

## MUSEUM REPORT 2019/20

### Collections Committee

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### Overview 2019/2020 [GRR]

The last year, the fifth since the closure to the public in December 2015, was largely occupied by the final phase of delivery of the architectural redevelopment of our new museum gallery, education centre and climate-controlled performance space, as well as the planning phase of the new on-site storage and research centre. These elements represented the largest part of our capital redevelopment, supported by the NLHF, with a total budget over the year of more than £2.1 million.

The new spaces were formally handed over by the contractors to the RCM on the 20th March, just before the building was locked down as part of the containment measures related to the COVID19 pandemic. The new gallery still requires relatively minor refinements, but it is mostly ready for us to begin the mounting of the permanent display when we re-gain access to the site: state-of-the-art showcases have been installed and tested for compliance, the climate control and monitoring system has been installed and tested, lights and all digital hardware have been installed, while mount-making for the objects has started but had to be interrupted half way because of the lock-down.

Two art commissions have been completed: a five-element contemporary artwork by Victoria Morton has been installed in December and a video- and sound-art installation has been completed by two RCM graduates, Matthew Lomax and Connor D'Netto.

Meanwhile, all content has been developed and signed-off for the interpretation of the display, including texts and design for the panels and labels, as well as digital content for hand-held audio guides, two video projections, six contextual screens, and four listening stations. These were delivered in collaboration with several external companies based in the UK and France and content providers including the Natural History Museum, Steinway & Sons, several RCM students and professors and independent charities. The delivery of all digital content, which was expected to be now in the testing phase, had to be suspended because of the lock-down and will resume as soon as possible. We have experienced similar delays to the delivery of low tech and digital interactives (currently in development for the Weston Discovery Centre) and Museum shop merchandise, which has been selected, tested and finalised, but will only be ordered when we gain certainty about the opening date.

Almost all objects due to be displayed in the permanent gallery were conserved before the workshop had to be closed and are ready to be mounted. A few outstanding interventions and final refinements will be delivered in parallel with the mounting of the objects once the site becomes accessible again.

As for the other spaces included in the redevelopment project, the climate-controlled Performance Studio – to which the Museum has shared access – has been completed and is ready to use. Work on the Wolfson Research Centre on Music and Material Culture has progressed through several stages of design. Internal fit-out has been tendered and a contract assigned to Bruynzeel Storage Systems, and all legal requirements have been successfully addressed by the

RCM Estate Department. Construction, which was meant to start over the Easter break, has now been tentatively shifted to the summer holidays, although this timeline might have to be revised again.

The cataloguing of the large collection of iconography and the digital availability of our collections have progressed in parallel, adding a further 3,000 objects to our digital public catalogue, which now includes over 9,000 objects, or 60% of our collections (an increase by 20% from last year).

Having gained a more thorough understanding of the quality and strengths of our holdings, a new application has been submitted to the ACE towards the Designation of the Museum and Library Collections. This has been successful in round 1, and – in close collaboration with the Library – we are preparing to submit our round 2 application in July.

Public engagement and dissemination of the collections have progressed both with in-person and digital initiatives, including events held at local libraries and National Trust properties, Google Arts & Culture digital exhibitions and a sharp increase in social media activity. Consistent and focused engagement with the main RCM communication platforms has led to the @RCMMuseum Twitter channel nearly doubling the size of its audience in the last year. Intensive work with teachers from all key stages led to the finalisation and off-site testing of a rich formal and informal education offer that is now ready to be delivered on site.

Musical instruments, paintings and drawings from our collections have been loaned for display at major national and international exhibitions in Muscat, Barcelona, Madrid and Liverpool.

Research has been a substantial part of everyone's activity in the Museum team, as is inevitable with the development of new resources in all areas of the new museum. This has included studies required to write all texts for printed and digital interpretation of the display, preliminary research to catalogue over 3,000 objects from the iconography collections, material science research undertaken in collaboration with the V&A, Imperial College, Natural History Museum and several other public and private scientific labs which included – among others – a 3D tomographic scan of one of our keyboard instruments and a micro-tomography of one of our clarinets. Pilot education projects and formal evaluation of the redevelopment project are also providing material for publications that will become available over the next year.

International collaborations have included the development and delivery of a research project with the Hunan Museum in Changsha, leading to the cataloguing of over 300 musical instruments spanning over more than 3,500 years, and the co-organisation of an international conference on functionality of museum objects with the Philharmonie de Paris and the International Committee of Music Museums of ICOM.

