

<p>Institution: SOAS</p>
<p>Unit of Assessment: 35 Music, Drama, Dance and performing Arts</p>
<p>a. Context</p> <p>Throughout the period 2008-13, external impact has been a central element of the research activities of all members of the Department, representing a normal and expected outcome of the ongoing process of research. Central to achieving this impact is individual and collective outreach to beneficiaries, primarily conceived as the general public in the UK and overseas. SOAS is aware of its position as having the UK's only music department exclusively devoted to the study of 'world music', and seeks to play an active role in the dissemination, appreciation and understanding of world music amongst the general public. This includes the individual promotion of specialist (and in some cases 'endangered') music from certain world regions, and encouraging greater understanding of traditional and contemporary musical styles and music-making both within these regions and beyond, as musicians and mediated sounds circulate the globe and performance contexts undergo rapid change, impelling new forms of musical experience and creativity.</p> <p>A variety of routes to impact are employed within the Department, including collaboration with development and community organisations, broadcasting, the production of CDs, DVDs and films, live music performance and the creation of educational materials for secondary and primary schools. In this sense, we seek to have impact both on the general public in the UK and in the regions in which we work, and also on particular sections of these publics, notably school-age children, who are arguably best placed to maintain and strengthen diverse musical traditions in the future. In addition, a section of our impact activities are orientated towards influencing public debate and public policy more directly, notably in relation to citizenship and belonging in newly-created states (e.g. South Sudan) or regions undergoing rapid social transformation (e.g. Mali, and Xinjiang, China).</p> <p>b. Approach to impact</p> <p>The approach that the Department has taken during the 2008-2013 period emerges clearly from the objectives noted above. It is an approach that encompasses all staff, and is fundamentally driven by the specialist research interests, performance skills and public profile of each staff member. In some cases, this has led to high profile external activities (e.g. Durán's longstanding connection with BBC radio), whilst in others, engagement in music performance (e.g. Gray, Harris, Howard) has helped raise awareness of the traditions in which they are expert, through participation in ensembles alongside musicians from the cultures concerned. However, it has also included collective endeavour on the part of the Department, especially around music production and performance.</p> <p>A key area of focus for the Department's research impact has been in broadcasting and the production of CDs, DVDs and films. These emerge as products of both individual and collaborative research, but as a strategic endeavour as colleagues have collaborated to produce outputs that will have wider reach and significance. For example, since 1995, the Department has been collectively involved in the production of the SOASIS series of CDs and DVDs, which have showcased African and Asian music recorded by performance teachers and students of the Department, and often informed by our research. The series has grown to include some 20 audio CDs and six music and dance DVDs. Engagement with the wider public has been particularly effective when conveyed in recorded format, so that in addition to the compilations produced to boost familiarity with a variety of Asian and African traditions, there has been significant research-driven documentation, especially in DVD and film format (e.g. Howard's films in relation to endangered shamanic traditions in Siberia, and Durán's, concentrating on children's acquisition of performance skills). It should be added that staff respond, as a matter of routine, to appeals from broadcasters and film makers wishing to make use of their expertise.</p> <p>In addition to broadcasting and the production of CDs and DVDs, we have placed considerable emphasis on delivering impact through live performance, again drawing on musical traditions that are the central focus of our research. Prominent on the public stage have been Gray, who runs a Balinese <i>gendér wayang</i> group involving non-students and students, plans for which include an experimental shadow play as part of the Asian Performing Arts Forum South East Asia</p>

Impact template (REF3a)

Festival in 2014, and Harris, who performs regularly in two ensembles, one presenting Central Asian repertoires, the other Chinese. The Department also launched the SOAS World Music Summer School in 2002, specifically aimed at a 'non-academic' audience, that provides performance opportunities in numerous non-Western traditions for beginners and the more advanced alike. In 2012, this unique summer school attracted nearly 250 students across 18 courses each lasting a week, and ranging from the seven-tone Balinese gamelan to the Jews Harp and the didgeridoo.

In various ways, staff have sought to make a particular contribution to impact in the wider field of education. This has ranged from the provision of lesson plans, occasional lectures and workshops in schools, to the engagement of Howard in policy-making decisions about the national curriculum, in which he has advocated for the inclusion of world music at the heart of the curriculum at all levels. Specific mention should be made here of the work of Impey, whose major collaborative research project in the new state of South Sudan that has led to the creation of an alphabet for Dinka and its use in the publication of a collection of recorded songs and related texts that has been welcomed as an important aid in the spreading of literacy and, ultimately, participation and social cohesion in a fledgling state (see case study).

