

MUSEUM REPORT 2018/19

Collections Committee

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April 2019 – Paper 19/021

Overview 2018/2019 [GRR]

The Museum has now entered its fourth year of activity since it was closed to the public for renovation at the end of 2015. This period has been instrumental in delivering the major transformation that had been planned over the previous two years and which concerns the very identity and mission of the Museum and all aspect of its spaces, operations, as well as internal and external interactions. We have now started the final phase of the project which will lead to the re-opening to the public in the new spaces as well as the launch of the public engagement, temporary exhibition, performance and research programmes. This will happen in stages between Spring and Autumn 2020.

The project, generously supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, delivers a significantly larger footfall for the Museum, articulated in a permanent and a temporary exhibition gallery, dedicated space for educational activities (the Weston Discovery Centre), a shared climate controlled space for performances on collection's instruments and a research centre (the Wolfson Research Centre in Material Culture and Music) which includes accessible storage, digitisation, conservation and study facilities.

An expanded Museum team, formed by six full time members of staff, is developing and delivering an intense programme of public engagement activities to build up a new audience – expected to reach between 40 and 50,000 visitors per year by 2022 – and undertake major enabling work in the field of digitisation, conservation and research.

Over the past year the design of the spaces has substantially progressed focussing in particular on the Museum gallery, which is now fully designed by ZMMA architects within a base build designed by John Simpson Architects. All digital hardware required to provide an interactive and immersive experience to visitors has been chosen and digital content is now being developed for an audio guide system, a series of screens and projectors that will enrich the interpretation of our collections. Coordination with the broader More Music redevelopment has been challenging but effective, thanks to the constant support from the RCM Estates team, and particularly Aida Berhamovic and Sarah Hanratty.

Conservation of the collections, coordinated by Susana Caldeira, has now been undertaken on more than half of the objects that are due to be displayed in the new gallery, often transforming the appearance of some of our most beautiful objects and, when possible, considering their potential to be used for musical performance within the educational purposes of the RCM. It also led to a better understanding of several of them, including establishing the date of a 16th century Venetian painting previously thought to be a 19th century reproduction and enabled major international loans which considerably strengthened the position of the RCM Museum and Collections in the broader context of musical heritage.

The design of the climate-controlled performance space and research centre has also progressed and further development is expected before summer.

A major effort was concentrated in the development of the online presence of the collection, which was almost absent before the beginning of the redevelopment project. A digital platform was developed to offer public access to the over 15,000 objects that are in our collections and the number of digital records has more than doubled in one year thanks to the efforts of Richard Martin who coordinated the work of a number of dedicated volunteers.

Two new digital exhibitions were curated by Anna Maria Barry, aimed at different target audiences, and a new series of blogs was released, on the RCM website and on several external platforms such as BBC Music Blog, Museum Crush and The Victorianist with the aim of making the museum known beyond the circle that normally engages with the RCM.

Towards the same goal, the presence and level of interaction of the Museum on social media has also more than doubled in terms of reach and engagement, compared to one year ago, exceeding by far the targets established in the planning phase of the project.

Extensive research in the iconography collections led to the cataloguing of over 3,000 pieces and the identification of new works by Edward Burne-Jones and of the earliest surviving portrait of Franz Liszt. Preliminary research was also undertaken on several new acquisitions, including 1,300 drawings of musicians by Milein Cosman, recently donated to the Museum, and an 18th century painting representing an actual instrument preserved in our collections.

Finally, an intense collaboration with teachers from all Key Stages and SEND schools, led by Lydia Baldwin, is leading to the development and testing of educational activities that will be delivered in the Museum's new spaces, while our collections have travelled extensively in the UK and abroad as part of a Museum Roadshow organised by us, as well as contributing to major international exhibitions.

The administration of all aspects of the project and support in project management were guaranteed by Erin McHugh, who also managed the recruitment of volunteers and of the several students from HEIs who joined the project for placements and internships over the past months.

Forward plan

The year ahead will be largely occupied by the fit-out and delivery of the gallery display, including all interactive and digital elements: over 50 musical instruments spanning over five centuries, plus about 50 paintings and drawings will be prepared and installed in the new gallery, in new showcases specifically designed and produced in Europe and reflecting state of the art technology for access and conservation of museum objects. Interpretation will be delivered through low-tech supports (panels and labels), as well as digital resources, which include a 26-station audio-guide, six screens, two large projections, whose contents (texts, audio and video recordings) are currently being written and developed with the support of several external companies. All content will be installed and tested by the beginning of 2020.

The new gallery will be opened with a soft-launch period between early spring and early summer 2020, when groups, individuals, schools and representatives from all segments of stakeholders will be invited to test the Museum display and resources to prepare for the second phase of the public launch, before the summer season.

Substantial work remains to be done to refine the resources of the Weston Discovery Centre and to complete the production of two contemporary artwork commissions – one for a suspended sculpture and one for a video-art installation – which will need to be installed before the end of 2019.

The fit-out design of the Weston Research Centre and the definition of its content has also just started. The project includes a part of base-build design and construction, which is planned to be completed by the end of spring 2020, while fit-out design is developed. Installation of the objects in the accessible storage which is part of the Centre is planned to begin in April 2020 and continue until the end of July.

Digitisation of the collections will continue, partly with the support of an external agency, aiming at exceeding the target of 10,000 items digitally available online by late spring 2020.

