

Contact Details

LCM Exams has moved offices; our new address is:

LCM Exams
University of West London
TC326, St Mary's Road
Ealing
London W5 5RF

Following the University's name change (see page 3) our email and website addresses are now:

E lcm.exams@uwl.ac.uk
 W uwl.ac.uk/lcmexams

Telephone and fax numbers remain the same.

Performance Awards

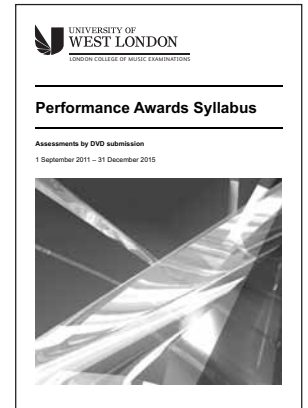
Performance Awards provide a new opportunity for the assessment of musical performance, whereby candidates submit a DVD of their performance rather than attending an examination venue.

Performances are assessed by trained LCM examiners, using the same standards and criteria as are used for the standard graded exams, offering candidates a reliable and independent assessment of their performance standard, while

benefitting from the flexibility allowed by the submission process.

Performance Awards may be entered at any time of the year, and considerations such as exam venue locations, clashes with other commitments, performing in unfamiliar surroundings, etc are not applicable.

The awards also offer candidates the opportunity to have their performances assessed externally before taking a graded examination.



Performance Awards are offered in a wide range of solo subjects, and may also be entered by ensembles; refer to the syllabus for full details.

Syllabus Validity Reminders

Piano Grades:

The current repertoire list is valid until the end of 2012. The new repertoire list will be valid from September 2012. The estimated publication date for the new series of handbooks is May 2012.

Electronic Keyboard & Organ Grades:

The current syllabus is valid until the Summer session of 2013. The new syllabus will be valid from January 2013. The estimated publication date for the new series of handbooks is September 2012.

Music Diplomas (piano, pipe organ, woodwind, brass, strings, percussion, classical singing, pop vocals, classical guitar, electronic keyboard & organ, harp):

The 2008-2010 syllabus may be used until the end of 2011.

Music Grades (flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, recorder, classical saxophone, French horn, trumpet, trombone, baritone/euphonium, tuba, violin, viola, cello, double bass, tuned percussion, snare drum, timpani, percussion, classical singing, harp):

The old repertoire lists are no longer valid; candidates must use the 2011 lists.

Jazz Grades (piano, flute, clarinet, saxophone, trumpet, trombone):

The current syllabus and repertoire lists expire at the end of 2011. The 2012 versions will be available soon. Candidates may use either old or new versions in Spring and Summer 2012.

Visit uwl.ac.uk/lcmexams for up-to-date versions of all syllabuses and repertoire lists.

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Key Information

Contacts at LCM Exams

John Howard	Director of Examinations
Philip Aldred	Chief Examiner in Music
Stephen Hazell	Chief Examiner in Drama & Communication
Janet Lill	Senior Examinations Officer
Andrew Hatt	Qualifications & Marketing Officer
Alexandra Marchant	Exams Information Officer
<i>to be appointed</i>	Publications Administrator
Jackie Honan	Finance Administrator
Grace Sweetman	Administrative Assistant

Calendar - 2011

10 January	Asia Pacific: Spring closing date
1 February	UK/Eire: Spring closing date
18 February	Music senior examiners' meeting, UWL
18 February	Drama senior examiners' meeting, UWL
19 February	Examiners' seminar, UWL
19 March - 21 April	UK/Eire: Spring examination session
13 April (pm)	Theory examinations
21 April	Scotland/N Ireland/Eire: Summer closing date
1 May	England/Wales: Summer closing date
1 May	Asia Pacific: Summer closing date
28 May - 25 June	Scotland/N Ireland/Eire: Summer examination session
18 June (am)	Theory examinations
18 June - 23 July	England/Wales: Summer examination session
1 September	Asia Pacific: Winter closing date
16 September	Norwich centre: presentation concert
1 October	UK/Eire: Winter closing date
7 October	Sheffield centre: prize-giving concert
14 October	Drama senior examiners' meeting, UWL
28 October	Music senior examiners' meeting, UWL
12 November - 17 December	UK/Eire: Winter examination session
26 November (am)	Theory examinations

London College of Music Examinations is an international examining board, offering graded and diploma examinations in music and in drama & communication.

LCM Exams caters for candidates of all levels: from early years examinations, through graded exams, to four levels of diplomas in performance and teaching. Qualifications are offered in an exceptionally wide range of subjects. In Music, they encompass classical, jazz, pop, rock and traditional music genres. Subjects in Drama range from acting to verse speaking and group performance, and in Communication from public speaking to ESOL. A comprehensive range of publications is available, including, for Music, all-inclusive graded handbooks for selected instruments.

Examinations are held across a large network of local public centres, and also at many schools and colleges.

LCM Examinations are unique in the graded examinations world in being awarded by a university, while Ofqual accreditation assures validity and a standard consistent with other approved boards. Grades 6-8 qualifications in accredited subjects attract UCAS points towards university entrance.

LCM Examinations
University of West London
St Mary's Road
Ealing
London W5 5RF

tel: 020 8231 2364
fax: 020 8231 2433
email: lcm.exams@uwl.ac.uk
uwl.ac.uk/lcmexams

Editor: Andrew Hatt
andrew.hatt@uwl.ac.uk



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Copy deadline for next issue: 31 October

University Name Change and New Reporting Structure

1. University name change

Thames Valley University has been renamed the University of West London.

The announcement highlights a strategic shift for the University with a re-positioning of its operations to its West London campus, which comprises a newly refurbished main building in Ealing and an 11-storey award-winning building, Paragon, in Brentford.

The new name marks a change of emphasis to the University's mission with a strong focus on employer engagement at the heart of its new direction. A new logo incorporates a dynamic wing shape representing the West London Griffin, pointing west, to create a trusted shield.

The University recently received the highest increase of UCAS applications for any higher education institution, up

47 % from the previous year. It is hoped that the new name will help to enhance this already impressive record so that the University can continue to support students from all walks of life.

Vice-Chancellor Professor Peter John said: "This is a natural progression for TVU, which is now a very different institution to that which was granted university status in 1992. The name change is necessary in order to align our new direction of travel with our clear brand and geographical identity which now lies at the heart of West London focusing on our two campuses in Ealing and Brentford."

2. LCM Exams and the University

The University has recently undergone a change in structure, with eight Schools (one of which being the London College

of Music) replacing the previous faculty system. As a result of the restructuring LCM Exams now lies within the London College of Music, alongside the LCM undergraduate, LCM postgraduate and Junior Music College departments.

LCM Exams now falls within the remit of Sara Raybould, Acting Director of LCM, herself a former LCM examiner. Sara said: "I am very excited about the prospect of working with LCM Exams, and keen to explore ways for LCM Exams and other areas of the school to work in a more collaborative way, enhancing the opportunities we can provide both within the University and externally. LCM Exams' recent move to offices on the St Mary's Road campus brings all parts of the school together into one musical community, and will help us to work together in a more integrated and productive way."



Time to begin your career...

London College of Music is a vibrant, exciting college led by highly experienced, industry-focused, academic staff. We are committed to delivering a curriculum that is both innovative and relevant to the needs of your future profession.

Our unique creative community provides opportunities for performance both in and outside your specialist area.

Cutting edge courses are available at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels that will challenge and develop your potential.

- Music Performance
- Music Composition
- Music Technology
- Musical Theatre
- Music Business

To find out more, visit us at uwl.ac.uk/music or call **0800 036 8888**



Drama & Communication

Miscellany of Drama and Communication Topics

by Stephen Hazell, Chief Examiner in Drama & Communication

Revised syllabuses

My email traffic about the revised Grades syllabus, first available last Winter, and the revised Diplomas syllabus, first available this Summer, has been at a normal level, so I feel reassured that they are gaining a good level of acceptance. I suspect, though, that most Summer entries at Diploma level will have been under the old regulations, which are currently available for the final time. We now look forward with interest to the new entries, and I would advise candidates to read with care the notes on the Essay under 'Assessment Criteria' on page 21 of the revised Diplomas syllabus.

I'll use 'ethos' for my main commentary here, in its sense of 'motivating spirit' (rather than 'moral atmosphere' – though I trust we maintain that also to the best of our ability!). The two principles we are progressively enacting are: (a) enlarging the personal connection of the students to the material and ideas they are preparing for the examination; and (b) encouraging the presentation of interesting local extracts in the own-choice items of the examination, as well as continuing with classic texts of the kind found in the general Anthology.

The first principle is particularly in evidence in the revision to the Folder of Work in grade examinations. Forgive me if I'm repeating myself in this. The Personal Reflection is not meant to be an onerous piece of writing, but it is important in saying something about what the student finds attractive in one of the passages included in the folder: the personal connection. Examiners will look for this Reflection, and will often start discussion from its content, so please do make sure that the folder concludes with this exercise. It's helpful

if the specific requests at each level for the particular topic of the Personal Reflection (and likewise the Portfolio at Grades 6-8) are attended to carefully.

