

<b>Institution: Royal College of Music</b>
<b>Unit of Assessment: 35 - Music, Drama, Dance and Performing Arts</b>
<b>Title of case study: LEARNING FROM THE PAST</b>
<b>1. Summary of the impact</b>

*Learning from the Past* is a priority in the RCM's research strategy, building on the College's reputation for bringing music's context to life, whether through concerts, recordings or text-based outputs. The rich RCM Collections provide a stimulating environment for advancing dialogue across the theory and practice of music. RCM Director Colin Lawson, an internationally recognised clarinettist, takes a lead in working from historical sources (often from within the RCM) to invigorate and illuminate performance. His multifaceted research and his leadership across the institution and beyond have radically advanced the understanding of music across a wide range of national and international beneficiaries, including the general public, the business community and the public sector. He challenges the cultural values and sociological assumptions of performance practice in ways which enrich the lives, imaginations and sensibilities of a broad cross-section of society.

<b>2. Underpinning research</b>
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Lawson seeks to interpret historical evidence in ways that can be readily comprehended by today's musical community and directly influence it. His outputs range across published books and articles, editions, innovative professional practice, recordings, broadcasts, programming, knowledge exchange and curriculum design. Since the 1980s he has been addressing the question of how primary source material can influence the art and craft of music making; in particular, he has brought influential insights to the under-investigated relationship of historical accuracy and practical efficacy. During his Directorship, the RCM's Collections and research activities have acquired a radically enhanced public profile.

Lawson produced some important scholarly outputs during his earlier association with the RCM as consultant and external examiner. For example, he was co-editor with Robin Stowell (Cardiff University) of *The Historical Performance of Music* (Cambridge, 1999). As a specialist in performance practice on wind instruments, Lawson was a contributor to the ABRSM series of *Performer's Guides*, together with RCM staff Roy Howat (Research Fellow to 2003), Stephen Preston (baroque flute professor to 2010) and David Ward (fortepiano professor to 2011). This series represented the latest thinking on stylish performance for a market of AS/A2 pupils and tertiary students, together with amateur performers and their teachers. The RCM's scholarly connection with the global marketplace of ABRSM has been further cemented with the publication of the monograph by David Wright (Honorary Research Fellow), *The Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music: A Social and Cultural History* (Boydell, 2013).

Since his appointment as RCM Director in 2005, Lawson has continued vigorously to pursue an agenda across theory and practice in both generic and subject-specific arenas, thus bringing reach and significance to an important aspect of the College's research agenda. In the *Dutch Journal of Music Theory* (2007), Lawson articulated his broad manifesto 'Practising research: Researching practice' to a European readership, and he has also undertaken projects to bring the realities of historical performance to a scholarly environment, an issue of which the general public remains generally unaware [1]. At the 2005 CHARM conference *The Art of Record Production*, he presented a paper 'The most original Beethoven yet recorded: Fantasies, realities and the microphone' [2]; this was followed by a personal take, 'Recording history: A clarinettist's retrospective' in *The Cambridge Companion to Recorded Music* (2009) [3]. Both articles drew upon the author's experience of period ensembles in the studio and concert hall, offering insights behind the scenes for both general audiences and specialists and probing underpinning musical philosophies and their relationship to market realities.

Lawson has consistently achieved practical demonstrations of his scholarly work. While RCM Director, he has undertaken a major project to record all twelve of the Sonatas contained in the *Méthode de Clarinette* (1802) by J.X. Lefèvre, professor at the Paris Conservatoire from its inception [4]. These take into account historical information contained in relevant primary sources (with due attention to national styles) and the commissioning of appropriate period instruments. He

**Impact case study (REF3b)**

applied this research in preparing editions for the ABRSM clarinet syllabus Grades 5-7 (2013), which include works by Lefèvre and his colleague Devienne. Lawson's most recent practical project comprises a recording of Mozart's Clarinet Quintet and its associated fragments with the period ensemble *The Revolutionary Drawing Room* (leader, RCM professor Adrian Butterfield) [5]. This reflects the contextual approach in his chapter 'A winning strike: The miracle of Mozart's *Kegelstatt*' in Martin Harlow (ed.), *Mozart's Chamber Music with Keyboard* (Cambridge, 2012).