Public engagement activities towards formal and informal education will enter a final elaboration phase of the content and materials developed over the past three years. The first test-activities will be delivered on-site in the new gallery between March and May 2020. The Museum communication strategy will also be revised, to consolidate and expand the Museum digital audience and prepare for the public opening of the new spaces.

Finally, a thorough reorganisation of the administrative procedures and team responsibilities will be undertaken in the period leading to the opening, including the revision of all policies required to re-obtain full ACE Accreditation after the suspension period required for the redevelopment.

Capital redevelopment

Gallery [GRR]



Over the past year, the base-build element of the Gallery has been completed, while internal fit-out, designed by ZMMA architects, has been developed to RIBA4. This included the design of the showcases, whose production has been entrusted to Florea D.sign, the choice of all digital hardware, and the refinement of the lighting scheme. Workshop drawings are currently being developed and signed-off for all the other elements of the fit-out, which will be realised by Deluxe. Soft-opening to the public is planned in March 2020.

Contracts were also signed for the graphic elements of the display (Why Not Associated), for the audio guide system (Orpheo) and the development of films and interactives to be used in the gallery (Chocolate Films).

This phase included the selection of a contemporary artist to realise a bespoke sculpture to hang from the ceiling at the centre of the gallery. Scottish artist Victoria Morton was appointed through a selection process guided by the Contemporary Art Society. The design of the piece is now at RIBA2 stage and the work should be ready to be installed in November. This will be the last element to be installed before beginning the mounting of the collection objects, which is due to start in December. Generous support for this element of the gallery is coming from private individuals, as well as from the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Weston Discovery Centre [GRR]

The Centre, which is an integral part of the Museum gallery, will include three stations:

- Station 1 consists in a selection of acoustic instruments and musical objects which highlight the interaction between the hand and the instrument to make music. This element is still under development and will be finalised before summer.
- Station 2 includes several contemporary musical instruments which visitors and RCM professors and students are encouraged to try and – in the case of the latter – borrow. The selection of the instruments is now in advanced stage and we are exploring connections and agreements with the makers
- Station 3 is based on an interactive wall that responds to the movements of users through a software that supports them in creating music. This project is being developed with the support of the RCM Centre for Performance Science and the University of Barcelona.

Performance Studio [GRR]

The Performance Studio is a climate controlled performance space of which the Museum will have shared use with other RCM Departments. Concerts and lectures on objects from the Collections, educational activities for families and visitors with special needs, conferences and recordings will be delivered in this space as part of the Museum Learning and Participation Programme.

This space, developed by John Simpson Architects, is designed as a flexible and essential space, equipped for recording, conferences and the performance of early, modern and contemporary music.

Wolfson Research Centre for Music and Material Culture [GRR]

The Wolfson Research Centre combines intensive storage for a substantial part of the Museum collections, with facilities to study and digitise them, undertake maintenance and small conservation, and deliver object based learning activities. The centre will be partly built as an extension of the RCM South Building and building design has been fully developed.

Concept design for the fit-out has now started, together with the definition of the collections to be stored on-site. The centre is due to open to the public in September 2020.

Collections

New Acquisitions [GRR]



The Museum received a donation of over 1,300 drawings of musicians by Milein Cosman (1921-2017). This is by far the largest collection of music-related works by this artist, whose drawings are included in the collections of the V&A, National Portrait Galleries, Palais des Beaux Arts in Brussels and in university collections in Austria, Texas, Pennsylvania, Canada and Japan. The collection has been entirely catalogued and digitised thanks to the support of the Pilgrim Trust and the project was launched with a concert, lecture, and digital exhibition in February 2019 (see below). A selection of these works will be on permanent display in the Lavery Gallery, a new space which forms part of the More

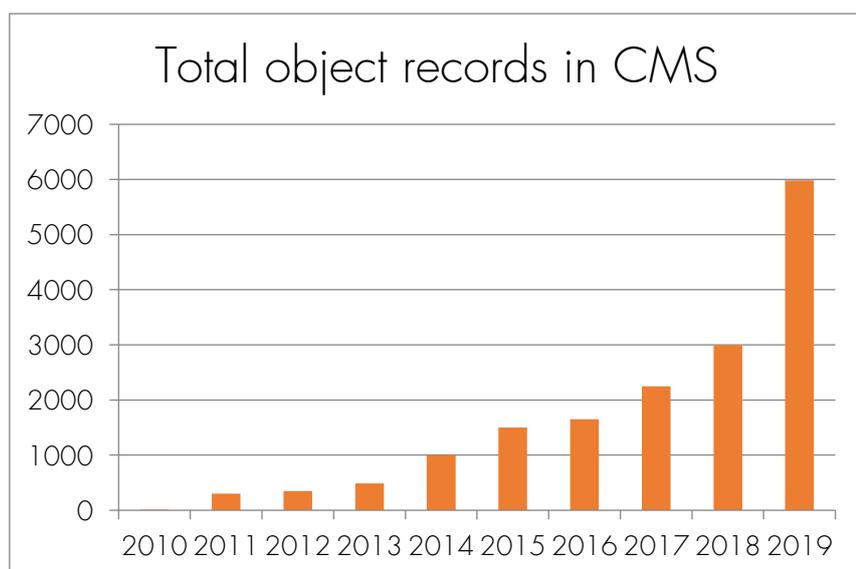
Music development.

