

Royal Northern College of Music

Collection of Historic Musical Instruments Collection Development Policy

Policy & Procedure

**Department: Collection of Historic Musical
Instruments (Library)**

Document owner: Head of Library Services

**Approval Committee: Research Committee /
Academic Board**

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Review Date: December 2024

RNCM
ROYAL NORTHERN
COLLEGE of MUSIC

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Introduction

Name of museum

Royal Northern College of Music Collection of Historic Musical Instruments (RNCM CHMI)

Name of governing body

Royal Northern College of Music Board of Governors (with delegated authority to Academic Board)

Date on which this policy was approved by governing body

11 December 2019

Policy review procedure

The collections development policy will be published and reviewed from time to time, at least once every five years.

Date at which this policy is due for review

December 2024

Arts Council England will be notified of any changes to the collections development policy, and the implications of any such changes for the future of collections.

1. Relationship to other relevant policies/plans of the organisation:

- 1.1** The museum's statement of purpose is:
 1. To be a representation of material culture for the purposes of learning and teaching, research and performance.
 2. To build on current levels of participation, accessibility, inclusivity and diversity in the College and the wider community.
- 1.2** The governing body will ensure that both acquisition and disposal are carried out openly and with transparency.
- 1.3** By definition, the museum has a long-term purpose and holds collections in trust for the benefit of the public in relation to its stated objectives. The governing body therefore accepts the principle that sound curatorial reasons must be established before consideration is given to any acquisition to the collection, or the disposal of any items in the museum's collection.
- 1.4** Acquisitions outside the current stated policy will only be made in exceptional circumstances.
- 1.5** The museum recognises its responsibility, when acquiring additions to its collections, to ensure that care of collections, documentation arrangements and use of collections will meet the requirements of the Museum Accreditation Standard. This includes using SPECTRUM primary procedures for collections management. It will take into account limitations on collecting imposed by such factors as staffing, storage and care of collection arrangements.
- 1.6** The museum will undertake due diligence and make every effort not to acquire, whether by purchase, gift, bequest or exchange, any object or specimen unless the governing body or responsible officer is satisfied that the museum can acquire a valid title to the item in question.
- 1.7** The museum will not undertake disposal motivated principally by financial reasons
Note. This principle is included to ensure that the integrity of the Collection is maintained, and in order to provide clarity for the managing committee and governing body.

2. History of the collections

The origin of the Collection dates back to 1900 when **Dr Henry Watson** (1847 – 1911) gave his collection of instruments to the Royal Manchester College of Music (RMCM), one of the predecessor institutions to the RNCM. Watson, who was born near Burnley, was a Professor at the RMCM and a great collector – his collection of books and music was the foundation of the eponymous music library in what is now Manchester Central Library and he took a pioneering interest in musical instrument studies. At Owens College and, later, the Victoria University of Manchester, where from 1905-1907 he was Dean of the Faculty of Music, he gave lectures on the History and Development of Musical Instruments. He was a member of the organizing committee of the 1900 International Loan Exhibition of Musical Instruments at the Crystal Palace in London, to which he lent 38 instruments from his own collection.

In October 1900 Watson offered his collection to the RMCM as he no longer had space and felt that the instruments should go to a place where they could be of benefit to others. Although there is a list of the instruments Watson donated (transcript below), because of the way the list was written, it is not clear exactly how many it comprised but is estimated to be in excess of 50.