The activity above is the result of the intense collaboration of a core team of six people – all listed as co-authors of this paper – each one fully responsible for the results achieved in the respective area. Over the past year, the team has expanded to include three paid interns: Maura Kalthoff, Learning & Participation Graduate Intern; Ellie Clark, Conservation and Documentation Graduate Intern and Angel Choi, Digital Preservation Graduate Intern. The work of the department has benefited from collaborations with several RCM students, both as paid collaborators and placement candidates in the areas of Learning & Participation, conservation, digital preservation and collection management. Students from the RCM, West Dean College and UCL have been involved in placements and paid projects in the areas of digitisation and conservation.

Finally, the last four weeks of the period covered by this report have been affected by the measures introduced by the Government for the containment of COVID19. The RCM has decided not to furlough any member of the Museum team, which has enabled the continuation of work in all areas. While many – though not all – of the project streams have had to be suspended, efforts have been redirected to the digital presence of the Museum, through reprioritising some core projects that were already planned for later dates and creating some rapid-response ones to increase public engagement at these difficult times.

These include the creation of new Twitter threads, some of which connecting with large scale initiatives being promoted by the museum world at large and some original ones that are proving particularly popular among existing and new audiences. Some limitations emerging from the museum not having direct access to public platforms (access to our own webpage, a YouTube channel, social media platforms apart from Twitter, etc.) are being addressed as a matter of urgency with the RCM Marketing and Communication department.

## Forward Plan

The Museum Forward Plan for 2020-2021 has had to be completely revised in consideration of the impact of COVID19 lock-down. Plans had been made for the permanent display to have been completely fitted out, including object mounting, before mid-April 2020, and to enter an internal test phase – or soft opening – for 75 days leading to a public launch on the 25th June. This relied on 68 individual project threads, involving a substantial number of people from several RCM departments, external companies in the UK and abroad and a large number of strict dependencies that would lead to the delivery of the project on time, notwithstanding some challenges that had emerged in the delivery of the architectural element of the redevelopment.

The current situation has not only imposed a suspension of the workflow, waiting to re-gain access to the site, but also required a complete revision of the management model, since there is currently no certainty about availability and operation readiness of the external companies when the lock-down is lifted, or about availability of other RCM departments (such as ICT or Marketing) which are vital to the delivery of the last phase of the project, but will all have to deal with different priorities. A preliminary assessment of the impact and risks of the lockdown has been undertaken and positive discussions are ongoing with the ACE and the NLHF to attract emergency funds to mitigate the inevitable increases in the cost of delivering the project in a longer time span.

The next year will be focused on the mounting of our permanent exhibition after the final elements of the architectural redevelopment are addressed. This will include the completion of any outstanding conservation work, delivery, installation and testing of all printed and digital content, recruitment of the staff and volunteers required to begin regular public opening for up to 46 hours per week (Tue-Fri 10:00-18:00; Sat-Sun 11:00-18:00), setting up and launching the museum shop, as well as initiating all of the training and procedures required to reach operation readiness.

Furthermore, an entirely new display of Milein Cosman works is being designed and will be launched in the Lavery Gallery. A project of completely revising the display of paintings across the RCM, which was planned over summer 2020, will need to be reconsidered and may have to be put on hold at least temporarily.

The delivery of the Wolfson Research Centre in Material Culture and Music is also expected to be achieved over the next year. The space includes on-site storage for most of the Museum collections, a digitisation and research space, conservation workshop and object-based learning area and its mobilisation will require dedicated staff and time that need to be re-sequenced in relation to the other ongoing projects.

The Learning & Participation programme, which has been built up and tested over the past years, will be launched and delivered on site through a number of formal and informal education workshops, activities for internal (RCM) and external users and an increased public engagement programme to gradually grow our user numbers to the 40,000-50,000 target figure.

Two temporary exhibitions are in development and will be ready to be launched when the museum opens: one explores the connections between music and visual arts in Victorian London (curated by Anna Maria Barry), while the other focuses on the social impact of the RCM (developed as a team project).

Digitisation of our collections will continue, although the lock-down has severely slowed down the process and the target – originally aiming for 2,000 more objects – will need to be revised when operations can restart. At the same time, increased resources have been allocated at revising our online collections' catalogue <http://museumcollections.rcm.ac.uk/>. The current structure, developed in 2015 thanks to an RCM capital grant, requires a thorough re-design in consideration of the number of items made available – which increased more than 9 times – and the transformations in online catalogues. All of our collections are also being made available on Wikidata and WikiCommons as part of our commitment to sharing our collections as Open Data.

Overall, the next year will be a transformative one for our museum and operations, moving from the last phase of the redevelopment to the public launch and operative phase. This requires careful planning and management, through a series of test and refinement phases that take into consideration the specific characteristics of the Museum, of the RCM as an institution, of the people involved. The year will also see a transformation in the structure of the team and need to include all the evaluation and retrospective assessment procedures required by our sponsors and to make the best of the considerable experience gained over the past years.