The second principle is really an extension of the first, based on the assumption that students will find more of the feeling and meaning of a passage if it concerns the social and geographical context they know best. That's what 'local' refers to, whether it's Scotland or Singapore or Somerset or Sri Lanka. The complex question of accent, dialect and standard English comes into view at this point, and I'll say more below. But it's not an issue to restrain enthusiasm. Above all we want brave performance and challenging material that the student feels for.

Advice notes

This really is a brief miscellany of procedural points on the one hand and broad ideas on the other.

Just occasionally candidates come to the examination without a copy for the examiner of the pieces to be performed. This puts both examiner and candidate at a disadvantage, since the examiner will want to explore some aspect of the passage and its delivery with the candidate.

In discussion, not all of the topics suggested in the syllabus can be covered in the time available. The examiner will choose topics that seem best for filling out the overall picture of the exam. All parties need to keep an eye on the clock, and as examiners we need to resist dwelling on a single area of interest for too long.

Performance is about the compelling delivery of meaning, and difficult words should be thought through by the student – not just for dictionary



definition, but why that word was chosen, and what it says about the character or intention of the speaker of the passage. Of course, much depends on which grade is being worked on, but the classic approach of imagining who is speaking, to whom, where, at what time of day, and so forth, can be valuable at all levels, and my point here is that knowing what the words mean in context makes a lot of difference.

And now to the question of Received Pronunciation (RP). I recently got a thoughtful and full email on this subject, for me to comment on LCM's approach. I won't mention her name as I haven't asked permission, but I think I can say that she felt that a capacity to use RP was important, yet she got varied advice from each source she consulted.

I don't think there's an absolute position that an examinations board can take on this question, and my reply might spark a measure of debate, but here's the gist of what I said.

1. Regional accents are warmly welcomed in the theatre these days, and rightly so. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in Yorkshire accents will acquire an extra spice, and be great to watch. LCM can accept performance in regional accent.

2. There is a move in some quarters to discourage RP altogether. I believe that this is a reaction against what the phrase itself implies: 'received' pronunciation may be understood as the natural possession of a privileged group, and to aspire to it is to align oneself with the dominant class, the royals even. The BBC, my correspondent pointed out, has pursued a policy which encourages a variety of accent, at the least. I accept this move as progressive.
3. Nonetheless, there are many plays which require a middle-class accent in character, and there is an important sense in which English is an international language, not owned by England or any section within it, and I think there is a register that we can call internationally comprehensible English (ICE) which speech and drama students should have at their command.
4. I suspect it's not much of a problem in practice. Everywhere, people tend to speak a local dialect with those

they grew up with, and a group style of speech with their acquired friends, and a version of ICE in formal situations or with new contacts. This was certainly true of my experience of Singapore, where Singlish is a vivid living dialect, but standard English is used in all education and business.

5. So hybridity is the reality of what we all are these days, and my practical advice to candidates choosing passages is this. You are free to do

whatever suits your intentions best. But flexible range is a useful guideline, so a model would be to perform one passage in standard English, to show that you can, and to do the other pieces in whatever accent, or dialect if appropriate, is best for your delivery of them.

I think that leads me to the same final line as the previous section! Be brave in performance and use challenging material that you feel for.

Syllabus Reminder

The old Drama & Communication syllabus is no longer valid; all candidates must now use the new syllabuses:

- Drama & Communication Grades Syllabus 2010-2013
- Drama & Communication Diplomas Syllabus 2011-2015

Syllabuses are downloadable from uw.ac.uk/lcmexams, or available from the LCM Examinations office.

Daphne Ramsay-Brown LRAM LLCM

*'Yet leaving here a name, I trust,
That will not perish in the dust.'*

(lines from a poem by Robert Southey)

It is with immense personal sadness that I write about the death, in April 2011, of our colleague and fellow examiner, Daphne Ramsay-Brown. Daphne was an examiner for the London College of Music for almost 30 years and for some considerable time acted as a Senior Examiner for Drama and Communication.

She had been involved in Speech and Drama for most of her life, competing in her childhood years and entertaining and teaching throughout her adult life. She was a trained dancer and her skills were also applied to Dance Drama and Musical Theatre. She had been involved in intensive courses at the Coalville

Technical College for the Royal Academy of Music, where she was successful in gaining her Licentiate Diploma. As well as preparing and entering students for examinations at the Technical College she also taught privately, gaining an excellent reputation as a teacher whose dedication to the students in both graded and diploma examinations resulted in great success.

For many years she was a prominent member of the Society of Teachers of Speech and Drama and had organised and taken part in many conferences and social events. After being appointed as an examiner for the London College of Music she travelled extensively and became a very popular and highly esteemed examiner, working for many years in Ireland and Scotland where she organised several workshops which will

be remembered by many teachers and students. She was also instrumental in helping to produce the syllabus and re-writing the specifications for Verse Speaking and Choral Speaking, having specialised in these arts for many years. Her Study Guides in these subjects have been an inspiration to many teachers.

Daphne had been ill for some time before she died and our sympathies go to her dear daughter Fiona and all her family. She was a dear friend and a very loyal colleague and support to me in my role as Chief Examiner for Drama and Communication. She will be long remembered by all who knew her and I am sure that all will join with me in saying how grateful we are that she passed our way.

Jocelyn Lord
Senior Examiner

Music Syllabuses & Publications

Drum Kit Grades repertoire list

All references to Lists A, B and C should be disregarded at Grade 7 and Grade 8. The requirements in the revised repertoire list should be followed, i.e. candidates must perform ONE solo piece, ONE accompanied piece, and ONE piece with click track.

Drum Kit publications

The Grade 1&2 and Grade 5&6 handbooks have recently been reprinted, and the Grade 3&4 handbook will be reprinted within the next year. A full list of amendments is available on our website.

Examiners and teachers, please note that candidates performing as written from the first printing of the handbooks will not be penalised in the examination.

All music should be played as written. If the CD demonstration track differs from the score of the music and the candidate opts to perform as in the recording, they should be prepared to discuss the choice they made with the examiner in the viva voce part of the exam at Grade 4 and above.

Music Theatre syllabus

The first edition of the current syllabus incorrectly stated that 'Singin' in the Rain' was written in 1952.

It was first published in 1929 and used in a silent film called *The Hollywood Revue*. Comden and Green wrote the MGM film script for a film of the same name in 1952 and incorporated the song, written by Nacio Herb Brown.

Violin Grades repertoire list

At Grade 2, the CPE Bach 'March in D' is unaccompanied and 'The Sailor's Hornpipe' is accompanied.

String Diplomas repertoire list

On the Violin LLCM list an error was made in listing the required movements of the Bach Partita No. 3. The requirement has been amended to ANY TWO movements.

Ensemble syllabus

Please note the following revised arrangements:

1. Up to 10 certificates are included in the fee for the exam. For groups comprising more than 10 players, additional certificates may be purchased at £1.00 each (payable at the time of entry).
2. Certificates will include individual players' names; these should be supplied at the time of entry.

NB Different arrangements apply in Asia; please contact our Regional Representative, Lui Events (www.lui.com.sg).

Theory of Music

A new set of sample answers and markschemes (Step and Grades 1-5) is now available through our downloads website, www.LCMEbooks.org.

See page 11 for further information.



Rock Guitar Exams

Later this year, Registry of Guitar Tutors (RGT) in conjunction with LCM Exams will be releasing a brand new series of graded exams in Rock Guitar Playing. This follows in-depth consultation with a large number of rock guitar teachers and a specialist team working on the new syllabus for the past two years.

The syllabus will be formally launched at the RGT Annual Guitar Teachers Conference at the University of West London on September 25. If you are interested in attending this event, please contact the RGT office on 01424 22222 or email office@RGT.org

The new syllabus will focus on the core lead and rhythm playing skills required by rock guitarists, and it will include the opportunity for candidates to perform some of the most popular rock guitar tracks of all time by players such as Jimi Hendrix, Eric Clapton, Kurt Cobain and many others.

Please note that the new rock guitar syllabus will be in addition to the existing RGT electric guitar syllabus; it will NOT be replacing it. So candidates will have the choice of which syllabus they wish to enter, or they could even take exams in both: the new specialist rock guitar grades, and the broader, more comprehensive RGT electric guitar grades.

Once the new syllabus is available it will be highlighted in a future edition of *Forte* and will be downloadable from the RGT website www.RGT.org

RGT, in partnership with LCM Exams, also offers exams in bass guitar, jazz guitar, acoustic guitar and popular music theory. Syllabuses and exam information booklets for all these subjects can be freely downloaded from www.RGT.org

Tony Skinner
Director, Registry of Guitar Tutors

LCM Ensemble Examinations

by Jayne Davis, Wolverhampton Representative

During the past academic year Wolverhampton has seen over 50 ensemble examinations in a wide variety of instruments including steel pans, keyboards, percussion, strings, woodwind, brass, guitars and melodicas at Levels 1 to 3.