English.	Viols, - Treble & Tenor, Viol-da-Gamba, (6 strings Barak Norman.) Cittern (18 th century) Keyed Cittern. Dancing Master's Kits or Pocket fiddles. Zither (old) Bassoon, 5 keys (circa 1780) Oboe, (6 keys), Pitch Pipe (circa 1700), Pan-pipes (2) Picco pipe.
Indian.	2 Turhi, (Brass trumpets) Pungi or snake-charmer's pipe - 2 Bin Baja (used at Hindoo weddings), Small Sitar, Large Sitar, Dotara or Hindoo Guitar, Vina (the National instrument of India Manjeera (brass cymbals, 3 sets), Kanjari (or tambourine), 2 Dolaks or Tom-toms, Dhol & Tabla, 2 drums (used at Hindoo weddings), 2 Large and one small Sarangi, & bows, Debrubba, Fiddle made from a tortoise shell.
Chinese.	Urheen (violin & bow) San-Hsien or Chinese banjo, Hiuen-tchung or bell, largest size, 21 inches.
Japanese.	Koto, (a representative set of insts. now on the way to England, from Japan.)
African:	Marimba, or Zulu Harmonicon, Large & Small Igedegbo (Niger district), Five-stringed harp (Egypt) Shepherd's Pipes (Morocco).
Palestine.	Double pipe made in Jerusalem.
South-Seas.	Nose flute (Savage Islands).
Philippine Islands:	Fiddle made from a cocoa-nut shell
American.	Folding banjo (old)
Piano family.	Dulcimer, Italian Virginal (1570,) Clavichord (German 1700, Spinnet (Eng. 1773), Harpsichord (Eng. 1780), square piano (Eng.1791)

By 1906, when the 'Descriptive & Illustrated Catalogue of the Henry Watson Collection of Musical Instruments' was published, the Collection had, through further donations, been augmented to a total of 158 instruments. These comprised 92 non-European, 26 strings, 8 keyboards, 17 woodwinds, 5 brass instruments, 3 bagpipes and 11 miscellaneous, to which a further 31 items were added by 1910. At least 90 of these objects survive in the Collection today.

Watson continued to collect instruments and offered them to the RMCM but the additional items could not be accommodated and therefore, in 1910, he offered them to Manchester Corporation 'as an adjunct to the new Corporation Music Library in its new home'. This included not only the new items he had acquired over the previous ten years but also some items from the RMCM collection which were duplicates and in total numbered about 70. When a brief descriptive catalogue was prepared in 1926 the Corporation collection numbered 88 instruments.

The Corporation collection was added to in 1942 by the donation of a collection that had belonged to **Josiah Thomas Chapman** (1843 – 1907). Chapman, a pioneer photographic chemist, was the founder of a well-known Manchester firm. A keen amateur musician and close

friend of Watson, he assembled a remarkable collection of some 300 musical instruments; notable for stringed instruments and bows. In 1904 he and his wife lent some 20 violins, including rare examples made in 17th century London, to the London 'International Loan Exhibition' at the Fishmongers' Hall but in the years following his death the family sold many of the instruments. In 1942 his son Mr James G. Chapman (1877– 1962) presented to the Library, in his memory, his father's extensive library of some 1340 volumes of chamber music and books, together with the residue of his musical instruments. According to a report of the Chief Librarian, the latter comprised the following (due to the vagueness of the listing, not all can be confidently identified today):

keyboards: virginals (K 7), spinet (K 8), square piano (K 7)
strings: small violin by Stradivarius (i), several kits (pockets) (ii, ?V 11-13, ?V 17-22),
miniature violin outfit (V 23), other viols (?V4-10), 3 gambas (V 1, 2, 34)
bows: an outstanding collection of bows (B1-2, 5-40)
plucked strings: irish harp (S 10), japanese koto (MPL 56), 2 old spanish guitars,
hurdy-gurdy (S 6)
winds: flutes, serpent (MPL 21)

During the 1950s all of the items in the Corporation collection were moved from the Central Library to Wilbraham Road Public Library and later into a store.

When Watson died in January 1911 he was succeeded as curator of the RMCM collection by **Dr James Kendrick Pyne** (1852-1938), Professor of Organ at the RMCM and organist of Manchester Cathedral, 1876-1908. Kendrick Pyne retained this post as curator until his own death in 1938. After Watson's death there were still donations to the collection but they were infrequent compared with the numbers that were accumulated during his stewardship. The College collection remained on display in the Lees Hall of the College, suffering some damage when the building was hit during air-raids in 1941. Pyne was replaced in 1942 when the curatorship was taken over by **John F. Russell**, Librarian of the Henry Watson Music Library.