The impact of our research is sometimes felt most importantly within the regions and communities with who we work. For example, there has been increasing awareness among performers of Turkish classical music (and not only in Turkey) of the riches of the 17th-century Ottoman tradition resulting from the transcription and publication of notations of the period. Both at home and abroad all staff have given lectures and taken part in fora open to the public that have helped disseminate aspects of their research findings, and they have also published in non-academic journals that reach a wider audience. Some (e.g. Howard, Impey, Widdess, Harris) have also had a significant role in helping to influence public policy through, for example, participation in the formulation of education curricula, and expert reports for UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage initiatives.

c. Strategy and plans

The Department will seek to continue with the range of activities outlined above, in other words the achievement of significant levels of impact by the dissemination of research findings through various media and activities based on the varied (and likely changing) specific foci of research amongst individual members of staff. However, over the next five years, within its new context in the SOAS School of Arts, the Department plans to develop a more conscious strategy with regard to impact, in particular by pooling the research and connections of staff in music with those in other disciplines in the school, notably media and film, but also art and archaeology. For example, the School has recently launched a new MA in Global Creative and Cultural Industries, incorporating elements of vocational training and work experience that are innovative in design and aspire to directly address an employability agenda for students of music and other forms of performance and culture. Whilst this programme is still at an early stage, it is led from the Music Department, and it is envisaged that it will represent a route for stronger research connections between the music department and a variety of organisations and companies working in music production and performance. The aim is to harness this commercial expertise both to the benefit of our students and to the wider impact of our research. A BA World Music, which will parallel these initiatives at undergraduate level, is currently being prepared for launch in September 2014.

The Department has developed one strand of its impact strategy focusing on collaborations with the BBC. Durán has presented a regular weekly one-hour radio show "World Routes" and other occasional programmes on Radio 3 since 2001. This collaboration has drawn both on her own research and research generated by the department; for example Harris's research on Uyghur Muqam and Widdess's field research in the Kathmandu Valley, Nepal were the basis for World Routes programmes associated with the "Human Planet" television series. In 2013 the Department's direct research input was acknowledged by a Radio 3–SOAS Partnership enabling the BBC to use Durán's research materials on Azerbaijan (generated through her collaborative AHRC "Growing into Music" project) in support of their World Routes Academy project.

Another key strand of our strategy is based on the recent memorandum of understanding agreed between the Department and the Aga Khan Music Initiative (AKMI), a branch of the Aga Khan development network, signed in 2012. Since then, AKMI has supported the dissemination

Impact template (REF3a)

and development of department-based research, eg. funding a conference organized by Harris on Musical Geographies of Central Asia in May 2012, and open access website featuring podcasts and paper summaries. Staff have acted as consultants for AKMI development projects in Central Asia and Mali, and collaborated on touring and recording projects involving various world artists collaborating with, among others, the Kronos Quartet.

Beyond these specific initiatives, we will increasingly seek to develop impact more broadly through the conscious formulation of research projects, whether individual or collaborative, in such a way that their potential for impact is specifically acknowledged at the start, and the mechanisms for achieving it clearly articulated. The new AHRC Research network 'Sounding Islam in China' provides an example of this approach, with a project website, public performances, and workshops in Chinese universities. Such 'impact plans' are increasingly an element of peer review of research projects by research councils, and will become systematically integrated into internal peer review processes prior to submission to funding bodies. At an institutional level within SOAS, this will be supported by specific advice and guidance to staff on ways of conceptualising and promoting impact, and the development of a system to track evidence of impact, and thereby to disseminate best practice.

d. Relationship to case studies

Most of the various kinds of impact made by staff of the Department are exemplified in the activities of Durán, whose high profile in the public arena has been underpinned by expertise gained from extensive fieldwork research conducted mainly but not exclusively in sub-Saharan West Africa and Cuba. As noted above, for over a decade she has been one of the main presenters of the weekly BBC Radio 3 'World Routes', allowing the general public to sample a wealth of musical traditions, some poorly documented, and through her interviews with the musicians to gain insight into their backgrounds, attitudes and motivations. Using this experience, she has played a leading role in a collaborative research project into the ways children acquire skills orally/aurally within musical lineages, the outcome including DVDs and films that can be expected to have considerable impact in the field of music education. Calling upon her extensive researches into oral traditions in Mali, she has also been active as a record producer, with two albums to her credit that have not only won or been nominated for awards, but have also been significant in raising general awareness of a repertoire and style associated with a little-known West-African lute: indeed, they have had the effect of raising its profile in Mali itself. Her experience as a producer has been distilled in an article on Impact published in Ethnomusicology Forum, and recognition of her research-driven expertise is evident in her appointment as advisor to the Aga Khan Music Initiative in Mali.

The other impact case study included in our submission reflects the rather different aspiration for music research to impact on wider public debate and policy, which whilst it is less common in the Department (and in the wider discipline) represents an important and potentially far-reaching goal. Specifically, Impey's work as part of an AHRC-funded project within the 'Beyond Texts' programme, working alongside colleagues at the University of Edinburgh, included a specific objective of developing research that would have a wider public and policy impact. Impey's case study sets out how a new Education Bill in the newly created Republic of South Sudan seeks to improve literacy and protect a huge number of native languages, and how the researching and recording of traditional music has been invaluable to this political process of nation-building and poverty-reduction.