# POLIFONIA Workshops on Assessment practices and policies in higher music education

'Polifonia' Working Group on Assessment and Standards 2014

**Table of Contents**

## Introduction

This report gives an account of two events that took place during 2013:

- a seminar entitled 'Enhancing standards of assessment for higher music education through international dialogue' (26-27 April 2013, University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna) and

- a workshop entitled 'Intensive Workshop on Assessment, Standards and Institutional policy' (7 November 2013, Conservatorio di Musica "V. Bellini", Palermo)

Both events were part of the work done within the ERASMUS Network for Music 'Polifonia'. The Vienna seminar was jointly organized by two of its groups: the 'Polifonia' Working Group on Assessment and Standards, active in the current cycle of the project, and the INVITE Working Group on Instrumental and Vocal Teacher Education, active within the previous cycle of 'Polifonia', from 2007 to 2010. The Palermo workshop was organised by the first group only. The seminar and workshop aimed to provide a forum for colleagues involved in assessing in higher music education institutions and senior management to engage in a dialogue around principles and processes of assessment in music.

## About 'Polifonia'

The ERASMUS Network for Music 'Polifonia' is the biggest European project on professional music training to date, involving 55 institutions in the field of music training and the music profession in 26 European countries and 4 countries outside Europe. It is jointly co-ordinated by the Royal Conservatoire The Hague and the European Association of Conservatoires (AEC), and funded by the EU's Lifelong Learning Programme. The project is currently in its third three-year cycle, and ends in September 2014.

Within 'Polifonia' III, the working group on **'Assessment and Standards' (WG1)**, takes up the work on assessment begun in the latter stages of 'Polifonia' II and draws upon expertise from the earlier working group. It particularly aims to:

- strengthen shared understanding of assessment methods, procedures and standards in European higher music education and
- explore how external examiners might be used to enhance objectivity and the exchange of expertise

The Working Group for Instrumental and Vocal Music Teacher Training was set up during the second cycle of 'Polifonia', and its members have proceeded their work independently after the end of the project in reflecting on current trends and challenges regarding the changing role of instrumental/vocal music teachers and disseminating their findings and outcomes. One of them were a set of competences for instrumental/vocal teacher training that supplemented the existing AEC learning outcomes.

## Seminar theme and rationale

Assessment is a core part of the daily work of music educators. It takes many forms and fulfils many functions. Recent developments relating to output-oriented curriculum design and competence-based education raise questions regarding the nature and purpose of our assessment practices. A recurring question seems to be 'Are we really assessing what we think we assess'? Other important questions relate to the use of criteria in assessing, the role of external examiners, the issue of grading and the understanding of the concept of 'standards' across institutions.

The first seminar focused on assessment in the areas of Performance and Pedagogy. Therefore most of the participants were those involved in practical assessments and examining in these areas, either within their own institutions or as external examiners/panel members in other institutions. The seminar in Palermo had a dual focus on developing existing assessment policies within institutions and on exploring ways of calibrating standards across institutions. Participants were AEC congress attendees.

## About this report

The report gives an overview of the structure of the events and the main observations and discussion points. All available material produced by the working group can be found in the appendices. It is also meant as giving practical illustration to a workshop model developed by the 'Polifonia' working group on assessment and standards[1]. Presentations and key notes given are mentioned in a separate section and corresponding slides or material is referred to in the text when available on the internet.

## Structure of programme

The seminar and workshop incorporated practical exercises in assessment along with keynote presentations and time for group reflection and discussion. Participants were

invited to share examples of innovative practice in assessment. For the complete programmes, please consult the appendix[2].

After opening words from the host institutions, introduction to the project work and brief key notes on assessment and standards and related topics, the participants engaged in practical exercises.

## Practical Exercise: 'Panel assessments of student achievement'

In Vienna, parallel sessions were held focusing on a practical exercise in assessing a. performance and b. pedagogy. In Palermo, the focus was on performance only. The following sections describe the tasks given for the performance group a) in Vienna and for Palermo. The pedagogical exercise b) is described in the next section.

## Description of tasks – Performance

The participants were asked to form panels with up to five participants observing and assessing three video performances by students

The participants were asked to:

a) make an individual assessment of the performance and produce a mark/grade and written comments on the performance

b) discuss the performance with the other members of the group, arrive at an agreed mark/grade and provide written feedback for the performer

With regard to the context, all three performers were in the eighth semester (BMus), preparing for their final recital or playing their final bachelor recital. In Vienna, solely piano performances were shown, as the group felt it would be useful to have an example of an instrument most of the participant have at least some experience with. In Palermo, a variety of instruments (piano, violin, flute) were shown as the feedback from Vienna had indicated that it did not matter for the exercise if the participants were specialists on the instruments assessed as long as they were musicians.