In March 2019 the Museum finalised the purchase of a large oil painting attributed to Johann Friedrich August Tischbein (1750-1812). The portrait depicts an unidentified lady holding RCM0027, the Citrinchen made by Johannes Tielke in 1675. It is one of the only three known historical paintings representing surviving instruments, and the only one in the world to be reunited with the original object. The painting and the instrument will be displayed next to each other in the new Museum gallery. The acquisition has been made possible thanks to the generous support of the ArtFund, the ACE/V&A Purchase Fund, Mr. and Mrs. Davidson and Mr. Alan Rubin.



Cataloguing and digitisation [RM]

Cataloguing of the Museum's iconography collections has been coordinated by the Museum Digitisation and Documentation Officer, and supported by seven volunteers and three placement students. 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.6,000 objects now catalogued to the Spectrum national standards – a primary requirement for the Museum's re-application for Accreditation.



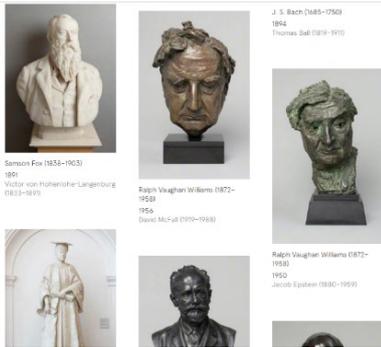
Public access [RM]

Circa 4,500 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 harvested from the MINIM project (see below).
- Google Arts and Culture: over 1,800 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.
- ArtUK Your Paintings: 206 paintings from our collections are available through this platform that includes almost 224,000 artworks from museums and institutions in the UK.





- Art UK Sculpture Project: In June 2018, the RCM was the first collection in the region to be visited by the Art UK Sculpture Project, a continuation of the 'Your Paintings' project, which intends to bring all publicly available artwork collections into a single online repository. Art UK undertook new photography of several of the College's key sculptural items, and the RCM's items were included in the initial launch of this strand of the Art UK resource.

- ArenaPAL: over 4,000 images are available through this commercial platform that has been managing copyright fees and authorisation on behalf of the Museum since 2014. The collaboration has led to a remarkable improvement in efficiency and income from reproduction fees.

Refinement and disposal [RM]

Following an incorporation of certain collections from the Centre for Performance History in 2014, the RCM Museum holds over 15,000 items across in three different sites. The sheer number of objects is the result of numerous acquisitions and donations from independent individuals, whose entire collections were transferred to the Museum, and therefore include several duplicates, objects that do not fit with the primary purpose and identity of the collection, or objects whose conditions are beyond the possibility of conservation.

Since June 2018 the Museum team has undertaken a formal refinement and disposal exercise whose method is described in a *Proposal for the disposal of selected RCM Museum holdings*. The procedure is compliant with Spectrum and Museum Association requirements and reflects the collections' *Acquisition and Disposal Policy*.

The procedure aims at a reorganisation of the collections across departments – in particular transferring material to the Library and the RCM Loan Collection of musical instruments.

Objects that fall outside the goal and profile of the Museum collections and of those of other RCM Departments will be disposed of, in line with the Museum Association disposal guidelines.

Accreditation [EM]

The Museum received full Accreditation from the Arts Council of England in 2013. Following its closure in 2016, it was awarded Provisional Accreditation status. This is reviewed annually and can be renewed for a maximum of three years depending on positive feedback from the Accreditation officer.

The Museum Provisional Accreditation was renewed for the third time in November 2018. We are now preparing the documentation to re-apply for full-accreditation at the time of reopening to the public in spring 2020. This includes:

- 1.9 Emergency Plan
- 2.2 Acquisitions and Disposals policy
- 2.3 Documentation policy
- 2.5 Documentation Plan
- 2.4 Care and Conservation Policy
- 2.6 Care and Conservation Plan

Further documents and policies need to be revised in early 2020 and will require formal approval by the Collection Committee.

Public engagement, collaboration with HEI and dissemination

Teacher ambassador project [LB]

The Teacher Ambassador Project is part of the Activity Plan 2016-2020 supported by the HLF and consists in engaging with a group of teachers from all Key Stages in order to develop, test and disseminate a series of formal learning activities to be delivered when the Museum is open. The project consists of a series of workshops delivered annually at the RCM, also in collaboration with external institutions, and in the delivery of the educational activities at some of the schools involved.

In 2018 we changed our recruitment model for this project in order to work with teachers from a wider pool, and focussed on what we will offer for Early Years, Primary and SEND groups. Five teachers attended a Learning Day at the RCM in November which included getting hands on with some of our collections objects in order to open up discussions about the value of hands-on experiences for children.



The day included a presentation from a colleague at the London Transport Museum about their learning programmes, and a creative afternoon spent contributing ideas and topics towards the RCM Museum's future learning programme. Five new sessions are being developed and will be delivered with our partner schools in March 2019.

Museum Roadshow [LB]

Following the launch of the Museum Roadshow in February 2018 with a family heritage trail at the Southbank Centre, we subsequently used this programme to reach a different audience target through our partnership with the National Trust by travelling to Mottisfont Abbey in Hampshire for a two-day visit. This was an opportunity to share and test some of the developing stories for our new display through a pop-up exhibition, and trial some events that we'd like to feature in the museum's future activity programme.



In December we took the Museum Roadshow to Kensington Central Library, complete with volunteers, two concerts, a pop-up exhibition and several pop-up performances.

We used the pop-up exhibition to test Area 2 of our museum interpretation – Music is Craft, and we also tested the graphic design of the new labels.

These activities included:

(a) a Curator Talk giving a behind-the-scenes glimpse at some keyboards from our collection

(b) a lunchtime concert featuring two RCM students on harpsichord and baroque violin.

