

THE HONG KONG ACADEMY FOR PERFORMING ARTS

ANNUAL REPORT 1985-86

香港演藝學院
圖書館

THE HONG KONG
ACADEMY FOR
PERFORMING ARTS
LIBRARY

February 1987

1. Introduction

The academic session 1985-86 was the first full session in the Academy's history. The Academy building, whose foundation stone was laid on 28 October 1982 by HRH the Duchess of Kent, was erected under the supervision of the Royal Hong Kong Jockey Club, and was completed within the projected time-scale and budget. The Administration Block was ready for occupation by July 1985. The Academy Block was officially opened by His Excellency the late Governor, Sir Edward Youde, President of the Academy, on 18 September 1985. By this date the teaching accommodation was also available for use. The Theatre Block was handed over in November 1985 and a period of testing and commissioning ensued. It was officially opened by HRH the Duchess of Kent on 3 February 1986. On the same day the inaugural season of opera performances began, presented by Glyndebourne Festival Opera in the context of the 1986 Hong Kong Arts Festival.

2. Administration

2.1 Personnel

Personnel numbers are as follows :

Full-time Staff :	Teaching Staff	51
	Administrative Staff	105
	Total	<u>156</u>

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Part-time Staff :	Dance	33
	Drama	6
	Music	76
	Technical Arts	7
	Total	<u>122</u>

2.2 Building Services

1985-86 was a year of settling in and consolidation for this department. Some 650 operations of repairs or improvement work were carried out. Conscious of the need to contain costs, the Building Services Department paid special attention to devising means of effecting energy savings and maximising resources in this area. As a result, the annual electricity expenditure was reduced from \$8 million to \$6 million during the period.

2.3 Library

The Library, which is bilingual, multidisciplinary, and which includes books, music scores, audio and visual materials, got off to a promising start, thanks to the efforts of the staff, and to a number of substantial donations. By the end of the session the inventory comprised some 25,000 items, including 22,000 books and scores, 2,500 audio, and 500 visual items. Among the very welcome donations were :

- The Hong Kong Conservatory of Music Collection
- The Hong Kong Academy of Ballet Collection
- The Ernest Read Orchestral Collection, donated by Mr Harry Weinrebe, a member of the Council
- The Leathlean Collection of Phonodiscs

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The Mrs Strauss Collection of Phonodiscs

The Lady Kotewall Library Collection

The circulation figures for the session show some 10,000 borrowings.

3. The Schools

3.1 Full-time Student Enrolment

In response to the demand for places, and to facilitate the planned subsumption of the Hong Kong Conservatory of Music and the Hong Kong Academy of Ballet into the Academy for Performing Arts, initial enrolment into the Schools of Dance and Music took place in September 1984. During the 1984-85 session staff and students of these two Schools had worked with dedication in limited accommodation in 'CC Block' of Victoria Barracks and the Arts Centre, respectively. Accordingly, in September 1985 there was a group of Academy students of Dance and Music entering upon their second year of study, together with a number of more advanced students from the Academy of Ballet and the Conservatory of Music who were completing their courses under the aegis of the Academy for Performing Arts. There was no early intake into the Schools of Drama and Technical Arts.

An extensive selection process for new students in all four Schools was undertaken in the spring and summer of 1985.

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The aim was to enrol approximately 150 new full-time students into the Diploma Courses. The number of applications for admission to each School was as follows :

School of Dance	210
School of Drama	890
School of Music	420
School of Technical Arts	980
Total	<u>2500</u>

After enrolment was completed, the numbers of students in each School, including those already enrolled in the Schools of Dance and Music, were :

<u>School</u>	<u>Foundation Year</u>	<u>Diploma I Year</u>	<u>Total</u>
Dance	34	37	71
Drama	13	17	30
Music	33	42	75
Technical Arts	30		30
		Overall Total	<u>206</u>

These numbers included 3 overseas students : 2 Dance students from Malaysia; 1 Music student from Singapore.

3.2 Grants and Loans

A grants and loans scheme similar to that administered by the UPGC is available to Academy students. 119 applications were received, and over 80% of the applicants were granted some financial assistance, totalling \$1,300,000.

