INTRODUCTION FROM THE DIRECTOR OF OPERA

Royal Academy Opera is a vibrant community for vocal students of the highest calibre who show the necessary levels of promise required to succeed in this competitive world.

RAO mounts at least two fully-staged opera productions per year. The operas are chosen according to the nature of the vocal talent available and guest conductors and directors supplement the Academy’s own team. In addition there is at least one set of fully-staged Opera Scenes every year, and provision for other operatic activity (semi-staged or concert performances) both within the Academy and externally.

Alongside the core elements of individual singing lessons and work with a personal vocal coach the course provides a wide range of complimentary activity; this ranges from movement/acting classes and 1:1 seminars to working with distinguished visiting artists in both class and individual situations. The work and scheduling is run along the lines of a small professional company, with all the expectation which this brings, and it should be viewed as a very real and significant bridge towards life in the profession.

Gareth Hancock
### KEY STAFF: ROYAL ACADEMY OPERA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Contact Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Director of Opera</td>
<td>Gareth Hancock</td>
<td><a href="mailto:g.hancock@ram.ac.uk">g.hancock@ram.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head of Vocal Studies</td>
<td>Mark Wildman</td>
<td><a href="mailto:m.wildman@ram.ac.uk">m.wildman@ram.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opera Company Manager</td>
<td>Nicola Candlish</td>
<td><a href="mailto:n.candlish@ram.ac.uk">n.candlish@ram.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutor for Opera students</td>
<td>Sarah Callis</td>
<td><a href="mailto:s.callis@ram.ac.uk">s.callis@ram.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head of Postgraduate Programmes</td>
<td>Neil Heyde</td>
<td><a href="mailto:n.heyde@ram.ac.uk">n.heyde@ram.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Singing Professors:
- Alexander Ashworth
- Catherine Benson
- Michael Chance
- Jennifer Dakin
- Ryland Davies
- Philip Doghan
- Andrew Foster Williams
- Glenville Hargreaves
- Yvonne Howard
- Ben Johnson
- Julie Kennard
- Kathleen Livingstone
- Neil Mackie
- Susan McCulloch
- Mary Nelson
- Elizabeth Ritchie
- Brindley Sherratt
- Giles Underwood
- Sarah Walker
- Lillian Watson
- Mark Wilde
- Mark Wildman
- Catherine Wyn Rogers
- Giles Underwood

#### Principal Opera Coach:
- Ingrid Surgenor

#### Opera Coaches:
- Alexander Crowe
- Lionel Friend
- Gareth Hancock
- Audrey Hyland
- Iain Ledingham
- Jonathan Papp
- Michael Pollock
- Peter Robinson
- Susanna Stranders

#### Languages:
- Ludmilla Andrew (Russian)
- Maria Cleva (Italian)
- Florence Daguerre de Hureaux (French)
- Johanna Mayr (German)
- Isabella Radcliffe (Italian)

#### Movement:
- Mandy Demetriou
- Victoria Newlyn

#### Visiting Producer:
- John Ramster
ABOUT THE ADVANCED DIPLOMA

The Advanced Diploma has been established in response to external recognition of the level at which Royal Academy Opera students have been performing and in order to provide the best possible environment for meeting the pre-professional training requirements at this level. It is set at level 8 of the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) in order to recognize the stage at which students usually enter the programme and to provide an appropriate framework for assessment. Whereas programmes at level 7 and below tend to be subdivided into various components (which have individual assessments), at level 8 the expectations are holistic. You will receive detailed feedback on all aspects of your work during the programme but none of these elements will receive a mark. You can read more about assessment below.

A full programme specification is available on AIR, and the programme aims and intended learning outcomes are provided below. The aims should be self-explanatory, but the learning outcomes are expressed in language that demonstrates how the Advanced Diploma meets expectations at level 8 (at which doctorates are also set) and may thus require close reading. The key elements are that we recognise the complexity of the synthesis of activities involved in opera and that we acknowledge the value of the artistic insight that can be communicated in performance. There is no written assessment.

PROGRAMME AIMS

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

PROGRAMME INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES

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

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

LEARNING AND TEACHING PROCESSES

The principal modes of teaching are described below:

