



## **Annual Report 2017**

MusiQuE - Music Quality Enhancement  
The Foundation for Quality Enhancement and Accreditation in Higher Music Education  
Brussels, November 2018

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## Message from the MusiQuE Board

It is with great pleasure that we would like to provide, through this report, an update on the current situation of *MusiQuE* – Music Quality Enhancement, the independent European organisation for evaluation and accreditation in music. And we are very happy to report that *MusiQuE* is doing well.

As will be evident from this report, the activities of *MusiQuE* are developing strongly in many ways. A growing number of institutions are finding their way to the services offered by *MusiQuE* and it is interesting to see that the scope of *MusiQuE*'s operations is starting to be truly international, with institutions all over the world showing interest. This growth of activities continues in 2018 and is expected to develop exponentially in 2019 and 2020. Surely this positive development is helped by the registration of *MusiQuE* on EQAR, which gives the organisation credibility in the European higher education context, but also by an increased understanding of and trust in the philosophy of quality enhancement with a subject-specific and international dimension promoted by *MusiQuE*.

At the same time, *MusiQuE* is constantly improving itself. In 2017, it started a review of the composition of its Board by exploring the possibility of adding a student member. It has implemented a new review process for research activities and has started to develop a new experimental approach to review, entitled the 'Critical Friend Review'. Furthermore, *MusiQuE* is constantly fine-tuning its existing activities through feedback received from stakeholders through surveys and discussions.

The *MusiQuE* register for peer-reviewers is expanding. The peer-reviewers come from AEC member institutions, but increasingly also from EMU and PEARLE\*. Each year, workshops are being held to train new and update experienced reviewers, including a growing number of students.

*MusiQuE* is also gaining quite some visibility in the context of the European quality assurance and higher education scene through the publication of articles and the presentation of our work at important conferences. In 2017, *MusiQuE* also published a Trend Analysis, an interesting document that shows trends in the higher music education sector based on findings in our review reports.

Finally, important steps are being taken with regards to the financial sustainability of the organisation. With work expanding and budgets increasing, *MusiQuE* is well on its way to its ambition to be not only independent from a structural point of view, but also from a financial one.

We should therefore express our sincere gratitude to all those who are working hard to make *MusiQuE* a success. Firstly, to our partner organisations, the European Association of Conservatoires (AEC), Pearle\* Live Performance Europe (Pearle\*) and the European Music School Union (EMU) for their trust and continuous support to the development of *MusiQuE*. Secondly, to the excellent *MusiQuE* team in Brussels. And finally, to all *MusiQuE* reviewers: they are all helping *MusiQuE* to reach its goal to develop an approach for external quality assurance that is relevant to higher music education institutions and can help the sector to reflect upon itself, develop further and make a strong contribution to society.

Bernd Clausen, Momchil Georgiev, Timo Klemetinnen, Gordon Munro and Martin Prchal

## About MusiQuE

MusiQuE is an independent quality assurance agency dedicated to the continuous improvement of the quality of higher music education across Europe and beyond. MusiQuE's work is subject-specific and is characterized by flexibility, diversity, transparency and accountability. Its operations are underpinned by independent, skilled and authoritative international peers.

MusiQuE offers a range of review and accreditation processes tailored to the needs of Higher Music Education institutions: quality enhancement reviews and accreditation procedures for institutions, programmes and joint programmes, as well as joint procedures with national quality assurance and accreditation agencies.

MusiQuE was established in October 2014, as a foundation of three partner organisations: the Association Européenne des Conservatoires, Académies de Musique et Musikhochschulen (AEC), the European Music Schools Union (EMU) and Pearle\*-Live Performance Europe (the Performing Arts Employers Associations League Europe). In this way MusiQuE functions as a unique partnership of the higher music education sector and the music profession and thus its work is assured and relevant in terms of the professional demands of today's world of music.

