

RESEARCHING CONSERVATOIRES

ENQUIRY, INNOVATION AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF ARTISTIC PRACTICE IN HIGHER MUSIC EDUCATION

POLIFONIA RESEARCH

WORKING GROUP



KUNGL. MUSIKHÖGSKOLAN
Royal College of Music in Stockholm



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

ERASMUS NETWORK FOR MUSIC

polifonia

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FOREWORD

All authors were members of the Research Working Group of the second cycle of the ERASMUS Network for Music *Polifonia*. The *Polifonia* network, a partnership of more than 60 organisations in professional music training and the music profession in 30 European countries, was coordinated jointly by the Royal College of Music in Stockholm and the European Association of Conservatoires (AEC).

To build on the successful first cycle of *Polifonia*, a second 3-year project cycle for the period from 2007 - 2010 was approved by the European Commission in September 2007. The following three project strands were part of this cycle:

- 1 The “Bologna” strand continued the work on various issues related to the “Bologna Declaration”, such as curriculum development and design, internal and external quality assurance and accreditation.
- 2 The “Lisbon” strand was concerned with continuing professional development for conservatoire management and the further investigation of instrumental/vocal teacher training. In addition, the dialogue between higher music education and the music profession is addressed.
- 3 The “Research” Strand aimed at studying the role of research in conservatoires, as well as setting up continuing professional development activities for conservatoire teachers¹.

The Research Working Group was one of several groups assembled to meet this objective, specifically focusing on the third project strand. The members of the Research Working Group were:

Helena Gaunt, oboe player and Assistant Principal (Research and Academic Development) at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama in London. She is a National Teaching Fellow (2009), and her own research focuses on one-to-one tuition in Higher Education, and on improvisation as a component of expertise across disciplines.

Carlos Caires, composer. His music has been performed in several festivals in Portugal, United Kingdom, Germany, Belgium, France, Italy, and Shanghai. Researcher at CITAR (Research Center For Science and Technology in Art) at Porto. At the present time, Carlos Caires teaches at Escola Superior de Música de Lisboa.

Peter Dejans, director of the Orpheus Institute, Ghent, since its foundation in 1996. He received his music training at the Brussels Royal Conservatoire and the Lemmensinstituut, Leuven (choir

¹ Further information about *Polifonia* and the Research Working Group, including details of events and published reports, is available at www.polifonia-tn.org.

conducting) and graduated from the University of Leuven (Law studies). He has a wide concert experience with his chamber choir Musa Horti (with several recordings), and is often invited as guest conductor by other ensembles, including the Flemish Radio Choir.

Siw G. Nielsen, Professor of Music Education at the Norwegian Academy of Music (NAM) in Oslo. Nielsen is also Head of Research and Developmental work, and Head of the research focus area titled Research in and for Higher Music Education at the NAM. Nielsen's research interests include development of music expertise, practising behaviours of musicians in different genres and the education of music teachers within music academies/conservatoires.

Hans Hellsten, professor of organ at the Malmö Academy of Music. He combines teaching, playing, researching and writing. A recent recording "Spanish dreams" complements publications on organ history and one on organ performance (co-authored with Hans Fagius). A forthcoming book will focus on the interpretation of Bengt Hambræus' organ music.

Bart van Rosmalen, improvising cellist and theatre director, heads the research programme 'Teacher of the 21st Century' at the Royal Conservatoire of The Hague. The leading perspective in his research and practice as an artist is 'Connecting Conversations' between art, science and business professionals, aiming to contribute to innovation and organisational change.

Valentina Sandu-Dediu, graduated in musicology at the National Music University of Bucharest in 1990, and has been teaching at the same institution since 1993. She has written over 30 studies, 300 articles, and 7 books, in 2008 receiving the Peregrinus-Stiftung Prize (Berlin-Brandenburg Akademie der Wissenschaften). She also plays piano in chamber music.

Rineke Smilde, flautist, musicologist and social scientist, and Professor of Lifelong Learning in Music & the Arts at the Prince Claus Conservatoire in Groningen and the Royal Conservatoire in The Hague since 2004. Together with an international research group she conducts research into concepts of lifelong learning for musicians and artists.

Aaron Williamon, Senior Research Fellow at the Royal College of Music, London, where he heads the Centre for Performance Science. His research focuses on music cognition, skilled performance, and applied psychological and health-related initiatives that inform music learning and teaching. As a trumpeter, he has performed in chamber and symphony orchestras, brass bands, and brass quintets in both Europe and North America.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

As Chair of the Research Working Group, I extend my sincere thanks to all the members of the group for their commitment to this project and contribution to this book. In keeping with the diversity of research that we have been exploring within the conservatoire sector, our work has

challenged us to use a variety of methods in our enquiry including a survey, case studies and action research with musicians who teach in conservatoires. I am delighted that making music has been an integral part of some of this work, and I am grateful both for the individual expertise and for the skills of collaboration which members of the group have demonstrated: empathy, dialogue, respect, creativity, mutual challenge, discipline, humour....

I should also like to thank Eleonoor Tchernoff and the Polifonia team at the AEC for their unswerving support and professionalism. Eleonoor has been exemplary in her particular role supporting the Research Working Group. Lastly I should like to thank Professor Barry Ife, Principal of the Guildhall School of Music & Drama, for his astute comments on a draft of this publication.

Helena Gaunt, Chair of the Polifonia Research Working Group

"If we knew what we were doing it wouldn't be research."

Albert Einstein

CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

Twenty years ago, research in conservatoires² generally consisted of musicology or music theory. In 2010, this picture has transformed (Jorgensen, 2009). Ideas about research are diverse, and the variety of methodological approaches and ways of demonstrating research outcomes offers a kaleidoscope of possibilities. Furthermore, as research is increasingly associated with, and undertaken through, musical practice, we see the powerful role research has to play in deepening artistic practice, driving innovation, making connections between ourselves, our music and wider communities, and in stimulating dialogue and reflection.

This PocketBook aims to be a practical resource, shedding light on different perspectives that our institutions have on the purpose, methods and outcomes of research. In addition, it sets out to open up concrete avenues for stimulating and nurturing a research culture.

Our purpose is not to make philosophical judgements about nature or significance of different types of research in conservatoires. Institutional perspectives are so often dependent on local factors such as the overall profile of the conservatoire, cultural, educational and geographic opportunities and constraints. Rather, our purpose is to give voice to the diversity, passions and impact which characterise current practices.

Chapter 2 – Mapping the terrain: an overview of research in conservatoires presents the findings of a first objective of the Research Working Group. We were conscious that research is a slippery concept in our institutions. Among those conservatoires that profess to do it, some designate research as the remit of a single department or concentrate it solely in one sub-discipline, others distribute it across the full spectrum of their professional activities and training. Some consider research to be irrelevant, unnecessary or even a distraction from professional training, others view it as integral to innovation, progress and the advancement of artistic practice. The ways in which research is organised and practised in conservatoires undoubtedly varies hugely between contexts.

Consequently, in conducting the survey of AEC member institutions, we started from an inclusive perspective and a broad understanding of research. The definition, for example, proposed recently

² Throughout the PocketBook, the term 'conservatoire' is used. This term also refers to Musikhochschulen, Music Academies and Music Universities and other such institutions that offer higher music education training, which may be stand-alone institutions or departments within larger multidisciplinary institutions.