

AEC FORUM: 'Outliers' and the mainstream: sharing expertise to mutual benefit for Early Music to Jazz, Pop and Research

60 years of AEC means taking stock of a huge amount of high quality work and exciting developments.

AEC started in the nineties to be very active beyond the annual congresses; networks between schools were created, or led by the AEC intensified through projects, with working groups that focused on important topics for higher music education, like for instance young talent development, lifelong learning and continuing professional development. Followed by an extremely important project that focused on enabling institutions of HME to take part in the Bologna process in an informed way. AEC was a real forerunner in this, and after this, amongst a number of other important projects, there were the three Polifonia cycles. It is impressive, I would welcome you to visit the website, because of the wealth of information that can be found there!

AEC turned into an organisation where its members more and more felt connected to new developments, were kind of hungry for more information, development, and sharing.

Meanwhile within this increasing connectedness through what we could call, developmental projects for the mainstream, projects like the Polifonia cycles, which were also a result of the content of the Bologna process, we have seen the emergence of new intensive collaborations between schools on particular themes or developments, which in the end generated three important platforms within the AEC: one on jazz and pop, one on early music, and one on artistic research.

The jazz and pop platform, developed since 2005 and the early music platform, developed since 2009 are intended to be a European meeting ground between

member institutions of the AEC, creating a network for exchange and cooperation on the level of leadership, staff and students. In your conference reader you can read more interesting background information about these platforms.

The same goes for the European platform for artistic research in music, which had its first meeting in 2011: it deals with artistic research on the level of all three cycles, and like the other two platforms, it is meant for leadership, teachers and students, and exchange, development and collaboration are at the core.

'Outliers' and the mainstream is the first part of the title of this session. Is this rightly phrased in the perspectives of today's HME? Jazz and pop departments in most of our schools can really not anymore be seen as 'marginal' and can contribute hugely to very important skills that need to be acquired by any performing musician. Pop music may perhaps be quite far from our beds, yet within pop institutions there are innovative approaches to be observed which are hugely important for any entrepreneurial musician of the 21 st century.

Being engaged with historic performance practice, 'early music' can no longer be considered as marginal either. It is very much alive, goes beyond early music training in its influence on the mainstream training as it can be seen as a kind of *attitude* for any performing musician! It is therefore highly interesting for us to explore how both jazz and pop as well as early music can play an important role in influencing the mainstream of our curricula.

The connections of jazz and pop on the one hand and early music on the other are manifold: ranging from developing a free and original musical mind to an explorative musical mind. Basically one could say, research is at its core.

And that brings us to the third outlier which is research, and then in particular

artistic research. In particular since Bologna, 'research is an integrative part of our curricula, yet it is for many quite a struggle to get a grip on it. However, the explorative and reflective mind of the researcher is imperative for any innovation and artistic development in our conservatoires, universities and academies.

Could we perhaps say that what *seem* outliers can actually serve as very important incentives for the mainstream? This is what we are going to explore with six panel members, who are together representing these three platforms.

I would like to introduce them to you. They are to my left (for you at your right:) and to my right (for you left):

Jazz and Pop:

Stefan Heckel, from the Kunstuniversitat Graz, chair of the Jazz & Pop Platform

Udo Dahmen, from the Popakademie Baden- Wurttemberg

Early Music:

Elisabeth Gutjahr, from the Musikhochschule Trossingen

Terrell Stone, form the Conservatorio A. Pedrollo in Vicenza

Artistic Research:

Helena Gaunt, from the Guildhall School of Music & Drama in London

Peter Dejans, from the Orpheus Institute in Ghent

We will try to get an idea of the most important developments within these three areas in the last few years, illuminated in the work of these platforms, and then explore how we in our institutions could benefit from these developments and lastly, how AEC could be of help to extend further work and embedding in our institutions.