

The Mundus Musicalis Project

NEWSLETTER II

THE 'MUNDUS MUSICALIS' PROJECT

The 'Mundus Musicalis' project (the first project in the field of music supported by the ERASMUS MUNDUS programme) has studied international cooperation and mobility in the field of higher music education. The project ran from 1 December 2005 to 1 December 2007 and was jointly coordinated by the Norwegian University of Science and Technology – Department of Music (NTNU) and the European Association of Conservatoires (AEC). Project partner organisations were Birmingham Conservatoire (UK), McGill University – Schulich School of Music (Montreal, Canada), Le Conservatoire de musique et d'art dramatique du Québec (Québec City, Canada), University of Adelaide – Elder Conservatorium (Adelaide, Australia), Queensland Conservatorium – Griffith University (Brisbane, Australia), Keimyung University – College of Music & Performing Arts (Daegu, Korea), National Association of Schools of Music – NASM (USA), and Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul – Institute for the Arts (Porto Alegre, Brazil). A working group was established with one representative from each partner institution, which collected and analysed relevant information, and drafted the final project documents. The project realised an ambitious working programme with working group meetings in Europe, North America and Asia, and several conference presentations world-wide.

INFORMATION ON NATIONAL HIGHER MUSIC EDUCATION SYSTEMS WORLDWIDE

One of the main aims of 'Mundus Musicalis' was to facilitate increased mobility and employability of students, teachers and professionals. This requires a greater understanding of global higher music education issues so that obstacles to the recognition of music programmes and qualifications can be removed. As a result, the working group compiled an unprecedented amount of information about higher music education systems world-wide in the form of national descriptions, which have been developed following a set format to achieve maximum comparability. This format includes information on structures, qualifications, number of institutions, funding mechanisms, admission requirements, credit point systems, quality assurance and accreditation procedures, and academic calendars. 43 of such national descriptions have been produced: 34 European, 2 Latin American (Brazil and Argentina), 2 North American (US and Canada), 3 Asian (Korea, Japan and Vietnam) descriptions, as well as descriptions from Australia and New Zealand. As the international mobility of music students constantly grows, institutions and future students will be helped by having access to such information.

THE INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION OF STUDIES AND QUALIFICATIONS IN MUSIC

In addition to the information on national higher music education systems mentioned above, the 'Mundus Musicalis' working group has also studied technical issues related to the recognition of studies and qualifications. It has collected information on the various credit point systems that can facilitate the recognition of studies. Moreover, a substantial amount of data was compiled on the recognition of qualifications at international level, including lists of regulated music professions and information on the relevant national recognition procedures. This information will be of use to professional musicians looking for work in other countries.

COMPARING QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ACCREDITATION SYSTEMS IN MUSIC WORLDWIDE

As the exchange of information on quality assurance and accreditation procedures is essential to the development of mutual trust necessary to underpin an effective recognition of qualifications, a comparative study was also produced with a focus on quality assurance and accreditation procedures in music at international level, which lists, compares and analyses the existing procedures in 34 countries.

ENHANCING ATTRACTIVENESS OF EUROPEAN HIGHER MUSIC EDUCATION

Another outcome of the 'Mundus Musicalis' project has been the launch of a website portal (www.studymusicineurope.org) with information on studying music in Europe for music students worldwide. The website has been based on the feedback of a study addressing issues related to students outside the European Union currently studying music in EU member states.



Association Européenne
des Conservatoires,
Académies de Musique
et Musikhochschulen (AEC)



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Education and Culture

Enhancing the attractiveness of European higher music education appeared to be a sensitive issue for a group whose members represented institutions from other parts of the world. It was therefore considered vital to avoid any suggestion of 're-colonisation' or a competitive approach towards the global recruitment of students. Instead, an approach based on cooperation and networking was emphasized and the group emphatically sees mobility in the 21st century as two-way traffic. In addition, it was also underlined that any promotion of European higher education could only work when a subject-specific approach will be taken, as students are more interested in academic content than in glossy marketing campaigns as being used by certain countries.

THE 'MUNDUS MUSICALIS' FINAL REPORT

A considerable challenge to the working group was the vast amount and diversity of information that needed to be collected and analysed. It was therefore decided during the first meeting that the project would focus predominantly on the countries represented in the group, as well as some neighbouring countries. Now that these countries have been covered, the addition of other countries will be explored after the project ends.

Despite the acknowledged diversity of educational structures and approaches there was also a strong sense in the working group that many common themes exist at the international level, such as:

- the continuous challenge faced by higher music education institutions to prepare graduates for an increasingly diversified music profession
- changes in the role of art music in our societies, the emergence of new 'players' such as world music and web-based music, and the continuous questions raised by choosing position in an increasingly globalised, mediatised, and commercialised musical arena
- opportunities caused by regional and global developments (e.g. the Bologna Declaration process)
- a lack of respect for cultural diversity caused by forces of globalisation, as addressed in the UNESCO Convention for the Protection and Diversity of Cultural Expression.

Consequently, the working group decided to go beyond the minimum requirements of the project (which were mostly intended to address the more technical aspects of mobility) and to formulate a set of recommendations that could serve as a basis for future explorations. These recommendations are described in the Final Report, which also includes general information about the project, and reflections about the benefits, current issues and tools related to international mobility and cooperation in higher music education. Moreover, a policy paper entitled 'Towards an International Higher Music Education Area' can also be found in the Final Report, which presents a forward-looking ambition to approach developments in higher music education from a truly global perspective.

This policy paper lists a set of comprehensive recommendations in which the working group underscores the necessity for international cooperation in higher music education because of the increasingly international nature of the music profession. It also calls for a high degree of flexibility from national governments, individual institutions and the European Union when dealing with the recognition of studies and qualifications, and visa regulations for students outside the EU.

'MUNDUS MUSICALIS' AND THE BOLOGNA DECLARATION PROCESS

The global dimension of the Bologna Declaration process was emphasised at the London ministerial meeting in May 2007, and a great need was identified by the 'Mundus Musicalis' project for the dissemination of information about the Bologna Declaration process outside the 'Bologna' region. It has been one of the aims of the working group meetings to update the members on the latest 'Bologna' developments relative to higher music education and to disseminate this information through their contacts at national level.

Another strong asset of this project was its close synergy with other European projects in the field of higher music education. The 'Mundus Musicalis' working group was invited to comment on the European sectoral qualifications framework developed in the ERASMUS Thematic Network for Music 'Polifonia' and the subject-specific framework for quality assurance and accreditation in music developed in the project 'Accreditation in European Professional Music Training'¹. This way, 'Mundus Musicalis' offered a unique opportunity to compare these frameworks at the international level, which will hopefully facilitate the recognition of the frameworks in the future. By making this connection between work being done in the Bologna process and the international dimension, the 'Mundus Musicalis' project has put into reality what is being discussed as part of the global dimension of the Bologna process and shows the leading role the discipline music plays in these important developments.

*For more information about 'Mundus Musicalis',
please visit www.aecinfo.org/mundusmusicalis or www.studymusicineurope.org.*

¹ See for more information on these projects on www.polifonia-tn.org/tuning and www.bologna-and-music/accreditation.