With Stowell, Lawson is co-editor of *The Cambridge History of Musical Performance* (2012), a radical project tracing the development of musical history from the perspective of the performer rather than the composer, the first time such an approach has been promoted [6]. Its international authorship includes William Mival (RCM Head of Composition), Natasha Loges (Assistant Head of Programmes), David Wright and Anthony Payne (Research Fellow in Creative Practice 2007-09).

The impact detailed below also extends to examples of ways in which Lawson's leadership has influenced the institutional research profile (e.g. see [G1] and Section 4).

**3. References to the research**

- [1] Lawson (2007), Practising research: Researching practice, *Dutch Journal of Music Theory*, vol.12 (no.1), pp.58-65.
- [2] Lawson (2005), 'The most original Beethoven yet recorded': Fantasies, realities and the microphone, in *CHARM Symposium 2: The Art of Record Production* ([www.charm.rhul.ac.uk](http://www.charm.rhul.ac.uk)), <http://charm.cchcdn.net/redist/pdf/s2Lawson.pdf>.
- [3] Lawson (2009), Recreating history: A clarinettist's retrospective, in Cook, Clarke, Leech-Wilkinson, Rink (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Recorded Music* (pp.263-266), Cambridge.
- [4] Lawson (period C clarinet), with Claire Thirion (vc), Sebastian Comberti (vc) (2007, 2011), *Xavier Lefèvre: A Revolutionary Tutor* (2CDs), Clarinet Classics: CC0055, CC0058.
- [5] Lawson, with The Revolutionary Drawing Room (2012), *Mozart Clarinet Quintet and Fragments* (in completions by Robert Levin and Franz Beyer), Clarinet Classics: CC0068.
- [6] Lawson, Stowell (eds.) (2012), *The Cambridge History of Musical Performance*, Cambridge.

**Grant**

- [G1]Williamson (PI), with CI Solomon (2008-10), *The Listening Gallery: Integrating Music with Exhibitions and Gallery Displays*, AHRC, £234,685 (Ref. AH/F016840/1).

**Quality of the research**

Cambridge University Press publications are subject to rigorous peer review and *The Cambridge History* postulates an innovative view of the subject through performance and performers rather than via composition and composers. Lawson's contributions relate to his research in musical education and the compromises between historical accuracy and practical expediency. The peer-reviewed article in the *Dutch Journal of Music Theory* was part of a special issue dedicated to practice-based research in music. The journal's editorial board is drawn from the Universities of Amsterdam, Leuven and The Hague. The Lefèvre CD returns the music to its original sound-world by using a replica of a C clarinet from the Shackleton Collection made c1805 by the composer's preferred maker Baumann. It also demonstrates a historically informed approach to the musical text as a basis for performance. Aside from its intrinsic musical value, the project contributes to knowledge of early conservatoire training, as charted in Lawson's contextualising liner notes.

**4. Details of the impact**

Lawson has made a sustained and effective contribution to economic and cultural aspects of the music business. He remains unusual in pursuing and influencing an agenda across theory and practice that enhances an understanding of performance at the highest level. His own playing activity focuses upon new ways of communicating with audiences and on new ways of training musicians. In particular, he has influenced creative practice by his practical investigations into the relationship of musicians, repertory and audiences. He connects with a wide public not only

