

Profile newsletter

Spring 2003 Vol. 1 No. 1



Welcome to the first edition of the Profile newsletter!

This newsletter is intended as a forum not only for information and ideas from us, but also from you, so please feel free, whether you are an individual member, an associate, or a course provider, to send in anything you would like to see in print. Contributions are best sent directly to me via e-mail: philippa.bunting@trinitycollege.co.uk

Trinity's 'New-Look' Website

The new version of the Profile website is now up and running, and you will be sent your individual password for this separately. The members' area contains information of interest to members, on one-off courses and workshops for example, and some useful links to other websites. In the next stage of development we will be adding a bulletin board facility, so you can be in touch with one another as well as us.

Info from www.trinitycollege.co.uk/profile

A selection of the current list of links is printed here for your convenience, but we will be updating it frequently, incorporating your suggestions as well as our own amendments, so keep logging in!

General education sites:

www.qca.org.uk
www.nfer.ac.uk
www.lsc.gov.uk
www.dfee.gov.uk
www.niace.org.uk
www.becta.org.uk/index.cfm

Music Education organisations:

www.isme.org
www.federationmusic.org.uk
www.mec.org.uk
www.mfy.org.uk

Music Education sites:

www.childrensmusicworkshop.com
www.music-is-it.com
www.schoolnet.org.uk
www.mtrs.co.uk
www.musictheory.net
www.musicatschool.co.uk
www.kevinsplayroom.co.uk
www.themusicland.co.uk
www.musiced.org.uk/musiced.html
www.gridclub.com
www.datadragon.com/education

General arts education sites:

www.arts4schools.com

Feature: New Developments in Diplomas

We live in interesting times when it comes to professional qualifications in music, and so the time seems ripe for a brief survey of what exactly is going on, in order that we, as musicians, are in a position to take best advantage of what is on offer, and also best avoid any lurking pitfalls.

Throughout the twentieth century, diplomas for musicians were traditionally available in two areas—performing and teaching, with one of the major awarding bodies also recently offering a directing strand. Standards for performance diplomas at Associate, Licentiate and Fellowship levels were roughly tied to levels of achievement in the classical

conservatoires and, though offered as external qualifications, were generally accepted as carrying similar weight to the performance component of the more academic degrees awarded. Diplomas in teaching were typically based upon a simple performance model with some questions added in, reflecting the commonly held assumption that the best players would make the best teachers.

This situation has, over the past ten years or so, met with significant challenge, not only from individuals, but from government agencies, and from representatives of the profession itself, all of whom began to question whether these qualifications were

truly relevant, whether completing them really prepared musicians for the increasingly complex work environments in which they found themselves.

It has been the tireless activity of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, the government body charged with the policing of awarding bodies and the qualifications they offer, that has been the most influential. With the establishment of a National Qualifications Framework, music qualifications now have equivalence not only with one another, in that those offered by the different awarding bodies are regarded as equal, but also with

qualifications in any other subject from classical Greek to physics by way of horticulture and hairdressing.

This has undeniably been a positive development for music qualifications across the board, raising their status, and making them amenable to such things as points within the UCAS tariff system (for grades) and the Open University credit transfer system (for diplomas). However it has also demanded that awarding bodies take a long hard critical look at themselves and the qualifications they offer, and nowhere more so than at diploma level. One board, Trinity College London, has gone significantly further than the others, and has comprehensively reworked its diplomas, as well as producing a host of new ones to mark achievement in a wide range of areas, and we will look at these in a little more detail later.

Diplomas in performance have perhaps proved the most robust in the face of this new climate. Since performance in front of an audience, without any opportunity for preparation or contextualisation, is the stuff of musicians' lives, an examination which mimics this, though usually with one or two silent examiners rather than a live, sweet-wrapper-rustling audience, is not too far from reality. Whether or not such examinations should include any auxiliary tests, such as technical work and sight-reading, is a moot point, since these are really aids to preparation and not an integral part of the performance itself, and there have been moves on the part of some boards to do away with these aspects, or at least offer alternatives.

So far so good. Until, that is, one moves on to look at the way that, for example, session musicians work. Outside the standard classical sphere the model no longer necessarily holds true, and new ways must be found to reflect the high levels of skill such players demonstrate. Even amongst musicians working in more traditional settings, there are significant skill gaps. The Musicians' Union's own Orchestra Research Report (2001) stated: 'It has become apparent that whereas players generally feel they have been offered a good, if not excellent, musical training, the majority feel they were not offered any training in skills that would enhance their musical careers—for example, management, business, knowledge of legal issues or health and safety.'

When Trinity College London addressed this issue, it came up with a tripartite exam which included rehearsal techniques and knowledge

of such things as work opportunities and health & safety, making their exams in Music Professional Practice: Performing a more robust exploration of the musician as a whole, and a better guarantor that their holders not only know how to play but a little about why, where and for whom as well.