MusiQuE operates according to the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ESG) and is registered with the European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR). As such, MusiQuE is a leading player in higher education quality assurance in general, working with the institutions in which its procedures are applied to construct a broadly-supported quality culture tailored to the specific contexts and characteristics of higher music education.

More about MusiQuE's Vision and Mission can be found on our website and the following [link](#).

## Organisation

The [MusiQuE Board](#) consists of experts proposed by the three partner organisations: AEC, EMU and Pearle\*. The Board is responsible for overseeing all activities of MusiQuE, including the consideration of review reports and, where relevant, granting accreditation.

In 2017, the Board comprised of:

- Martin Prchal, Chair of the Board, Royal Conservatory The Hague
- Gordon Munro, Secretary and Treasurer, Royal Conservatoire of Scotland
- Bernd Clausen, University of Music, Würzburg
- Helena Maffli, President of the European Music Schools Union
- Géza Kovacs, Director-General of the Hungarian National Philharmonic Orchestra and Choir, President of the Association of Hungarian orchestras (member until May 2017)
- Momchil Georgiev, Secretary General of Bulgarian Association of Employers in Culture (member as of May 2017)

Géza Kovacs left the Board in May 2017, just before the end of his three-year term. Géza's contributions to the Board have been crucial to the development of MusiQuE in its first years of operation. The MusiQuE Board and staff would like to express their gratitude to Géza for his commitment.

Board meetings in 2017 took place in Würzburg (May 2017) and Lausanne (October 2017). Summaries of the meetings can be found on the following links. [Spring Board meeting](#); [Autumn Board meeting](#).

In response to a recommendation of the Register Committee of the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education ([EQAR](#)), the Board of MusiQuE decided to add a permanent student seat to its membership and launched an open call among AEC member institutions in August 2017. Following two selection rounds, a student was selected with a three-year mandate beginning in February 2018.

The [MusiQuE staff](#) is responsible for the day-to-day running of MusiQuE's operations and review processes, as well as providing support to the Board and ensuring that Board decisions are implemented. Members of the MusiQuE staff in 2017 were:

- Linda Messas, Director (0.3 FTE)
- Jef Cox, Policy & Review Officer (0.7 FTE)
- Paulina Gut, intern (.8 FTE)

## Review Procedures

### **Completed review procedures**

During 2017, 6 review procedures were carried out in 6 countries, 5 within the scope of (and therefore in compliance with) the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) and 1 outside the scope of the ESG due to its specific nature:

#### Institutional Quality Enhancement Reviews (2) – within the scope of the ESG

- Vorarlberger Landeskonservatorium, Feldkirch, Austria, 31<sup>st</sup> of January – 1<sup>st</sup> of February ([report](#))
- College of Music, Mahidol University, Bangkok, Thailand, 15-17 June ([report](#))

#### Programme Quality Enhancement Review (1 procedure; 12 programmes) – within the scope of the ESG

- Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre, Tallinn, Estonia, 22-23 November ([report](#)) – 12 programmes

#### Programme Accreditations (2 procedures; 39 programmes) – within the scope of the ESG

- Kazakh National University of Arts, Astana, Kazakhstan, 14 -16 March
  - Accreditation of 19 music programmes ([report](#))
  - Accreditation of 17 visual and performing arts programmes (in cooperation with EQ-Arts) ([report](#))<sup>1</sup> – 17 programmes
- Escola Superior de Musica de Lisboa, Instituto Polytechnico Lisboa, Lisbon, Portugal, 11-13 December ([report](#)) – 3 programmes

#### Evaluation of Research Activities (1) – outside the scope of the ESG

- Royal Conservatoire, University of the Arts, The Hague, the Netherlands, 15–17 February ([report](#))

The Quality Enhancement Research Review of the Royal Conservatoire, University of the Arts in The Hague, was the first review of this kind undertaken by MusiQuE, and its main aim was to test MusiQuE's new *Framework for the Evaluation of Research Activities in Higher Music Education*.

All reports have been published in the '[Completed reviews](#)' section of the website.