### Impact case study (REF3b)

through recordings, broadcasts and publications, but through interaction with institutions such as the Association of British Orchestras, Conservatoires UK Research Forum (as chair), individual orchestras, museums and cultural and community venues. He achieves a broad educational impact through ABRSM publications and inclusion on HEI reading lists worldwide. He consistently reaches an international audience not only through performances and recordings but through his contributions to the *International Symposia on Performance Science* (Auckland 2009, Toronto 2011, Vienna 2013) which, as the proceedings indicate, include many professional practitioners in their delegate lists. While most innovations in performance practice have been largely driven from outside academe, Lawson has been in a distinctive position to articulate the realities of the marketplace and their relationship with scholarship and research. For example, his article “‘Attractively packaged but unripe fruit’: The UK’s commercialization of musical history in the 1980s’ was published in the peer-reviewed *Performance Practice Review* (2008, vol.13). This journal aims to bridge the gap between theory and practice and has a wide reach across the executant community, especially in the USA.

Lawson’s research publications may be found on the syllabus of music courses in various parts of the world. His work reaches important markets through the ABRSM *Performer’s Guide to the Classical Period* (sales c10,000) and through his ABRSM editions of Grades 5-7 Clarinet Pieces (initial domestic and international sales of over 6,000 from their June 2013 publication to 31 July [S1]). His Cambridge books (including *The Cambridge History of Musical Performance*) continue to appear on the reading lists of UK universities including Manchester [S2], St Andrews and Goldsmiths and are recommended as essential reading for LRSM and FRSM candidates. Internationally they are used by Singapore Examinations Board and the Universities of Indiana, Tasmania, New South Wales, Melbourne, Rioja (in a 2005 Spanish translation) and Mexico. They are also represented on the select reading list of the website *Early Music America*. *The Cambridge Companion to the Clarinet* (ed. Lawson) appeared in a Chinese edition in 2010.

The Lefèvre discs (2007, 2011) have circulated in the UK, America, Canada, Japan, France, Germany, Belgium and Italy on the Naxos distribution network, attracting global acclaim [S3]. *International Record Review* (December 2011) emphasised their didactic value as follows: the Lefèvre Sonatas “still frequently feature in syllabus lists (Nos. 3 and 5 are currently Grade V and VI pieces in the ABRSM syllabus)... Lawson, well-known as a period instrumentalist, brings these academic works to artistic life with subtle use of ornamentation and sensitive variation in dynamics which are omitted from Lefèvre’s original scores. This disc...is invaluable to pupils studying these works. Their pedagogical nature is reinforced by the welcome initiative that scores can be downloaded from the...website.” The American journal *Fanfare* wrote of “impressive technical command” and “superb clarinetistry”. *The Gramophone* wrote of Lawson’s Mozart disc: “an interpretation of distinction...a recreative process that spreads beyond the printed page.” *The Cambridge History of Musical Performance* (2012) has been widely reviewed, in *The Wall Street Journal*, *Early Music Today* and *BBC Music Magazine*, inter alia. It was described in *Early Music* as “a magisterial survey that will surely remain a standard reference work for a generation” [S4] and praised by *The New York Review of Books* as having invested a genre largely associated with specialized scholarship with “the reliability of a trusted friend.” Its international impact is enhanced by belonging to a prestigious Cambridge series, with consequent global reach and influence.

Lawson’s research leadership as RCM Chair of Historical Performance has repositioned the College work across theory and practice; his influence has achieved wider reach, impact and significance for the RCM’s historical resources. The Museum of Music has been reconfigured, with radically enhanced opening hours. Incorporating special exhibitions related to the RCM performance programme, it offers tours for schools and for higher education institutions, general tours and discovery sessions. From 2008 to June 2013, it has hosted over 18,000 visitors from over 70 countries, and between the 2008/09 and 2011/12 academic years saw annual visitor numbers increase by nearly 50%. The RCM’s 1692 bass viol by Barak Norman was lent to The National Gallery’s *Vermeer and Music: The Art of Love and Leisure* (2013). The National Museums of Scotland’s *Mary Queen of Scots* exhibition displayed the guitar (c1650) attributed to Rene Voboam. Closely associated with the Museum’s unique collection of viols, the RCM’s *International Festival of Viols* has since 2007 promoted a series of concerts, masterclasses and lectures, as well as exhibitions of instruments and bows; these promoted understanding and appreciation of a little known period. Twenty-two events were hosted between 2008 and 2013, with a combined 1500 in