We engaged with 358 adults over the course of this visit and carried out some valuable evaluation on our developing interpretation.

Concert and lectures

On the 2nd July the RCM launched a new concert series entitled 'The Gift of Music'. The opening concert, in the Amarillis Fleming Concert Hall, featured instruments donated to the Museum over the past five years, which were played by RCM professors and students under the artistic direction of Prof. Ashley Solomon.



Twelve instruments, from the early 18th to the mid 19th centuries, were thoroughly documented, prepared for performance by the Museum Conservator Susana Caldeira and then presented to an audience of ca. 80 people who attended the event.

On 20th February 2019, another event in the same series celebrated the donation of drawings from Milein Cosman. The evening comprised a pre-concert talk featuring Richard Martin, Ines Schlenker, Norbert Meyn, and Julian Hogg. The following concert, performed by RCM students, featured a programme of works based on some of the artist's subjects. An accompanying temporary display allowed visitors to view a number of the key artworks during the event.

Digital exhibitions [AMB]

The RCM has partnered with Google Arts and Culture since 2015 to present content related to the Museum and Library collections. 91,228 people have viewed our collections items on Google Arts and Culture since our partnership with the platform began. Notably our iconography collection has attracted by far the most views, with our drawings by John Singer Sargent (two originals and two prints) being the four most viewed items with a collective total of 24,831 views.

Exhibitions that were launched in previous years continue to draw a substantial audience; *Beautiful Objects/Beautiful Subjects* has had 2,790 views whilst *Treasures of the Royal College of Music* has had 1,395.

This year the Museum launched three new digital exhibitions exploring ways to connect with different audiences, not necessarily academically oriented:

Milein Cosman: Musical Portraits: a digital exhibition was produced in February 2019 to coincide with the launch of the Cosman collection. A range of promotional postcards has been produced to promote this exhibition, and these have been disseminated at recent events including the RCM's International Women's' Day performance at the Royal Academy of Art.



Promotional Milein Cosman Postcard

For the Love of Music: An exhibition entitled *For the Love of Music* was launched on Valentine's Day. This showcases a number of striking sheet music cover designs dating from 1845 – 1925, all of which have a romantic theme. The exhibition has had 558 views to date. The team promoted the exhibition through two widely-shared blog posts; one for the British Association for Victorian Studies and another for BBC Music.

Six of the best sheet music covers inspired by love

We look through the Royal College of Music's exhibition of romantic designs to find some of the most romantic sheet music covers this Valentine's Day.

14 February 2019 - 11:02am

Submitted by: Freya Parr

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A a -



Shakespeare famously wrote: 'If music be the food of love, play on'. Music and love have long been companions, and the history of romantic songs and ballads stretches all the way from antiquity to the chart-toppers of the present day.

Coverage on the BBC Music website

Volunteering, internships and placements [EM]

Volunteers

The redevelopment of the Museum over the next years relies on a large number of volunteers to collaborate in the digitisation, conservation, organisation and management of the collections. Our volunteers are recruited using the RCM jobs webpage, the TeamLondon volunteer portal and the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea volunteering website. Since the last annual report, a total of 12 new volunteers were recruited to work with the museum team across all areas of the redevelopment. These volunteers receive training from members of the museum team as well as from the Health and Safety Manager. Volunteers include RCM students as well as externals of all ages. Volunteers' expenses are refunded according to Museum Association guidelines.

Placements

We hosted a total of six unpaid student placements between May and July 2018. Our placements were recruited in collaboration with Higher Education Institutions offering Museum studies degrees throughout the UK, including Newcastle University, Birkbeck, Goldsmiths and UCL. These placements undertook work in the museum for professional development, and received specialist in house training to deliver projects. Three students from the UCL MSc in conservation worked with the Museum Conservator to restore a 1531 harpsichord by Alessandro Trasantino. We also hosted two digitisation and archives placements, and one learning and engagement placement to assist with the planning and logistics of Museum Roadshow events in 2018/19.



Communication [AMB]

A communication strategy was developed with the aim of building an audience for the new Museum and minimise the build-up time usually required to regain an audience after a prolonged closure. This relies on the use of several digital platforms, including social media and blogs, as well as promotion of specific events. A large part of the Communication strategy is delivered in collaboration with the RCM Marketing and Communication Department and through platforms managed by the RCM, while other independent platforms and collaborations are being explored in order to expand the reach and audiences specifically interested in Museums and Heritage.

In particular:

Social media

Facebook

Five posts were published through the RCM Facebook account, with a total reach of 67,000 people and generating c. 8,000 impressions and 4,500 engagements. The Museum does not have a separate Facebook account.

Twitter

The Museum engages with Twitter both through the main RCM account (@RCMLondon) and a Museum-specific account (@RCMMuseum) to develop an audience specifically interested in museums and heritage. The RCM account currently reaches 26,400 followers, while the Museum one reaches about 1,500.

Between May 2018 and January 2019 the RCM account has issued 20 tweets related to the collections, reaching an aggregated total of 75,191 impressions and 1,333 engagements.

Over the same period the Museum account issued 360 tweets reaching an aggregated total of 381,376 impressions and 12,130 engagements.

The @RCMMuseum account has also been useful for direct user consultation and preliminary research on objects from the collection, yielding immediate and often reliable answers to questions that would have required lengthy investigation.



