

4 September 2013

Guildhall School of Music & Drama launches Creative Entrepreneurs scheme in partnership with *Cause4*

Today, the Guildhall School of Music & Drama launches a new Creative Entrepreneurs scheme aimed at supporting graduates of the School to set up their own businesses/social enterprises and develop entrepreneurship skills.

Recognising the current needs of graduate students to be able to be self-starting, and entrepreneurial, the scheme will support Guildhall School alumni to create, launch and make a success of their businesses – as well as to raise vital seed funding.

Run in partnership with development and fundraising enterprise *Cause4*, Guildhall Creative Entrepreneurs forms one strand of a new scheme of Enterprise development at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama, focusing initially on working with a cohort of recent Guildhall alumni (music, acting and technical theatre) through transition to professional life.

The scheme has been developed by Assistant Principal (Research and Academic Development) Professor Helena Gaunt and consists of an intensive 12-month programme for those alumni with a business idea already formed. The scheme includes access to mentoring, coaching, business planning, marketing and sales and funding. Alumni will also benefit from use of office and creative space for a 12 month period and will be introduced to a range of entrepreneurial, community and partnership networks to support business development.

Additionally, the partnership will run a 'lighter touch programme' of workshops and seminar activity for those wanting to develop their knowledge of creative entrepreneurship and develop viable initiatives. A series of seminars and monthly leadership events including core entrepreneurial management skills, such as customer development, digital development, sales, marketing, building teams, finance and pitching, will take place throughout the year.

Alumni will be selected onto the scheme via criteria including artistic quality, strength of concept, business readiness, investment potential and anticipated contribution to the School's life or community programmes. Additionally, successful businesses will be expected to contribute financially to the scheme's future sustainability via funding and mentoring alumni coming through the scheme in subsequent years.

Guildhall Creative Entrepreneurs will be hosted and run at the offices of development and fundraising enterprise, *Cause4* in the City. CEO of *Cause4* Michelle Wright is an alumna and Fellow of the Guildhall School (Violin 1995-1999). The company specialises in the development of charities and social enterprises and as a fast-growing SME itself, *Cause4* has good expertise in the development of entrepreneurial ideas and associated business models.

This scheme builds on knowledge and evaluation of *Cause4*'s successful Entrepreneurship programme which aims to fast-track graduates into leadership roles in the charity and social enterprise sector through a programme of training, development and 'hands on' learning.

Professor Helena Gaunt says *“This is a unique opportunity for us at the Guildhall to make a step-change in the way we engage with our recent alumni and support them at a critical point in their careers, ensuring that the quality of their artistic skills and creative ideas are matched with relevant business skills and practical understanding of how to unlock professional potential in the performing arts. By working in partnership with Cause4, we will capitalise on our distinctive areas of expertise and catalyse an exciting range of start-ups in the creative industries that demonstrate next practices in the performing arts.*

Michelle Wright, CEO of Cause4 says *“As a graduate of the Guildhall School of Music & Drama I know from my own experience just how challenging it can be to launch a career on leaving college. A conservatoire education teaches you many things, including how to perform under pressure, resilience and creativity – all key skills for start up entrepreneurs. This new initiative from the Guildhall School offering alumni the chance to develop their own businesses is a golden opportunity to invest in a new generation of creative entrepreneurs, as well as to support talented graduates to be able to earn a living and thrive on leaving college. It’s a brilliant innovation to support graduates in a more challenging economy for the arts and culture.”*

End

Notes to Editors

About the Guildhall School of Music & Drama – www.gsmd.ac.uk

Rated No. 1 specialist institution in the UK by the Guardian University Guide 2013 and 2014, the Guildhall School is one of the world's leading conservatoires and drama schools – a vibrant, international community of young musicians, actors and theatre technicians in the heart of the City of London. Founded in 1880, the School is a global leader of creative and professional practice which promotes innovation, experiment and research, with nearly 900 students in higher education, drawn from nearly 60 countries around the world. It is also the UK's leading provider of specialist music training at the under-18 level with nearly 2,500 students in Junior Guildhall and the Centre for Young Musicians. The School is widely recognised for the quality of its teaching and its graduates, and its new building Milton Court, which opens in September, will offer new state-of-the-art facilities to match the talent within its walls, ensuring that students enter their chosen profession at the highest level.

About Cause4 – www.cause4.co.uk

Cause4 was set up in May 2009 to support charities, social enterprises and philanthropists in development and fundraising across the charity, arts, sports and educational sectors. *Cause4* seeks to be a modernising influence and leader within the charitable sector, offering relevant, contemporary solutions for charities and social enterprises at a time when more creative, entrepreneurial approaches are much needed. The organisation works in three main areas: strategy and fundraising, philanthropy and enterprise development.

In 2010 *Cause4* developed the Entrepreneurship training programme through which it seeks to address the widely-acknowledged shortage of entrepreneurial development and fundraising personnel within the charity, arts, sports and education sectors. The programme identifies young graduates with a passion for the charitable sector and with the entrepreneurial drive, personality and talent to succeed.

Cause4 has won a string of awards including Michelle Wright, as female entrepreneur of the year at the Natwest Start Up Awards 2011, a top 10 winner in the Ernst and Young Future 100 awards 2011 for demonstrating innovation in social enterprise. *Cause4* was also a winner in the 2012 Startups 100 list for most innovative small businesses across the UK. In November 2012 *Cause4* won two prestigious silver international Stevie Awards for innovation.

In recent months *Cause4* was invited by Lord Young of Graffham and Sir Terry Leahy to join the Accelerate 250 for UK small businesses showing rapid growth and great potential and the company won a fast growth award from Unltd to develop its Entrepreneurship programme.