### **Upcoming Review procedures**

At the end of 2017, 8 programme and 1 institutional quality enhancement reviews were scheduled for 2018, in 6 countries.

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<sup>1</sup> This programme accreditation (17 Visual and Performing Arts Programmes) has been the first actual cooperation between MusiQuE and EQ-Arts – Enhancing Quality in the Arts (<http://www.eq-arts.org/>). The programmes were assessed against the *MusiQuE - EQ-Arts Standards & Guidelines for Programme review*, jointly agreed on by MusiQuE & EQ-Arts.

## Trend analysis

MusiQuE published a trend analysis prepared by former Board member Christopher Caine (Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance) which highlights common areas for development and good practice observed in the eight institutions reviewed by MusiQuE in 2014-2016.

For example, with regard to the relationship of higher music education institutions with their local/regional cultural environment, recommendations for further development included: tracking of student and alumni professional engagement and bringing external partners to institutions regularly, in order to generate placement opportunities, develop a curriculum that encourages employability, enhance programme development and promote student commitment to social engagement and citizenship.

With regard to assessment, the trend analysis demonstrates that the critical area for development is the link between learning outcomes and assessment, the assessment criteria, the assessment methods and the feedback. The report also outlines some recommendations on how this area can develop, such as creating an assessment policy (also to develop staff), student self-assessment and peer-assessment.

Finally, in the field of Quality Assurance, the trend analysis highlights the need for QA mechanisms that optimise internal engagement (students and staff) and that are focused on enhancement. The recommendations for improvement outlined in the report are: sharing good practice across the institutions and involving external experts.

The Trend Analysis is available at the following [link](#).

## Peer-Reviewers Register

Peer-reviewers form the panels that carry out the reviews commissioned by the Board of MusiQuE: in line with its subject-specific focus, MusiQuE works with a pool of international experts in relevant musical fields, who are familiar with and well informed about the specificities of higher music education. 16 peers were admitted to the Peer-reviewers register in 2017, bringing the total number of registered experts to 73.

More detailed information about the Peer-reviewers Register can be found on the MusiQuE [website](#).

## Peer-Reviewers Training Sessions

In November 2017, the MusiQuE training session for Peer-Reviewers took place at the Academy of Music of the University of Zagreb, Croatia. 38 experts from all around Europe, including 4 students, participated in the training. This year the training was extended to two and a half days, in response to participant feedback. The training session elicited very positive feedback from both participants and trainers, which will inform the training session in 2018. More about the training can be found on the following [link](#).

## Finances

2017 was the third year of operation of MusiQuE. The profit and loss statement reflects a significant raise of MusiQuE's general level of activity: 6 review procedures were organised, as opposed to 5 in 2016 and their scope was generally larger, which generated an increased income for MusiQuE, as well as increased review costs. The operational costs were maintained at a reasonable level and staff costs doubled.

Indeed, based on the agreement between the three founding partners of MusiQuE, AEC, EMU and Pearle\* to offer their financial support to MusiQuE in order to guarantee its financial viability in its first years of operation (without compromising its independence), staff costs of the MusiQuE Office in Brussels are covered by AEC, and progressively reimbursed by MusiQuE, until financial independence is reached. In 2017, MusiQuE reimbursed 50% of the total staff costs covered by AEC (as opposed to 33% in 2016). In addition, for overhead costs covering the daily operation of the MusiQuE Office, an annual contribution to AEC calculated on the basis of 7% of MusiQuE direct costs is paid to AEC.