The head of the Rock It! Project at the Forest Arts Centre is John Baugh. John is an excellent ambassador for LCM, promoting the ensemble syllabus as part of their curriculum. The schools are very excited about this syllabus as the qualifications awarded raise the profile of each school and are welcomed by Ofsted inspectors.

This term our examiner, Kevin Gill, and I travelled out to each school instead of the schools hiring a very expensive coach to transport the children, and this was very successful, with each school welcoming us. The children were very relaxed and rehearsed on their instruments while waiting for us in their own familiar environment, so there was no waiting for instruments to be set up, which can cause a delay to the timetable. I didn't plan any breaks other than lunch as the 5-10 minute journey to each school caused a natural break. Each school had up to 5 exams so each visit was 45 minutes or more.

Kevin spoke to the children at the end of each examination, asking general questions and encouraging feedback. He left the children smiling and uplifted with their examination experience. Kevin commented: "The standard of the ensembles was very high and I enjoyed examining them. The Wider Opportunities scheme run by Walsall Borough Council is a great initiative and is doing fantastic work in a wide range of areas with children

of mixed abilities. John Baugh, who is the head of this project, has a tremendous rapport with the children, who obviously love working with him."

Some of the children taking part had specific individual needs, and may not ever have achieved a qualification in an individual examination. Because of this, head teachers are very keen to encourage these ensemble examinations, with the hope that some individuals may take up private lessons to progress further in their instruments.

Each piece performed was introduced by the children, with a different speaker chosen for each one, giving a brief background of the piece to be performed. Colourful programmes were presented to the examiner in each case. Many of the programmes included photographs too.

The ensemble groups had between 20 and 30 children, with the schools happy to pay for extra certificates to be produced so that each child received an individual certificate.

At the end of each term the Forest Arts Centre hosts a Rock It! Concert where the children get the opportunity to perform their pieces to their parents and have their certificates presented.

I hope to encourage other council boroughs near to my centre to use this syllabus more, due to the success at the Forest Arts Centre. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Mike Parrott (Manager of the Forest Arts Centre) and all his staff for their hospitality and support.

Pictured right are three of the ensembles presented this term.



Blue Coat Primary School Steel Pans



Hatherton Primary School



Walsall Wood Junior School

"The London College of Music Ensemble syllabus provides a unique opportunity for our students taking part in the Wider Opportunities projects across the Borough of Walsall. The benefits to schools, students and staff alike are unrivalled in my experience."

John Baugh, Forest Arts Centre



Private Music Tutors – the Unsung Heroes

by Richard Percival

Learning a musical instrument makes you smarter, or so recent brain research suggests. Increasing information in books such as Daniel J Levitin's *This is Your Brain on Music* and Oliver Sacks' *Musophilia* tells us what many musical educators have long suspected.

For the young, particularly, learning a musical instrument is even more effective than mastering a second language in uniting the two hemispheres of the brain and

increasing the ability to think *laterally* – a vital tool for life in the 21st century. Research suggests that early learning can increase a young person's IQ by up to seven points. The development of motor skills is also dramatically increased.

For the older learner there is no more effective foil against degenerative brain disorders.

In an age where delayed gratification is becoming a memory, the organisational skills and discipline needed to master a musical instrument fill a vital role.

We can add to this list the life changing opportunities that musical participation offers. Increased self esteem, a social network and the joy of a deeper musical appreciation are all on offer.

For those of us whose career has been in the music industry, and who are concerned at the increasing manipulation of young peoples' musical tastes by marketing and finance executives, learning an instrument offers the best opportunity of broadening musical tastes. It is estimated that by the age of 18 most people's musical tastes are pretty much consolidated. The exposure to a wide range of musical styles and an intimate look into the mechanics of music offered to a young or adolescent student will enhance their musical journey immensely. It has been suggested that as little as a few months' musical training can markedly increase musical awareness.

In a world where the ubiquity of muzak, the treatment of music as a consumer fashion commodity and the general noise and pace of contemporary life mean that the ability to actually *listen* to music is being lost, the potential consequences for the music industry and society as a whole look dire. Learning a musical instrument, and all that goes with it, can go a long way to remedying this situation.

It seems surprising, then, that the status of the instrumental music teacher has not increased and that the importance of music in school curricula is, if anything, declining.

It seems one response to this situation has been to confuse quantity with quality. While band programmes and group learning situations can be of enormous value if coupled with

private tuition, all too often they do little more than cripple the potential musician for life. I think many instrumental tutors will be all too familiar with the frustrations of trying to undo disastrous habits and introduce technical fundamentals to students who have, at the most vulnerable stage of their musical development, been put in a room with up to 30 other novices and an unexplored instrument, and left to their own devices. In an attempt to survive the young player will often find strategies that all too often prove to be virtually unchangeable habits later in life.

Many woodwind tutors will witness the lack of air support, bizarre embouchures, inability to articulate, poor tone production, poor stance, tense and inefficient hand positions, poor reading skills, lack of musical understanding and a myriad of other technical problems that can result from these situations. In some cases the habits can prove unfixable.

If we were to use the metaphor of, say, swimming classes, many of these group learning situations would be the equivalent of loosely supervising a large group of novice swimmers in deep water – left largely to their own devices. These activities may be amusing initially but soon begin to pall.

Far too many young musicians abandon further study because the band or group proves either too boring or too daunting to be enjoyable.

As any good swimming coach will confirm, the real joy of learning is feeling oneself progressing and gaining mastery over time. This can really only be achieved through a structured and disciplined programme of learning. The recently published book *Bounce* by Matthew Syed does a great deal to explode the myth of 'talent' and to examine the damage it can do. The importance of regular and structured practice and access to necessary information become clear.

For the young musician this means a carefully structured learning system supervised by a competent teacher; one which installs the technical and musical fundamentals on which the musician will need to build. It should introduce them to relevant information about specific challenges encountered along the way and expose them to a wide range of musical styles that will entice them into further listening. It needs to be

a system which encourages a disciplined approach to learning and which will produce a confident, aware and enthusiastic participating musician.

If coupled with a well structured examination system, such as that offered by LCM, the developing musicians can feel themselves progressing, gaining proficiency, confidence and self esteem and being part of the life changing process of being a participating instrumentalist.

For too long the unsung heroes of the education system, the instrumental teachers, have been left to battle the increasing trivialisation of music, the alienation of instrumental music from the popular mainstream, the problems generated by often well intentioned group learning systems, the loss of the ability

to listen, the lack of high profile models for young instrumentalists, the loss of delayed gratification in the 'computer' age, the increasing expense of printed music and educational aids and a lack of appreciation of the importance of their part in the development of young minds.

It is our hope, that in creating the Teacher On Tap learning system, we have gone at least some way to ameliorating this situation.

Richard Percival, along with Peter Dorich, is the creator of the Teacher On Tap learning system for woodwinds, which is part of the AMEB and NZMBE syllabuses. Pieces from it have been selected for LCM's 2011 classical and 2012 jazz repertoire lists.



A Cautionary Tale

by Petra Lloyd

Some years ago I lost a pupil because her mother thought her progress too slow. The daughter of a friend of hers who had begun piano lessons with me at the same time was two grades further ahead. The pupil was not academic but was lively and quite articulate and with beautiful manners, and a delight to teach in many ways. The other girl with whom she was being compared was three years older and already able to read music well when she started lessons.

She began lessons with another local teacher who decided that she should have taken her Grade 1 in piano playing at her age. She had passed the London College of Music Step 1 examination a few weeks earlier with a very pleasing mark but it would have taken a lot more learning before she would have been ready to begin work on the Grade 1 syllabus. Step 2 would have been a fairer and more achievable goal.

A few weeks afterwards I was told that the child was not enjoying her lessons and was finding the work too difficult. She wanted to give up playing.

I hoped that her parent would have swallowed her pride and would ask if she could return to me. I would have taken her back straight away of course. Alas, it did not happen.

I am never happy when comparisons are made, either by teachers or parents. Students need to learn at their own pace and keep within their limits. Of course we as teachers need to develop their talents and techniques, but at a pace that is comfortable. I found it sad that this child had been given work for which she was not yet ready just because the parent had a brief, and the teacher decided that at her age she should be playing music of a certain grade.

Making music should be fun! I think that some teachers forget this at times. If work is presented in a lively and interesting way most learners will respond positively and enjoy the learning process.

Nothing succeeds like success. If a student is enjoying their lessons and making steady progress they will succeed. Conversely nothing fails like failure! If they feel downhearted because they are presented with pieces or other work that they are not yet ready to tackle they will not enjoy their lessons or practice sessions and all may well be lost. Yet another pupil may be turned against making music, perhaps for life.

Pianists are built on sure foundations; they need to develop their reading skills and their musicianship, have a sound understanding of any necessary theory and be able to play simple exercises and pieces easily and fluently with correct posture and a good hand shape before they are ready to move on. When the basics are in place progress may be more rapid.

I really love preparing students for the LCM Step examinations. The books use a large music stave, making them easier to read for small players, and the exercises, studies and pieces are very well chosen, appealing to both girls and boys and to a wide range of ages too. These books make excellent stepping stones towards the grade exams.

