Taking Centre Stage

A New Theatre
This building has been absolutely at the centre of everything that I have learnt

Sir Simon Rattle, alumnus, speaking at the Academy in March 2011

Photo: Simon Rattle in the Theatre, 1992
Britain's oldest conservatoire is recognised world-wide as one of the most prestigious and forward-looking cultural and educational centres. The Academy's Opera and Musical Theatre programmes enjoy a remarkable artistic and educational reputation, with a staff of internationally renowned professors, coaches, conductors, directors and designers.

We reveal the finest young performers of their generation and our productions are universally acclaimed by critics, who review them as though the Academy was a professional company.

Many of our alumni are household names and perform internationally at the top of their profession.

A dazzling range of work – from Monteverdi and Mozart to Sondheim and Maxwell Davies – requires a theatre to match the exceptional quality of performance that is synonymous with the Academy.

The Academy intends to transform the cramped and outdated Sir Jack Lyons Theatre, and replace it with superb new facilities, designed by the celebrated architect Ian Ritchie. He has brilliantly reshaped the auditorium, created a new balcony, improved sight lines and increased the overall seating capacity by 40%. The design delivers state-of-the-art stage and recording facilities in an adaptable theatre suitable for all forms of classical and contemporary opera and musical theatre productions.

The new theatre complex also provides a 100-seat roof-top recital hall, significant improvements to back and front of house facilities and full accessibility.

We are seeking to raise £12m. This project presents a rare opportunity for supporters to make an indelible mark on British musical life, enabling brilliant young artists to prepare for the world stage.

[The] singers threw themselves into the fray with an energy and a dynamism that outclassed anything seen on the stage of a British conservatory in living memory

The New York Times,
(World Premiere production of Kommilitonen! by Sir Peter Maxwell Davies)

The Royal Academy of Music

[Photo (right): Lucy Crowe in Haydn's Il Mondo Della Luna, 2003]

[Photo (top right): Lucy Crowe in Haydn's Il Mondo Della Luna, 2003]

[Photo (below): Musical Theatre Showcase Concert, 2009]

[Photo (top right): Tommy, 2011]
The Academy’s enduring prestige and success rests on a simple formula:

* Seek out and recruit the most promising young musicians from all over the world
* Match our students to the most eminent mentors, teachers and visiting artists
* Develop artistry in a rich cultural environment, most critically in the quality and range of student opportunities
* Create important collaborations – such as our ongoing and inspiring projects with the Juilliard School in New York – and links with the industry in the UK and abroad
* Do everything possible to enable students to realise their dreams in the professional world

All the main roles were superbly taken – any may be a star of the future – as were the cameos

The Observer, March 2012

on Royal Academy Opera’s Die Zauberflöte
Ian Ritchie’s exciting scheme... 

has been granted full planning permission and the Board of the Royal Academy of Music is launching a campaign to raise the money necessary to carry out this transformation.

Together with the renowned Duke’s Hall and the David Josefowitz Recital Hall, the new theatre will ensure the Academy has a full complement of world-class performing spaces, where Opera and Musical Theatre will take centre stage.

New facilities will include:

• An adaptable, intimate and stunning space to deliver all forms of classical and contemporary opera and musical theatre work

• 315 seats, representing more than a 40% increase in capacity

• A new stage, balcony, proscenium, wings, orchestra pit and fly tower

• A transformation of the theatre’s ambience, sight lines, backstage facilities and acoustic quality

• Full accessibility

• Innovative and technically advanced professional recording facilities which will also be available for hire

• A spacious new gallery foyer

• A new 100-seat recital hall above the theatre to provide an important addition to the Academy’s performance spaces
The Theatre...

A rare opportunity for supporters to make an indelible mark on British musical life, enabling brilliant young artists to prepare for the world stage.
For 190 years the Royal Academy of Music has been the nursery, hothouse and generator for the British music profession and has become one of the world’s great conservatoires.

The Times, November 2011
The Recital Hall...