• **Singing Lessons and Repertoire Coaching.** Regular one-to-one tuition is designed to enable students to continue developing key professional disciplines: technique, interpretation skills, repertoire building, programme/portfolio building, audition techniques, and so on. It enables students to refine their reflective, critical and informed attitudes to performance.
• **Opera Coaching** specifically prepares students for roles in opera scenes or productions.
• **Language Tuition** is provided on a one-to-one basis to support the preparation of Opera Productions and Scenes and to prepare students more generally for the demands of the profession. These sessions are individually tailored to specific developmental needs.
• **Acting and Movement** classes provide the necessary dramatic training and support to accompany the musical and linguistic skills outlined above.
• **Opera Productions and Scenes** provide a key synthetic and collaborative focus of the learning and teaching experience. The process of preparation and the experience of performance bring together all of the aspects of the programme and provide opportunities for students to demonstrate their individual responses to specific challenges.
• **Masterclasses** provide students with opportunities to present work to a leading visiting artist, normally in an ‘open’ setting (open to other students and members of the public).
• **Visiting Opera professionals** (such as casting directors and agents) will provide students with current advice on how to navigate the practicalities of entering the profession.
• **Regular progress meetings with the Director of Opera** will provide students with ongoing holistic feedback on their work and will help to focus their wider professional preparation.
• **Core role study** will provide students with the opportunity to focus on two key roles from their repertoire and to be tested on these at the end of the year.

ASSESSMENT AND FEEDBACK

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

• **One-to-one meetings with the Director of Opera.** These will be regular (at least 4 per term) and will provide the student with ongoing and detailed formative oral feedback on their progress. Satisfactory engagement with these meetings will be noted on the End of Year 1 report form.
• **One-to-one lesson report.** This is formative assessment (in both years of study) logging progress and providing formalized feedback to complement the regular oral feedback given in lessons.

• **Core Role Assessment.** This is a short exam to test a student's familiarity with the core roles they have learnt over the year. Written feedback will form part of the End of Year 1 report form.

• **Opera Scenes and Productions.** These will be assessed by the visiting director/musical director who will provide a report on the student’s engagement in the rehearsal process and their final performance. This will provide an external perspective on the student’s work.

• **Final Appraisal.** At the end of the Spring term of the second year, students will undertake a viva (c.30 mins) with the Director of Opera and Course Tutor to discuss their work over the programme and to acknowledge that all of the requirements of the programme have been met. This will be documented in a short report written by the Course Tutor.

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**PROGRAMME STRUCTURE**

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

**TIMETABLEING**

During the 2016-17 academic year the RAO will not follow a standard timetable. Termly calendars will be issued by the Company Manager showing dates and times of all RAO activity.

The Plan of the Year detailing dates of production rehearsals and weekend working will be issued to all students at the earliest opportunity. Questions can be directed to the Company Manager at any time.

**Productions**

RAO presents at least two fully-staged productions with orchestra per year. The selection of operas is geared towards the specific talents among the current group of singers on the course. A balance is sought across any two-year period, with regard to period, style and language, in order to give all students as wide an experience as possible. These major productions are double-cast, in order to give opportunity to as many people as possible. Casting is decided as a result of competitive auditions held at the end of the previous academic year; but these decisions may of course be modified later if circumstances change.

The rehearsal process lasts approximately 5-6 weeks. As with all opera companies, it begins with concentrated music calls (both individual and in ensemble) and proceeds to staging. The climactic final weeks consist of stage and piano, piano dress rehearsals, sitzproben, stage-orchestral rehearsals and dress rehearsals for each cast. These major opera productions each receive four performances, so each cast member performs twice. Representatives of opera companies, artists’ agencies and the national press are invited to attend these performances.

Productions are complemented by Opera Scenes (sometimes in the form of full operas or one-act operas) with piano accompaniment, which allow students to work intensively...
on smaller-scale projects, further helping to ensure that they are exposed to a range of periods and styles.

**Production Rehearsals**
Rehearsals for productions generally take place during the slots 10:30-13:30, 14:30-17:30 and 18:30-21:30. No student will be required to do more than two sessions in each day. Evening and weekend rehearsals take place during stage rehearsals.

**Locations**
During the redevelopment of the theatre most of the RAO activity will be offsite including, but not limited to, the following locations.

- **Regent’s Park Open Air Theatre rehearsal room**
  - Inner Circle, NW1 4NU
  - 10 minute walk from RAM

- **Rudolf Steiner House, 35 Park Road, London NW1 6XT**
  - 10 minute walk from RAM

- **The American Church, 79a Tottenham Court Road, W1T 4TD**
  - 20 minute walk from RAM, nearest tube Goodge Street

*Alcina* performances:
- **Hackney Round Chapel**
  - Lower Clapton Rd, at the junction of Glenarm Road, E5 0NP
  - 45 minutes from RAM by public transport, nearest station Hackney Central or Hackney Downs

*Orpheus* performances:
- **Hackney Empire Theatre, 291 Mare Street, E8 1EJ**
  - 40 minutes from RAM by public transport, nearest station Hackney Central

*Opera Scenes* performances:
- **Steiner Theatre**
  - Rudolf Steiner House, 35 Park Road, London NW1 6XT
  - 10 minute walk from RAM

*Threepenny Opera* performances:
- **Shoreditch Town Hall, 380 Old Street, London EC1V 9LT**
  - 35 minute from RAM by public transport, nearest tube Old Street

**Performance Dates**
- *Threepenny Opera*: 15, 16, 17 (matinee and evening) June 2017.

The academic year ends on 30th June 2017 with graduation on Wednesday 5th July.

