

Research Assessment Exercise 2020

Impact Overview Statement

University: The University of Hong Kong (HKU)

Unit of Assessment (UoA): UoA 39 Music and performing arts

Total number of eligible staff of the university in the UoA: 6

(1) Context

In its research, the Department of Music (UoA) aims to break down the boundaries between areas such as historical musicology, music theory, ethnomusicology, music psychology, philosophy of music, composition and performance. This cross-disciplinary approach also informs its impact, aligning research, teaching, performance and creative outputs with community engagement and public influence. Since its establishment, the Department has sought to influence the cultural sector in Hong Kong by engaging with policymakers and practitioners, as well as by taking on a leadership role in curating concerts at a professional level. The Department's impact is focused on three main areas, all aimed at enriching cultural life in Hong Kong and beyond: a vibrant series of public concerts and talks, its composition work, and the development of cultural leaders through its Advanced Cultural Leadership Programme. Principal beneficiaries include public audiences for music, musicians and singers, and professionals working in the cultural field. The Department collaborates extensively with internal and external partners that support and fund its impact.

(2) Approach to impact

Enriching Cultural Life: When the Department moved to the Centennial Campus in 2012, it was asked by the University to take up the organisation of concerts in the state-of-the-art, 900-seat Grand Hall. The Department established a Cultural Management Office (CMO), which oversees the “My University Spotlight Encounters” (MUSE) Concert Series and “Music in Words” programmes. Members supervise the selection of performers with the aim of introducing audiences to less well-known as well as established musicians. Concerts are presented alongside in-depth dialogues with the artists, providing an intellectual component based on our research expertise; this distinguishes the Department's concert series from other music performances in the region. CMO organises up to 30 MUSE concerts and talks per year, with the majority offered free or at greatly discounted prices to widen access, thanks to rental revenue and collaborations with partners such as the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra. Artists performing or participating in MUSE events during the review period include the Juilliard Quartet, Angela Hewitt, Ian Bostridge, Hélène Grimaud, the Takács Quartet, Roger Norrington, Evgeny Kissin, Nobuyuki Tsujii, Orpheus Orchestra, and Lang Lang.

The Department is active in bringing new musical experiences to audiences through its championing of new music, young composers, and their own compositions. Chan Hing-yan has composed three chamber operas, two of which, *Datong – the Chinese Utopia* (2015) and *Heart of Coral* (2013), were commissioned by the Hong Kong Arts Festival (HKAF). Chan worked with the HKAF to create the cantata *Hong Kong Odyssey* (2017), for which he composed half of the music, and mentored three young composers and over 100 musicians. These commissions and performances testify to the Department's success in introducing new music to mainstream audiences, and provide festival programmers with opportunities to showcase local talent on an international stage. *Heart of Coral* was performed in Taiwan in 2014, and *Datong* in London in 2017, as part of the celebrations for the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the HKSAR.

Building Capacity for Cultural Leadership: The Advanced Cultural Leadership Programme (ACLP) is a novel approach to impact developed by the Department. Its aim is to train a new generation of arts administrators with the skills to manage world-class venues and create innovative programming. Working with the Clore Leadership Programme and the West Kowloon Cultural District (WKCD), Stage 1 of the ACLP (2010–17) trained over 100 skilled cultural leaders and created a global network for arts professionals in Hong Kong by establishing contacts with arts leaders and institutions around the world. Stage 2 of the ACLP, which is now underway, is to build

on the successes and relationships established during Stage 1 to foster a network of ethical leaders for Hong Kong's emerging cultural movement, and further its transformational work. The ACLP has shaped the MUSE Concert Series both in terms of its design and the training of the CMO. ACLP alumni now work in many of Hong Kong's most important cultural institutions, such as the Hong Kong Museum of Art and the Hong Kong Ballet.

Partnerships and Consultancies: The Department has fostered major partnerships with the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra (Chua and J. Chan helped shape strategy as members of the Board), the UK's Clore Leadership Programme, WKCD, Hong Kong Sinfonietta, Hong Kong New Music Ensemble (HKNME), HKAF, Le French May, and the HKSAR Government's Leisure and Cultural Services Department. These partnerships are key to disseminating the Department's research and composition work through MUSE and the ACLP network. Biancorosso is the Chairman of the HKNME and an advisory member of the HKAF Programme Committee. He is also involved in a Leverhulme Trust funded project that investigates the "Phantom on Film" phenomenon, which has produced public screenings and talks, including events organised with the HK International Film Festival in 2017, and at the Barbican Cinema and Guildhall School of Music & Drama in London in 2018. In 2016, Waugh and Neglia collaborated with the Faculty of Architecture and the HKNME to research and construct instruments for performances of the work of Harry Partch.

Leveraging Funding Opportunities: The Department raised considerable funds from private individuals and foundations to run the ACLP and MUSE/CMO (over HK\$15 million); it also successfully bid for seed funding from the University Development Fund, and procured two endowed professorships to help sustain these programmes. It has leveraged existing resources, including the Faculty's University Artists Scheme, which funded public events and workshops with Hong Kong Sinfonietta Conductor Yip Wing-sie and renowned cellist Trey Lee. The Department has made use of HKU's Knowledge Exchange (KE) Scheme to support MUSE programming, most recently a community-building 'Messiah Sing-Along' in 2017 in the Grand Hall.

(3) Strategy and plans

The Department will build on existing partnerships and work on developing new collaborations to support the continued growth of the MUSE Concert Series programming and the nurturing of young musicians and composers. One example is a new genre-bending music festival with California-based Camerata Pacifica planned for 2021 that will introduce new and established works, build new audiences in Hong Kong, and foster creative exchange among artists. The Department will continue to explore new ways of disseminating its research. Future plans for the MUSE Concert Series include the establishment of artists-in-residence programmes in conjunction with Le French May, and outputs based on the concert series, including books and recordings. 2020 is the 250th anniversary of Beethoven's birth, and the Department's expertise on Beethoven will result in public lectures, recitals, and the release of a new recording of the 32 Piano Sonatas performed by Konstantin Lifschitz in the Grand Hall in 2017. CMO already collects audience feedback from all its concerts and uses this to inform its programming. The Department supports Faculty initiatives to ensure that impact is embedded in staff training and in new staff recruitment, and will continue to encourage members to apply for impact funding opportunities, such as the HKU KE Fund.

(4) Relationship to case studies

The selected case study on the ACLP exemplifies the Department's integrative and dynamic approach to research and impact. Chua identified a need for globally connected arts administrators to staff Hong Kong's rapidly expanding cultural landscape and, based on his research on Beethoven, developed a new leadership model that informed the training offered by the ACLP. In turn, these leadership principles have inspired the values and strategies of the CMO and MUSE Concert Series. Both the ACLP and MUSE rely on partnerships established by the Department and target its key beneficiaries.