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attendance. The RCM Library's external profile has been developed by publication in 2005 of a series of 30 postcards portraying major autograph holdings, as well as facsimiles of Elgar's Cello Concerto and works by Parry, Howells and Beethoven. The Library loaned its Mozart K491 autograph to the Albertina in Vienna for an exhibition in 2006. The facsimiles have found an international readership among the RCM's partners, and Parry's *Jerusalem* was distributed at the 2009 BBC Proms launch. A further scholarly BBC connection was the publication of *The Proms: A New History* (Thames & Hudson, 2007), co-edited by David Wright.

Among specific projects during Lawson's tenure, *The Listening Gallery* (2008-10) was an AHRC knowledge transfer collaboration between the RCM and the Victoria & Albert Museum [G1]. Stemming from research in music, art and design, the project connected objects in the V&A's collections with 50 new downloadable recordings of period music that share their rich and distinctive pasts. A summative evaluation of the Medieval and Renaissance Galleries from 2011 showed that a high percentage of users engage with the audio-points, a strong indication that they are valued by visitors [S5]. The project also made significant contributions towards enriching curatorial knowledge of objects in the collection, establishing a model for use internationally.

In another distinctive project, Ashley Solomon (RCM professor from 1994, Head of Historical Performance from 2006) has investigated and recorded the 10,000 manuscripts amassed by the Jesuit missions in Bolivia in the 100 years after 1670, blending European baroque and local culture and powerfully illustrating the fusion of two rich civilizations. Florilegium, RCM Ensemble in Association, has performed this music in over 30 concerts in the Bolivian jungle, at the Wigmore Hall, the RCM and internationally, to a combined audience of more than 18,500 [S6]. The Arakaendar Bolivia Choir of native singers was founded in 2005, sponsored by the Prince Claus fund. Three discs were recorded in Amsterdam and Bolivia. A *Guardian* reviewer wrote "the Arakaendars have developed in little over five years into one of the most remarkable choirs in the world" [S7]. The Association Pro Art y Culture awarded Solomon the Hans Roth Prize (2008) in recognition of his assistance to the indigenous people [S8], and the Florilegium 'Bolivian' London concert and other UK performances raised £10,000 to buy instruments for children in Bolivia [S9].

#### 5. Sources to corroborate the impact

[S1] Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music, <http://gb.abrsm.org/en/home>.

[S2] University of Manchester, Advanced Study in Performance Issues (Syllabus 2013): <http://courses.humanities.manchester.ac.uk/undergraduate/module.html?code=MUSC30710>.

[S3] Clarinet Classics, [www.clarinetclassics.com](http://www.clarinetclassics.com).

[S4] Irving (2013), Performance through history, *Early Music*, vol.41, pp.141-143.

[S5] Victoria and Albert Museum (2011), Case Study Evaluation of Future Plan: [www.vam.ac.uk/data/assets/pdf\\_file/0005/178790/med\\_ren\\_galleries\\_summative\\_evaluation\\_2011.pdf](http://www.vam.ac.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0005/178790/med_ren_galleries_summative_evaluation_2011.pdf).

[S6] Director, Florilegium.

[S7] The Guardian (2012), York Early Music Festival – Review: [www.theguardian.com/music/2012/jul/09/york-early-music-festival-review](http://www.theguardian.com/music/2012/jul/09/york-early-music-festival-review).

[S8] Association Pro Art y Culture: [www.festivalesapac.com/en\\_gb/musica.htm](http://www.festivalesapac.com/en_gb/musica.htm).

[S9] Florilegium: [www.florilegium.org.uk/bolivia.htm](http://www.florilegium.org.uk/bolivia.htm).