This is normally a very delicate phase in any project delivery, and the increase in risk and uncertainty related to external circumstances is considerable. However, the positive collaboration among all persons involved, the commitment to the project and everyone's long-acquired familiarity with it are the best guarantees of a successful outcome, which I look forward to presenting to next year's meeting.

## Capital Redevelopment [GRR]

### Gallery



The fit-out of the new gallery has been mostly completed. This includes 19 showcases produced and installed by Florea D.sign, 9 large screens, 3 laser projectors, 6 touch screens, the digital infrastructure required to support the delivery of the digital and sound content for interpretation, a fully dimmable light system, an independent climate-monitoring system working in tandem with the RCM BMS, in addition to furniture for the welcome area and shop. A few elements have remained outstanding and will be addressed before mounting of the objects and of the first temporary exhibition can begin.



Five elements composing the sculpture *Antiphonic Waves*, especially designed and created by Victoria Morton, were installed, and the work is ready to be publicly launched.

All objects are ready to be installed in the permanent display. They have been measured and templated by Richard Rogers, the specialised company in charge of mounting the exhibition.

Why Not Associates has delivered the final graphic layout for all printed contents and the printing contracts have been assigned. Panels and labels will be ready to be delivered at the end of the object-mounting phase.

### Weston Discovery Centre

The fit-out of the space has been fully delivered and the space was handed over to the RCM in December 2019. Since delivery, this space has been used as temporary storage for our collection and additional conservation workshop and enabled the completion of the painting conservation required ahead of the mounting.

Low-tech interactives and additional furniture are being realised by Fifex Ltd. and will be ready to be delivered before the opening of the space to the public. Several contemporary musical instruments, which will be made available to visitors, have been acquired and tested in collaboration with manufacturers (Roli, Artiphon, and Freedrum) that are sponsoring the display offering the instruments free of charge.

An interactive experience for the visitors is being developed by a research group of the University of Barcelona, based on further development of a research project initiated by the RCM-IC Centre for Performance Science and in collaboration with the RCM Faculty of Composition.

## Performance Studio

The Performance Studio – previously known as Performance Space B – has now been fully delivered and handed over to the RCM. The Museum will have shared access to the space, which is equipped with an active climate control system able to maintain temperature and humidity levels similar to those in the gallery and is therefore suitable for public performances on the delicate instruments of the collection.



## Wolfson Research Centre for Music and Material Culture

The Wolfson Research Centre in Music and Material Culture will occupy a dedicated space in the RCM South Building. Its delivery is dependent on the demolition of temporary facilities used by Gilbert Ash – the construction company which built the More Music redevelopment – and of part of an external wall of the RCM. The newly built portion will occupy ground owned by Imperial College.





At this point, detailed construction drawings for the building, plants and fit-out have been developed, costed, signed-off and issued. Construction and fit-out have been tendered and contracts assigned and legal consent has been obtained from Imperial College.

The demolition and construction elements of the project depend on a complex interaction with the other activities of the RCM in order to minimise disruption to students and performance. The timeline for the delivery of the project is therefore difficult to foresee at this point, although it is hoped that the project might be concluded by the end of the year. Retrieval of the collections and mounting of the objects are expected to be executed over a period lasting 4–6 months, depending on the number of people who can be assigned to this project.

The space will include a digitisation and public consultation room, a conservation workshop, an area dedicated to object-based learning and space to store ca. 14,000 objects on-site.

## Collections

### New Acquisitions [GRR, RM, AMB]

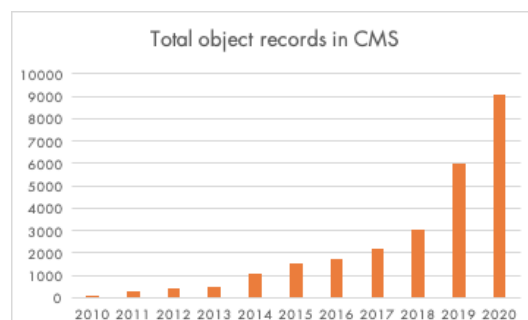
			
Portrait of Michael Tippett, c. 1977, by June Mendoza	Staff of the Joshua Marshall piano and organ dealers, Huddersfield - photograph from the Graham Gadd Collection.	Ink drawing of Hans Keller, by Milein Cosman	Sculpture of Mozart, by Irena Sedlecká

Key acquisitions include:

