Developing Music at Queen Mary University of London

A Strategy for Music within the cultural environment of the university, 2015-2020
Introduction

Queen Mary’s location in England’s capital city is unique in terms of London’s mix of educational and artistic culture. Based around The People’s Palace, we belong to a profound history of arts provision which has long enriched and developed the lives of those in London’s East End.

From the 1880s to the 1950s, the People’s Palace was home to the finest opera (Carl Rosa, Sadlers Wells etc), orchestral music (LSO, LPO, Boyd Neel Orchestra, etc), UK and world premieres (Copland’s ‘Appalachian Spring’, Martinu’s fourth symphony, Goosen’s second symphony), BBC broadcasts, ballet (Markova and Dolin), theatre and performing arts. Now, as a leading university and formative force in its sector, QMUL is home to the UK’s number one-ranked Drama department (REF 2014) and one of the world’s leading research centres for music and music development, the Centre for Digital Music (C4DM).

Music possesses the ability to develop and transform lives; it has the power to bring people together in recognised ways; and it fosters transferable skills that are paramount to the betterment of life, opportunity and employability.

This Strategy supports QMUL Strategy (Strategic Aim 5), Arts and Culture Strategy and Public Engagement Strategy.
“Music has a power of forming the character and should therefore be introduced into the education of the young”

(Aristotle)

“…without music, life would be a mistake”

(Friedrich Nietzsche)
A Strategy for Music, 2015-2020

Mission
• To enrich, inspire and develop QMUL students, staff and the QMUL community

Vision
• To be a beacon of - and leading London music community university for - participation, diversity and performance
• For music to be at the heart of a thriving East London community

Values
• Diverse and inclusive
• Open and accessible
• Progressive, innovative and creative
• Welcoming and engaging
• Love of music and the arts
• Community engagement

Engagement in music encourages:
• QMUL community spirit
• Talent recognition, performance and celebration
• Leadership, team spirit, employability/transferable skills
• Self-discipline and motivation
• Social and cultural awareness as well as a global perspective
• Wellbeing and stress relief
• Regeneration via cultural opportunities and aspiration
• Socialising and bonding.

Queen Mary University of London has…
• The Centre for Digital Music – one of the foremost centres in the world sector for music innovation
• The UK’s number one Drama department (REF 2014)
• Some of the best performance spaces in the UK university sector
• A history of supporting arts in the community
• A cosmopolitan global community on and off campus.

Current physical resources:
• Music Centre with medium-sized Music Rehearsal Room and practice facilities
• Pianos and keyboards (two full sized concert grands including Steinway Model D)
• Spaces large enough and appropriate to rehearse in:
  – Great Hall, People’s Palace [suitable for large ensembles such as Orchestra, Choir]
  – The Octagon [suitable for large ensembles such as Orchestra, Choir]
  – The Old Library, Whitechapel [suitable for large ensembles such as Orchestra, Choir]
  – Music Rehearsal Room [suitable for small ensembles such as Chamber Ensemble, Big Band, A Cappella, etc].

“One good thing about music: when it hits you, you feel no pain”
(Bob Marley)
Current human resources:
- Director of Music
- Assistance to support the promotion of events from the Service Liaison team
- Artistic Group (representatives from Student Services, the Students’ Union, Events, Music Societies, Centre for Digital Music, the Centre for Public Engagement, Drama, Director of Music)
- Instrumental and vocal tutors supported by Music Scholarships
- Additional Ensemble Directors funded by music societies and other sources.

Music Societies:
Music Societies based at both QMUL’s Mile End campus and Barts and The London School of Medicine and Dentistry offer a range of music ensembles such as:
- Choirs
- Orchestras
- A Cappella groups
- Chamber groups
- Big Band
- Jazz groups
- ...and new ensembles are being formed to reflect QMUL’s rich cultural capacity, such as an Indian Music Group and an Irish Folk Group among others
- Informal bands (rock, jazz, folk etc), singer songwriters and underground creative artists
- Quest Radio (which promotes digital and contemporary styles).

Recent developments are enhancing the student and staff experience. They include:
- Music Scholarships, which have been awarded to students across all years (1st year undergraduates to PhD); the application process revealed the considerable musical talent that exists at QMUL
- Music teaching, which is being offered in a developing range of ways: from paid lessons to those given by current conservatoire students as part of their Teaching Skills modules.
“Music is a moral law. It gives soul to the universe, wings to the mind, and life to everything... Without music, life would be an error.”

(Plato)
Strategic Aim 5
To open up music opportunities through inclusivity:

Expand the range of music engagement and events that embrace the diversity of the university community. Examples of this include the formation of an Indian Music Ensemble and an Irish Folk Group as well as support for African Gospel traditions. It is essential to foster a framework that allows for the creation of a wide musical expression.

Objectives:
1. Widen range of musical styles encompassed in university music activities to reflect the diversity and interest of the QMUL community
2. Develop a coherent and inclusive yearly calendar of music events
3. Develop a balanced and inclusive framework for music provision in university events (i.e. Graduation ceremonies, services, etc)
4. Provide opportunities for all QMUL staff to develop music engagement activities (e.g. singing days, etc)
5. Develop and maintain a Promotion and Marketing Plan in cooperation with Student Services and Marketing and Communications.

Strategic Aim 4
To facilitate a thriving community music programme:

Facilitate a range of activities that contribute to the work of external-facing departments and research groups. In 2014, Music at QMUL has collaborated with external organisations such as the Inside Out Festival, profiled work by the Centre for Digital Music and delivered school workshops.

Objectives:
1. Work with the university’s arts and culture programme to develop external funding to support Queen Mary’s cultural programming aspirations
2. Develop a mechanism for confirming and recognising links with external organisations together with CPE and VP for PESE
3. Provide musical expertise and relevant support to departments and initiatives that will benefit the cultural impact of the university
4. Provide events for alumni in conjunction with music societies along with Development and Alumni
5. Support and work with music and arts festivals