The assessors were asked to consider each performance, in so far as possible, in the context of the standard that might be expected for a final undergraduate recital. The main learning outcome was described in terms of the AEC learning outcome relating to

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[2] Please note that in Vienna the original programme on Saturday was changed, based on the decision on all participants. Instead of the planned parallel morning sessions there was a long plenary in the afternoon.

'Skills in Artistic Expression': 'at the completion of their studies, students should be able to create and realise their own artistic concepts and should have developed the necessary skills for their expression'. A 1-5 grading scale (1-Excellent/5-Unsatisfactory) was used. In Vienna, the participants were asked to assess the performances in three settings: The first performance was assessed without using any written criteria. For the second performance the assessors were given lists of detailed assessment criteria to consider relating to Technique, Interpretation, Expression and Communication. In assessing the third performance, criterion statements linked to the grading scale were used. After the having reflected on the feedback participants gave to the Vienna seminar, the first more general set of assessment criteria was used as a sole frame for the Palermo exercise.

The WG were also interested in the assessment *process* engaged in by the participants and an observer was assigned to each group to report on the exercise.

The Guidelines for assessors/panels can be found in appendix 2, the Guidelines for Observers can be found in appendix 4. The Criteria can be found in appendices 2 and 3.

## Description of tasks – Pedagogy

The Pedagogy Group also engaged in a practical exercise but, as the numbers were smaller, the exercise was undertaken by the Group as a whole rather than working in smaller groups. The focus of the Pedagogy session was somewhat different from that of the Performance Group. The purpose of the exercise was to stimulate discussion around assessment in the area of Instrumental/Vocal Pedagogy and to explore how the teacher competences identified by the 'Polifonia' Working Group on Instrumental/Vocal Teacher Education as part of the 2nd cycle of Polifonia might be used in developing criteria for assessment. Thomas Bolliger, a member of the WG, gave an initial presentation on the WG outcomes, focusing in particular on teacher roles and competences presented under six headings: *Teacher as Performer and Artistic Role Model*; *Teacher as Planner and Organiser*; *Teacher as Communicator and Pedagogue*; *Teacher as Facilitator*; *Teacher as Reflective Practitioner* and *Teacher as Advocate, Networker and Collaborator*.

The Pedagogy Group then observed videotaped material of excerpts from student teachers' Teaching Practice placements. The student teachers were pursuing a one year postgraduate qualification in pedagogy and the lessons involved were a group Clarinet

lesson and an individual Violin lesson.  The observations were followed by open discussion where each participant gave their individual assessments  of the performances of the two student teachers and this led to further debate on assessment criteria.  There was also more general discussion which covered a wide range of issues relating to general principles and processes of assessment in Instrumental/Vocal Teacher Education.

## Feedback session

Following the practical exercise there were feedback sessions dedicated to small group discussion on the aspects/parameters to be assessed and the contextual factors to consider in relation to assessment in performance and pedagogy. Afterwards the participants had the opportunity to present their experience with the practical exercise within their panels to the whole group of participants. A final discussion in the big group rounded the experience up. A summary of the observations, reflections and main discussions points over the two events is following.

## General observations and reflections

The following statements are summaries and exemplary for the discussions during the seminar. The discussion covered a range of issues including: participants' experience of assessment processes in their own institutions – in particular, problematic issues relating to panel assessments; issues relating to grading and marking; feedback; the purpose of assessment; standards.

### *Assessment – an area for professional development?*

Participants gave positive feedback on their experience of the practical assessment exercise undertaken. The following issues were raised:

- The opportunity to discuss issues around assessment (both performance and pedagogy) was welcomed – can be an area we take for granted, assuming shared values
- The need to repeat the exercise/engage in similar exercises over a number of times was identified – to 'unpack the way we think' and 'make explicit shared values' – both within and across institutions
- Participants would like more provision for training and professional development in this area
- Providing staff with more information and insight on assessment issues can have an influence on the *culture* within an institution

- For some institutions there can be an issue with part-time staff – lack of time and resources to explore such issues
- A 'bank of examples' similar to Schumann dvds would be useful for training purposes and would facilitate further discussion at institutional level

## Panel assessments: issues

There was quite a wide-ranging discussion on various matters relating to the conduct of assessments involving a panel of examiners. Participants raised issues in relation to practices within their own institutions:

- Problem of departmental/institutional politics –'something really rotten in the process'? - eg 'assessing the teacher rather than the student', personality issues, 'tenacious' personalities, dominant voices - 'not all voices heard', 'fighting'......
- Issue of how panels arrive at a grade – 'majority rules'? mathematical process? (can result in student getting grade that nobody chose), negotiation towards concensus?
- The importance of having a strong Chair who can manage interpersonal relations, monitor 'dominant voices', ensure that all views are heard, keep the focus on the student performance
- Institutional/departmental 'culture' around assessment – 'an assessment says a lot about the organisation' - can vary across departments within an individual institution
- Use of criteria – criteria can be useful and can provide a point of departure for discussions and keep discussions focused  - can help avoid purely 'emotional' responses and encourage a more systematic approach
- Being on a panel can in itself be a learning experience for the assessor
- The role of an external examiner

## Assessment and feedback

There was some debate over the role of grades and oral and written feedback. Participants seemed particularly interested practices where the panel members give *oral feedback* to the student after the performance. Issues arising:

- Such an approach provides opportunities for interaction and discussion
- Differing views and opinions can be helpful for both student and teacher
- There is a need to respect each individual's viewpoint
- Focus is on the student
- Challenging for student directly after recital – a lot of information to absorb
- 'Dynamics' of process – need for trust, respect, loyalty

- 'Powerful', 'very giving' – but issue of time?
- Good investment of time - the power of oral feedback – details of what needs to be addressed  - can really help student
- Students appreciate 'being taken seriously'
- Pedagogical students allowed to sit in on the process (Helsinki) – peer learning

### What is being assessed?

- Importance of assessing the work of the student/the student performance - not the student
- Not 'predicting a future' for the student but merely assessing what has been achieved to that instant
- Assessment as part of 'loop' – how what we look for at audition/what and how we teach/ how and what we assess should all relate and there should be no 'mixed messages'
- Issues relating to assessing students' development over time and the learning process
- Issue of institutional identity – panel understanding of institutional values  - teacher + institution + values
- Can sometimes have protocols regarding assessment procedures but not 'levels of learning' being assessed

### Assessment and the student perspective

- Students need to have knowledge of assessment systems and procedures including any stated Learning Outcomes, criteria for assessing etc.
- Learning outcomes are being assessed and indicators provided to show how they are being achieved – the student also has the right to be provided with the possibility of achieving them
- Students are entitled to be provided with 'reasoned justification' for the grade awarded – issues can arise in relation to teachers'/assessors' inability to *articulate* reasons – limits in the articulation process at times
- Students have the legal right to question the grade awarded on the basis of the assessment procedures/systems employed – not on the basis of the grade awarded
- Students are entitled to know 'how they are doing'
- Students should be able to transfer easily from one HME institution to another and to have their achievements/awards/qualifications recognised in other institutions/countries

- What is the purpose of a grade/mark? How will it be used? (Comparison made with engineering where final grades can influence future career - level of job, promotional opportunities etc.)

- Grades cannot be 'absolute' – no absolute values

- Issue of standards in European context – not recommending 'standardisation' where all institutions would be the same – train analogy whereby using different coloured/types of trains, but on the same size of track, can facilitate mobility directly from one European country (HME institution) to another – links into shared values, understandings on issues such as learning outcomes, assessment procedures, grading systems

- The role of learning outcomes – what do we expect at Bachelor/Masters levels

## Notes concerning teacher education in particular

*Observed and summarised by Natalia Ardila-Mantilla (Univ. Ass.Mag.art. University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna, Institute for Music Education: Instrumental / Vocal Education)*

### „Enthusiasm"

There are characteristic of teachers, which are relevant to the process of teaching and learning, but quite difficult to assess.

For example: "Enthusiasm", "charisma", "group management"

- Is the teacher "enthusiastic", "charismatic" or does he has a good "group management"? The terminology changes the focus of the assessment and the development possibilities.

- Is it legitimate to assess characteristics, which aren't competences, but personality traits or dispositions?

- How to assess characteristics, which are more than the sum of their parts? (In this sense, checklist might be problematic.)

- Are you charismatic (always), or are you being enthusiastic in this particular situation?

- How does enthusiasm impact (positively or negatively) on the learning?

### Strengths / Weaknesses

In assessment processes, we tend to think in terms of strengths and weaknesses. That's not always helpful. Some elements of the teaching / learning process can be considered both as a strength and a weakness, for instance: "being in control" ("not leaving students room for own ideas"), "high pace" ("not being able to let go").

A more appropriate term would be "areas of development", because not only a weakness, but also a strength can be considered an area of development.