**Song Circle and Bach Cantatas**
Students are able to audition for the Academy’s ‘Song Circle’, a small group of accomplished performers of song repertoire. The group performs regularly at the Academy as well as at prestigious outside venues. Auditions are in the summer term. There are also opportunities to take part in the Academy’s ongoing Bach Cantata
series, held once a month and involving significant performers and conductors from the profession. It should be noted that whilst RAO members are encouraged to participate in these areas of Academy life, priority, both by the individual and RAO must be given to operatic training.

Concerts
Students are able to arrange their own concerts within the RAM, as well as become involved in external bookings. Details of these are available on Air (Air > Events and Performance > Lunchtime and early evening concerts; and > External bookings).

Communication
RAO and the wider Academy will communicate with you via your @ram email address only, so you will need to access this account every day. This will ensure that you receive all the information you need to undertake the programme. It is easy to ensure that you can access your RAM emails on your own phone/laptop/tablet – visit the IT helpdesk to set this up.

Weekly Schedule
A weekly schedule of all RAO activities is issued via PDF and ASIMUT on a Thursday evening (or, at latest, Friday afternoon) by the Company Manager. It is vital that students check both ASIMUT and the PDF schedule. The weekly schedule lists classes, guest coaching, language coaching, master classes, production rehearsals, costume fittings, etc. Each day’s listing also indicates which students have Leave of Absence. Students are encouraged to keep the Company Manager informed of their coaching requests, which are then included in the schedule whenever possible. During production periods it is often necessary to issue a revised schedule for the following day, so you will need to check your Academy e-mail every day, including at weekends.

Leave of Absence Procedure
You must apply for Leave of Absence if you are going to take any time away from the Academy during the term, regardless of whether or not you will miss any Academy activities which are part of your schedule of study. Leave of Absence will only be allowed in exceptional circumstances and can be applied for by filling out a Leave of Absence form (available on AIR and outside the VF office).

Some guidance on completing a Leave of absence form:
- You must apply for Leave of Absence as far in advance as possible.
- It is your responsibility to check what activity you will miss and to collect the signature of your singing teacher.
- Forms should be handed to the Company Manager who will then process your request.
- Your Tutor will notify you via email once the process is complete.
- You may not go on leave until you have received this notification from your Tutor.
- In the case of emergencies or last minute external opportunities, speak first to the Company Manager who will advise you accordingly.

In addition to filling out a Leave of Absence form, you should inform other relevant lecturer(s) or professor(s) that you have been granted Leave of Absence from a particular class, lesson, rehearsal, or performance.

Any regular timetable clashes must be brought to the attention of your Tutor and the Company Manager immediately.
If you are ill, you should telephone the Company Manager on 07947 443110 at the earliest opportunity, and also contact your vocal coach or singing teacher direct if you will miss a coaching or lesson. You should also visit your doctor in order to obtain a medical certificate.

Please note that the summer term does not end until 30th June 2017. You will therefore be expected to be available to attend any end of year tutorial interviews or to collect any correspondence that is left in your pigeon hole up until this date. The Academy will not be responsible for any information which a student fails to receive in the event that they left the Academy early without making appropriate arrangements.

Performance Protocol
Students are required to attend all timetabled activity unless Leave Of Absence (LOA) has been granted (see above). Students are expected to be fully prepared for rehearsals and to arrive warmed-up, 5 minutes before the beginning of the rehearsal.

Students who are late will be issued with a penalty mark in accordance with the penalty mark system described in the Regulations.

STUDENT RECORDINGS
You can access recordings or large scale public performances from the Library for educational purposes. The Academy cannot provide you with your own copies of these performances for copyright and resource reasons. Exceptions may be made in the case of performances with rarity value such as concertos but requests must be submitted to the Concerts Department at least one calendar month in advance of the performance. This will allow the Concerts Department time to consider any copyright clearance issues/licenses/costs involved and for the Recording Studio staff to allocate time in their schedule and recording equipment.

If the Academy is not planning to record a performance that you are performing in (e.g. Tuesday lunchtime concerts), requests may be made by students to record it but in audio format. In order to request this you will need to ensure that all relevant consent forms and copyright clearance is completed at least one calendar month in advance of the performance. You are able to record yourselves on Academy premises (in practice rooms and concert venues) either using your own or loaned equipment (in this case you would retain the copyright on the recordings and accept all responsibility for any necessary copyright clearance required). You are advised to check the Academy’s guidelines ‘Recording Academy concerts and students’ private performances; IPR considerations’ on the Copyright and Intellectual Property page on AIR for more information.

