and attendance dates. Discounts are limited and will be allocated on a first come first served basis.

Find out more and book at gsmd.ac.uk/shortcourses



Welfare & Wellbeing Appeal

Demand for welfare support, particularly our counselling service, is increasing. The pandemic caused many to struggle with the effects of social isolation, health anxieties and financial worries. With a cost-of-living crisis and financial anxieties likely to affect people across the UK, pressure on our welfare services shows little sign of easing.

From counselling to ensuring wellbeing in the curriculum, and world-leading health research to innovative outreach workshops, find out more about the School's Welfare & Wellbeing Fundraising Appeal and how you can help at gsmd.ac.uk/appeal

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