In the late 1950s the City Librarian had made a tentative agreement with the then Principal of the RMCM, Frederic Cox, to re-house the two collections in the new College building when it was completed. Accordingly in February 1976 the Manchester Public Libraries collection of some 151 instruments was transferred to the RNCM on indefinite loan to join the 166 instruments already there, including some which had been in the ownership of the Northern School of Music prior to the merger with the RMCM. The Collection was moved to its present location in 1997 with all the items being together for the first time and at the same time the city transferred ownership of its collection to the College.

The flautist Trevor Wye and bassoonist **William ('Bill') Waterhouse (1931 – 2007)**, both of whom taught at the RMCM and RNCM, made a checklist of the city collection in 1971 prior to its transfer to the RNCM and subsequently did some work on the amalgamated collection. Bill was a keen collector, author of authoritative volumes on the bassoon, editor of the 'The New Langwill Index: a dictionary of musical wind-instrument makers and inventors' and highly respected by musical instrument curators worldwide. He began working on the collection in a formal capacity in 1991, later being designated as Acting Curator from which post he retired in July 2007. One of his achievements was to compile a catalogue of the collection which formed the basis for the printed version published in 2010.

3. An overview of current collections

The collection comprises 272 musical instruments, 44 bows and 17 miscellaneous items (the majority of which have a musical connection).

Woodwind (western)	57
Woodwind (ethnic)	24
Brasswind (western)	12
Brasswind (ethnic)	7
Percussion (western)	4
Percussion (ethnic)	36
String: bowed (western)	38
String: bows	44
String: bowed (ethnic)	10
String: plucked (western)	33
String: plucked (ethnic)	26
Keyboard	17
Mechanical	8

As he wrote to the RMCM in 1900 Watson's purpose was "gathering together a Collection of old & curious Musical Instruments with a view to presenting them (when the collection became of sufficient interest) to some public Institution where they would be of service". He also wanted to "make it of great practical use to the College Students particularly, & to the musical public generally, as showing the development of musical Art at different times & in different parts of the earth, so that they may be able to compare the past with the present & form an idea of the advance made in this direction at the present day".

When he donated the second collection to the Corporation he hoped that "the Libraries Committee would accept these quaint and curious examples of musical handicraft" and it "would not only serve a useful educational purpose, but it would also attract the attention of visitors, and show them our indebtedness to the crude efforts of aboriginal savages and the high wrought products of Eastern workmanship..."

Chapman was said to have a great love of music – a love apparently shared by his family as there is a photograph from 1886 showing three of his children playing musical instruments and one son, Samuel, studied at the RMCM (1914-1917) when in his forties for a teaching diploma. Josiah's original collection numbered about three hundred instruments which he apparently made available for prominent musicians to play. Sixty-nine items, consisting mostly of stringed instruments and bows, are identifiable as part of the current collection.

Given that about 160 items in the collection came from either the Watson or Chapman collections it would be reasonable to summarise that a substantial part of the collection is a representation of musical instrument collecting during the latter half of the nineteenth century and first decade of the twentieth century and, therefore, of significance for that reason.

4. Themes and priorities for future collecting

Objects will only be added to the Collection in exceptional circumstances where such an acquisition would be seen to be a significant addition to the current collection. Objects may be considered for the Collection where they:

- enhance or add to the current Collection;
- are associated with, or illustrative of, the Royal Northern College of Music (and its predecessor institutions, the Royal Manchester College of Music and Northern School of Music), past or current staff or students or other persons with significant connections to the Royal Northern College of Music;
- enhance the resources available for teaching, research and performance in the College;
- complement the collecting areas of the Royal Northern College of Music or complement the current holdings;
- are of local significance and not otherwise covered by the acquisition policies of other institutions in the area.

5. Themes and priorities for rationalisation and disposal

5.1 The museum does not intend to dispose of collections during the period covered by this policy.

This policy confirms that disposal is not a priority for the current period but if disposals are undertaken it will be for legal, safety or care and conservation reasons (e.g. spoliation, radiation, infestation, repatriation).

In the case of the items transferred from Manchester City Council, disposal would be governed by the terms of the transfer document.

6. Legal and ethical framework for acquisition and disposal of items

6.1 The museum recognises its responsibility to work within the parameters of the Museums Association Code of Ethics when considering acquisition and disposal.

