

Research Assessment Exercise 2020
Impact Overview Statement

University: The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Unit of Assessment (UoA): 39

Total number of eligible staff of the university in the UoA: 7

(1) Context – context for the individual case study(ies)

Uniquely placed in our geographical location and with unique research collections, The Department of Music of the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) aims to serve as a conduit for musical scholarship between the Greater China region and the West. The unit strives to excel in the creation, application, dissemination and preservation of musical knowledge through our research, teaching, professional training, and service to a variety of local, regional and international communities. The faculty is committed to original research that advances musical creativity and knowledge in our four areas of specialisation: 1) composition, 2) ethnomusicology, 3) historical musicology, and 4) music theory.

The impacts generated by or derived from the research activities of the UoA can be categorized as musical, educational, and sociocultural. Accordingly, the audiences and beneficiaries of the unit's research can similarly be categorized into the three groups. The musical group includes music participants of all kinds, such as the performers and audiences involved in the performances of works by the CUHK composition faculty. Educationally, music teachers and students at secondary and tertiary levels have benefited from the unit's compositional and academic activities. Audiences and beneficiaries whose involvement has an extra-musical component (e.g. devotional, ceremonial, or therapeutic) are subsumed under the sociocultural group.

(2) Approach to impact – the unit's approach to impact during the assessment period for impact

In the impact case study, the unit has chosen a selection of compositions that represents the integration of Chinese and Western elements as the underpinning research. We focused on how these compositions have filled the artistic, musical, and functional void in various sectors in Hong Kong and abroad, showcasing the unique contributions of our compositional faculty on different fronts. As illustrated in the case study, musical, educational, and sociocultural impacts have been derived from the creative output of the unit that centers on the theme of Chinese-Western syncretism, aligning well with the Department's mission to bridge the east and west.

More generally, the composition faculty has been working closely with local performing groups as well as theatre and dance companies to stage collaborative artworks. Faculty members working for the Hong Kong Composers' Guild have also created platforms and performance opportunities for other local composers, especially the younger generation. In addition to contributing to the local cultural scene, some of these works also draw on local heritage, breathing new life into centuries-old traditions from the territory, and raising public awareness of our own culture. Notably, our composition faculty have been active in contributing concert works and church music in the local language, which is a unique contribution of the Department on the world stage. Although widely spoken in Southern China and communities of overseas Chinese, Cantonese is still rarely used in the choral and vocal repertoire because of the difficulty in setting to music existing texts in a tonal language with six different pitches. In recent years, our faculty's Cantonese outputs have not only been performed locally, but also by overseas performers whose first language is not Cantonese; some of these works have been published by prestigious presses including Edition Peters.

Faculty members have also sought to disseminate musical knowledge, including their own research, to a variety of communities through their commitments to serve various professional organisations and through their continued support of local, regional and international institutions. For instance, our theory and musicology faculty have been collaborating with the Hong Kong Arts Festival, the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra, Hong Kong Sinfonietta and other performance organisations in various

capacities such as artist associate, actively promoting musical knowledge to the public through numerous channels such as talks, workshops, and online platforms.

In line with the growing attention directed to the preservation of cultural heritage worldwide, the unit has strived to preserve local musical culture through research, knowledge transfer and archival efforts. The two units under the auspices of the Centre for Chinese Music Studies, namely the Chinese Music Archive, and the Chinese Opera Information Centre, have played critical roles in archiving valuable local cultural assets, including traditional Cantonese music and other important assets in the south China region, as well as disseminating them through courses, public lectures, online platforms, and so on.

(3) Strategy and plans – strategy and plans for supporting impact

To develop impact, the UoA has adopted, and will continue to adopt, a twofold strategy: direct and indirect. The direct sub-strategy covers impact-enabling and -enhancing activities directly organized by the Department of Music, while the indirect sub-strategy refers to the achievement of impact taking place beyond the Department as a result of the active fostering of ties by faculty members with the industry, education sector, as well as different performing groups and concert presenters. Both sub-strategies have their own methodological advantages and limitations: the direct one enables us to target the audience concerned and achieve the intended impact in a highly focused and organized manner, but is inevitably limited in reach; by contrast, although the indirect one does not permit the kind of thorough planning involved in the direct one, it greatly widens the potential reach of our impact by going far beyond our institutional confines, and with serendipity, enables the achievement of completely unexpected impact. Hence, the two sub-strategies are not only both necessary but indeed mutually complementary.

To demonstrate how our strategy works in practice, it would be useful to turn to the impact case that exemplifies the indirect sub-strategy. For the composition faculty involved, the connections they had fostered led to numerous commissions and performances, in addition to invitations to disseminate the Department's output through talks, workshops, concert collaborations, score publications, and CD publications, etc. The output of the faculty encouraged different beneficiary groups to take the lead in disseminating the faculty output to an even wider range of beneficiaries, resulting in far-ranging impacts in the performing arts, education, religion, and other social sectors. To collect evidence of the impacts received by the beneficiary groups for the impact case study, the Department then proactively sought testimonials from individuals who were directly involved in the impact development.

In order to further this line of impact development, the unit—this time taking a more direct role—has planned to collaborate with the Education Bureau in Hong Kong as well as other local schools in the coming years so as to introduce the unit's creative output to the younger generation of music students through lectures, workshops, and masterclass. Young composers will be able to incorporate some of the compositional tools designed by the faculty and showcase their work in a concert series administered by the Department. The know-how transfer activities are expected to bring even more substantial impacts among the beneficiaries in the years to come.

(4) Relationship to case studies – the relationship between the unit's approach to impact and the submitted case studies

During the assessment period, the unit's active development of ties with various groups outside the academia has brought considerable impact to the performing arts, education, religion, and other social sectors. For this impact case and the chosen output, our beneficiaries range from professional musicians such as the Hong Kong Chinese orchestra and the Taipei Chamber Singers, to emerging performers such as participants of the Maggini Double Bass Competition; from government authority such as the Hong Kong Education Bureau, to religious communities such as the Hong Kong Anglican Church (Episcopal). These beneficiary groups have actively further disseminated the Department's output through self-initiated activities including workshop, lectures, and repeated performances, thus maximising the reach and impacts of the chosen outputs.