It was the teaching qualifications that took the most significant battering. For years, musicians holding them (secure in the knowledge that what they do constitutes teaching of some sort, since how else do the students in their care end up able to play a note?) have yet been denied access to Qualified Teacher Status, and seen their colleagues teaching in different contexts enjoy the benefits of such things as paid holidays, continuing professional development, higher and structured pay scales, and a decent pension. Clearly there is a difference between teaching individuals and whole classes, but even musicians teaching whole classes without the benefit of a Post Graduate Certificate in Education fall foul of the system.

Unfortunately there is no immediate answer to this, since there is no way that the existing teaching qualifications could stand comparison to a year's full time PGCE study, including weeks of supervised teaching practice. And yet there is a huge shortage of instrumental teachers, and of secondary school music teachers, and courses for primary specialists are increasingly becoming a thing of the past.

Trinity has attempted to tackle this issue head on, and has introduced teaching diplomas with a significant practical component. Since not only QCA but also the Department for Education and Skills has nodded its approval, one can assume that this is the way of the future. Holders of its new Specialist or Instrumental/ Vocal Teaching diplomas, will possess a valuable and significant step towards QTS, and come summer will know exactly what top up is necessary for them to achieve it. The Holy Grail might, just might, be within reach.

This is a significant moment in the history of music teaching and one which those involved in developing these new qualifications are very excited about. For the first time it will be possible for musicians to gain recognition as teachers, following a route which gives recognition to the time needed to develop a sufficient level of specialist expertise to enable them to pass on their skills effectively. The non-professional music teacher, the teacher whose expertise and status is not recognised will, we hope,

be a thing of the past.

Another major issue is the change in employment patterns for musicians, and the hugely varied nature of the work they undertake. Baroness Blackstone, UK Minister of State for the Arts, writing in support of Trinity's new suite of diplomas, says: 'A portfolio career, which covers a range of musical activity from performance to tuition to recording and composing, is already a reality for many musicians. Giving music graduates the opportunity to learn this portfolio of skills is essential, if we are to ensure success for a whole new generation of professional and semi-professional musicians.'

This variety of other working patterns followed by many musicians have until now gone unrecognised by any of the major awarding bodies, but Trinity has sought to address some of these as well. One major growth area has been in the kind of education work which involves working with unskilled musicians, in a school or community setting. Under the auspices of its directing strand, Trinity's new Music Professional Practice diplomas measure achievement in working with any large group, be it a symphony orchestra, a group of young offenders, a year 6 class or a church choir. Because the qualifications measure appropriateness rather than celebrating one technique over another, they have the flexibility to allow this.

Another area Trinity has addressed is the area of mentoring, something it has worked on in collaboration with the Musicians' Union, given their expertise in the area as demonstrated by the establishment of the Maestro programme. Mentoring is important in all areas of the arts, something recognised by a number of bodies, including government, who have placed Music Industry Consultants at the heart of their New Deal for Musicians. Trinity has also established qualifications in assessment and adjudication, but will not be forcing all its examiners to take them immediately!

Qualification is clearly a double-edged sword—examinations can act as fierce gatekeepers to certain professional activities as much as they can raise the profile of others, encouraging the recognition and celebration of achievement in less well-trodden areas. Trinity has bravely sought to tread this line and, having achieved the necessary government recognition, is now waiting to see if the profession approves as heartily. This, as they say, means you.

Courses

One of the services Profile provides is the course recommendation document which we draw up either as part of a one-off orientation exercise, or for full members, following the initial meeting with your mentor. These courses are the recommended core curriculum for the year.

In addition to this, we have information about numerous one-off courses and workshops, which we post to the website on a regular basis. Some dates for June, July and August are:

10th–11th June 2003—at The Bridgewater Hall, Lower Mosley Street, Manchester M2 3WS. Sangeet Sabha is an exciting and groundbreaking two-day event for all those engaged in programming, performing, teaching and funding South Asian Music at all levels in Great Britain.

Further information from:
Uma S Raman, Administrative Manager, Milap Festival Trust
tel 0151 280 6118
e-mail Milapfest@aol.com
website www.milapfest.com

18th June 2003—10:00–16:00 in the Logan Hall, Institute of Education, Bedford Way, London. Creating Conditions for Creativity, a conference organised by the school of Early Childhood and Primary Education and the School of Curriculum, Pedagogy and Assessment.

For further details and to apply for a place, contact Elaine Peck in the Centenary Office tel 020 7612 6556
e-mail centenary@ioe.ac.uk

22nd June 2003—ESTA National Forum and Nutshell Day, 10:00–16:30 at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. Workshops for all stringed instruments from grade 2 to 8+ with Edward Huws Jones.

Contact Marion Seymour
tel 020 8940 4640 or e-mail:
marionseymour@compuserve.com or
Sylvia Palmer 020 8398 4691 or
sylvia.palmer@virgin.net or visit
www.estaweb.org.uk

5th July 2003—venue to be announced. African, Jazz and Gospel Singing Day with Gitika Partington.