A succesful strategy in one situation might be completely inefficient in another situation. The context and the situation are unique.

## Observing a lesson / The whole picture

To assess pedagogical competences by observing a lesson is just not possible. On one hand, the assessor lacks the view of the whole picture. On the other, many of the teacher's roles can't be seen in a lesson.

You need to know the aims of the teacher to assess him/her. And you also have to know the aims of others (students, parents, the institution).

You need a view of the middle- and long-term perspective.

## Assessing teaching and/or assessing learning

When assessing teaching you always have to assess the effect of teaching on the learning. (Has anything being learned?)

## Assessment / Self-reflection & Self-evaluation

Self-reflection is essential to be a good teacher. When assessing teaching, you always need to take into account how the student (teacher in training) reflects on the situation. Is the student aware of his/her lacks?

When students are very insecure or very sure of themselves, the feedback needs to be used differently, has a different function.

## Teacher roles / Teacher's identity

In teaching, people sometimes take the role of the teacher they think they are supposed to be. Assessing the teaching itself wouldn't be the most important here, but to analyse together with the teacher in training his/her images of the teacher's identity.

When you assess, you also assess the ideas that a teacher in training has about "what's a good teacher". An important question for the student would be: How do you define your teacher's role?

### Performance assessment / Teaching assessment

There are many differences between the processes of assessing performance and assessing teaching.

For instance: What's the student in control of? What happened before? What is supposed to happen next? (This is relevant in teaching assessment.)

### Opposing / defending

In assessor panels, the assessors tend to assume the roles of opponents and defenders of the assessed person. This blocks the view for the many common observations.

### Building criteria for assessment

You always assess the things, which are important to you. By assessing, you're building together criteria for assessment. You're doing two things simultaneously: creating criteria and applying these criteria for assessment.

You build a structure together, as an assessment panel, but on the other hand, you get influenced, and that means, that each student gets a different assessment / a different assessment situation. Is that fair?

### Assessment in the workshop / in real life

In a real life assessment situation, the process wouldn't run so smoothly, because other interests of the people involved also play a role.

In real life, you would have much less time for discussion and reflexion.

### Identifying with the person being assessed

In the process of assessing, you identify yourself with the people involved: sometimes with the teacher, sometimes with the pupil.

## Plenary presentations given in Vienna and Palermo

### Assessment in Music: The standards challenge

Associate Professor Don Lebler at the Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University in Brisbane, Australia, with a research expertise on learning and teaching of music, music education, curriculum design and popular music presents his research project AiM (Assessment in Music) that deals with "*An approach to aligning assessment with Threshold Learning Outcomes in the creative and performing arts*".

## The process of becoming a teacher- what to assess and how?

Geoffrey Reed (Senior Lecturer in Music Education at the Royal Northern College of Music, Manchester, UK) and Kaarlo Hildén (Faculty Dean at the University of the Arts Helsinki - Sibelius Academy, Faculty of Classical Music, Helsinki Finland) present issues of pedagogical assessment based on the INVITE experiences and set of competences. Their full presentations can be found here and here.

## Examples of innovative practice in assessment

When registering for the seminar in Vienna, participants were encouraged to present 'Examples of innovative practice in assessment'. 4 presentations were given.

### Example 1 – Jeremy Cox

Jeremy Cox (former Dean of the Royal College of Music in London) described a case study on reoccurring issues related to Assessment in Music carried out by the Royal College of Music, London, UK. The full presentation can be found on LINK.

### Example 2 – Jacques Moreau

Jacques Moreau (Director of Cefedem Rhône-Alpes – Lyon, France, and member of the 'Polifonia' Working Group on Assessment and Standards) presented two examples of specific assessment procedures based on the expression of the student perspective.

### Example 3 – Keijo Aho

Keijo Aho, Vice-Chairman and Treasurer of the European Chamber Music Teachers' Association (ECMTA) gives a presentation about the special challenges to teach and evaluate chamber music. The presentation is based on his book "The Art of Chamber Music". An abstract can be found here.

### Example 4 – Laura Huhtinen-Hildén

Laura Huhtinen-Hildén (Senior Lecturer in Music Education and Project Manager at the Helsinki Metropolia University of Applied Sciences, Finland) gives in inside to the challenges faced by music educators and presents a "map" illustrating the process of becoming a music educator. The full presentation can be found here.

## Assessment, Standards and Institutional Policy: What? When? Who?

Jan Rademakers (Dean, Maastricht Academy of Music and WG member) gave a presentation about the system applied in his institution where all courses are related to learning outcomes, assessment methods and criteria.