The profit and loss statement shows a positive result of 7,083€. This is consistent with the decision of the MusiQuE Board to create a reserve over the coming years with the aim to finance the next external review for EQAR in 2020.

| <b>Income</b>                              | <b>2017</b>    | <b>2016</b>   |
|--|----------------|---------------|
| Direct income from Reviews                 | 116,261        | 60,399        |
| <b>Total Income</b>                        | <b>116,261</b> | <b>60,399</b> |
| <b>Expenditures</b>                        |                |               |
| Review Costs (Expenses & Reviewers' fees)  | 62,398         | 19,799        |
| MusiQuE operational costs                  | 16,561         | 12,982        |
| MusiQuE Staff costs                        | 23,078         | 12,400        |
| <b>Total Expenditures</b>                  | <b>102,036</b> | <b>45,181</b> |
| <b>Overhead costs (=7% of total costs)</b> | <b>7,143</b>   | <b>3,163</b>  |
| <b>Result</b>                              | <b>7,083</b>   | <b>12,055</b> |



## Internal Quality Assurance

MusiQuE has developed a robust internal quality assurance system, which provides the MusiQuE Board with relevant feedback on the organizations fitness for purpose.

### External evaluator

Mr Stefan Delplace, Honorary Secretary General of EURASHE (the European Association of Institutions in Higher Education), was appointed to serve as External Evaluator of MusiQuE in 2016, to review material documenting MusiQuE's activity, as well as to monitor the compatibility of MusiQuE's systems with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) and formulate [evaluation reports](#) addressed to the Board.

Among other key recommendations, the External Evaluator suggested that MusiQuE creates an additional seat on its Board for a student, and appoints a Phd student or a recent graduate/alumnus from Music Higher Education, with a declared interest in quality in music education, and that MusiQuE further examines the possibility of interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary cooperation with networks of related or complementary disciplines to music education (Arts, Teacher Education, Cultural Management, etc.)

The Board expresses its gratitude to Mr Delplace for his work in ensuring the quality of MusiQuE's systems and processes.

### Results of feedback questionnaires and improvements to MusiQuE review procedures

Feedback from institutions reviewed, and from members of Review Teams is considered annually by the Board of MusiQuE which then decides on any action to improve systems and processes or to fine-tune the Standards.

Feedback in 2017 is generally very positive. It highlights the excellent support of the MusiQuE staff in advance of site visits and the well-structured and organised procedures, as well as the good setup of the Review Teams including the level of expertise and competence of the Team as a whole, the gender balance and the professional atmosphere within the Review Teams. Feedback also highlighted the need to better tailor the length of site visits and the size of the Review Team according to the number of programmes to be reviewed, and to provide new peer-reviewers with more precise information in the initial briefing at the start of the review process.

### Extension of MusiQuE's services

Building on the outcomes of both types of evaluation, and on a constant analysis of the needs of the higher music education sector, MusiQuE has developed new services that will be offered along with the 'classic' review services:

- 'Critical Friend Reviews' [activity within the scope of (and therefore in compliance with) the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)]:

MusiQuE has developed a new approach to review, entitled the 'Critical Friend Review', in which regular visits by a 'critical friend' reviewing one of the institution's programmes or departments, are

combined with a modified version of MusiQuE's standard review visit. Such an approach offers a more continuous external dimension of the institutions' internal quality assurance processes and emphasises the importance of seeing quality enhancement as an endeavour in which all participants, those reviewing and those being reviewed, share a common goal.

- Evaluations of Research Activities in Higher Music Education [activity outside the scope of the ESG due to its specific nature]

These evaluations are based on a dedicated evaluation framework developed by MusiQuE and aim to provide an analysis of research objectives and results within the higher music education context.

- Reviews of Pre-college institutions [activity outside the scope of the ESG due to a focus on a level of education other than higher education]:

Under this process, pre-college institutions and programmes have the opportunity to engage in a Quality Enhancement Review, i.e. a peer-review visit which results in an advisory report (see above under a). These quality enhancement reviews of pre-college institutions and programmes are based on a specific set of standards (Standards for Pre-College Music Education) which aim to guide pre-college music education providers in evaluating their activities and enhancing quality.