Make your lessons pleasurable and your pupils will enjoy them, will work better between lessons and will make sure progress. Even the slowest of students can learn to play if they are taught with sensitivity and care. Lead them gently through their music-making journey and you will be rewarded with hard-working and happy pupils.

Petra lives and works on the Isle of Anglesey, where she teaches piano, singing and recorder.

Features

Lucky To Be Here

by Clare Holme



Coming back to life

“We’ve been looking forward to meeting you,” announced a disembodied voice.

I couldn’t think of an appropriate reply.

“Do you know who you are?”

This was usually taken for granted. I gave my name, and waited to see what direction this odd conversation was taking.

“Do you know where you live?”

I recited my address.

“Do you know where you are?”

The questions were getting more difficult. I was lying in a room with square tiles on the ceiling. It could have been anywhere.

“Pass,” I replied.

“Oh, you’re in I C U.”

Right. I still didn’t know where I was. There was a shuffling of feet, and two ladies appeared beside me. At least I could see where the voice came from.

“You’ve been very poorly, but the worst is over,” one of the ladies informed me. I raised my head a little and looked around. There was a familiar shape not too far away.

“Is that a piano?”

“No, we don’t keep pianos in the Intensive Care Unit,” a soothing voice replied.

Nobody had mentioned the high dose of morphine that was filtering into my bloodstream. My visual perceptions were clearly a bit suspect, but I was alert enough to figure out that life would never be the same again.

Reflections

Twenty eight weeks later I came home. Like most people who are forced to take a break from work, I had been thinking a lot. One very positive thought was how lucky I was to be a piano teacher. Some students and my partner visited me every day, so the isolation ward was far from lonely. Towards the end of my stay my partner – now husband – brought a keyboard into the hospital, and all manner of requests, from Prokofiev to Procol Harum, floated out of room 11. I was in a teaching hospital, and numerous young doctors came to tell me about their musical experiences. The long stay was in 2005 - 2006, but even now I meet people at out-patient clinics who say “I remember you – you’re the piano teacher!”

There was a nagging fear in the early stages that my students would leave. It had taken many years to build up my clientele and reputation, and with low energy I didn’t feel able to start all over again, but it didn’t happen. Someone had the idea of finding a temporary teacher, and others followed. Most of them chose to take lessons with their violin teacher. I remain grateful to her for helping out on a temporary basis. Recovery was bound to be easier without the worry of having to start all over again.

What next?

I thought about teaching, and hoped my students were enjoying their music. Our culture is very much geared towards passing exams, and whilst I believe a definite target like an exam is a good

thing, I wondered if there was too much emphasis on collecting pieces of paper? After many years of teaching, I’ve seen how easy it is to sink into ‘potter and plod’ mode in the absence of exams, so I seemed to be looking for an exam syllabus with a conspicuous fun ingredient. I did some research and found that there was much change around. 2007 promised to be an exciting year, and I was very much drawn to the LCM jazz syllabus.

Jazz for Juniors

I found the syllabus to be full of catchy tunes with instant appeal. Most students have iPods, and I feel sure that their playlists include a very limited selection of Mozart and Beethoven – if indeed classics are represented at all! The jazz syllabus offers a great opportunity to play music that these youngsters have a feel for. I expected them to capture the spirit of the LCM jazz pieces without any difficulty, and that has proved to be the case during the last four years. They are also learning about the relationship between chords and melody from an early stage in their musical journey, and finding that classical composers use the same ‘tricks’.

I was delighted to find that backing tracks were allowed in jazz exams. Producing backing tracks is on my list of ‘things I can do from a wheelchair’. As well as giving me the feeling that I can still be useful, even a simple bass plus drums track provides a realistic context. “You’re playing along to a machine. It doesn’t know how to wait for you,” is a regular comment in lessons. Fluency improves by default, along with steady time-keeping.

Developing resources

The syllabus introduces scales which are specific to jazz right from the beginning, but searching for music to illustrate the sounds generated by those scales at the correct level turned out to be time consuming and often futile. My list of projects includes ‘write tunes’. Here was an interesting challenge. Could I meet

my own criteria of fun mingled with instruction? Only one way to find out! I wrote a tune related to each grade from one to five with a view to demonstrating possible uses of these less familiar scales. Using characters from Dickens fired my imagination, and the entertainment factor appears to be in place, judging by the reaction of the students who have attempted to play them. These pieces have found their way onto the 2012 LCM jazz syllabus. They're part of my 'What the Dickens?' collection. I'm hoping that some of you will enjoy using them. If you go to 207music.com and click on Demos, you'll be able to hear them. You can award points if you like! The tune with most points at the time of writing is 'Lucie's Lament'.

It's a privilege to be able to help others to be creative. I love those moments when someone announces that they've written a tune and they'd like to play it. It's always possible to applaud these attempts, and find some feature that's worth developing. Creative response should pave the way to experimenting with sounds for those with less confidence, or who claim they don't know where to start. If there is a

difficulty here it's persuading people that this creativity is a core concept in jazz. I've come across a tendency to treat the area as just a peripheral test for picking up a few extra exam points. To tackle this, I'm collecting the various resources I've been using into a set of booklets called 'Monday, Wednesday, Friday'. With a task for each of the three days, the idea of regular involvement with creativity should be cultivated.

Right now

I think most of us fear change and expect the worst. My original thought that life would never be the same again was an uncomfortable one. Since the long stay, I've been in and out of hospital several times – teaching has

been a stop-start affair, but as the hospital stays seem to be getting shorter, maybe I'll be able to stay out this time. Of course we musicians have the best role model in Beethoven. If he had given in to deafness, we would never have heard some of his finest creations.

So, onwards and upwards. Who knows what will emerge? But I no longer expect the worst. The situation holds many positives. Being housebound has forced me to do the things I really enjoy but didn't make time for before – like writing teaching materials and setting up the 207music website. Life has taken a different direction. Surviving a series of health challenges has reminded me how precious life is, a gift not to be wasted. I'm certainly lucky to be here!

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* **NEW** * **Sample answers** for Step and Grades 1-5 are now available as downloads.

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Musicians' Focal Dystonia: the end of a successful career?

by Alison Sparrow, Examiner

Musicians' Focal Dystonia: a neurological disorder, not particularly well known in the musical world but one that all musicians should be aware of and one that causes great fear to any professional musician.

It is a task-specific movement disorder which presents itself as a painless muscular un-coordination or loss of voluntary motor control of extensively trained movements during the time a musician is playing their instrument. MFD is sometimes referred to as 'musicians' cramp' and often comes under the umbrella term of repetitive strain injury. Focal Dystonia is an incurable condition of debated and complex aetiology which can end the careers of some professionals. The start of MFD is usually not immediate and tends to progress gradually. There are thought to be numerous factors that make a musician more likely to develop FD. These range from internal factors such as personality, expectation and achievement, to external factors such as posture, instrument and practising schedule. There is also thought to be a probable hereditary component.

What exactly is Focal Dystonia?

One needs to understand that for every part of the body which deals with sensation (such as fingers, toes, mouth and face, for example), there is a dedicated area of the brain that deals with the messages that are sent from that area. The hand has its own dedicated area of the brain which processes messages like pain and pressure and these messages are sent back to where they came from so we can react accordingly – actually much quicker than we could ever be aware of! After the mouth and lips, etc, the hand and forearm have the largest representation (area) of the brain totally dedicated to sensation, pain, stimulation and reactions – this means the hand is actually very sophisticated.

So what does all this mean? Basically, for the average person, the areas of the brain dedicated to one's index finger, ring finger and thumb, for example, are very separate and distinct as they don't use their fingers in a highly sophisticated and intricate way most of the time. For professional musicians who have had years of training and practice, the 'edges' between each finger's area in the brain may have become blurred, almost because they have educated their somatosensory cortex (or just the brain in general) to function using very precise, quick and specialised movements of the hands – in particular a violinist's left hand which would be taking on the workload. Due to many years of extensive training, a violinist would know exactly where to put their fingers on the strings with the right amount of pressure and the correct distance between the other fingers without even having to look. This is because the violinist has refined the abilities of their somatosensory cortex.

For a non-musician who can't or doesn't need to do this, the only way they could experience something similar to this effect is if, for example, they were to injure their index finger somehow and because of the pain, they didn't use it for a few months. Their brain could start to think that they actually didn't have an index finger any more (the 'use it or lose it' theory) so the brain would very cleverly start to use the areas in the brain that are next to the area of the index finger. In a sense they would be using their thumb or middle finger as if it were their index finger because they have 'tricked' their brain into thinking that they don't need or have their index finger anymore because they haven't used it! With special training they could re-educate their brain to re-use the area that is dedicated to their index finger. So, in fact, it is possible for the somatosensory cortex to be changed, developed and moulded depending on the demands placed upon it.