## International External Examiners: linking assessment, quality assurance and internationalization

Martin Prchal (Vice Principal, Royal Conservatoire The Hague) and Susanne van Els (Head of Classical Music, Royal Conservatoire The Hague) gave a presentation about the experience their institution made with engaging international external examiners on a reciprocal basis in assessment procedures.

## Pre-Congress 'Polifonia' Workshop on Assessments and Standards: exercises and group discussions, Budapest, 13th November 2014

Additionally the third Workshop was organized by the the 'Polifonia' Working Group on Assessment and Standards as a succession, addition and logical continuation of two previously held workshops. This workshop on Assessments and Standards took a strategi place just before the AEC Annual Congress 13th of November 2014 (Liszt Academy, Budapest, Hungary). This additional workshop was entitled 'Pre-Congress Polifonia Workshop on Assessments and Standards: exercises and group discussions' and was part of the work done within the ERASMUS Network for Music 'Polifonia'. The workshop aimed to provide a forum for colleagues involved in assessing in higher music education institutions and senior management to engage in a dialogue around principles and processes of assessment in music an to offer senior staff of higher music education institutions and those involved in assessment (both as internal and external examiners) a platform to reflect on specific topics around assessment including quality, standards and institutional policy. The workshop had a dual focus - on developing existing assessment policies within institutions and on exploring ways of calibrating standards across institutions.

A check-list developed by the 'Polifonia' working group on Assessment and Standards served as an important guide through the participant's discussion. Participants from the workshop in Palermo 2013 were invited to rejoin the discussion as well. The workshop incorporated practical exercises in assessment along with the Working Group's members' presentations and time for group reflection and discussion. Participants were invited to share examples of innovative practice in assessment. After opening words from the chair of the Working Group on Assessment and Standards , introduction to the Polifonia project  and the activities and findings of the Working Group, the participants engaged in practical exercises based on the prepared homework. Group work was to

identify themes for the day followed by discussion on selected topics according to participants' preferences.

Homework requirements included a statement on an aspect of participant's institutional assessment policy he/she regard as a strength, a statement on an aspect of their own institutional assessment policy they would like to improve and in case participants attended the workshop 2013 in Palermo, a statement on the impact of workshop on practices in their institution/their own assessment practices afterwards was asked to be delivered.

Practical exercise was followed by a presentations by Mary Lennon, DIT Conservatory of Music and Drama, covering a theme "Assessment of learning and Assessment for learning" and by a working group guest Susanne van Els, Head of Classical Music, Royal Conservatoire The Hague introducing "The Power of Feedback". The presentations were followed by practical exercise within the two formed groups of participants. Last presentation focusing on "Research on Performance Assessment" was delivered by Gary McPherson (Melbourne Conservatorium of Music, The University of Melbourne). During the workshop two groups were formed and discussed different themes- the role of the teacher, need for clear criteria, shared problems and differences, transparency of assessment and feedback related questions. The workshop was concluded by the presentation of both groups findings.

## Appendix 1 – Programmes

### A) Enhancing Standards of Assessment for Higher Music Education through International Dialogue

26th-27th April 2013, University of Music and Performing Arts, Vienna

Anton-von-Webern Platz 1, 1030 Wien

| Friday, 26th April 2013 | | |
|---|---|---|
| 13.00 | **Registration starts** | Orchesterstudio |
| 14.00 | **Opening** Welcome by host institution and working group members Presentations by Hannah Hebert, Project Manager of the ERASMUS Network of Music 'Polifonia', and Ester Tomasi-Fumics, chair of the 'Polifonia' Working Group on Assessment and Standards, | Orchesterstudio C 01 13 |
| 14.45 | **Introduction to the topic** WG members | Orchesterstudio C 01 13 |
| 15.30 Parallel session 1 | **"Panel assessments of student achievement"** Introduction to the practical assessment task Division into two parallel working groups: **A** Performance and **B** Instrumental/Vocal Teacher Education | **A** Orchesterstudio C 01 13 **B** iPop F 01 39 |
| 16.00 | *Coffee break* | iPop building first floor |
| 16.30 Parallel session 2 | **Practical exercise 1** **A** Performance **B** Instrumental/Vocal Teacher Education | **A** Orchesterstudio C 01 13 **B** iPop F 01 39 |
| 18.00 Parallel session 3 | **Reflective process** Small group discussion on the | **A** Orchesterstudio C 01 13 |

