

RWCMD ALUMNI

NEWSLETTER
SUMMER
2019



ROYAL WELSH COLLEGE
OF MUSIC & DRAMA
COLEG BRENHINOL
CERDD A DRAMA CYMRU

www.rwcmd.ac.uk

WELCOME FROM THE PRINCIPAL



AS THE NEW PRINCIPAL, IT IS MY PLEASURE TO WELCOME YOU TO THE FIRST EDITION OF THIS ALUMNI NEWSLETTER.

As I set foot in the Royal Welsh College's beautiful buildings, I was struck by its spirit, the quality of the people who make its community, and by its further potential. I look forward to connecting with you as we move into the next phase of its development.

Wales is a nation that punches above its weight in so many ways, and the College is a real beacon in this. It's immediately obvious that it's a place where the future of professional practice in music and theatre is being shaped. Every day I see individual passions being nurtured in the midst of profound attention to ensemble and a sense of shared journeys - immersed in professional work experiences.

My strongest impression is that every single student at the College is called to find their own distinctive voice, and many different career paths emerge. Alongside those who reach the bright lights of our international stages, others are making their own shows, becoming key figures in the newest film studios, developing rich and varied portfolio careers, making moves in the gaming industry, or setting down roots in education work.

This approach is absolutely something to be celebrated, and actually often an essential part of success. So I hope so much that in the next

months I will meet many of you, get to hear more about your own stories, professional journeys and experiences of the College.

We are now busy working to define the strategic direction of the College for the next five to ten years. Without question, we are living in challenging times for many economic, political, environmental and social reasons. But exciting opportunities lie ahead as we think about the College's commitment to the future of music and theatre, our role as the national Conservatoire of Wales, our potential to make international connections and work on a global stage, and the need to innovate our practice, not least in looking towards more inclusive societies able to embrace the richness of diversity.

Do keep in touch, and please come and visit us whenever you are in Cardiff, the doors are open.

Thank you, diolch o galon.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Helena F. Gaunt". The script is fluid and cursive.

Professor Helena Gaunt
Principal

*Cover photo: Royal Welsh College Showcase
New York. Photo by Dan Callister.*

DA IAWN! SOME HIGHLIGHTS

ERIC HALLENGREN (2017)

In Band Das Musical in Berlin.

ANTHONY BOYLE (2016)

Will be seen in *Tolkien*. He's also been cast in the HBO television of adaptation of Philip Roth's *The Plot Against America*.

TIANYI LU (2016)

Assistant Conductor of the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra.

EDWARD BLUEMEL (2015)

Following on from *Sex Education* on Netflix, plays the role of Hugo in *Killing Eve* Season 2.

LUKE MCCALL (2014)

Starring alongside Kelsey Grammer in *Man of La Mancha*.

HELEDD GWYNN (2013)

Shortlisted for the National Theatre Ian Charleson Award 2018 for the roles of Katharine and Dauphin in *Henry V*. **ARTHUR HUGHES** shortlisted 2017, **THALISSA TEIXEIRA** won in 2014, **AMY MORGAN** won in 2012.

GABRIELLA SLADE (2012)

Nominated for an Olivier Award for Best Costume for the production *Six* at the Arts Theatre.

OLIVER HOWELLS (2011)

Arranger/Orchestrator/Conductor/Instrumentalist on the BBC David Attenborough Series *Dynasties*, recipient of the Sky Academy Arts Scholarship & held a 3-month Artist Residency at Quincy Jones's Q's at the Palazzo Versace in Dubai.

CLAIRE FURLONG (2011)

Learning and Participation Manager, National Youth Jazz Orchestra.

MATTHEW HARDY (2010)

Principal Timpani City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra.

JUSTINA GRINGYTE (2010)

International Opera Awards Young Singer of the Year 2015

CHRIS AVISON (2009)

Principal trumpet, Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra.

CLARE DUNNE (2009)

Writing and starring in feature film *Herself*, directed by Phyllida Law.

TOM CULLEN (2009)

Second season of *Knightfall* now airing on the History Channel, also wrote & directed *Pink Wall* which recently debuted at SXSW. Partly filmed at RWCMD. Next working on indie drama/crime drama *Castle In The Ground*.

ANEURIN BARNARD (2008)

Plays the lead role of Theo in the *The Goldfinch*, due for release in October 2019, based on Donna Tartt's Pulitzer Prize winning novel.

ERIN RICHARDS (2007)

Still in *Gotham*, season 5.

DAVID CHILDS (2004)

Professor of Euphonium at the University of North Texas.

ANITA REYNOLDS (1996)

At the Globe's upcoming productions of *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and *Bartholomew Fair*.

We'd love to know what you are doing now, please get in touch with us to let us know: alumni@rwcmd.ac.uk

DAY IN THE LIFE OF... A STAGE MANAGER



SPRING WAS 'NEW' TIME AGAIN! OUR NEW WRITING FESTIVAL RETURNED FOR ITS 6TH FABULOUS YEAR.

NEW gives the College's Richard Burton Company the chance to work on plays specially written for them by four emerging writers, and directed by some of the most exciting talent in the UK.

The College collaborates with four great theatre companies, Paines Plough, Royal Court Theatre, Sherman Theatre, and The Gate Theatre, to create four provocative, challenging and inspiring brand new plays, asking the big questions – this year covering everything from drug culture to a joyful utopia where nature starts to take over...

WHO ARE YOU, WHAT COURSE ARE YOU STUDYING?

My name is Jessica Forella. I'm an MA Stage and Event Management student, originally from New York.

TELL ME ABOUT YOUR COURSE, A QUICK RUN THROUGH A NORMAL WORKING DAY?