The reason some think this could be linked to why musicians get Focal Dystonia is because the blurring of the individual finger areas in the brain only comes from VERY advanced and excessively rehearsed movements, for example a concert instrumentalist. The problem of this blurring /smearing effect is that the fingers lose the ability to be able to localise when one specific digit is being stimulated, so all five digits almost act like one and because of this, movement begins to become uncoordinated as individual fingers lose the ability to be controlled independently (which is crucial for nearly all instruments). So in effect, the hugely specialised skills that are required to be a musician almost turn round and render the musician a victim of their own success because it is this ability in the brain that could create the problem!

Overcoming Focal Dystonia

This topic is relevant to all professional musicians and music teachers, not only for their own awareness but for their students. There is no cure for MFD, but it can be remedied somewhat. It is recommended that musicians, at any level, should ensure they take into consideration their posture, technique, and environmental conditions such as temperature, lighting and ergonomics. Teachers should advise students to warm up adequately prior to playing, take regular breaks and be aware of students demonstrating high achieving perfectionist characteristics to prevent the possible onset of FD.

Treatment for Musicians' Focal Dystonia is multi-modal with variable success rates.

Treatments can include:

- Oral medication and injections such as Botox, which can help to relax certain muscle groups which may be in spasm.
- Splints: custom-made finger splinting devices to assist with specific movements during play or being immobilised in a splint for a designated rest period.
- Rehabilitation: examining posture and playing technique and adapting methods with visual feedback, using mirrors, compensatory techniques and behavioural approaches.
- Ergonomic adaptations: by modifying the instrument, repositioning of keys in woodwind instruments, using belts, straps, rests and stands, for example.

It is really important at this point to mention that the British Association for Performing Arts Medicine (BAPAM) provides help for musicians and performers alike who suffer with any performance-related condition or who may feel they would like to know more about the subject and preventative measures they can take.

They offer free advice, consultations and assessments and because they provide specialist medical and therapeutic clinicians, they are often able to spot performance-related problems where a general practitioner may not be able to do so.

For teachers, they offer workshop programmes that provide information on healthy lifestyle and practice advice they can pass on to their students, whether they are teaching beginners or enhancing a more advanced technique.

Their website – www.bapam.org.uk – provides some valuable further information for anyone who is interested in this subject, and makes available fact sheets on warm-up exercises, tips for instrumental musicians, potential risks that can affect a performer and even coping with stage fright!

Finally, even though there is no cure for MFD, knowledge and awareness of the subject is a musician's best weapon against it, as 'prevention is better than cure'!

Alison M Sparrow graduated with a BA (Hons) Music from UEA in 2004. She is founder of AMS Private Music Tuition in Norfolk, teaching piano, violin, keyboard and music theory from beginner to all diploma levels, and is an examiner for the London College of Music.



Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4

Figures 1, 2 and 3. The ring and little finger tend to be more commonly affected. These digits primarily deal with power grip, therefore they may not be designed to be used for the continued, quick and highly complex movements needed when playing an instrument.

Figure 4. Other digits can also be affected, such as the index finger. It is demonstrated by a lack of coordination resulting in awkward, slow and altered movement patterns affecting smooth and flowing play.



Ideas on Teaching and Improving Sight Reading on the Piano

by Dr Gordon Pearce

The ability to play unseen music that is put in front of you accurately and fluently is one of the most useful skills any musician can have. One benefit of being a good sight reader is that you get to know a much wider range of music. However, it doesn't just happen. Sight reading has to be worked at in a systematic way using appropriate materials and devoting regular periods of time to it during weekly lessons, as well as pupils practising reading some unseen music on a daily basis as part of their piano practice schedule.

Although sight reading is one of the most important aspects of a good musical training it is sadly often neglected until a few weeks before a piano examination. Unfortunately sight reading isn't an aspect of music training that can be crammed. It should be started in the early stages of training and should be a feature in every lesson and not left to the last few minutes of the lesson. Sight reading can be the starter activity! It gives value and importance to it.

Better progress is made if easy music is selected as a starting point and gradually over time the music being read becomes more complex. If the pupil is making too many mistakes then the material being used is too difficult.

It is important to develop a cheerful and positive atmosphere, together with a sense of humour that will encourage a relaxed state of mind which encourages concentration and attention, which is essential when reading music at sight.

In the very early stages it can be helpful to deal with pulse, rhythm and pitch separately and to gradually bring them together as appropriate to the individual pupil. It may be helpful to play short extracts for pupils to listen to and to clap the regular pulse. Pupils must have a good understanding of pulse and be able to mark one consistently, otherwise it is difficult to develop accurate reading of rhythm patterns.

Having a secure knowledge and understanding of note values and simple rhythm patterns is essential. There are many ways of developing this. The use of French time names can be very helpful to some pupils if introduced early on. They give the pupils something definite to say for each beat and beat subdivision, e.g. for a crotchet (taa), for a minim (taa-aa), for a dotted minim (taa-aa-aa), for a semibreve (taa-aa-aa-aa) and for a two quavers (ta-te). Simple rhythm patterns can be written clearly on flashcards for pupils to clap and say the time names or to clap and count using numbers, e.g. 1 2 & 3 4, or to play on a single note or triad, according to their age and stage of development.

It is essential for pupils to have a thorough knowledge of the geography of the keyboard and to be able to identify patterns, e.g. the black keys in their sets of twos and threes with D being

between the two black keys, and B being to the right of the set of three black keys, etc.

The ability to name notes quickly and find the corresponding pitch is a skill to develop through games. Mnemonics are useful to aid the memory of the note names in treble and bass clefs. A set of clearly written flashcards at an appropriate size can be used for pupils to develop speed and accuracy in note naming and finding. Some pupils enjoy the challenge of finding out how many notes they can name and find on the keyboard within thirty seconds and whether their speed and accuracy improves in subsequent lessons.

Teaching the pupils about direction in a melody is of great importance. Flashcards can be used to combine pitch and rhythm and pupils can use a highlighter pen to join up the note heads to emphasise the direction in which the music moves (upwards, downwards or stays the same). Pupils need to understand how the direction of notes being read relates to the geography of the keyboard.

As well as teaching pupils to know the pitch names of the notes, the location of the notes on the staff and the relationship to the keyboard, it is also of vital importance to teach them about the distance between notes (the intervals), for example the music moves up a second, that is to the next note up, up a third means we miss a note, etc. A series of games can be used to develop pupils' understanding of simple interval recognition; for example that the interval of a fifth on the music is from a space to a space missing a space, or from a line to a line missing a line, and in relation to playing the interval of a fifth on the keyboard three notes are missed between the first and the fifth when playing in a five-finger position.

It is of great importance to ensure that the pupil understands the simple rules about the use of correct fingering, for example that they think in five finger patterns. When reading and playing a note that is the interval of a second it is played with the next finger, if playing two notes that are a third apart miss a note and miss a finger, etc.

A set of flashcards with simple intervals for pupils to name and find on the keyboard can be a good investment.

I have found it really helpful to talk to pupils about the music they are sight reading and to use questioning skills to focus their attention and to find out what they know, understand and can do. For example one presents a piece of sight reading that is appropriate for the age and stage of development and gives the pupil adequate time to look through it. The teacher then asks focused questions such as:

- What key is the music in?
- How do you know?
- What sharps or flats do you have to remember?
- Are there any accidentals in the piece? If so, what are they?
- Does the clef stay the same all the way through or does it change?
- What is the time signature?
- What does that mean?
- What does the tempo marking mean?
- Are there any Italian words that tell you how loud or quiet to play, etc?
- Any Italian words that tell you to slow down the tempo, etc?
- Can you clap and say the time names or count the rhythm of the right hand melody?
- Are there any notes written using leger lines?
- Can you tell me the names of the notes in the treble / bass ?
- Can you talk to me about the direction of the music and the intervals? (e.g. 'It starts on G then goes up a third to B, it stays on B, goes up a second to C then down a third to A and down a second to G.')
- Which fingers will you start with? Why?
- Which finger will you use to play this note? Why?
- Do you have to play legato or staccato?
- Can you show me the phrases? What do they ask you to do?
- Are there any scale passages or arpeggios in the piece?

The teacher knows the pupil well and will obviously formulate the questions accordingly.

The advice given before the pupil attempts to play the piece includes such detail as:

- Count yourself in, keeping a steady beat (this could be aloud or silently as appropriate).
- Choose an appropriate tempo.
- Try to look ahead and keep going, keeping a steady, consistent beat.
- Count the note values or think the French time names as you play.
- Don't stop and correct mistakes.
- Remember the key signature and observe any accidentals.
- Try to observe all the dynamics and articulation, etc.
- Try to make it sound interesting.

When the pupil has read the piece it is important to discuss their performance of it and to encourage them to evaluate it by asking such questions as:

- What went well?
- What could have been better?
- Would you like to have another go at it ?

I have a very valuable piece of equipment in my teaching studio, a CD recorder and a good quality microphone on a stand. It is very well used! Sometimes I record pupils' sight reading attempts so that they can listen to them at the same time as following the music; this helps them to evaluate their performance. A second or even third attempt can be made during the lesson and comparisons made. It is easy to keep a CD for a pupil to show them the progress that they have made in sight reading over a period of time.

There are no quick fixes to improve sight reading. It takes time, regular practice, dedicated hard work and a desire to improve, which is helped by knowing what the benefits are of being a good, fluent sight reader.