- A large portrait of Michael Tippett, by June Mendoza. The portrait was created in approximately 1977 and was created from live sittings (Mendoza's principal working method) and then given to Sir Colin Davis (conductor) as a present. The portrait hung in Sir Colin's music room until his death in 2013 and has now been donated to the RCM by his son, Kurosh Davis.
- A collection of over 850 items of memorabilia and photographs relating to the piano, keyboard instruments makers and vendors, and depictions of musicians at keyboard instruments. Prior to donation, the items were collected over many years by the former journalist Graham Gadd, and the collection has been named in his honour. This material has been used in the series of short films that will be shown in the new museum, and many items have also been shared on social media – particularly a collection of humo romantic cards featuring pianos.
- Additional drawings by Milein Cosman received from the Cosman Keller Art and Music Trust, depicting musicians throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century.
- A sculpture of Mozart, by Irena Sedlecká FRSS.

### Cataloguing and Digitisation [RM]

Cataloguing of the Museum's iconography collections has been coordinated by the Museum Digitisation and Documentation Officer and supported by three volunteers. Volunteers have undertaken inventory, cataloguing, and digitisation tasks to support gathering of key object information, and to help develop contextual information supporting re-use of the objects in digital exhibitions, and for future physical exhibitions. The support of volunteers has enhanced the information available through the Museum's collection management system, with c. 9,100 objects now catalogued to Spectrum national standards – a primary requirement for the Museum's re-application for Accreditation.



The Museum appointed two new positions which have supported Museum digital projects. In December 2019, Angel Choi was appointed as the Digital Preservation Graduate Intern. Angel's primary role is to assist the implementation of the Museum's long-term digital preservation plan, to ensure long-term access to its digital collections can be maintained. Angel has also been supporting development of 3D scanning guidelines for Museum objects and helping to develop open data access to object records and images.

In January 2020, the Museum appointed Ellie Clark as Collections Management Graduate Intern. Ellie has been supporting the audit and inventory of uncatalogued objects in on-site storage locations, management of conservation records, and cataloguing.

A new partnership with the Internet Archive has increased the rate of digital image reproduction, with the non-profit undertaking some collections photography at their Euston-based office. The Internet Archive's online platform, archive.org, will provide an additional platform for publication of collections objects.

Key works catalogued include:

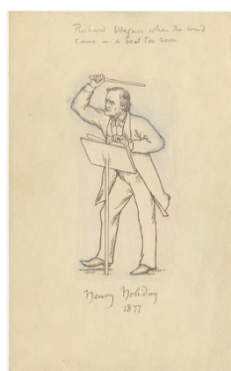
- Completion of cataloguing of the Museum's collection of prints, ranging from 17<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> century.
- An extensive collection of iconography and memorabilia relating to the piano in Britain, including items dating back to the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, donated as the Graham Gadd Collection.
- Original artworks, including previously uncatalogued works by artists including Henry Holiday, among others.
- Scrapbooks and ephemera from the Mary Garden Collection
- Additional works received as part of the Milein Cosman Collection



Rare carte-de-visite photograph from the Graham Gadd collection.



Portrait of Count Johann Adam Graf von Questenberg playing the lute.



'Richard Wagner when the wind came in a beat too soon'. Drawing by the Pre-Raphaelite artist Henry Holiday. Drawn at the Wagner Festival at the Royal Albert Hall, May 1877.



Jennifer Vyvyan and Denis Dowling in 'Albert Herring', at Sadler's Wells, 1948. Drawn by Milein Cosman. Dowling was the first singer at the RCM to be awarded the Tagore Gold Medal.

## Public Access [RM]

Circa 7,500 records from the Museum collections are now available through the online collections' catalogue (<http://museumcollections.rcm.ac.uk>). This was developed by Surface Impression through a capital project funded by the RCM and is regularly maintained and updated.

The Museum records are also available through several other specialised platforms that increase impact and visibility through clustering of contents. These include:

- MIMO (<http://www.mimo-international.com>): 851 records of musical instruments are available through this platform, which is the largest international resource specialised on musical instruments in museum collections. It currently includes ca. 64,000 instruments, 13,000 of which were harvested from the MINIM project.
- Google Arts and Culture: over 1,850 items are available through this platform, as well as 9 digital exhibitions developed by the Museum and the Library teams and a Street-View of the College. The RCM was the first Conservatoire in the world to be included on this platform.
- MINIM-UK: 897 instruments from the Museum collections are available through the MINIM-UK platform (<http://minim.ac.uk>), the largest national resource for musical instruments in public collections, conceived and delivered by the RCM Museum between 2015 and 2018 and currently including over 22,500 instruments.
- Art UK: The Museum was one of the first UK venues to join the Art UK Sculpture Project. The Museum's collection of sculptures is available to explore on the resource, in the context of thousands of other national cultural institutions. The RCM now shares 162 artworks through this platform.
- ArenaPAL: c.5,000 images are available through this commercial platform that has been managing copyright fees and authorisation on behalf of the Museum since 2014.