| | aspects/parameters to be assessed and the contextual factors to consider | **B** iPop F 01 39 |
|---|---|---|
| 18.30 – 19.30 Parallel session 4 | **Feedback session** Discussion based on the previous two sessions: assessment in the performance/pedagogical areas – characteristics and challenges | **A** Orchesterstudio C 01 13 **B** iPop F 01 |
| 19.30 – 21:30 | *Dinner with traditional Viennese dishes* | iPop F 01 39 |

| Saturday, 27th April 2013 | | |
|---|---|---|
| 9.30 | **Observers report back to plenary** | Orchesterstudio C 01 13 |
| 10.15 | **Assessment in Music: The standards challenge.** Don Lebler Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University (Australia) | Orchesterstudio C 01 13 |
| 11.15 | *Coffee break* | iPop building first floor |
| 11.45 | **The process of becoming a teacher-what to assess and how?** Issues of pedagogical assessment based on the INVITE experiences and set of competences. Working group members | Orchesterstudio C 01 13 |
| 12.45 | *Lunch* | iPop building first floor |
| 14.00 Parallel session 5 | **Practical exercise 2** Continuation of the small group practical assessment tasks undertaken on Saturday. Parallel sessions; characteristics of good practice **A** - Performance **B** – Instrumental/Vocal Pedagogy Ideas of future collaboration in developing Instrumental/Vocal Teacher Education. | **A** Orchesterstudio C 01 13 **B** iPop F 01 39 |
| 16.00 | *Coffee break* | iPop building first floor |
| 16.30 | **Plenary with observers' reports followed by discussion** | Orchesterstudio C 01 13 |
| 17.15 | **Examples of innovative practice in** | Orchesterstudio |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | **assessment in HME**<br>Short presentations by participants, outlining examples of innovative practice in assessment in their own institutions. | C 01 13 |
| 18.00 | **Closing Session with final statements** | Orchesterstudio<br>C 01 13 |
| 18.30 | *End and optional dinner (not included in participant fee)* | Salm Bräu |

7th November 2013 Conservatorio di Musica "V. Bellini", Palermo

Via Squarcialupo, 45 Palermo, Italy

| **Thursday, 7th November 2013** | |
|---|---|
| 09:15-09:30 | **Registration** |
| 09:30-10:30 | **Opening and Introduction to the Polifonia Project**<br>Hannah Hebert, *Polifonia Project Manager, AEC*<br>Ester Tomasi-Fumics, *Chair WG on Assessment & Standards*<br><br>**Assessment, Standards and Institutional Policy: What? When? Who?**<br>Jan Rademakers, *Dean, Maastricht Academy of Music, WG member*<br><br>**International External Examiners: linking assessment, quality assurance and internationalization**<br>Martin Prchal, *Vice Principal, Royal Conservatoire The Hague*<br>Susanne van Els, *Head of Classical Music, Royal Conservatoire The Hague* |
| 10:30-11:00 | *Coffee break* |
| 11:00-12:30 | **Practical exercise:**<br>**Assessing Music Performance: Focusing on the Assessment Process**<br>Division into small assessment panels |
| 12:30-13:30 | *Lunch* |
| 13:30-15:00 | **Plenary Discussion**<br>**Reflecting on Assessment Processes and Standards: Issues and Concerns**<br>including individual group feedback from the morning session |
| 15:00-15:30 | *Coffee break* |
| 15:30-16:00 | **The Quest for European Standards in Assessment Processes in Higher Music Education: Future Pathways?**<br>Discussion based on the previous two sessions and topics introduced in the morning |
| 16:30 | Closing remarks |

13th November 2014, Liszt Academy, Budapest

Wesselényi utca 52, 1077 Budapest

| **Thursday, 13th November 2014**<br>Franz Liszt Academy of Music in Budapest<br>Room: Room I | |
|---|---|
| 08:30 | *Registration open* |
| 09:00 - 10:30 | ### Assessment: the elements<br><br>**Brief Introduction**<br>Ester Tomasi-Fumics, *University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna*<br><br>**Continuing the Conversation**<br>*Group work: identifying themes for the day followed by discussion on selected topics according to participants' preferences* |
| 11:00 - 11:30 | *Coffee break* |
| 11:30 - 12:30 | ### Assessment for learning<br><br>**Brief Introduction**<br>Mary Lennon, *Dublin Institute of Technology*<br><br>**The Power of Feedback**<br>Susanne van Els, *Head of Classical Music, Royal Conservatoire The Hague*<br><br>**Continuing the Conversation**<br>*Debate with participants* |
| 12:30-13:30 | *Lunch* |
| 13:30-15:00 | ### Assessment: continuing the debate<br><br>**Research on Performance Assessment**<br>Gary McPherson, *Melbourne Conservatorium of Music, The University of Melbourne*<br><br>**Continuing the Conversation**<br>*Presentation of group work outcomes*<br>*Plenary discussion* |