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3.3 Junior Student Scheme

Although no ear-marked funds for the Junior Scheme were provided within the Government grant, the Scheme, regarded by the Academy as essential for the future supply of well-prepared entrants, was inaugurated in Dance and Music in September 1984, and continued with the addition of Drama in September 1985. Under this Scheme gifted children of secondary (and, in the case of music, also of primary) school age are given instruction during out-of-school hours. The enrolment figures in 1985-86 were :

Dance	58
Drama	10
Music	59
Total	<u>127</u>

The progress and achievement of these students, especially in the case of Dance and Music, was very striking, and confirms the desirability of continuing and expanding this programme. The lack of pre-vocational training in Hong Kong is the subject of a review by an Academy committee.

3.4 School of Dance

The School of Dance had a successful year. Courses in the three major streams of Ballet, Chinese Dance and Modern Dance were developed. The continued cooperation of the Beijing Dance Academy in seconding teachers for the Chinese Dance course was much appreciated. Other visiting staff took part in the other courses. The availability of more accommodation

enabled the ancillary courses, such as movement analysis and notation, dance history and music for dance to be more fully exploited.

The highlight of the year was the International Festival of Dance Academies, referred to elsewhere in this Report. Immediately following the Festival students of the School took part in a Festival in Taipei where they were well received. Such international exposure, on a limited scale in the early years, is an invaluable aid to the development and education of young dancers.

3.5 School of Drama

For its first productions the School of Drama implemented its planned policy of commissioning new works from local playwrights. Three one-act plays and one full length play were prepared, in consultation with the authors concerned, for performance. Such cooperation with local authors has great mutual benefits, and should give a valuable boost to the growth of indigenous creative talent. The texts of the plays have subsequently been published by the Academy, and have been well received. It is hoped that this policy, which will go hand in hand with the study and performance of a world-wide repertoire, can be pursued in the future.

During the session, students benefitted from contact with a wide range of visiting artists, from China, U.K. and U.S.A., who gave talks and seminars.

The culmination of the session's activities was an 8-day visit by the staff and students of the School to Beijing, to take part in discussions and workshops, and to experience at first hand training methods and performances there.

3.6 School of Music

The work of the School was greatly facilitated and enhanced by the availability of an adequate supply of rehearsal and performance venues, and individual teaching and practice rooms. The regular presence of the Hong Kong Philharmonic for rehearsals in the Orchestral Hall was both a convenience for the part-time teachers drawn from the orchestra, and a stimulus to our students. The School benefitted greatly from the three-week residency of Sir David Willcocks, formerly Principal of the Royal College of Music, who gave invaluable counsel on all matters concerning the work of the School to staff and students.

The first choral and orchestral presentation given by the School was Haydn's oratorio 'The Creation'. This was undertaken as a joint collaboration with the Music Department of Hong Kong University, thus inaugurating what both sides believe will be a continuing and mutually beneficial cooperation.

The stage performances of Purcell's opera 'Dido and Aeneas', referred to elsewhere, provided our students of voice with their first experience of theatre work.

The session's performance activities culminated in a summer Festival of Chamber Music, in which the New Budapest String Quartet, the Australian Wind Quintet, and our own Academy Trio took part.

3.7 School of Technical Arts

As was foreseen, the work of the School was initially restricted by the fact that its accommodation in the Theatre Block was not available until the second term. A further complication was the essential involvement of the teaching staff in the lengthy and complex process of commissioning the theatres. In addition, both staff and some students were fully committed to working with Glyndebourne Festival Opera in preparation and performance. Such active involvement in an international company's production on the part of students, especially first-year students, is probably unprecedented. But the Festival Opera were generous in their praise of the assistance they received.

During this first period of the session the regular teaching programme inevitably suffered, although the practical experience gained by the students was invaluable. However, from February onwards the teaching programme was firmly established, with modifications where necessary, and the staff and students played a full part in the various productions mounted by the other Schools.

4. Outreach

4.1 Introduction

Conscious of the need to reach out to the general public, in order to increase the public understanding of, and support for the new institution, the Academy began to develop an Outreach programme already adumbrated in the previous two

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years during the planning and building stages of the Academy. The programme has two complementary aspects: elucidating and illustrating the work of the Academy by events such as talks, discussions, and performances in external venues; and inviting the public into the Academy for a variety of purposes such as attendance at performances, workshops, and classes, and tours of inspection of the premises. The scope of the programme was inevitably restricted during the first term of the session, when staff and students were settling down in the new premises, and the Theatre Block was not available for inspection and theatrical performance; but the tempo increased from February 1986.