## Accreditation [LH]

The Museum received full Accreditation from the Arts Council of England in 2013. Following its closure in 2016, it was awarded Provisional Accreditation status. The Museum's Provisional Accreditation status was renewed for the fourth time in March 2020. In light of the coronavirus pandemic, ACE has extended all current accreditation awards for an additional 12 months. We are preparing the documentation required to re-apply for Full Accreditation status in March 2022.

## Designation [GRR]

The ACE Designation scheme certifies the outstanding relevance of museum collections. The RCM has submitted applications for various parts of the special collections to the ACE in 2009, 2012 and 2015, but none were successful. In summer 2019 a new application has been submitted to include the Library and Museum historical collections and this successfully passed stage 1 with minor comments. A stage 2 application is currently being developed and will be submitted by early July and we expect to have a result by November 2020.

## Public Engagement, Collaboration with HEI and Dissemination

### Teacher Ambassador Project [LB]

The Teacher Ambassador project is part of the NLHF Activity Plan. Each year the Museum engages with a group of volunteer teachers from across the curriculum key stages to develop and test new content for formal learning activities in the museum. Teachers participate in a Learning Day at the RCM and get to experience some object handling and share their expertise on bridging the gap between our collection and the curriculum.





In 2019 we recruited 4 secondary school teachers to help develop workshops and resources for KS3 and 4 pupils (both Music and Design & Technology). At the Learning Day teachers proposed a number of great ideas for sessions and resources which have subsequently been written up and will be piloted with school groups between March – October 2020. A student on the Music Education course is also doing a placement with the Museum as part of this project and will lead one of these workshops.

## Museum Roadshow [LB]

The Museum Roadshow is how we are sharing our collections and stories with wider audiences during the construction phase of the project.

In August 2019 we visited The Red House, Aldeburgh (Britten-Pears Foundation), home of composer Benjamin Britten with a joint exhibition of sketches by Milein Cosman, as well as activities for families and under 5's, and a concert. We also visited Leith Hill Place (National Trust), home of composer Ralph Vaughan Williams with an exhibition of RVW iconography, drop-in family events and a concert. In total we engaged with 611 people.

At the end of 2019 we took time to review the target audiences we have reached so far on our Roadshow, and to plan the final phase of the Roadshow in summer 2020, which will include pop-ups at the V&A, a pre-Prom tour offer, Proms family activities and local farmers markets.



## Story Makers [LB]

In 2019 we worked with storyteller/composer Rosie Adediran to create a new musical storytime session which we took on tour to 8 local libraries this July. We engaged with 188 adults and 219 children, experienced overwhelmingly positive feedback and multiple repeat visits to our sessions.

This project will culminate this summer with a Museum Family Festival, which will involve a repeat of the early years musical storytime sessions, a musical heritage trail for families with 5-11s, family arts and crafts and more. We've also been approached by the libraries to host more sessions in summer 2020.



## Digital exhibitions [AMB]

Our digital exhibitions continue to be popular, with many users accessing our collections through the Google platform. Several exhibitions are currently in preparation which will be launched in advance of the museum opening in order to raise awareness of our collections. These include an exhibition on the strangest items in our collection, and another which supports our forthcoming exhibition on Victorian portraits.

## Volunteering, internships and placements [LB]

### *Volunteers*

Over the academic year 2019-20 the Museum welcomed a number of volunteers who have contributed towards the digitisation of material in our collection. We also benefited from a regular conservation volunteer, as well as several RCM students who volunteered for museum learning & participation events.

### *Placements*

An RCM student on the Music Education course completed a placement as part of the Teacher Ambassador project, and over the summer the Conservator worked with 6 placements from UCL who took part in a variety of conservation projects with the RCM collections.

### *Interns*

In Autumn 2019 the Museum team welcomed 3 graduate interns:

- Maura Kalthoff is the Learning Intern who is providing practical and administrative support to the Learning & Participation Officer as we build momentum towards the museum opening.
- Ellie Clark is the Collections Management Intern supporting the documentation and handling of objects going in the new gallery space, as well as conservation documentation.
- Angel Choi is the Digital Preservation Intern, assisting with the development and implementation of the Museum's digital preservation plan.

## Communication [AMB]



We continue to disseminate our collections and activities through social media. Our Twitter account now has over 2,200 followers with a high rate of interaction – our tweets have an average of 120,793 impressions and 3,298 engagements each quarter. During the lockdown period social media activity has increased, leading to a 640% increase in mentions and a 270% increase in profile visits.