**A) Vienna**

You are kindly requested to observe three recorded performances of Schumann's Fantasie op.17 c-major, 1st movement for piano. Following each performance (c12 minutes) you are asked to (within c18 minutes):

  a. make an individual assessment of the performance and produce a grade and written comments on the performance

  b. discuss the performance with the other members of the group, arrive at an agreed grade and provide written feedback for the performer from the panel

**Context**:

All three performers are students on the same bachelor programme (BMus) at a European conservatoire and are currently in the eighth semester, preparing for their Final Recitals.

The three performances were recorded under the same conditions, designed to simulate a formal recital situation. You are asked to consider each performance, in so far as is possible, in the context of the standard that might be expected for a final recital.

*Main learning outcome involved*

"Skills in artistic expression

At the completion of their studies, students should be able to create and realise their own artistic concepts and should have developed the necessary skills for their expression" (AEC LOs)

*Grading scale*:          **1** - Excellent

                          **2** - Very good

                          **3** – Good

                          **4** – Satisfactory

                          **5** – Unsatisfactory (Fail)

*Time*: The overall time allocation for this task is 90 minutes.

Please note that, following this session, there will be time for reflection and discussion on the process.


Many thanks for your participation and co-operation!

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The instructions were complemented with sheets for individual and panel feedback about the performances eventually leading to written feedback to the performing student.

**B) Palermo**

You are kindly requested to observe three recorded performances:

| Level | Work | Composer |
|---|---|---|
| 1 BMus year 4 Violin | Violin Concerto in D minor, Op. 47 - 3. Allegro, ma non tanto | Jean Sibelius |
| 2 BMus year 4 Flute | Sonate pour flûte et piano, 3rd movement only | Jindřich Feld |
| 3 BMus year 4 Piano | Toccata, BV 287 | Ferruccio Busoni |

Following each performance (between 8 and 12 minutes) you are asked to (within c18 minutes):

    a.  make an individual assessment of the performance and produce a mark

    b.  discuss the performance with the other members of the group, arrive at an agreed mark and provide written feedback for the performer from the panel

Before starting the exercise, please choose one member of the group to act as Chair for the panel assessments.

**Context**:

The three performers are all from the same Conservatoire and the performances were recorded as part of their BMus 4th Year recitals. You are asked to consider each performance, in so far as is possible, in the context of the standard that might be expected for a final undergraduate recital, even though you will not hear the full programme.

*Marking scale*:      **1** - Excellent

                    **2** - Very good

                    **3** – Good

                    **4** – Satisfactory

                    **5** – Unsatisfactory (Fail)

Please assess the individual performances according to the learning outcome and the criteria presented below and consider them for your written feedback:

*Main learning outcome involved*

"<u>Skills in artistic expression</u>

At the completion of their studies, students should be able to create and realise

their own artistic concepts and should have developed the necessary skills for their expression" (AEC LOs)

*General assessment criteria*

| **Technique** |
|---|
| *Physiological* |
|   - Breathing<br>  - Posture<br>  - Relaxation—tension Balance<br>  - Coordination |
| *Physical* |
|   - Sound: production, projection and control of instrument/voice and consistency, clarity and focus of tone across all registers and dynamic levels<br>  - Range<br>  - Intonation<br>  - Physical control—stamina—endurance<br>  - Bodily coordination |
| *Instrumental* |
|   - Coordination, balance and cohesion<br>  - Accuracy, assuredness and facility of rhythm, pitch, articulations, dynamics, timing, as well as the degree to which errors undermine and detract from the overall quality of the performance<br>  - Pacing of performance<br>  - Sensitivity to intonation |
| **Interpretation** |
|   - Authenticity: understanding of the style/genre and established performance practice<br>  - Accuracy: based on faithful reading and/or memorization of the score, and realization and exploration of the composer's intentions<br>  - Musical coherence: perceptive choice of tempo, phrase shaping, dynamic shadings, sense of line, and understanding of overall structure |
| **Expression** |
|   - Understanding of the emotional character of the work<br>  - Projection of mood and character of the work<br>  - Communication of the structural high points and turning points of the work<br>  - Sensitivity to the relationship between parts within a texture<br>  - Appropriate use of tone and color, light and shade, and/or drama |
| **Communication** |
|   - Confidence, as demonstrated in performances that are both convincing and purposeful<br>  - Interest, in terms of the degree to which the performer holds the audience's attention, maintains a sense of direction, creates a sense of occasion, and ends the work convincingly<br>  - Projection of expressive, interpretative, and structural features of the composition performed |

*Time*: The overall time allocation for this task is 90 minutes.