STUDENT SUPPORT
Students receive an induction programme which includes: an induction into library and IT facilities; guidance on health and safety (including audiometric testing); registration; international student meetings; introduction to senior staff with programme responsibilities; tutorial meeting. Students are supported in all aspects of their subsequent life and work at the Academy throughout the duration of the programme in the following dedicated ways:
• Director of Opera (with responsibility for the Opera Department and for overseeing the specific needs of the student in consultation with the Tutor)
• Designated Tutor (with responsibility for academic and pastoral support)
• Library (staffed by subject specialists who can advise on sheet music, instrumental and vocal parts, musicological materials, reference works, on-line resources, and materials from the Academy’s special collections)
• IT Helpdesk
• Counsellor: the Counsellor provides confidential pastoral support as a trained professional
• Disability Advisor: the Disability Advisor and support team are responsible for the implementation of the Academy’s Disability Equality Policy and Action Plan
• Alexander Technique co-ordinator: The Alexander Technique co-ordinator and support team teach Alexander Technique – an established method to improve posture and prevent repetitive strain injury.
• Professional Development Advisor; provides one to one consultations with students and can help with issues such as creating a biography or CV, writing letters to promoters, sourcing funding and contractual issues.
• Head of International Affairs, who offers advice to overseas students
• Chaplain; The Chaplain’s task is to serve the pastoral and spiritual needs of all members of the Royal Academy of Music, whether staff or students, whatever their faith, or none.
• Estates Manager: who advises on student accommodation issues
• The Royal Academy of Music Student’s Union
• The English Language Support team and Helpdesk

Please see the Student Support Handbook for more details.

**SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES PROCEDURE**

The Special Circumstances Committee considers applications from students in the Special Circumstances Regulations, for the following reasons:

• extenuating circumstances which may have affected student performance in assessments
• extensions to deadlines for the submission of work for assessment
• the deferral of assessments
• appeals against penalty marks where the reasons were beyond your control.

You must submit a completed application form no later than 10 working days from the imposition of a penalty mark; 10 working days before the published deadline for submission of academic work, or 10 working days before the published date of an assessment†.

Your application will then be assessed by the committee, which consists of the Academic registrar (Chair), Head of Undergraduate Programmes, the Head of Postgraduate Programmes and the Head of Alumni Development.
Please note that retrospective extensions and waiving of lateness penalties will not be permitted except in very serious cases and where you have provided evidence to explain why you were unable to submit within the required timeframe.

1. Applications must be signed by you and your Tutor and be accompanied by supporting evidence before it is submitted to the Academic Quality Officer. If the form is missing either signature, it will be returned to your pigeon hole.

2. If you are citing medical reasons in support of your application, you must provide medical evidence with your application form. Applications without medical evidence cannot be considered by the committee. If you submit a form without evidence, you will be given a deadline to provide this (usually 7 days). If you do not meet this deadline without good reason then your application will not be considered and will be dismissed.

3. If you are citing a medical issue, you must provide relevant evidence from a medical practitioner which confirms the relevant timescales and a formal diagnosis. A letter which merely states that you visited the practice for an appointment will not be accepted.

4. SCC will normally consider cases on a weekly basis during the term (on a Wednesday afternoon) and, when deemed appropriate, information from the student’s Tutor, the Concerts Department or any other Academy department shall be sought prior to the meeting.

5. SCC will either accept or reject the application and agree any details in relation to extensions or penalties as appropriate. When applications are rejected, a full explanation will be given.

6. Students will normally be informed of the outcome within two working days of the meeting by the Chair of the Committee via Academy email* and their Tutor and other relevant members of staff (i.e. Module Leaders) copied in.

7. The case outcomes are circulated, normally within 2 working days of the meeting, to representatives from the Registry so that a note of the outcome can be placed on the student file.

8. Students have the right of appeal against decisions of the Special Circumstances Committee; via the Academic Appeals Procedure (see the Regulations).

* All correspondence documenting the outcome of applications will be copied to the relevant Registry staff, relevant Tutor and any Module Leaders/other administrative staff concerned.

†If you are making an application for a deferral of an assessment due to unforeseen circumstances such as illness on the day of the assessment, you must provide an application with supporting medical evidence within five working days of the assessment taking place.

Please see the guidelines on AIR for further information on making applications.

DEPARTMENTAL STUDENT FEEDBACK

The annual departmental feedback exercise is an important factor in influencing how the Royal Academy Opera is run. It also enhances the student experience at the Academy. By providing feedback, you are shaping the course for future generations of vocal students and providing valuable information for the Head of Vocal Studies, the Directors of Opera and the departmental administrators.

We look forward to receiving your comments via the online survey in the summer term 2017.