Our followers are particularly engaged, often sharing their ideas, offering feedback and asking for further information. A particular source of social media material over the last few months has been the newly acquired Graham Gadd Collection of Piano Iconography. Hundreds of antique photographs, postcards and prints – many of them humorous – have given us a wealth of new material with which to engage our followers.

As we move towards reopening, we are acutely aware of how critical digital media will be in ensuring we meet our visitor targets. With this in mind, we are developing new strategies and sources of content to roll out to coincide with our opening. These include the aforementioned digital exhibitions, a number of blog posts (both on internal and external platforms) and some exciting social media initiatives that will help us spread the word about our collections and events.

## Loans [LH]

This year the RCM museum lent two of its objects to three internationally renowned museum collections for temporary exhibitions. Loan requests are managed through a refined procedure, fully compliant with museum standards, which include a thorough check of security and conservation facilities at the exhibition venue, an evaluation of the quality and reach of the initiative and of the fit with our goals and identity and the presence of an RCM courier to follow the object during travel and whenever it is handled. The requests are discussed and approved by Collection Management Committee based on recommendation by the Curator.

Loans of museum objects over the past academic year included:

Venue	Image
<p>Travelling exhibition Opera: Power, Passion, Politics (V&amp;A)</p> <p>Muscat (Oman), Royal Opera House: January-March 2019 Madrid, CaixaForum: 25 April-4 August 2019 Barcelona, CaixaForum: 10 September 2019-12 January 2020.</p> <p>RCM0002, Harpsichord, Alessandro Trasuntino</p>	
<p>Liverpool, The World Museum Drawing on Nature: Taki Katei's Japan</p> <p>04 October 2019 – 17 March 2020</p> <p>PPHC00002 Adrian Boulton, Kazunori Ishibashi, 1923 Oil on canvas</p>	

## Conservation [SC]

The past year was very enriching for the collection as a result of collaborations with other institutions that allowed us to learn and better preserve the RCM Museum Collection. Two objects, a venetian Virginal and a Clavicytherium, due to their value and complexity, required a detailed and intense scientific study. Lacking in-house facilities required for scientific studies, we were fortunate to establish partnerships with The Metropolitan Museum of Art, in New York, Imperial College, Victoria & Albert Museum, Natural History Museum, and private scientists.

The projects shown below are representative of most of the work done through Conservation during the past 12 months. Other projects took place and several other objects were conserved, including the Museum's Baryton, historical recorders and clarinets.

### Virginal made in 1593 by Celestini (RCM0176)

This project consisted on the scientific study of structure and decoration of the virginal. The exquisite and rare decoration of this instrument prompted a wider research project which included:

- Pigment analysis using X-ray fluorescence, a non-invasive technique that uses ionizing energy for identification of the inorganic components of the surface, in this case of pigments present in the decoration.
- Analysis of the organic component of the lacquer through a collaboration with The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Adriana Rizzo (a Research Scientist with extensive experience on similar objects) performed the analysis, allowing the findings about the decoration to be placed in a wider context, as well as a more precise comparative identification of the organic components.
- Analysis of the structure using CT scan technology, provided through a kind collaboration of Imperial College.



The Conservation of the object consisted on cleaning, stabilization, protection of the surface and, when necessary for aesthetical reasons and for interpretation of the object, retouch also took place. There is no plan for returning the instrument to playing condition. Its historical value, rarity and fragility would be compromised by it.



RCM0176, Virginal made Celestini, Venice 1593. Detail of the decoration before (top) and during conservation (Bottom)



RCM0176, Virginal made Celestini, Venice 1593. Details: rose before, after and during cleaning; keyboard during cleaning.

## Clavicytherium, Germany, c.1480 (RCM0001)

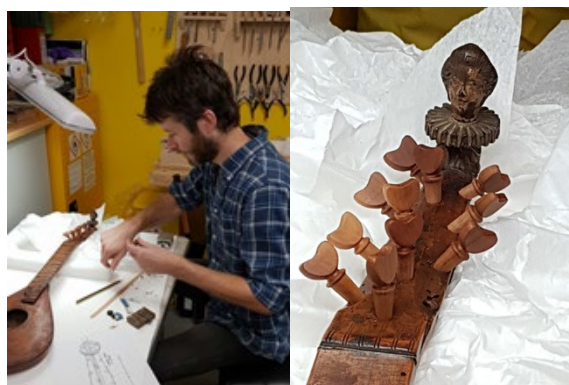
Known as the earliest string keyboard instrument in existence, the clavicytherium and its outer case were subjected to analysis using X-ray fluorescence in partnership with the Natural History Museum and the Victoria & Albert Museum.