There is a wealth of excellent sight reading material commercially available to use for all ages and stages of development. Sometimes it can be necessary and beneficial to write one's own examples that are bespoke to the pupil. The use of Sibelius software is most helpful in this respect and also for devising one's own rhythm and pitch flashcards.

Enjoy your sight reading and celebrate your progress!

Gordon Pearce BA MA PhD FLCM ARCM LTCL FRSA has 40 years' experience of piano teaching.

QCF Accreditation

In the previous issue of *Forte* we reported that LCM's graded exams in music performance, music theory and drama & communication had been accredited on the UK Qualifications & Credit Framework (QCF).

We are pleased to confirm that LCM's diplomas in music performance and in music teaching have also been accredited on the QCF, at levels 4, 5, 6 and 7.

The QCF is replacing the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) as the system for recognising skills and qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

For full details please consult our website, or visit the Register of Regulated Qualifications: <http://register.ofqual.gov.uk>

NB Our Awarding Organisation has been renamed *University of West London Qualifications (UWLQ)*.

Andrew Hatt
Qualifications & Marketing Officer

Overseas Centres

New Overseas Centres

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Apt No.15/1-2-3
Istanbul 01120
Turkey

T 0322 4575060
E info@adanamuzikmerkezi.com.tr
W www.adanamuzikmerkezi.com.tr

Asia International Handbell Association (Hong Kong)

Mr Kevin Ko
Asia International Handbell Association
(Hong Kong)
Room 336, 3/F Fat Lee Industrial
Building
17 Hung To Road
Kwun Tong
Hong Kong

T 852 2104 3016

Cambodia

Ms Phalen Saly
Cam Melody Ltd
No.1A, Street 255
Sangkat Boeung Salang
Khan Toul Kork
Phnom Penh
Cambodia

T 855 1699 7766

Korea

Mr Allen Saejeeb Oh
Sangjiwon Inc.
667-7 Deungchon-dong
Gangseo-gu
Seoul 157-033
South Korea

T 82 2 3663 4544
W www.sangjiwon.co.kr

Medan, Indonesia

Medan is one of my favourite places to examine. I have examined there several times, and find that the standard of performance is magnificent and the children never fail to give their best, whichever level they are entering.

Excellent technique and stylish playing were evident even in the Step exams; it was so enjoyable and delightful to watch them. These students may have weaknesses in the Viva Voce as English is not their mother tongue, yet I do appreciate their effort in preparing their answers. This shows how much they value their exams!

During this trip I was very honoured to represent LCM at the PMCI (Professional Management College Indonesia) graduation ceremony. PMCI has been closely linked with LCM Drama & Communication, and certificates and awards are proudly presented to the students every year.

Wei Wong
Examiner



Wei Wong and Lina Djeniwati (member of the Board of Senates, PMCI)



Nelly Anthony (member of the Board of Senates), Wei Wong, Sutomi Tandiyani (Commissioner of PMCI), Sandy Julioes (President of PMCI) and Lina Djeniwati

Akademi Muzik Shah Alam (AMSA), Malaysia

Following an examination session at AMSA earlier in the week, it was a privilege to attend their concert. As well as music, there were many dramatic contributions. Humour and more serious subjects were well represented, and there were also many items of poetry.

A large, highly appreciative audience was admirably entertained by a huge number of AMSA students.

Although this was a complex and varied programme, the students deserve great praise not only for their performances, but also for producing and directing the concert themselves. In the background were School Principal Mr Gilbert Wong, his family and colleagues.

The result was a wonderful occasion and one that raised a great deal of money for charity. A concert earlier in the year raised a great amount of money for the Malaysia Breast Cancer Charity Appeal.

Stuart Corbett
Senior Examiner



Seimpi School of Music

We are delighted to announce our collaboration with Seimpi School of Music (Singapore).

The collaboration involves a clear division of responsibilities between Seimpi and London College of Music. Seimpi will be delivering the teaching and learning aspects of the programme to children within kindergarten classes. LCM will be designing the assessment methods, making the eventual awards, and selecting and training the assessors. It will also ensure the reliability and consistency of the awards and all the assessor decisions and will ultimately be providing the certification for all the successful children at three levels of 'Music for the Intelligent Mind' (MIM). Just as importantly, we will be working with Seimpi's team to ensure that the children all have a positive experience of being assessed, be it as individuals, as individuals within group activity, or as groups making music together.

This collaboration is also important because it conforms to a different model to the one often used by graded music examination boards. Normally, examiners come from the outside, outside the country and the culture, and bring to bear standards from elsewhere. We are confident in the ability here to have a genuine partnership between a British examination board and university, and local teachers, trained and developed as assessors within this programme, working with content and levels carefully matched by Singaporeans to the needs of children in this region. One highly significant thing is different here, compared to the time of LCM founder George Augustus Holmes: this is not a colonial model; this is one of genuine partnership across geographical and cultural boundaries.

Early childhood music education is an important part of our commitment

and reflects our breadth of approach in including a multiplicity of musical styles treated equally within our syllabuses and recognising the creativity of the individual. The University of West London has recently been placed at the top of the UK university league table for graduate employment, and along with that kind of profile goes our belief in the power and effects of life-long learning. All the awards made to the children in the MIM programme will be university awards.

A university these days needs to be committed to the education of all ages, and our contribution, shown today by this important collaboration with Seimpi Music School, demonstrates our belief in the value of music education, conducted well and properly, for the very young. We need joined-up education, and I am sure that the spirit of this collaboration is one that matches that early commitment to the education of the community by the founder of London College of Music. Not everyone, certainly not the majority, can attain to a career in music; but the potential of music to stimulate the creative thinking and expressive qualities, along with its demands on intellectual development, means that all young children have much to gain from a positive involvement in music from an early age, complemented and supported by meaningful qualifications, awarded in order to encourage and motivate them. In later life, music can play an important part in their lives, be it through participation or appreciation.

I am delighted to acknowledge the start of this significant collaboration with Seimpi School of Music.

Professor John Howard
Director, LCM Exams

New Overseas Centres

Seimpi School of Music

Ms Allison Ng
Seimpi School of Music
#05-37 Funan DigitalLife Mall
Singapore 179097

T 65 6737 6731
F 65 6737 6031
E info@seimpi-music.com.sg
W www.seimpi-music.com.sg

The Echo

Mdm Elena Ng
The Echo
126 Cairnhill Road #02-01/03
Cairnhill Arts Centre
Singapore 229707

T 65 9105 9915

Updates

Please consult the website for the following updates:

- Academy of Rock, Singapore [address]
- Bogor, Indonesia [address and contact name]
- Honeycomb Music School, Singapore [address]
- Hong Kong 1 [address]
- Lee Wei Song School of Music, Singapore [email address]
- Manado, Indonesia [address]

New telephone and fax numbers for Lui Events (Regional Representative, Asia):

T 65 6622 5868
F 65 6622 5867

We were very sorry to learn of the death of Geraldine Amanita Jayanata, following a heart attack in February. Geraldine was the LCM Exams representative for Bogor, Indonesia, and will be greatly missed.

Overseas Centres

Athens

During my past 29 years as an LCM examiner, I had never had the opportunity of visiting our Athens centre before – probably because the centre has only been built up over the past 5 years.

Pantelis Gertsos began reviving the centre, with his close friend and composer Nikos Panagiotakis, some 5 years ago and began with only 16 candidates.

In 2011 he had some 110 entries for the February session and is expecting around 500 entries in the June session. The growth over the past 5 years has, indeed, been tremendous. In total this year, he expects around 650 entries.

How has this been possible, in the current climate?

Thanks to LCM's innovative and forward-thinking creativity, subjects such as pop vocals, music theatre, classical guitar, electronic keyboard and drum kit are the most popular. Indeed the vast majority of candidates this session were pop vocalists – many tutored by Guildhall-trained tutor Evangelia (known as Lia!) Georgakopoulou, pictured right, who teaches piano, classical singing, popular singing and music theatre. With a secure background in the subject, there is some extremely secure vocal technique and a most enjoyable time was spent, seeing our syllabus put to good, professional use. It was so pleasing to see so many young people between the ages of 14 and 45 using this syllabus.

Lia teaches mainly at the Nea Techni Conservatory, with her teacher Christina Tertipi (pictured right).

In all, I visited eleven different conservatories in the Athens region – the most exciting of these being on the remote Greek island of Kythira. The exams had been set for my first day, but due to exceptional snow, the flights were all cancelled, so Pantelis did a remarkable job of re-scheduling the exams and we tagged these onto the end of the trip.

On the beautiful Island of Kythira (where, as in Athens, technology is very advanced – wifi available everywhere and constant fast contact is maintained with the rest of the world) I was led into a wonderful conservatory owned by Timos Lignos – pictured top right with piano teacher Eleni Kolaki. How lovely it was to work in a conservatory with a view of mountains and pine trees, oregano growing wild and a pleasing standard of candidates on saxophone, piano, electronic keyboard and classical guitar.

