



Royal Conservatoire *of Scotland*

We started life as the Glasgow Athenaeum in 1847. The Athenaeum was established to 'provide a source of mental cultivation, moral improvement and delightful recreation to all classes' - a mission statement in today's terminology, and one that still holds true today. Charles Dickens delivered the inaugural address: an appropriate choice of celebrity, given the great expectations of the far-sighted founding fathers.

To begin with, the Athenaeum offered music classes and, in 1886, drama was introduced into the curriculum. Music proved to be so successful that, in 1890, a School of Music was formed as a discrete department of the Athenaeum, with its own Principal (Allan Macbeth, a graduate of the Leipzig Conservatorium) and its own prospectus. It was from the Athenaeum's School of Music that the Scottish National Academy of Music was formed in 1929. This grew in prestige and, by 1944, its international standing was recognised by King George VI, who approved that the prefix 'Royal' be added to the Academy's title, making it the 'Royal Scottish Academy of Music'. At that time, the then Queen Elizabeth graciously assumed the role of Patron, a role in which she continued as Queen Mother until her death in 2002.

These exciting developments were not confined to music. In 1950 the Glasgow College of Dramatic Art was created with the aim of training actors and directors for the professional theatre. Soon after, the college's curriculum expanded to include technical courses and, in collaboration with the University of Glasgow, diploma courses with a strong academic element. In 1962, the college opened the first television studio to be located within a UK drama school - evidence of the pioneering spirit still apparent in our institution today.

The title of Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama was approved in 1968, which reflected the happy union of music and drama in a single Academy, dedicated to excellence across the spectrum of the performing arts.

Throughout the 1970s and '80s, the Academy continued to develop its course provision and enhance its international reputation. The first degree courses were introduced, validated by the University of Glasgow. Then in 1993/94 the Academy became the only UK conservatoire to be awarded its own degree-awarding powers by the Privy Council, a decision that followed an extensive review of the Academy's approach to the maintenance and promotion of the quality of its courses. We remain justifiably very proud - particularly because this is still the case today. All courses were up-graded to degree level and, over the intervening years, they have been refined to keep pace with the demands of the professions. New undergraduate and postgraduate courses were also added, meeting new and future needs. We recruited our first research students in 2000/1: another key milestone, particularly because of our radical practice-based approach to research.

Our changing built environment has kept pace with artistic and academic development:

- * 1987 - moved from our original Victorian building to the current custom-built building, opened by Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother.
- * 1997 - Alexander Gibson Opera School is opened by Dame Janet Baker, providing rehearsal and coaching rooms and a stunning performance space used by both music and drama students.
- * 2011 - Speirs Locks Studios opens to accommodate modern ballet and technical and production arts.

Over the decades, we have developed our course provision and our reputation for excellence and innovative new work has grown internationally. Many new undergraduate and postgraduate degree programmes have been added to meet current and future needs – including, since 2001, Scottish traditional music, film and television, musical theatre, jazz and, most recently, modern ballet in collaboration with Scottish Ballet. So much so, we are one of the few conservatoires in the world to offer such a breadth - and this reality was the catalyst for our name change in 2011 to the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. We are now a mature, confident and vibrant new-model Conservatoire for the 21st Century. Our doors are wide open to the talented new performers of the world.