The conservation of the object is an ongoing project at the moment. Like the virginal, there is no plan for returning the instrument to playing condition. The painted lid of the outer case was conserved by an external painting's conservator, Lucy Odlin and by the RCM Conservator. The extremely fragile surface was consolidated, cleaned and retouched.

RCM0001, Conservator from the Natural History Museum using a portable device for x-ray radiography.

## Cittern, Italy, 16<sup>th</sup> Century (RCM0048)



*RCM0048: Image at centre, Jonathan Hill, Luthier, shaping new pegs for the cittern*

This cittern was missing the rose, the bridge, and the pegs. Besides cleaning and consolidation, new parts were made accordingly, keeping in mind other related objects from the same period and/or maker. The new parts were made in house either by the museum conservator or using the expertise of a luthier. The rose was commissioned from a private artist from Italy who specializes in roses for musical instruments.

## Training and Supervision of Conservation Placements

The RCM Museum and its conservation staff provide unique and privileged teaching in the field of conservation of musical instruments, a discipline not taught in the UK Conservation degrees. In this light, both UCL and West Dean College are filling this gap by inviting the RCM Conservator as a guest lecturer, giving the students an introduction to the discipline. Over summer, the RCM provided hands-on training to 5 UCL and West Dean College students. These students worked on condition checks and remedial conservation of objects that will be used for research. One RCM student also completed this summer placement, reaching a total of 6 students.

## Collaborations with Conservation

During the past year, many collaborations were established between the RCM Museum Conservation and other institutions and privates. These collaborations were for the purpose of study, analysis, conservation, and training. They contributed to a better understanding, preservation and dissemination of our collections. The following is a list of collaborations:

Conservation:

- The department of Conservation of Furniture of the V&A Museum has been offering support (Consultation) when necessary. In exchange, the RCM Conservator also responds to the V&A if consulted about some instruments of that collection.
- Lucy Odlin, a freelance Paintings Conservator, has been hired for conserving painted surfaces on musical instruments as well as paintings for the new display.
- Michael Parfett, a Conservator specialist in Harps.

Makers/Luthiers:

- Charles Bear & Sons, led a consultation about the conservation of the Viola by Enrico Catenar and the conservation of the RCM Museum Baryton
- Daniel Bangham led consultation and training on conservation of clarinets.
- John Topham, Luthier performed conservation and set up of a viol by Enrico Catenar (RCM00350)
- Jonathan Hill, Luthier made tuning pegs for the RCM Museum Cittern by Campi, (RCM0048).

Scientists:

- Dr Lucia Burgio, Senior Scientist, V&A Museum, performed X-ray fluorescence analysis and interpretation.
- Dr. Tracey Chaplin, Freelance Scientist, performed X-ray fluorescence analysis and interpretation.
- Adriana Rizzo, Research Scientist, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, provided sampling, analysis and interpretation of Venetian Lacquer.
- Rob McLeod, Conservator, Natural History Museum, provided equipment and performance of X-Ray fluorescence analysis.
- Dr. Robert Busza, Dr Robert Punjani, Wolfson Education Centre, Imperial College, Hammersmith Campus, provided CT Scan facilities.
- STRimaging, infrared imaging company.

## Employment Opportunities [SC]

- Ellie Clark (Collections Management Intern) is working on record management of conservation documentation, having updated about 800 records, of the circa 1300 obtained during the 2016 survey, and during consequent condition checks of the paintings on display in college.
- Emilie Trehu (Assistant Conservator) assisted the conservator on several tasks, including helping with the supervision of summer student placements. Emilie took charge of detailed conservation projects, like the cleaning of a very fragile and delicate rose of the Virginal by Celestini.

## Research and Knowledge Exchange

### HEFCE MINIM-UK Project [RM]

The museum continues to provide support for the MINIM-UK resource. Updates for the outputs of the GCRF project, including new story posts, and the upload of records from the Hunan Museum, commenced following the research visit to Changsha.

