

NEXT: Training the Next Generation of Contemporary Musicians

Birmingham Contemporary Music Group and Royal Birmingham Conservatoire launch the first one year UK course dedicated to the performance and promotion of contemporary music.

Birmingham Contemporary Music Group (BCMG) and Royal Birmingham Conservatoire (RBC), part of Birmingham City University, are launching the UK's first year-long study programme to train and prepare musicians to perform and promote contemporary classical music.

Open to post-graduate musicians currently enrolled in a course of study, or to professional musicians wanting to improve their knowledge and skills in this area, the intensive year-long NEXT training programme includes instrumental teaching with members of BCMG, artistic planning, lectures from guest artists and a variety of performance opportunities. Performances will include solo and chamber concerts, programmed and promoted by participants, and side-by-side playing with BCMG at high profile venues. There will also be unique opportunities for emerging and student composers to participate in several aspects of the programme to support their development. The programme, which begins in September 2018, will have space for up to 15 participants each year, including instrumentalists, a sound director, and a conductor.

Applications are now open at www.bcmg.org.uk/NEXT, with the first NEXT intake due in September 2018.

Stephan Meier, Artistic Director of Birmingham Contemporary Music Group comments:
"Looking at the role contemporary music plays in our cultural life, and more specifically in the music industry, you tend to find young musicians either orientated towards what is perceived as 'classical' music, for example in orchestras or opera, or engaged in self-organised attempts to set up some contemporary activities. NEXT seeks to support the latter approach, providing a semi-sheltered greenhouse, as it were, to transfer skills, techniques, knowledge and performance experience, and to allow musicians to fully concentrate on what is needed to professionally work in the sector, and space and time to brood on all kinds of contemporary music developments. There are, of course, opportunities to do this in an informal way but I think that NEXT will be the first year-long course in the UK to address contemporary music performance, practise and promotion in a structured, sustainable way.

BCMG is celebrated as one of the world's finest contemporary music ensembles, and its musicians are second-to-none in expertise, knowledge and sheer passion for the music of today. The combination of their experience, and the commitment and fantastic facilities at Royal Birmingham Conservatoire gives NEXT the potential to have a substantial and lasting input into our musical culture - a real game changer."

Professor Julian Lloyd Webber, Principal of Royal Birmingham Conservatoire comments:
"NEXT builds on Royal Birmingham Conservatoire's long-standing relationship with BCMG and is designed to significantly impact the next generation of contemporary music and musicians.

We pride ourselves in being a forward looking institution. NEXT will be at the cutting edge of new music creation and performance, offering students a unique opportunity to develop their careers in novel and exciting directions."

HOW TO APPLY

Applications are now open at www.bcmg.org.uk/NEXT, with the first NEXT intake due in September 2018.

The application process consists of two phases: submission of a written application and audio/visual recording will be followed by live auditions for selected finalists, conducted by a jury of Royal Birmingham Conservatoire faculty and BCMG musicians. It is the intention that a range of instrumentalists will be selected for participation to enable the performance of a wide range of contemporary music, including cutting edge performance techniques.

NEXT is free to students already enrolled at Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, or at a subsidised rate of £1500 for prospective external candidates, to access the Conservatoire facilities, individual instrumental teaching and lectures. Whilst the course is non-diploma, there is a possibility to combine NEXT with a Royal Birmingham Conservatoire degree-awarding study course. All participants will receive a certificate of study from Royal Birmingham Conservatoire and BCMG.

NEXT is made possible through the support of Art Mentor Foundation Lucerne.

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Notes

About Birmingham Contemporary Music Group (BCMG)

BCMG is recognised as a world-leading, new music ensemble, acclaimed internationally for its excellent performances, ambitious commissions and high-quality learning programme. Since its foundation in 1987, BCMG has:

- Reached more than 10 million people;
- Given more than 500 concerts in over 190 venues;
- Performed across the UK and in Europe, Mexico, India and the USA; and
- Commissioned and premiered over 175 new works helping to launch the careers of many notable composers mainly through our renowned Sound Investment scheme.

www.bcmg.org.uk

About Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

Part of Birmingham City University, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire is a world-class institution providing exceptional training for the musicians, actors, stage managers and performers of the future. Its outstanding facilities attract the best and brightest students to Birmingham, along with internationally renowned performers and teachers. With limitless collaboration opportunities for staff and students, the Conservatoire is a stimulating environment with an international reputation which celebrates diversity.

www.bcu.ac.uk/conservatoire