Blog Posts

The team have written blog posts for the RCM platform sharing news, interesting stories and new discoveries from the collections. A particularly successful post described how the Museum and Library teams helped two scuba divers to identify part of a harp that they found in a nineteenth-century shipwreck. As it was an Erard harp with a visible serial number, we were able to identify the owner through the Erard ledgers. This fascinating story proved very popular with readers, and went on to be covered by Historic England on their own blog.

We are currently publishing blog posts either on the RCM platform, and on a number of specialised external platforms related to music (BBC Music Blog), museums (Museum Crush), historic studies (Historic England and The Victorianist) with the aim of reaching new audiences which would not normally engage with our collections or the RCM.

In particular, over the past year, the following blogs were published:

- 2nd May 2018: The musician who married a doll
- 16th May 2018: On the road with the RCM Museum
- 21st May 2018: The shipwrecked harp
- 4th June 2018: Which came first, the music or the instrument?
- 24th October 2018: RCM Museum treasures on loan to 3 of the world's leading art museums
- 20th November 2018: RCM Museum on the road again
- 3rd December 2018: Over 1,000 Milein Cosman sketches acquired by the RCM Museum
- 18th December 2018: Rediscovering an original Edward Burne-Jones drawing
- 3rd January 2019: The experience of handling museum objects
- 18th Jan 2019: RCM Museum sends 16th century harpsichord to Oman

Museum Crush

- 10th January 2019: The Georgian musician who married a doll
- 7th March 2019: Milein Cosman's portraits of musical women

BBC Music Blog

- 14th February 2019: Six of the best sheet music covers inspired by love

The Victorianist (British Association for Victorian Studies blog)

- 8th March 2019: Edith Hipkins (1854 – 1945): A forgotten female artist
- 14th February 2019: 'Beauty's Eyes Waltz' to 'The Bridal Morn': Love songs and piano sheet music at the Royal College of Music Museum

Loans [EM]

This year the RCM museum lent seven of its objects to four internationally renowned museum collections for temporary exhibitions. The increasing number of loan requests is now managed through a new 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	Images
<p>Norwich, Norfolk Museums Trust/ Norwich Castle <i>The Paston Treasure, a microcosm of the known world</i> 23 June - 23 September 2018</p> <p>RCM0040, Pochette, August Wörle RCM0936 Bass Viol, Richard Meares RCM0301 Bass viol bow RCM0303 Pochette bow</p>	
<p>London, Tate Britain <i>Edward Burne-Jones</i> 24 October 2018- 24 February 2019</p> <p>PPHC00138, Edward Burne-Jones, Portrait of Jan Paderewski</p>	
<p>Paris, Grand Palais <i>Eblouissante Venise</i> 24 September 2018 – 21 January 2019</p> <p>PPHC00272, Bartolomeo Nazari portrait of Farinelli [Carlo Broschi]</p>	
<p>Venice, Palazzo Ducale <i>Canaletto e Venezia</i> Dates: September 24 2018- June 9, 2019.</p> <p>PPHC00272, Nazari portrait of Farinelli [Carlo Broschi]</p>	
<p>Travelling exhibition <i>Opera: Power, Passion, Politics</i> (V&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>	

Conservation [SC]

The Museum collections are undergoing a major conservation programme supported by the HLF and delivered by a full time Conservator with the support of external experts and institutions. It aims at preparing the objects for the new display, and substantially increase – whenever possible in compliance with museum standards – the number of playable instruments in the collection and guarantee long term preservation of the research collection.

Some of the highlights of the past year's activity have included:

Guitar, Joachim Tielke (Hamburg, c. 1684. RCM0016)



The instrument was cleaned, removing a thick layer of dirt from all surfaces. Fractures on the soundboard were filled, loose elements were consolidated and the pins on the bridge were replaced.

Cithrinchen, Joachim Tielke (Hamburg, c. 1676. RCM0027)

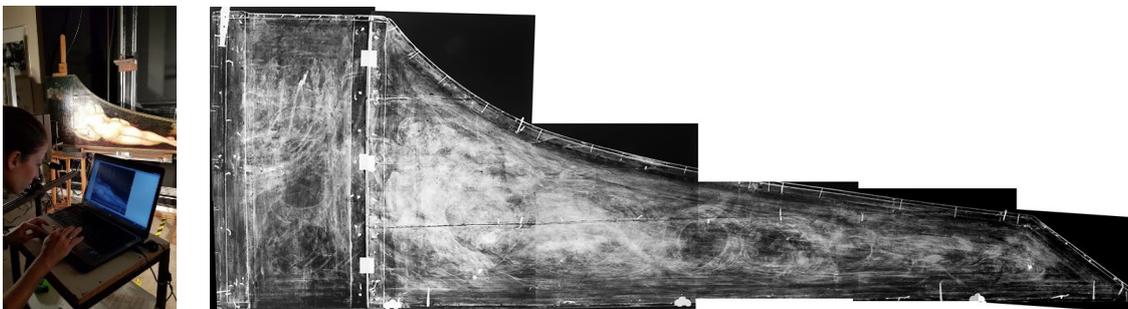


The instrument was covered in a layer of non-original and degraded varnish which was removed. The surface was cleaned. Old fillers were removed and replaced by new purfling, copying the original. Several fractures on the soundboard were filled and retouched. The roses were cleaned and consolidated by an external conservator, Emilie Trehu.