There was time for a breakfast beside the Aegean sea at Kapsali, however, and we even managed a very fast sight-seeing tour of the island whilst discussing how to administer aural tests – nearly missing our plane back to Athens in the bargain!

Pantelis and Nikos are to be congratulated on their building up of this centre – the growth rate over the past 5 years has been excellent and Pantelis went off to meetings with teachers from Thessaloniki whilst I was there, hoping to start another centre in the north of Greece.

Elaine Smith
Senior Examiner



Piano teacher Eleni Kolaki, Timos Lignos and Pantelis Gertsos at Avlemonas on the island of Kythira



Lia Georgakopoulou (pop vocals teacher) in her studio at the Nea Techni Conservatory



Lia Georgakopoulou, her teacher, Christina Tertipi, Elaine Smith and Nikos Panagiotakism (composer, who helps Pantelis run the centre)

New Publications Website (Asia)

Teachers and candidates in Asia may now order LCM Publications through a new online website managed by our Asia Regional Representative, Lui Events Pte Ltd:

www.lui.com.sg/store

Complimentary freight / delivery for minimum purchase of 5 books.

Kinderland Educare Services

Professor John Howard, Director of LCM Exams, was invited by Kinderland Educare Services Pte Ltd to present an Early Learning Workshop on 4 July 2011 to their 140 Speech and Drama teachers in Singapore during their Kinderland Professional Development Day.

The workshop gave the teachers an introduction to LCM Exams and the University of West London. In addition, there was an overview of exam syllabuses, particularly the Early Learning qualifications, specially tailored for children from 3-6 years. These enable young children to be assessed in, and credited for, skills and concepts already learnt in class as opposed to ones imposed from the outside just for the assessment.

The teachers were encouraged to see the Early Learning assessments as a positive experience for the children, hopefully motivating and encouraging them.

Professor Howard also shared with the teachers the approach to assessment in Early Learning, along with the general assessment system of LCME. Early Learning was placed within the context of all the pre-Grade 1 provision, and the teachers were encouraged to see the value of the assessment.

The examination board is committed to dealing sensitively and warmly with pre-school children, and some of the value of a child taking Early Learning lies in giving them an early first experience of being assessed in a positive manner, along with encouraging them to develop social and



communication skills of great relevance to them in their future development. Gaining a qualification from a university helps the children and parents to see education as a life-long concept.

Teachers were very enthusiastic in the workshop, and showed keen interest, asking interesting and searching questions. Kinderland will become a centre for our exams in the near future.

Peline Ong
Regional Representative, Asia



After indulging myself in the festivities of Istanbul, the next day posed something quite different. I played a lunchtime forty-five minute recital to a packed audience. This was filmed, and the students and teachers were very appreciative and I received an encore. It also gave me an opportunity to debut my own composition, 'Beautiful China', for which I received several compliments. Later that evening I went to hear concert pianist Marina Horak and the following day I heard a recital by Victor Chouchkov, who also performed his own composition. Once again the recitals were well received by the audience.

The highlight for me, though, was adjudicating the 9-12 year olds in the Pera Piano Competition. The jury consisted of several members besides myself – Professor Domenico Colucci from Italy, Bernhard Parz from Austria, Rafael Gasimar (Pera High School piano teacher), Yuriy Sayutkin and Dr Yesim Alkaya Yener from Turkey. The standard was excellent and we were hard pressed to decide 1st, 2nd and 3rd places out of the 26 candidates. Each student performed a study and a Turkish piece along with two other pieces. There were 10 year olds rattling off concert repertoire with ease and maturity.

The students at Pera were polite and helpful and I am delighted to have been asked back next year to perhaps give a masterclass and adjudicate/perform. On the back of working with the jury I am also in talks with Domenico Colucci as to participating in his festival in Italy.

On the whole this was an exciting experience and very rewarding.

Rebecca Chambers
Examiner

Pera Piano Festival

I was delighted to participate in the May 2011 Pera Piano Festival in Istanbul. After a long flight I was pleased to have the next day free and so decided to do all my sight-seeing then. I visited various tourist attractions – the Blue Mosque, Sophia Hagia and the Grand Bazaar. Not knowing what to expect I was somewhat surprised to hear staged pop music playing loudly outside the Blue Mosque. The Grand Bazaar was certainly an experience – spicy smells and a fusion of vibrant colour depicted a wonderful Turkish atmosphere. The art of bartering must be done here as I was told by a tour guide that the shops were often sublet four or five times over and substantial taxes were added to the prices.

UK Centres

New UK Representative

Market Lavington

Mrs Gill Tripp
8 Bouverie Drive
Market Lavington
nr Devizes
Wiltshire
SN10 4AB

E gilliantripp@fsmail.net

Updates

Please consult the website for the following updates:

- Boston & Sleaford [email address]
- Neath [contact name]
- New Malden [telephone number]
- York [email address]

Centre Closures

The following Centres have closed:

- Aberystwyth
- Derby

Thanks and best wishes to Anne Jones (Aberystwyth) and Gail Dallali (Derby)

Refer to our website for up-to-date centre details:

uw1.ac.uk/lcmexams

Workington

The annual LCM Concert was held on Sunday 13th February 2011.

Students from Allerdale and Copeland performed to a full audience; talent shone throughout from instrumental to vocal. Performances included piano, electric keyboard, guitar and singing.

The Mayoress of Workington presented all the students who gained the highest marks in their exams with a trophy of achievement and all performers received a certificate of performance.

The June Mckay instrumental trophy was awarded to twins Anne and Fiona Money and the June Mckay singing trophy



to twins Emily and Grace Fryer for performance and dedication throughout their musical education.

This year Anne and Fiona Money and Emily and Grace Fryer will be going to university, and hope the confidence they have gained through taking LCM exams will benefit their future careers.

If you are interested in learning to play an instrument or to sing, contact the LCM Workington Representative, Chris Hunter (01946 61163), for more information.

Pamela Murray

Photo collage by David Stephenson

Portadown

Pictured is one of the three rock groups from the Southern Regional College who used the LCM Ensemble syllabus for the first time in the Spring 2011 session of exams. The groups were examined by David Nichols, and their teacher Edith Elliot said that all the students had enjoyed the experience.



Hull Music

Kathryn Adams DipLCM DipLCM(TD) ALCM of Hull Music raised £400.00 for UNICEF by organising a presentation concert with 27 of her singers.

The concert, called *Songs from the Shows IV*, was held on Sunday 22 May 2011 at Sutton Methodist Church Hall, near Hull, East Yorkshire.

Gemma Binks (right) and Lucy Jackson (left) were presented with their Diplomas in Music Theatre Performance by Kathryn Adams (centre).

A lovely afternoon of singing was enjoyed by all.



London: awards and celebrations

The pages of *Forte* regularly feature celebratory concerts and events from all around the world, as the photos from Dublin to Dubai and Plymouth to Penang clearly show.

In the Greater London area our first event, last November, eventually turned out to be a great day in Ealing despite all sorts of technical problems about power cuts... which I will not dwell upon!

The format of the day combined morning workshops and rehearsals with an afternoon showcase and award ceremony. The awards featured singing, with Thomas Sutcliffe from the cast of *Wicked* as our guest vocal and dramatic coach. Performers were drawn from the award winners listed right, and their students.

Additionally, advanced students Komal Chikhalia, Rosie Raikes-May, Melody Adams, Jessie Rutland, Matilda Cowper-Dray and James Gribble received Certificates of Professional Development for attending the workshops and singing solos.

Pictured above right are all the performers with Kathy Gilbert, LCM examiner, who presented the awards.

Further photos and films of the event may be seen on the LCM Contemporary Voice page of Facebook, on YouTube and on the easy2playmusic.co.uk website.



Thomas Sutcliffe far left; Kathy Gilbert and Caroline Stephenson centre

Best Pop Vocalist, North London	Shared between Karla Celeste and Collette Allen
Best Pop Band, whole of London	Anthony Carter Band
Best Music Theatre Singing School, Central London	Sara Cluderay of Pimlico Academy
Best Pop Vocals School, South London	Jenni Stewart of Harris Girls Academy
Best Music Theatre Singing School, South London	Tamasine Kimber of Cantate Music
Best Music Theatre Singing School, West London	Mair Rees Davies of Primadonna Music
Best Pop Vocals Singing School, West London	Shared between Annabelle Westcott and Elysha Davidson-West
Best Singing School, East London	Loughton Music Academy

Awards for 2011

Our November 2011 event (provisionally booked for Sunday 20th November) will concentrate on instrumental teachers and schools. We are offering 3 exciting workshops in the morning, plus afternoon rehearsal and performance of a specially arranged piece for massed guitars with other instruments and voices. The workshop leaders will deliver at different levels: one session for beginners to Grade 1, one for up to Grade 5, and one for advanced students.

Workshop 1 'BEAT THIS' concentrates on how we hear a beat and improve our 'Beat Competency'.

Workshop 2 'QUICKER READING' offers a range of approaches that can improve the reading of music notation.

Workshop 3 'DYNAMICS and EXPRESSION' explores this often neglected aspect of performance.