Our course varies hugely depending on what part of the term it is. During classroom based teaching weeks we'll be in classes that vary from management discussions to technical practicals. During placements (which is the majority of our course time) we're working on shows, so our schedules are whatever the needs of the show and our position of the show require. As Stage Manager for NEW2019 I scheduled a lot of meetings between departments, got into the rehearsal room whenever possible, and then ran tech when tech time came around.

TELL ME MORE ABOUT WHAT YOU'RE WORKING ON AT THE MOMENT (REFERRING TO *LOAM*)?

Loam is one of the new works commissioned from the Royal Court for NEW2019 at RWCMD. It was written by Bea Roberts and is a hilariously funny and poignant commentary on our relationship with the environment. The Designer focused on sourcing materials made in a sustainable way.

WHAT WERE THE HIGHLIGHTS AND CHALLENGES?

Participating in the development of a new work is always a joy, even if it presents a number of challenges. The challenges are part of what make it fun, though. *Loam* presented some interesting ones, from working with live plants on stage to a rapidly changing cast of characters throughout the show, including a life sized earwig, all of which have to appear on stage one after the other seamlessly with no notion of the rapid transitions going on backstage, successfully meeting those sort of challenges is always a highlight.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING NEXT?

I'll be doing a little traveling between now and my next placement. Once I get back to Cardiff, that placement is as Deputy Stage Manager on *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame* in the Richard Burton Theatre.

Inset photo: Current student Jessica Forella.

HIGHLIGHTS... AMSERJAZZTIME FESTIVAL



**IN CELEBRATION OF THE ROYAL
WELSH COLLEGE'S 70TH
ANNIVERSARY, THE GUEST
PROGRAMME FOR THIS YEAR'S
AMSERJAZZTIME FESTIVAL
FOCUSED ON ALUMNI OF THE
COLLEGE AND OUR CURRENT
RESIDENT ARTISTS AND STUDENTS.**

Audiences enjoyed performances from alumni **Chris Hyson, Hannah Grace** and **Rebecca Nash** amongst others. There was also a host of performances by Royal Welsh College students with sets throughout the festival, including our AmserJazzTime foyer sessions that week on week present the very best emerging jazz artists.

NOW AND THEN...

**RWCMD HAS CHANGED SO MUCH
OVER THE YEARS. INSPIRED BY
THIS YEAR'S #10YEARCHALLENGE
WE'VE INCLUDED A THEN AND
NOW PHOTO OF THE CAFETERIA
WHICH WE'RE HOPING WILL
BRING BACK SOME MEMORIES OF
YOUR STUDENT DAYS. PLEASE
SHARE YOUR 'THEN' PHOTOS BY
EMAILING ALUMNI@RWCMD.AC.UK
AND WE'LL RECREATE THE 'NOW'
SHOTS!**



ARCHIVES: UNCOVERING OUR HERITAGE

JUDITH DRAY (RWCMD ARCHIVIST)

THIS YEAR MARKS THE 70TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDATION OF THE ROYAL WELSH COLLEGE OF MUSIC & DRAMA. OVER THE LAST COUPLE OF YEARS, WE HAVE BEEN PREPARING FOR THIS OCCASION BY GETTING THE COLLEGE ARCHIVES INTO ORDER.

Until 2017, the College archives were held in mismatched boxes in the basement, and we had little idea of what was in there. Mandie Garrigan, one of our library assistants, began sorting out the archive, clearing a suitable space, listing the contents of each box and discovering many treasures along the way. I was then appointed as an archivist last year to work with Mandie to sort out the archive. We have been properly

cataloguing the archive, providing access where possible, running a volunteer project to digitise vulnerable historical photographs, and showing off some highlights in 'pop-up' exhibitions at various College events. Eventually we plan to open the archive up for researchers, students and members of the public to explore.

The College archives tell the inspiring story of the College's history from its humble beginnings in 1949, housed in just two rooms in Cardiff Castle, to its present state as one of the UK's leading conservatoires with state-of-the-art facilities. The hundreds of photographs, programmes and other items in the archive also provide a rich and unique insight into past students' experiences.

Photo: Archivist Judith Dray with Head of Library Services Megan Wiley exhibiting items from the College's archive at an event in 2018. Photo by Nicola Lloyd.



KEEP IN TOUCH



There are many benefits of joining the Alumni Association. Apart from helping you reconnect with your peers, we offer a range of services including discounted Library membership for up to 3 years after graduation, box office and rehearsal space discounts, professional membership discounts.

**WE WOULD LOVE TO RECONNECT
WITH ALUMNI. SEND US
YOUR STORIES, SHARE YOUR
PHOTOGRAPHS OR FIND OUT
MORE ABOUT HOW YOU CAN
GET INVOLVED BY EMAILING
ALUMNI@RWCMD.AC.UK.**

*Photo: Chanae Curtis in The Marriage of Figaro.
Photo by Robert Workman.*

RWCMD ALUMNI REUNION

SAT 28 SEPTEMBER 2019 | 5—9pm

at the ROYAL WELSH COLLEGE MUSIC & DRAMA

**SAVE
THE
DATE!**





Facing page: In December 2018 RWCMD hosted a special performance for His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales, to celebrate his 70th birthday. Photo by Kiran Ridley.

Top: Catherine Zeta-Jones with Alumni of RWCMD at its St David's Day Gala at New York's Rainbow Room. Photo by Travis Magee.

Above left: *Orchestradventure!* hit the road again this year, heading to Buihth Wells and Llandudno by way of Cardiff St David's Hall, in Spring 2019. Photo by Kirsten McNernan.

Above: Kirsten Evans, Atmospheres Festival. Photo by Kirsten McNernan.
Left: Jazz students at the Catherine Zeta-Jones New York Gala. Photo by Travis Magee.