7. Collecting policies of other museums

The museum will take account of the collecting policies of other museums and other organisations collecting in the same or related areas or subject fields. It will consult with these organisations where conflicts of interest may arise or to define areas of specialism, in order to avoid unnecessary duplication and waste of resources.

7.1 Specific reference is made to the following museum(s)/organisation(s):

Manchester Museum

Manchester Art Galleries

Museum of Science and Industry, Manchester (MOSI)

Bate Collection, University of Oxford

Edinburgh University Collection of Historic Musical Instruments

Horniman Museum, London

8. Archival holdings

The Collection will not collect archive or library material. Should archive or library material be offered to the Collection then the offer would be directed towards the Royal Northern College of Music's Library or Archive as appropriate.

9. Acquisition

9.1 The policy for agreeing acquisitions is:

Acquisitions are normally be approved by the Head of Library Services; in the event of significant cost or resource implications in accepting an acquisition, the decision will be referred to the Principal and the Executive Committee.

9.2 The museum will not acquire any object or specimen unless it is satisfied that the object or specimen has not been acquired in, or exported from, its country of origin (or any intermediate country in which it may have been legally owned) in violation of that country's laws. (For the purposes of this paragraph 'country of origin' includes the United Kingdom).

9.3 In accordance with the provisions of the UNESCO 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, which the UK ratified with effect from November 1 2002, and the Dealing in Cultural Objects (Offences) Act 2003, the museum will reject any items that have been illicitly traded. The governing body will be guided by the national guidance on

the responsible acquisition of cultural property issued by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport in 2005.

10. Human remains

- 10.1** As the museum holds or intends to acquire human remains from any period, it will follow the procedures in the 'Guidance for the care of human remains in museums' issued by DCMS in 2005.

11. Biological and geological material

- 11.1** The museum will not acquire any biological or geological material.

12. Archaeological material

- 12.1** The museum will not acquire any archaeological material.

13. Exceptions

- 13.1** Any exceptions to the above clauses will only be because the museum is:

- acting as an externally approved repository of last resort for material of local (UK) origin;
- acting with the permission of authorities with the requisite jurisdiction in the country of origin.

In these cases the museum will be open and transparent in the way it makes decisions and will act only with the express consent of an appropriate outside authority. The museum will document when these exceptions occur.

14. Spoliation

- 14.1** The museum will use the statement of principles 'Spoliation of Works of Art during the Nazi, Holocaust and World War II period', issued for non-national museums in 1999 by the Museums and Galleries Commission.

15. The repatriation and restitution of objects and human remains

- 15.1** The museum's governing body, acting on the advice of the museum's professional staff, if any, may take a decision to return human remains (unless covered by the 'Guidance for the care of human remains in museums' issued by DCMS in 2005), objects or specimens to a country or people of origin. The museum will take such decisions on a case by case basis; within its legal position and taking into account all ethical implications and available guidance. This will mean that the procedures described in 16.1-5 will be followed but the remaining procedures are not appropriate.
- 15.2** The disposal of human remains from museums in England, Northern Ireland and Wales will follow the procedures in the 'Guidance for the care of human remains in museums'.

16. Disposal procedures

- 16.1** All disposals will be undertaken with reference to the SPECTRUM Primary Procedures on disposal.
- 16.2** The governing body will confirm that it is legally free to dispose of an item. Agreements on disposal made with donors will also be taken into account.