The workshops are open to any performers, not just award winners, with the whole day costing £24. Price reductions may be available in certain circumstances.

Please send your initial email enquiry including TEACHER and/or PERFORMER NAME(S) and full PERFORMER INFO to caroline@easy2playmusic.com and write EALING WORKSHOPS in the title.

Caroline Stephenson
London Representative

UK Centres

Sheffield

The annual Prize-giving Concert for the Barnsley and Sheffield area was held at Ponds Forge International Sports Centre in Sheffield on 8th October 2010. The prize-winners performed to a full audience, the performances ranging from first Steps through to diplomas and covering a wide range of subjects including music theatre and pop vocals.

There were 40 performers, all of whom had achieved very high marks during the year. Medals were also presented to seven candidates who had achieved 100 % in their theory of music examinations: Eleanor Kaye, Alex Pollard, Chloe Doree, Madeleine Grant, Hermione Schofield, Lydia McMath and Sophie Morgan. Congratulations to you all.

To present the prizes this year on behalf of LCM Exams was our guest of honour, examiner Dr John Beilby.

The trophy for the most promising musician went to Sophie Brocks, and the Barnard Farmer Memorial Trophy to Emily Mattocks, who obtained 97 % in her Pre Preparatory piano exam. The Outstanding Music Theatre Trophy went to Jessica Widdowson, who obtained 94 %. The AWC Robinson Memorial Trophy for Outstanding Musical Performance was awarded to Emily Rose Harris, who gained her ALCM diploma in music theatre during the Summer session.

All proceeds from the evening, at which £500 was raised, went to the Sheffield Childrens' Hospital. Thank you to everyone who came and gave us their support, and to the wonderful performers for making this night possible. Our next concert will be held on Friday 7th October 2011.

Maureen Burgess
Sheffield Representative

Plymouth & Cornwall



Jenny George, she gained a Merit in Grade 6 Music Theatre at the LCM Plymouth and Cornwall Centre.

At the age of 15, she sang with local groups in Scotland and joined an operatic company in Edinburgh. Returning to her native area of Plymouth in 1969, she sang with the Carmenians. Spurred by memories of her late husband, she spent 8 years raising funds by 'Tartan Shows' and a 'Music Marathon' for a kidney machine and a laryngeal stroboscope, with which Joy at one stage came to be examined herself.

Joy is a regular chorister in her local church at Brixton. She found there was more to the exam than she had anticipated, with demands greater than 'just having to sing four songs'. Proud of her achievement, she is delighted with her certificate, and currently has two other aims: to complete an internet course and to explore Scotland.

Joy performed 'Alice Blue Gown' from the musical *Irene* as one of her Music Theatre pieces.

Geoff Davis
Plymouth & Cornwall Representative

Joy Ridley, of Brixton, Devon, celebrated her 80th birthday in 2010 with three birthday cakes and a commitment to take her first-ever music exam. By the end of the year, under the guidance of teacher



Back row: Dr John Beilby, Sophie Morgan, Emily Rose Harris, Jessica Widdowson, Maureen Burgess
Front row: Alex Pollard, Madeleine Grant, Emily Mattocks



Eleanor Key (piano), Amy Purshouse (guitar),
Sophia Guy (music theatre)

Wakefield

A large audience attended the Wakefield Concert and Presentation Event. Performances ranged from Step level to LLCM, and there was admirable variety in the programme, including piano, electronic keyboard, classical singing, music theatre and pop vocals.

It was obvious that a great deal of hard work and a lot of time had gone into organising this memorable event. Wakefield Representative Anne Robinson and her loyal team of helpers deserve our thanks and plaudits for arranging not only a well run concert but one which offered an atmosphere which encouraged all performers to shine.

The result was an occasion which showcased the performers, teachers and LCM admirably. The occasion also raised a great deal of money for charity. I offer my thanks to all involved in such an enjoyable evening.

Stuart Corbett
Senior Examiner

danSing Studio, Harrogate

On Wednesday 15th June, students studying for LCM music theatre grades and diplomas had a wonderful evening with West End and TV actress, Verity Rushworth.

Verity, who attained an ALCM diploma in Music Theatre herself, took time out from playing the new Maria in the National Tour of *The Sound of Music* to talk to aspiring performers about the world of theatre and television. She treated her captive audience to songs from the show, accompanied by her former singing teacher, Helen Leaf, Musical Director of danSing performing arts school in Harrogate, where the event was held.

Later in the evening, danSing held a singing competition, judged by Verity. Singers, some of whom have already achieved Distinction at various levels of LCM examinations, competed for a place at danSing's forthcoming summer school. Verity was very impressed with the high standard of the competition and the winner was Megan Gilbert (Grade 7 Distinction) who sang the technically demanding comic number, *Alto's Lament*.



Verity Rushworth singing the title song from *The Sound of Music* (above left), and with students from danSing Studio (above right)

Come and Meet Maria is just one of the current series of workshops organised by Helen Leaf and Jane Waring, co-founders of danSing, to help young performers to develop their combined theatrical skills to an advanced level. Earlier in the year an audition workshop was given by stage and screen actress, Adrienne Posta, who currently teaches at the renowned Italia Conti Academy in London.

Pupils who train at danSing have starred with the likes of Tommy Steele, Lenny Henry and Dave Willetts, have

featured in TV dramas and soap operas, have attained outstanding results in London College of Music examinations and have successfully gained places at prestigious performing arts colleges.

danSing meets every Tuesday at Brackenfield School in Harrogate. For further details about classes, workshops, examinations and the summer school please telephone 07900 430448.

Helen Leaf
danSing Studio

Norwich: new piano and new music theatre venue

For all future candidates and accompanists who attend examinations at the Norwich centre, a treat is in store. A new Lippmann Grand Piano is in residence and will surely be a pleasant experience for those who play it.

Coming from the home of the German manufacturer R. Lipp and Sons, this piano can be termed as a strong and very capable instrument with a long history of piano making.

It has a pleasant lyrical tone and also a good resonance. The tonal response is in the middle range and therefore an instrument to suit all ages and styles. A generous and responsive piano in all respects.

For all those who play – enjoy it!

Sandra Cromie
Examiner

A new venue in central Norwich has been adopted for music theatre, drum kit and some keyboard examinations. We are very fortunate to have been offered the use of the Norwich Operatic Group's own rehearsal hall, which they purchased last year. The hall is an excellent size and set out for a theatre sized stage. The piano, although an upright, is excellent for accompanying. The venue address is Douro Place Chapel, Douro Place, Norwich, NR2 4BQ. Exams will still be held at Bramerton Academy, but we now have a choice of venues.

Simon Cullum, the piano tuner who looks after Norwich Centre's pianos, has been kind enough to make a Flip video of the tuning and workings of pianos, showing the new Lippmann and a new upright Kawai. He has done this as the Viva Voce requirements for Grade 4 now involve some knowledge of the workings of the instrument. Please apply to Elaine Smith if you would like a copy emailed to you (address available from LCM Exams).

Elaine Smith
Senior Examiner



Douro Place Chapel



Simon Cullum

UK Centres

Wolverhampton



The Wolverhampton centre hosted a charity concert and presentation in aid of the Mayor's chosen charities recently in the Mayor's Parlour.

I am always honoured to be asked into the parlour and enjoyed organising the event on behalf of LCM. I like to invite all the diploma students to perform first and then choose a variety of instruments with suggestions from examiners of those candidates who they feel deserve a chance to perform, due to either exceptional effort or marks awarded during a recent examination. This year we were entertained with percussion, keyboard, piano, music theatre, pop vocals and electric guitar.

During the evening with ticket sales, raffle and DVD orders we raised £600. I am delighted with this, considering that we could only seat 65 people! Thank you to all who contributed in any way.

The music performed was extremely varied, from the energetic performance of 'Jai Ho' by our Percussion group from St Dominic's School to the tranquil performance of 'Londonderry Air' by pianist Nino Russell.

All performers had their certificates presented by the Mayor of Wolverhampton, Councillor Malcolm Gwinnett, and our special guest, Senior Examiner Dr Andrew McBirnie. Thanks go to Andrew for taking time to come and present awards and for his kind words of praise and encouragement.

Many congratulations to all performers, including our wonderful accompanists. The standard was exceptionally high. I would like to wish all candidates continued success and hope that they will continue to progress through their grades and pursue their love of music.

Thank you to all teachers and parents who have supported me in this event and throughout the year.

I think I can speak for everyone and say that a wonderful evening was enjoyed by all.

Jayne Davis
Wolverhampton Representative



Dr Andrew McBirnie, Lucy Parker (receiving her LLCM in Music Theatre) and the Mayor of Wolverhampton, Councillor Malcolm Gwinnett



Callum Keene performing a Grade 7 piece on electric guitar
Greg Beale performing 'Semitime'



Laura Bray performing 'When I Look at You'
Oliver Dimmock performing 'Nocturne in Eb'



St Dominic's Ensemble group with their teacher, Mark Davies
Singing teacher Carly Birchell, who kindly agreed to perform with her ensemble group 'Tantallon'