Harpichord, Alessandro Trasuntino (Venice, 1531. RCM0002)

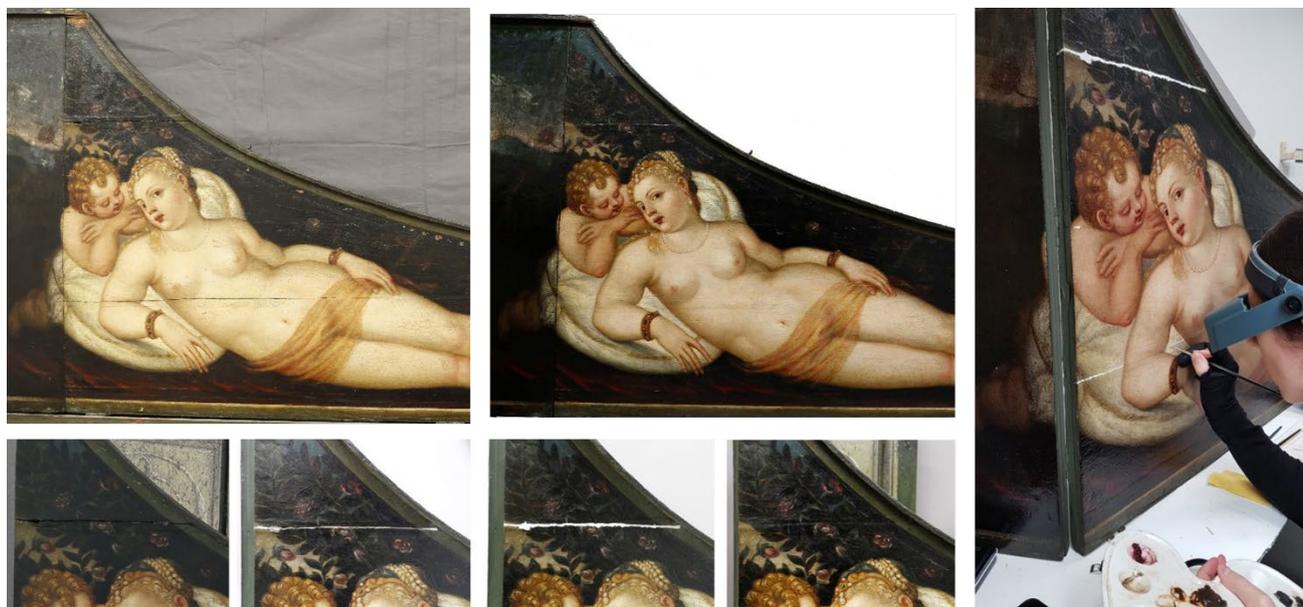
The instrument required a preliminary set of analyses to inform the conservation approach. These were supported through a grant from the Finnis Scott Foundation and undertaken in collaboration with the Courtauld Institute and private laboratories.



RCM0002 – Harpichord lid being analysed at the Courtauld Institute. Infra Red electography, X-Ray fluorescence, and X-Radiography.

Harpisichord lid overall X radiography of CIA 2578. The images, together with infra-red imaging, show another painted composition under the currently visible.

The instrument was then cleaned and consolidated. Missing studs, front of the keys, missing parts of the rosette, were replaced using materials that can be easily identified and removed. The painting on the lid was consolidated, the surface was cleaned (without removing the varnish) and fractures filled and retouched. The work was performed by UCL MSc Conservation placements, by Lucy Odlin, a private paintings conservator and by the RCM Conservator, Susana Caldeira.



Images of the lid of the harpsichord before, during and after conservation. On the right, Lucy Odlin conserving the painting.



Pochette violin, anon. (? , 17th/18th century. RCM0059)

The pochette which would initially incorporate a paper fan and the respective mechanism, was missing all the elements except for the body of the instrument. Missing elements – pegs, tailpiece, bridge and fan - were replaced, after researching other related instruments held in Paris (Musée de la Musique) and Nuremberg (Deutsches Museum).



Guitar, Belchior Dias (Lisbon, 1581. RCM0171)

The top of the guitar had several open fractures or joints which were disturbing for the eye and dangerous for the structure. The fractures were consolidated and filled with spruce shims, previously shaped and coloured. New pegs were made. The losses of the mustachios were replaced. The surface was cleaned.

