

## Searching for new approaches to strengthen subject-specific QA

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ESAPA Conference, December 2<sup>nd</sup> 2021

1

## MusiQuE's principles



promoting and supporting quality enhancement



working in partnership with stakeholders and institutions



involving international perspectives in quality enhancement



encouraging institutions to reflect on their own practices



respecting the values and ethos of each individual institution and making quality enhancement issues more meaningful to staff and students.

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2

## Higher Music Education and Quality Assurance: almost 20 years of work

- 2002-2004: Project AEC – NASM (US) on Music Study and Accountability
- 2006-2007: First review criteria, procedures and test visits by AEC
- 2007-2014 ERASMUS TN Project 'Polifonia' of AEC: criteria and procedures fine-tuned, standards formulated and visits realised
- 2011-2013: AEC Quality Enhancement Committee
- 7 October 2014: **MusiQuE – Music Quality Enhancement** established as an independent legal entity
- June 2016: registration MusiQuE on European Quality Assurance Register – EQAR, registration prolonged in November 2020



3

## Stakeholders approach



Association Européenne des  
Conservatoires, Académies de  
Musique et Musikhochschulen



4

## Why MusiQuE? (1)

### Subject-specific dimension

- Proposing subject-specific, self-controlled solutions to develop a quality culture in the sector
- Taking into account the characteristics of higher music education



5

## Why MusiQuE? (2)

### The international dimension

- Internationally recognised standards linking to international educational and professional environment – stakeholders approach
- International procedures – cross border QA
- International peers:
  - Access to a wider pool of specialists
  - Increased objectivity



6

## How to strengthen subject-specific quality assurance?

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7

## Speaking the same language as staff and students

### Concept of Quality

- Combining ‘(musical) standards’ and ‘(educational) quality’

Music sector has been strong on musical/artistic standards

‘Educational quality’ more recent: organisation of the curriculum, student feedback, facilities, assessment rules, etc.

=> Crucial for our type of institutions to bring both together

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8

## Offering tailor-made services

- **Quality enhancement reviews**
  - **Critical Friend Reviews** focused on programmes and departments (content-driven form of external quality review)
- **Accreditation procedures**
- **Joint procedures** with national QA agencies
- **Evaluations of research activities**
- **Benchmarking projects**
- **Consultative visits**
- **Quality Assurance Desk**



9

## Design tailor-made sets of standards

- Standards for Institutional Review
- Standards for Programme Review
- Standards for Joint Programme Review
- Standards for Classroom Music Teacher Education Programmes
- Framework for the Evaluation of Research Activities undertaken by Higher Music Education Institutions
- Standards for Pre-College Music Education



10

## MusiQuE Standards

### 8 Domains of enquiry

- 1) Mission and vision /Programme goals and context
- 2) Educational processes
- 3) Student profiles (admission to, progress through and completion of the programme)
- 4) Teaching staff
- 5) Facilities, resources and support
- 6) Organisation and decision-making processes
- 7) Internal quality culture
- 8) Public interaction



11

## Looking for new review models

Looking for new external QA methodologies that will resonate with our students and teachers taking into account:

1. Formal/informal
2. Internal/external
3. Qualitative/quantitative
4. Speak the language of our students and teachers

→ **Critical Friend Reviews**



12

## Looking for new review models: the Critical Friends Review

- Visit 'Critical Friends' at department level (2 per department within 6-year period)
- Reports 'Critical Friends' + institutional responses form (part of) self-evaluation report
- Prepares and informs ('light weight') 'classic review' every 6 years

## Benefits...

- Personal contact to students and teachers
- Takes both aspects of the concept of quality into account
- Speaks the language of students and teachers
- Strongly focused quality enhancement because of qualified recommendations
- QA workload evenly divided

## Contributing to the EHEA

- Taking responsibility for the realisation of the Bologna process goals on cross-border QA
- Establishing a shared Quality Culture within an academic discipline
- From technocratic approaches to Quality Assurance → a discourse on the content of our education
- Looking for creative approaches to QA

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15

## Strengthening subject-specific QA

- Advocating against the obstacles to cross-border mobility (even in countries where EQAR agencies can operate: financial and legal barriers)
- Increasing our influence on the European scene:
  - ENQA, EQAR
  - European Universities Alliances?
- Reinforcing the link between our standards and our learning outcomes?

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16



# MusiQuE – Music Quality Enhancement

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