### Research Strategy and Outputs [AMB]

The museum is currently delivering the key goals laid out in its research strategy. The team now has access to a range of academic journals relating to their individual areas and are being encouraged to read and share these with a view to developing individual outputs and foster a research-active approach across the various areas of activity. Research-active members of the team are working on a number of edited collections, journal articles and book chapters. The team have also given a number of conference papers, lectures and public talks over the past year:

#### *Publications*

- G. Rossi Rognoni, Carl Engel (1818-1882), in *Through the Eyes and Ears of Musical Instrument Collectors (1860-1940)*, ed. by Christina Linsenmeyer (Abingdon: Routledge, expected 2019). Cover of the *Digital Humanities and Musical Heritage* programme.
- G. Rossi Rognoni, 'Preserving Functionality: Keeping Artefacts "Alive" in Museums', *Curator: the Museum Journal*, special issue on Sonic Museums (2019)
- Anna Maria Barry, 'An Opera Singer's Gothic Fiction: The Autobiographies of Sims Reeves', *Journal of Musicological Research* (2019), 38:3-4, 233-252
- Anna Maria Barry, 'Lady sings the blues? Tragedy, Autobiography and Reassessment', *Billie Holiday: Essays on the Artistry and Legacy*, Eds. Michael Perez and Jessica McKee (McFarland Press, 2019), 38-53

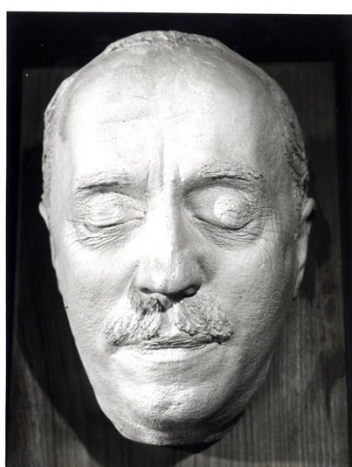


- Michael Brown, Anna Maria Barry, Joanne Begiato (Eds.), *Military Masculinities in the Long Nineteenth Century* (Manchester University Press, 2019)
- Anna Maria Barry, 'Charles Incedon: A Singing Sailor on the Georgian Stage', *Military Masculinities in the Long Nineteenth Century*, Eds. Michael Brown, Anna Maria Barry, Joanne Begiato (Manchester University Press, 2019), 82-101

#### Conference Papers and Lectures

- Gabriele Rossi Rognoni, *Curating Music: Building a Discipline in an Interdisciplinary World* (Paris, IRCAM/Sorbonne, 3rd May 2018)
- Gabriele Rossi Rognoni, *Preserving Functionality: Keeping Objects 'Alive' in Museums?* (Keynote paper, Edinburgh University, St. Cecilia's Hall, 12 November 2018).
- Gabriele Rossi Rognoni, *Ingenious sounds: Leonardo da Vinci and Music* (Invited lecture, Georgetown University, Washington, 10 April 2019).
- Gabriele Rossi Rognoni, *The Royal College of Music Museums: some new ideas on displaying music* (Invited lecture, Russian International Cultural Forum, 16 November 2019).
- Anna Maria Barry. *Edith Hipkins: Artist and Collector* (Pre-Raphaelite Sisters: Making Art, University of York, December 2019).
- Anna Maria Barry, *Musical Portraits at the Royal College of Music* (Britten-Pears Foundation, August 2019).
- Anna Maria Barry, *Musical Portraits at the Royal College of Music* (Leith Hill Place, August 2019).

#### Collections Research [AMB]



We have been developing our understanding of neglected areas of the collection through a number of new research projects. In 2019 the Museum Research Assistant was awarded an Understanding British Portraits Fellowship from the National Portrait Gallery for a project entitled *Musical Portraits in Bohemian London, 1870-1930*.

This seeks to improve our knowledge about some of the most important paintings in our collection, exploring what they can tell us about the connections between artists and musicians during the period in question. The fellowship is funding a number of research

trips and supporting dissemination activities including a talk, concert, family workshop and academic article. This research has proved so fruitful that it has been developed into the new museum's first temporary exhibition. Another project concerns the Museum's small but significant collection of death masks. We had a practising death mask sculptor come in and assess the collection, and the Research Assistant was awarded funding by Princeton University Library to undertake further research in Princeton's Special Collections. A number of related articles and dissemination activities are in preparation.

#### GCRF China [GRR]

In October, Gabriele Rossi Rognoni and Richard Martin spent five days in Changsha, China, at the Hunan Provincial Museum. The MINIM-UK project was presented as a successful example of a co-ordinated national effort at bringing musical instrument museums into a single resource for research and public engagement. Participants from at least 20

music museums around China attended an introductory workshop on digital cataloguing of music collections, followed by a hands-on opportunity to engage with the MINIM-UK resource.

Over the following three days, we photographed and recorded information on over 50 instruments, spanning over 3,500 years of Chinese musical history. They included a Nao (upright bell) dated to around 1,600 B.C., and a Yu (mouth organ) excavated from the renowned Western Han Dynasty Tombs at Mawangdui – the instrument, dated 163 B.C., is one of the best preserved archaeological wooden instruments.

The resulting records have now undergone translation from Chinese to English, in preparation for publication on the MINIM-UK and MIMO resources – a major step in joining the cohort of Chinese music museums to the global family of collections online.