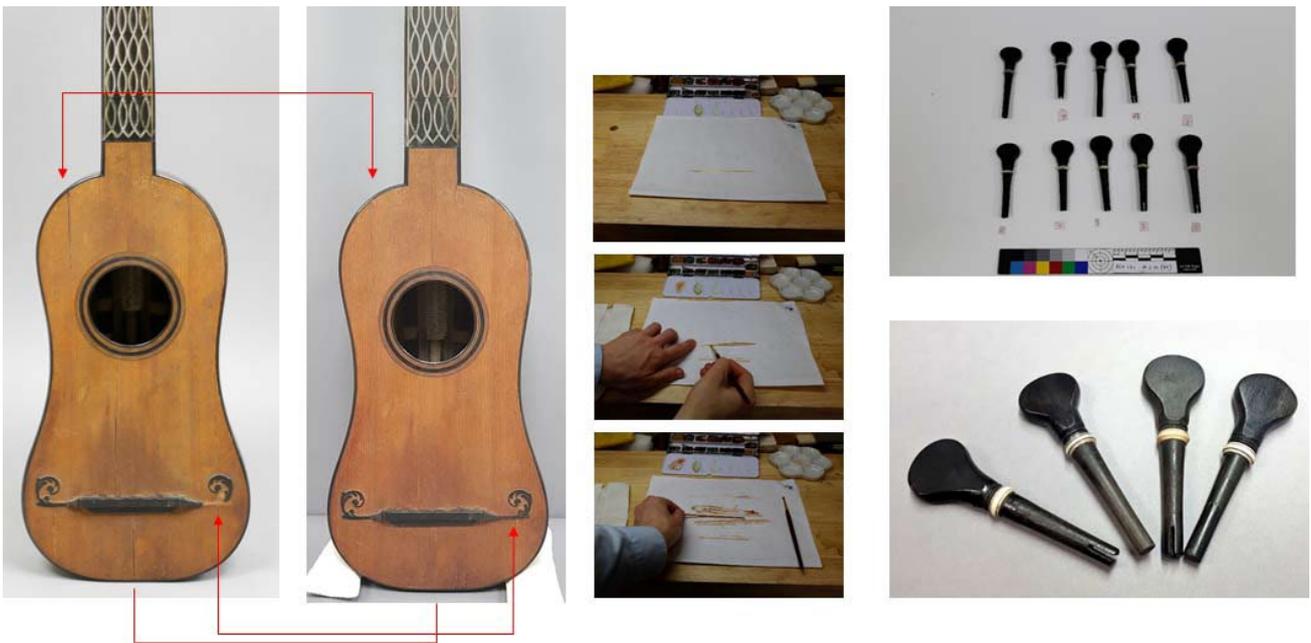


Image of soundboard of Guitar before and after conservation. Steps for making soundboard shims. Two new pegs.

Research and knowledge exchange

HEFCE MINIM-UK Project [RM]



DIGITAL HUMANITIES and MUSICAL HERITAGE

Royal College of Music, London, Monday 2 July 2018

Digital resources are playing a key role in transforming access to museum collections, enriching the experience provided by physical displays by providing different ways of encountering and interacting with 'heritage': the possibility of virtually aggregating objects from different museums, hard-to-reach collections and storage locations supports the making of new connections, narratives, and perspectives and dramatically expands the opportunities for everybody to engage with the material and intangible past. Thanks to the ease of access and friendly layout, most platforms are also evolving from being oriented only towards specialists to addressing non-specialised users, encouraging unprecedented numbers of people to take an active role in being 'curators' of heritage.

Musical heritage offers outstanding potential for these developments. It presents complexities that always posed major issues in traditional displays: the close connection between the tangible and intangible dimensions, the need to rely on images, sounds and multimedia to relate and develop stories, the requirement for immersive experiences to communicate effectively, all come together in stretching the potential of current technical resources.

At the same time, the digital interpretation of musical heritage poses challenges that remain hard to overcome for many institutions: issues of technical accessibility, high costs in maintaining and running complex infrastructures, fragmentation of resources in small projects which disappear in the digital space.

Over the past two years, the Royal College of Music Museum has launched and delivered the MINIM-UK project (www.minim.ac.uk), a partnership with the Horniman Museum and Gardens, the Royal Academy of Music, and the University of Edinburgh that – generously supported by Research England (formerly HEFCE) – addressed some of these issues by creating the largest resource in the world that aggregates data on musical instruments in the heritage collections of a single nation: over 200 collections have contributed records of around 20,000 objects, and a team of cataloguers has travelled the country creating digital records of hard-to-access instruments. These records include video and sound records in addition to images and texts, and are made accessible online for free exploration, and for creating bespoke curated resources. Since the launch of the project the resource has become the basis for digital exhibitions and academic curricula and has attracted over 12,000 individual users. The project also opens an otherwise hard-to-reach international dimension to medium and small collections, as its records are also harvested by major international platforms such as IAWG (www.mimo-international.com) and Europeana (www.europeana.eu).

This one-day workshop presents a variety of perspectives on major projects that address different dimensions of the documentation, dissemination, and conservation of musical heritage, or which provide promising methodological models that could be applied to music. It is aimed at starting new discussions that will stimulate further expansion and articulation of the MINIM-UK project, encourage new collaborations, and, moving beyond musical instruments, address the broader challenges of the digital dissemination of musical heritage.



RCM-Events
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The HEFCE-funded MINIM-UK project launched to the public in October 2017. Available at minim.ac.uk, it provides a public-facing resource for the exploration of c.20,000 individual instruments held in more than 200 venues in the UK.

Recent additions to the MINIM-UK resource include the instrument collection of the Britten-Pears Foundation, bringing some of Benjamin Britten's personal items to this national resource. We have also added audio and video materials from the Royal Collection Trust, which highlight some of the most important instruments from their collections.

On Monday 2nd July 2018, the College hosted *Digital Humanities and Musical Heritage*, a one-day conference presenting a variety of perspectives on major projects that addressed different dimensions of the documentation, dissemination, and conservation of musical heritage, or which provide promising methodological models that could be applied to music.

Speakers included representatives from the RCM, Philharmonie de Paris, the British Library, Art UK, the Irish Traditional Music Archive, Google Arts & Culture, the V&A, the University of Oxford, the Germanisches Nationalmuseum, and the University of Pavia.

The symposium was led by the MINIM-UK project. Videos of the conference presentations are available through the MINIM-UK website.

MINIM-UK is supported by the RCM until at least 2022. It

Cover of the *Digital Humanities and Musical Heritage* programme

has received over 30,000 users in the past year.