4.2 Public Performances in the Academy

Public performances fell into two categories :

1. those presented by the Academy as part of its teaching programme;
2. those presented by outside bodies.

4.2.1 During the session the following number of programmes open to the public was presented by Academy staff and students as part of the integrated course of study :

School of Dance : 16 performances

School of Drama : 12 performances

School of Music : 56 performances

The School of Technical Arts played an appropriate part in these performances.

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In addition an interdisciplinary production, involving staff and students from all four Schools, was presented. This was an expanded version of Henry Purcell's opera 'Dido and Aeneas'. As well as reaching a creditable standard of achievement in itself, it laid down some useful guidelines for future interdisciplinary productions, an area which the Academy is uniquely situated to develop, and one of very great educational value.

A highlight of the session was the concluding "International Festival of Dance Academies", held in the Academy from 20-27 July 1986. The Festival was organised by the School of Dance, with the invaluable support of a Ladies' Committee under the Chairmanship of Lady Akers-Jones, and with generous sponsorship from Dr Stanley Ho.

Eight of the most outstanding dance Academies of the world, four from the East and four from the West, sent groups to participate in an intensive week of classes, rehearsals, public performances and social events. 90 students and 30 accompanying members of staff from overseas, as well as staff and students from the Academy, were involved. This event, the first of its kind to be held anywhere, was acclaimed as a great success by all the participants, for the quality of its performances, the benefits to students of learning from and with fellow-students from many countries, and the contribution to the development of international good-will through harmonious contacts and increased mutual understanding. There could indeed have been no better example of the profoundly humanising

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and ambassadorial role of the arts. Our visitors were warm in their praise of the organisation and of the Academy's facilities, and unanimously requested that the Festival should continue in Hong Kong on a regular basis.

4.2.2 External presentation

It was recognised by the Academy from the outset that its rich and generously equipped facilities should not be confined to internal use, but should be exploited as fully as opportunity and resources allowed, by the encouragement of use by suitable outside performance groups. In this context a series of three jointly sponsored events in the Lyric Theatre by top-level international companies was planned to mark the opening season. The series was designed to represent the range of the disciplines taught in the Academy. The first event was the appearance of Glyndebourne Festival Opera in the context of the 1986 Hong Kong Arts Festival. The event was jointly presented by the Academy, the Royal Hong Kong Jockey Club, and the Hong Kong Arts Festival. The works performed were 'Don Giovanni' by Mozart and 'Midsummer Night's Dream' by Benjamin Britten for 5 evenings. This occasion was the first time that Glyndebourne Festival Opera had performed outside Europe.

In April 1986 the People's Arts Theatre of Beijing, jointly presented by the Academy and the Institute for the Promotion of Chinese Culture, gave 10 performances of the 'Teahouse'.

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In June 1986 The Cloud Gate Dance Theatre of Taiwan, jointly presented by the Academy and the City Contemporary Dance Company, gave 5 performances.

All of these events played to capacity audiences, and won critical and public acclaim.

Other visiting performances during the session included: Esso Serenade at Six Series; Desrosiers Dance Theatre; Helene Delevault; the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra.

4.3 Visits to the Academy

Visits to the Academy had to be of necessity limited until the Theatre Block was available in February 1986. However, some 12,000 visitors were shown round the Academy during the session. Among the official guests of the Hong Kong Government who honoured the Academy with a visit were HRH the Duchess of Kent, HRH the Princess Alexandra, and Mr Ji Pang-fei. Other visitors included groups from primary and secondary schools, and tertiary institutions; from social organisations for youth, the handicapped, and the elderly; from professional bodies such as architects and engineers, and builders; and from other interested bodies. In addition many distinguished visitors connected with the arts and education from Hong Kong and overseas saw the Academy at work.

5. Conclusion

In this inaugural session the Academy faced the double challenge of establishing new teaching courses of different kinds in four Schools, and of settling in to a new and complex building.

By the end of the session most of the initial problems had either been solved or were on the way to a solution, and a firm base had been secured for the future growth and development of the Academy as an institution of international standards and standing.