**Report forms:**

Report forms are attached and should be used to provide written feedback for each student from the panel as a whole – one report per student.

Please note that, following this session, there will be time for reflection and discussion on the process.

Many thanks for your participation and co-operation!

## Appendix 3 – Criteria

In Vienna, the participants had 3 different settings for assessing the three performances. The first performance had to be assessed without any criteria. The second performance had to be assessed according to the set of criteria **A** below. The third performance had to take the set of grading criteria **B** into consideration.

### Criteria A

Please consider the criteria below for your written feedback and grading for performance 2

| Technique | | |
|---|---|---|
| | *Physiological* | |
| | | - Breathing |
| | | - Posture |
| | | - Relaxation—tension Balance |
| | | - Coordination |
| | *Physical* | |
| | | - Sound: production, projection and control of instrument/voice and consistency, clarity and focus of tone across all registers and dynamic levels |
| | | - Range |
| | | - Intonation |
| | | - Physical control—stamina—endurance |
| | | - Bodily coordination |
| | *Instrumental* | |
| | | - Coordination, balance and cohesion |
| | | - Accuracy, assuredness and facility of rhythm, pitch, articulations, dynamics, timing, as well as the degree to which errors undermine and detract from the overall quality of the performance |
| | | - Pacing of performance |
| | | - Sensitivity to intonation |
| **Interpretation** | | |
| | | - Authenticity: understanding of the style/genre and established performance practice |
| | | - Accuracy: based on faithful reading and/or memorization of the score, and |

|  | realization and exploration of the composer's intentions |
|  | - Musical coherence: perceptive choice of tempo, phrase shaping, dynamic shadings, sense of line, and understanding of overall structure |
| **Expression** | |
|  | - Understanding of the emotional character of the work |
|  | - Projection of mood and character of the work |
|  | - Communication of the structural high points and turning points of the work |
|  | - Sensitivity to the relationship between parts within a texture |
|  | - Appropriate use of tone and colour, light and shade, and/or drama |
| **Communication** | |
|  | - Confidence, as demonstrated in performances that are both convincing and purposeful |
|  | - Interest, in terms of the degree to which the performer holds the audience's attention, maintains a sense of direction, creates a sense of occasion, and ends the work convincingly |
|  | - Projection of expressive, interpretative, and structural features of the composition performed |

Please consider the criteria below for your written feedback and grading for
performance 2

Criterion Statements relating to grading scale 1-5

1. A highly convincing and compelling performance which is extremely fluent and secure and demonstrates a strong sense of personal, individual engagement with the music and communicates, with confidence and flair, the expressive, interpretative and structural features of the work.

2. A performance which is, overall, highly accurate and technically fluent and demonstrates a strong sense of personal engagement with the music.   A confident and communicative performance which successfully projects the expressive, interpretative and structural features of the work.

3. Generally accurate and showing some technical fluency and some sense of personal involvement. Although there may be some small technical and/or interpretative misjudgements/ flaws, there is a sense of communication  and  a good understanding of the expressive, interpretative and structural features of the work.

4. Generally reliable but with some technical and/or interpretative flaws and/or perhaps lacking a sense of real engagement with the music.  Despite such limitations, the performer manages to maintain a sense of continuity and shows some understanding of the expressive, interpretative and structural features of the work.

5. Technically limited or incoherent and perhaps showing  lack of adequate preparation, making it difficult to judge the level of musical engagement. Lacking in assurance and continuity  with little evidence of musical understanding.

**Reflective Process**                              (to be chaired by the **Observers**)

*Some questions to guide the discussions:*

- How did the assessors experience the assessment process?
- How would the participants describe the strengths/weaknesses, positive aspects/challenges of the processes?
- Did the criteria/criterion statements provided help the group members with their deliberations?
- How did the process compare with assessment practices in the participants' own institutions?
- Do the participants' institutions provide training for assessors?
- If the participants were to complete the exercise again, what changes would they like to make to the process?
- What, if anything, did the participants learn from the task?

**Assessment Task: Guidelines for Observers**

Please observe the assessment panel process with an open mind and give some written feedback on your impressions of what you see and hear.

It would be helpful if you could address issues regarding:

- Issues discussed
- Use of criteria
- Grading
- Group dynamics
- General observations

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Observer's name_____