- 16.3** When disposal of a museum object is being considered, the museum will establish if it was acquired with the aid of an external funding organisation. In such cases, any conditions attached to the original grant will be followed. This may include repayment of the original grant and a proportion of the proceeds if the item is disposed of by sale.
- 16.4** When disposal is motivated by curatorial reasons the procedures outlined below will be followed and the method of disposal may be by gift, sale, exchange, or as a last resort, destruction.
- 16.5** The decision to dispose of material from the collections will be taken by the governing body only after full consideration of the reasons for disposal. Other factors including public benefit, the implications for the museum's collections and collections held by museums and other organisations collecting the same material or in related fields will be considered. Expert advice will be obtained and the views of stakeholders such as donors, researchers, local and source communities and others served by the museum will also be sought.
- 16.6** A decision to dispose of a specimen or object, whether by gift, exchange, sale or destruction (in the case of an item too badly damaged or deteriorated to be of any use for the purposes of the collections or for reasons of health and safety), will be the responsibility of the governing body of the museum acting on the advice of professional curatorial staff, if any, and not of the curator or manager of the collection acting alone.
- 16.7** Once a decision to dispose of material in the collection has been taken, priority will be given to retaining it within the public domain. It will therefore be offered in the first instance, by gift or sale, directly to other Accredited Museums likely to be interested in its acquisition.
- 16.8** If the material is not acquired by any Accredited museum to which it was offered as a gift or for sale, then the museum community at large will be advised of the intention to dispose of the material normally through a notice on the MA's Find an Object web listing service, an announcement in the Museums Association's Museums Journal or in other specialist publications and websites (if appropriate).
- 16.9** The announcement relating to gift or sale will indicate the number and nature of specimens or objects involved, and the basis on which the material will be transferred to another institution. Preference will be given to expressions of interest from other Accredited Museums. A period of at least two months will be allowed for an interest in acquiring the material to be expressed. At the end of this period, if no expressions of interest have been received, the museum may consider disposing of the material to other interested individuals and organisations giving priority to organisations in the public domain.
- 16.10** Any monies received by the museum governing body from the disposal of items will be applied solely and directly for the benefit of the collections. This normally means the purchase of further acquisitions. In exceptional cases, improvements relating to the care of collections in order to meet or exceed Accreditation requirements relating to the risk of damage to and deterioration of the collections may be justifiable. Any monies received in compensation for the damage, loss or destruction of items will be applied in the same way. Advice on those cases where the monies are intended to be used for the care of collections will be sought from the Arts Council England.
- 16.11** The proceeds of a sale will be allocated so it can be demonstrated that they are spent in a manner compatible with the requirements of the Accreditation standard.

Money must be restricted to the long-term sustainability, use and development of the collection.

- 16.12** Full records will be kept of all decisions on disposals and the items involved and proper arrangements made for the preservation and/or transfer, as appropriate, of the documentation relating to the items concerned, including photographic records where practicable in accordance with SPECTRUM Procedure on deaccession and disposal.

Disposal by exchange

- 16.13** The nature of disposal by exchange means that the museum will not necessarily be in a position to exchange the material with another Accredited museum. The governing body will therefore ensure that issues relating to accountability and impartiality are carefully considered to avoid undue influence on its decision-making process.
- 16.13.1** In cases where the governing body wishes for sound curatorial reasons to exchange material directly with Accredited or non-Accredited museums, with other organisations or with individuals, the procedures in paragraphs 16.1-5 will apply.
- 16.13.2** If the exchange is proposed to be made with a specific Accredited museum, other Accredited museums which collect in the same or related areas will be directly notified of the proposal and their comments will be requested.
- 16.13.3** If the exchange is proposed with a non-Accredited museum, with another type of organisation or with an individual, the museum will place a notice on the Museums Association's 'Find an Object' web listing service, or make an announcement in the Museums Association's Museums Journal or in other specialist publications and websites (if appropriate).
- 16.13.4** Both the notification and announcement must provide information on the number and nature of the specimens or objects involved both in the museum's collection and those intended to be acquired in exchange. A period of at least two months must be allowed for comments to be received. At the end of this period, the governing body must consider the comments before a final decision on the exchange is made.

Disposal by destruction

- 16.14** If it is not possible to dispose of an object through transfer or sale, the governing body may decide to destroy it.
- 16.15** It is acceptable to destroy material of low intrinsic significance (duplicate mass-produced articles or common specimens which lack significant provenance) where no alternative method of disposal can be found.
- 16.16** Destruction is also an acceptable method of disposal in cases where an object is in extremely poor condition, has high associated health and safety risks or is part of an approved destructive testing request identified in an organisation's research policy.
- 16.17** Where necessary, specialist advice will be sought to establish the appropriate method of destruction. Health and safety risk assessments will be carried out by trained staff where required.

16.18 The destruction of objects should be witnessed by an appropriate member of the museum workforce. In circumstances where this is not possible, e.g. the destruction of controlled substances, a police certificate should be obtained and kept in the relevant object history file.