## Communication and external relations

### Promotion of MusiQuE's activities

An article by MusiQuE, written by the Chair of the Board, Martin Prchal and the Director, Linda Messas, titled "*How to make quality assurance processes more meaningful to teaching staff – a proposal from the field of music*" was selected for publication by both the Journal of the European Higher Education Area (JEHEA) and by the Handbuch Qualität in Studium und Lehre (HQSL). ([link](#))

In 2017, MusiQuE services and activities have been presented to its partner organisation on several occasions:

- On 10 November 2017, MusiQuE's Martin Prchal, Chair of the Board, and Linda Messas, Director of MusiQuE, made a presentation to AEC members in a 'snapshot session' during the AEC Annual Congress.
- On 11 November 2017, MusiQuE Board member Gordon Munro reported on MusiQuE's most recent review activities to the AEC General Assembly.
- On 24 November 2017, MusiQuE Board member Momchil Georgiev presented MusiQuE's services to the members of Pearle\*-Live Performance Europe at the 54th Pearle\* Conference. Pearle\* representatives with an interest in quality enhancement and review processes were encouraged to participate in the next MusiQuE Peer-reviewers Training and to submit an application to be listed on the Peer-reviewers Register.

### Connections and collaboration with European organisations in the field of quality assurance

Since 2016, MusiQuE has been an affiliate member of ENQA – The European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, the umbrella organisation that represents quality assurance organisations from the European Higher Education Area that operate in the field of higher education. MusiQuE actively participated in the two annual meetings organised by ENQA in 2017: the ENQA Members forum (4-5 May in Oslo, Norway); and the 8<sup>th</sup> ENQA General Assembly (26-27 October in Sèvres, France).

MusiQuE was one of the founding members of EASPA (the European Alliance for Subject-Specific and Professional Accreditation & Quality Assurance) in 2014. MusiQuE Director Linda Messas serves as Vice-president of the EASPA Executive Board. During the EASPA 2017 Conference in Dusseldorf, Linda presented MusiQuE and the development of the 'Critical Friend Approach'.

### Cooperation with national quality assurance and accreditation agencies

MusiQuE and EQ-Arts (the foundation for Enhancing Quality in the Arts) signed a collaboration agreement in 2017 in order to join forces and jointly conduct a programme accreditation procedure at the Kazakh National University of Arts in Astana. EQ-Arts and MusiQuE staff jointly prepared the site visit with the University, and two Review Teams were composed: one for the review of the music programmes and one for the review of the performing and visual arts programmes. Both Review Team Chairs and Secretaries worked together closely, and both Teams operated in parallel during the site visit in Astana.

Furthermore, MusiQuE has developed connections to national quality assurance agencies in the following countries:

**Italy** – MusiQuE's activities were presented to ANVUR, the Italian National Agency for the Evaluation of Universities and Research Institutes, on 6 April 2017

**Lithuania** - MusiQuE and the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (SKVC) committed to sign a cooperation agreement concerning the organisation of joint accreditation procedures in Lithuania.

**France** - MusiQuE has met with representatives of the Conservatoire national supérieur de musique et de danse de Paris (CNSMDP) and the High Council for the Evaluation of Research and Higher Education (HCERES) on 9 May 2017.

**Poland** - MusiQuE's future activities in Poland have been discussed with the rectors of the Polish higher music education institutions and representatives of the Polish Accreditation Committee (PKA) in a joint meeting on 30 May 2017, which included a presentation of MusiQuE's services and a mapping of the MusiQuE standards for programme reviews against the PKA criteria for programme evaluation.

## Annexes

- **MusiQuE – Music Quality Enhancement: Background, Mission and Regulations**  
<http://www.musique-qe.eu/documents/>
- **MusiQuE Standards**  
<http://www.musique-qe.eu/documents/musique-standards>
- **Reports of institutions and programmes reviewed by MusiQuE**  
<http://www.musique-qe.eu/completed-reviews>
- **Trend analysis**  
<http://www.musique-qe.eu/documents/trend-analysis>
- **European references**  
Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)  
[http://www.enqa.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/ESG\\_endorsed-with-changed-foreword.pdf](http://www.enqa.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/ESG_endorsed-with-changed-foreword.pdf)