The Roof Gallery

The Recital Hall Interior

The Recital Hall Interior

The Roof Gallery
I felt Kommilitonen! should be instantly committed to DVD, as an advertisement for the superb establishment which mounted it

The Spectator, March 2011
Photo (below): Sir Peter Maxwell Davies with Professor Jane Glover

Orchestrally, vocally, theatrically, the performance is a triumph
The Independent on Sunday, March 2011

A triumph... outclassed anything I’ve seen on a college stage in years, inspiring wonderful performances all round
The Daily Telegraph, March 2011
Photo (above): Kommilitonen!
Dame Janet Baker CH
Honorary Member of the Royal Academy of Music

"The Royal Academy of Music is rightly renowned for its superb teaching staff and the quality of its students. Performances in the theatre over the years have given me, as a visitor, much enjoyment. Like many of us, however, the much-loved building now needs a facelift to carry on the marvellous tradition established there in order to maintain it and develop the cutting edge environment the staff and students undoubtedly deserve."

Profesor Jane Glover CBE
Director of Royal Academy Opera

"It is a privilege to witness the development of the young singers who pass through the Academy doors and on to the stage of opera houses and concert halls around the world. As part of their training at the Academy, these young people are challenged on a practical level by the productions that we stage each year. Academy singers are amongst the brightest and the best. They deserve a space that will help them to develop and deliver the best performance that they can give."

Sir Peter Maxwell Davies
Visiting Professor of Composition

"The commitment in the Royal Academy of Music has been absolutely mind-boggling."

Lesley Garrett CBE
As a Governor, alumna and advocate of the Royal Academy of Music, it's obvious that the next step for us is to create a space dedicated to giving students the most complete experience of what it is like to perform as a professional on stage."

Edward Gardner
Music Director, English National Opera

"I'm enormously fond of the Academy Theatre, and I'm sure I join all ex-Academy students in supporting the refurbishment. The space is a cauldron for artistic development in many fields of dramatic theatre; I conducted my first staged operas there, so have a deep personal connection. We owe the next generation of students the best possible space for their development."

Lucy Crowe
"I really can't speak highly enough of the Academy and the opportunities that it provides. A new theatre will make such a difference to the young performers and, eventually, to the musical life of this country."

Dame Felicity Lott DBE

"As a former Royal Academy of Music student, I am constantly amazed at the dynamism of the place now. Its energy is palpable as soon as you come into the building and the standards attained by the young singers on the Opera Course, both in singing and in acting, make for really professional performances. And then one goes backstage... The theatre needs a make-over."

Dame Kiri Te Kanawa DBE

"I strongly believe that quality breeds quality. To have facilities at the highest level cannot fail to inspire students to give performances ensuring the best standards."

Sir Peter Maxwell Davies
Visiting Professor of Composition

"The commitment in the Royal Academy of Music has been absolutely mind-boggling."
Mary Hammond
Academy alumna and Head of Musical Theatre

“The Royal Academy of Music is committed to training exceptional Musical Theatre performers and the Sir Jack Lyons Theatre is absolutely central to the work of Musical Theatre here. During a year of intensive study, it plays host to showcases, concerts, competitions and two full-scale musical productions. The theatre is the arena in which the Academy introduces to the world the artists of the future. Having a state-of-the-art performance space in which to rehearse and perform is essential to prepare students for life in the profession.”

Sir Cameron Mackintosh

“The theatre space at the Academy is utterly essential to so many of the courses at the Academy. The auditorium is both the spiritual and practical centre of their work. The stage on which they take their first tentative steps is, to a student of the performing arts, what the laboratory is to the scientist. It is not simply a room in which they work but a symbol of everything they dream of and aspire to. I applaud the Academy’s campaign to refurbish their theatre space and make it a suitable incubator for the precious talent that will be nurtured there.”

James Newton Howard

“There is a reason the Royal Academy of Music has such an impeccable and legendary reputation. From the distinguished faculty to the incredible student talent, their pedigree is undeniable. Such an outstanding group deserves exceptional facilities, and I was thrilled to hear that a new theatre is in the works.”

Stephen Sondheim

“My visit to the Academy last year was truly memorable and it’s abundantly clear that these brilliant students deserve outstanding facilities to realise their potential.”
To be part of this next stage in our history and to join our ever-increasing Academy family, please get in touch with us.

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