Further details from:
Sing for Pleasure North, 5 Smithills Croft Road, Smithills, Bolton BL1 6TX
tel 01204 848433

7th July 2003—at the Queen Elizabeth Hall, London SE1. 'The Importance of Music': The Music Education Council and Music for Youth invite you to take part in a national symposium on the vital role of music in education.

Full details on the Music for Youth website:
www.mfy.org.uk/conference/index.html

7th July 2003—at the Chelsfield Room, Royal Festival Hall, South Bank, London SE1 from 9:30–17:00. 'Finding the Common Ground': a workshop conference exploring the differences and similarities between artists and educators in creative learning.

For further details contact:
Gill Heron, Administrator, LEAP,
2 Westmoreland Road, Bromley BR2 0QL
tel 020 8464 8603 fax 020 8464 8563
e-mail gill@londonartsed.org.uk

8th July 2003—at the Royal Festival Hall London SE1—Singposium 2003. A one day course for choir leaders, teachers, students and choral conductors focussing on young singers and their training in order to lay a foundation for a life long interest in choral singing.

Contact:
Rachel Greaves, ABCD, 15 Granville Way, Sherborne, Dorset DT9 4AS
Tel 01935 389482
e-mail rachel.greaves@abcd.org.uk
website www.abcd.org.uk

18th–19th July 2003—at the Institute of Education, University of Reading.

A two day research conference hosted by The International Centre for Research in Music Education on music teaching and learning—'Music in Practice' with keynote speaker Professor Graham Welch.

For further information contact Daniela Brewis, ICRME Administrator,

University of Reading, Institute of Education, Bulmershe Court, Earley, Reading RG6 1HY
tel 0118 931 8843
e-mail d.brewis@reading.ac.uk

18th–20th July 2003—at King Alfred's College, Winchester, a three day conference hosted by EPTA UK. Three days of inspiration for pianists and teachers.

For further details contact:
EPTA UK, Archpool House, High Street, Handcross, W Sussex RH17 6BJ
tel 01444 400852
e-mail eptauk@hotmail.com

21st–27th July 2003—at Benslow Music Trust.

Hot Fiddle with Aidan Massey. Explore the styles of the great jazz violinists and try out some improvisation!

For further details contact Little Benslow Hills, Benslow Lane, Hitchin, Herts SG4 9RB
tel 01462 459446
e-mail info@benslow.org
website www.benslow.org

22nd–24th August 2003—in Birmingham.

Building Bridges is the ABCD's 18th annual convention with highlights including trade exhibition, choral composing competition and a gala concert. There will be score study and analysis for conductors, rehearsal techniques and workshops.
£185/£215.

Contact:
Rachel Greaves, ABCD, 15 Granville Way, Sherborne, Dorset DT9 4AS
tel 01935 389482
e-mail rachel.greaves@abcd.org.uk
website www.abcd.org.uk

Further listings are on the relevant section of the website. Please do let us know of anything we're missing out and we'll look at it.

Professional Development Focus

We all surely know how difficult it is to fit in professional development on top of full-time work, private life and that all-important downtime, but in order to get the most out of the limited time available there are some things you can do to 'get your house in order', which you might like to consider. Each issue of the newsletter will focus on one, starting with establishing and maintaining a Professional Development Portfolio.

A Professional Development Portfolio is useful for two purposes—providing information for potential employers, and giving you a good basis for reflecting on your own practice and that of others.

We suggest starting with a Record of Prior Experience, information which you may well have sent us on a form. This section is designed to provide an insight into not only the knowledge, skills and understanding you have already assimilated, but also into areas for possible future departures.

This section should begin with a description of any formal education undertaken after the age of 16, and should include short descriptions of any or all of the following:

- The contents of course/s of study followed with a list of qualifications gained.
- The content of any course/s which did not result in a qualification.
- Other qualifications taken.

It should then focus on any professional development, whether formal or informal, undertaken as part of your working life. This may include short descriptions of any or all of the following:

- INSET sessions attended or led, including course content and published outcomes if available.
- Conferences attended, and any presentations either attended or delivered.
- Performances, either your own or those you have facilitated.
- Compositions and arrangements.
- Materials you have developed, published or unpublished.

You could also include any informal activities or interests you have pursued outside working time, but which nevertheless have a particular bearing on your professional life. This may include:

- Ensemble work.
- Courses of reading or academic study.
- Attendance at concerts or lectures.
- Work in other art forms.

Once started, the Portfolio is your personal record of professional development, and should thus contain anything you find particularly relevant. This may simply be the regular statements of training undertaken that you will receive from Trinity, detailing course content and learning outcomes, plus any or all of the following:

- Course handouts.
- Copies of articles etc. of interest.
- A book list.
- A list of contacts.
- Documentation of any action research undertaken.

For more information about anything on this newsletter, please contact Philippa Bunting at:
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