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. Among the most relevant are:

Publications

- G. Rossi Rognoni, 'Organology and the others: a political perspective', *Journal of the American Musical Instrument Society*, 44 (2018), pp. 7-17

- G. Rossi Rognoni, *The Descent of Organology: Cultural and Methodological Influences in the Definition of Organology in the 19th Century*, in *Von Sammeln, Klassifizieren und Interpretieren: Die zerstörte Vielfalt des Curt Sachs*, ed. by Wolfgang Behrens, Martin Elste und Frauke Firzner (Mainz: Schott, 2017), pp. 199-208
- 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)
- G. Rossi Rognoni, 'Preserving Functionality: Keeping Artefacts "Alive" in Museums', *Curator: the Museum Journal*, special issue on *Sonic Museums* (2019)
- Anna Maria Barry, *Martial Masculinity: Exploring and Imagining the Military in the Long Nineteenth Century*, Eds. Michael Brown, Anna Maria Barry, Joanne Begiato (Manchester University Press, 2019)
- Anna Maria Barry, 'Charles Incedon: A Singing Sailor on the Georgian Stage', *Martial Masculinity: Exploring and Imagining the Military in the Long Nineteenth Century*, Eds. Michael Brown, Anna Maria Barry, Joanne Begiato (Manchester University Press, 2019)
- Anna Maria Barry, 'Lady Sings the Blues? Tragedy, Autobiography and Reassessment', *Billie Holiday: Essays on the Artistry and Legacy*, Eds. Jessica McKee and Michael Perez (McFarland Press, 2019)
- Anna Maria Barry, 'From the Stage to the Page: Male Opera Singers and the Nineteenth-Century Press', *Work and the Nineteenth-Century Press: Living Work for Living People*, Eds. Andrew King, Fiona Snailham and Elizabeth Tilley (Routledge, 2021)
- Anna Maria Barry, *Operatic Travel Writing of the Nineteenth-Century* (shortly to be submitted to *Studies in Travel Writing*)
- Anna Maria Barry, 'An Opera Singer's Gothic Fiction: The Autobiographies of Sims Reeves', *Musical Biography: Ideology, Narrative and Myth*, Eds. Christopher Wiley and Paul Watt (collection under review with Boydell and Brewer)

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, *Keyboard instruments in the Royal College of Music Museum Collection* (Mottisfont, Mottisfont Abbey, 23rd May 2018)
- Gabriele Rossi Rognoni, *A Social History of Britain Through Musical Instruments* (London, Royal College of Music, 5th July 2018)
- Gabriele Rossi Rognoni, *Materialities and Mobilities in the long 16th Century: the Transformation of Musical Instruments* (Cremona, International Conference on Baroque Music, 13th July 2018)
- Gabriele Rossi Rognoni, *Musical Instruments Unwrapped: Telling Social History through Musical Instruments* (Edinburgh, St. Cecilia's Hall, 12th November 2018)
- Anna Maria Barry, *Operatic Portraiture: Creating and Contesting Identity in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (18th Annual Conference of Association RldIM, Canterbury Christ Church University, July 2018)
- Anna Maria Barry, *Scoring the Women's Suffrage Movement at the Royal College of Music* (Centennial Reflections on Women's Suffrage and the Arts, University of Surrey, June 2018)
- Anna Maria Barry, *Overwrought and Overweight: Italian Opera Singers in Nineteenth-Century Culture'* (INCS: Measure and Excess, University of Roma Tre, June 2018)
- Anna Maria Barry, "...not what is expected, perhaps, in memoirs such as these": *The Operatic City in Michael Kelly's Reminiscences* (City and Spectacle in Nineteenth-Century Performance, University of Warwick in Venice, June 2018)

Collections Research [AMB]

Research on the collection is an ongoing process. It is feeding into content for the new museum, as well as supporting conservation projects. Some exciting discoveries have been made as the collection is catalogued and digitised. These include a previously unknown set of drawings by the Pre-Raphaelite artist Edward Burne-Jones. Following research by the Museum team and consultation with experts, the drawings will be included in a forthcoming *catalogue raisonné* of Burne-Jones's work. This discovery was disseminated through a widely-shared blog post for the RCM, and was further promoted at an international Burne-Jones conference through specially printed images featuring the new drawing.

Right: Portrait of Franz Liszt, 1827, by James Minasi, probably the earliest known portrait.



Below: Drawing for Magpie Madrigal Society by Burne Jones.



Other discoveries include the earliest-known portrait of Liszt. This was drawn when the composer was 16 and visiting London for the second time as a concert pianist.

A number of new research projects are currently in progress. These focus on the Museum's collection of death masks, the albums of Edith Hipkins and the Magpie Madrigal Society collection of drawings. This research has already produced some important new findings, and these will be disseminated through exhibitions, academic articles, conference papers and public talks over the course of the next year.

International cooperation

The Museum Curator has held for the third year the position of Chair of the Committee for Music Museums of the International Council of Museums (ICOM), which coordinates a network of over 250 institutions in five continents specialised in the display of music in museums.

Significant achievements of this year were:

- An international conference on 'Theory, Technology and Methods: Museums' Interpretation of Musical Traditions' organised in Wuhan and Shanghai in September 2018 in collaboration with the Committee of Music Museums of the People's Republic of China. The conference attracted over 130 participants from 20 countries. The conference proceedings will be published by summer 2019.

- The successful application for a research grant towards a publication on *Displaying Music in the 21st Century* edited by Gabriele Rossi Rognoni and Eric De Visscher
- The successful application for a grant to organise a joint conference on *Preserving the Functionality of Museum Objects* jointly planned with the Committee of Museums of Science and Technology of the International Council of Museums, to be organised in Paris, Cité de la Musique, in early 2020.

The Curator was also elected Chair of the Italian Early Music Foundation and is member of the Scientific Committee of the Museum of the Violin in Cremona.