

AEC Institutional and Programme Review Scheme



AEC Review Visit to the Conservatorio Superior de Musica "E. Martinez Torner"

Oviedo, Spain

28 – 29 April 2008



Review Committee:

Mr. Harald Jorgensen (Norwegian Academy of Music)
Mrs. Cecilia De Almeida Goncalves (Escola Superior de Música de Lisboa)
Mr. Gero Schmidt-Oberländer (Hochschule für Musik Franz Liszt Weimar)

Secretary:
Linda Messas (AEC)

ERASMUS THEMATIC NETWORK FOR MUSIC

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Introduction

The visit to the Conservatorio Superior de Musica del Principado de Asturias "E. Martinez Torner" (CONSMUPA) was the first visit undertaken in the framework of the *AEC Institutional and Programme Review Scheme*, a new service offered by the AEC to its member institutions in order to assist them in their quality improvement activities. This scheme is financed by the ERASMUS programme through the *Polifonia* Network.

The international group of experts used the AEC Framework Document *Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Music Education: Characteristics, Criteria and Procedures*, a set of common European standards and procedures for the external review of institutions and programmes in higher music education. Based on the visit and the materials sent to the team beforehand, the present report was produced.

Oviedo is the capital city of the Principality of Asturias, close to the Cantabrian Sea coast and surrounded by a gorgeous landscape composed of mountains, green fields, forests, rivers, sea, rugged cliffs and fertile meadows. Oviedo is a beautiful historic city with a well-developed cultural infrastructure and strong regional traditions. It is regarded as the "small Spanish Vienna" due to its intensive music activity.

The conservatoire, set up in 1923 and situated in an historical building, counts 283 students and 82 teachers. Its academic and artistic achievements have placed the institution at the forefront of higher music education institutions in Spain. During the visit, CONSMUPA was represented by the Director, Alberto Veintimilla Bonet, the secretary, Covadonga de la Riva Llerandi, the Head of studies, Roberto Martínez Vigil-Escalera, and the responsible for relations with the AEC, Cristobal Zamora. The members of the Committee were chair Harald Jorgensen (former director of the Norwegian Academy of Music in Oslo), Cecilia De Almeida Goncalves (Deputy director of the Escola Superior de Música de Lisboa) and Gero Schmidt-Oberländer (Prorektor of the Hochschule für Musik Franz Liszt Weimar). The Secretary was Linda Messas (AEC Project Administrator).

The Committee would like to express its thanks to the conservatoire for the organisation of the visit, for welcoming the Committee in such a friendly and hospitable way, for staying at the disposal of the Committee during the whole visit and for the atmosphere of sincere and fruitful cooperation in which many issues – current situation, problems, strengths and weaknesses - were discussed.

The Committee would like to express its appreciation for the hard work done by the conservatoire in preparation of the AEC visit with the production of its internal evaluation report. This excellent and in-depth analysis of the institution has helped the Committee to get a comprehensive overview of the conservatoire and has been of great help to the reflections and discussions before, during and after the visit.

2008 OVIEDO'S VISIT SCHEDULE

Day 1 – Sunday 27th April

When?	What?	Who?
During the day	Arrival at the Hotel: GRAN HOTEL ESPAÑA Jovellanos, 2. OVIEDO http://www.granhotelespana.com/ Tel. (+34) 985 220 596	Evaluation committee
18:30 – 19:40	Meeting at Hotel	Evaluation committee
19:40	Taxi to the concert (starting at 20:00)	Evaluation committee and Cristobal Zamora
21:45	Dinner at Restaurante La Gran Taberna or back to hotel	Evaluation committee, Cristóbal Zamora, Conservatoire's Director and Vice-Director

Day 2 – Monday 28th April

When?	What?	Who?
08:45	Meeting at Hotel	Evaluation committee and Cristobal Zamora
09.00 - 09.45	Meeting at the conservatoire with the Head of the school and members of academic and support staff	Evaluation committee Director Vice-Director Secretary and Cristobal Zamora and Elena Miguelez
10.00 – 11.00	Meeting with representatives of profession	Evaluation committee Director of Opera Councilman of Culture General Directress of Culture – Government of Principality of Asturias
11.00 - 11.20	Coffee break	
11.20 – 12.00	Meeting with academic council members	Evaluation committee, Director, Vice-Director, Secretary, Cristobal Zamora and the six academic council members.
12:15 – 13.00	Visit some lessons	Evaluation committee, Elena Miguelez
13.00	Meeting with academic staff members	Evaluation committee, Elena Miguelez, and teachers in the visited lessons.
14:00	Lunch break in Restaurante La Gran Taberna and committee meeting	Lunch: Evaluation committee and Elena Miguelez
16:30	Guided tour including the library	Evaluation committee, Elena Miguelez and Head of Music Librarianship Department
17:30	Meeting with Conservatory's Council	Evaluation committee, Cristobal Zamora, and the representatives of every area of the conservatoire.
18:30	Coffee break	
18:45	Meeting with administrative staff	Evaluation committee, Cristobal Zamora and

		Head of Administrative Staff
21:00	Dinner at Restaurante Latores	Evaluation committee, Inspector of Education, Conservatoire's Director and Cristobal Zamora

Day 3 – Tuesday 29th April

When?	What?	Who?
09:15	Meeting at Hotel	Evaluation committee and Cristobal Zamora
09:30	Meeting with academic members of Music and New Technology and Pedagogic department.	Evaluation committee, Cristobal Zamora and related professors
10:00	Meeting with students council	Evaluation committee, Student council, Cristobal Zamora and Elena Miguelez
11:00	Coffee break	
11:30	Meeting with former students	Evaluation committee Selected graduates and Elena Miguelez
13:00	Visit to Minister of Education - Government of Principality of Asturias	Evaluation committee, Conservatoire's Director and Cristobal Zamora
14:00	Lunch break in Restaurante La Gran Taberna	Evaluation committee
15.30 – 16.30	Committee Meeting (to prepare the feedback)	Evaluation committee
16.30 – 17.15	Feedback of the evaluation Committee	Evaluation committee Director Vice-Director Cristobal Zamora and Elena Miguelez
17:15 – 18:15	Evaluation of the visit/preparation of the report	Evaluation committee
18.30	Concert	Evaluation committee Conservatoire's Director Cristobal Zamora Personalities of the Community Authorities General Public
After	Dinner at La Gran Taberna	Evaluation committee Conservatoire's Director Cristobal Zamora Elena Miguelez

Day 4 – Wednesday 30th April

When?	What?	Who?
During the day	Departure	Evaluation committee

Standards Summary

This summary contains two sections; firstly a list of items which stand out as being very strong relative to the AEC criteria, secondly an outline of some of the areas in which there seems to be potential for further development.

Strong points

- **Atmosphere and leadership:** CONSMUPA is a dynamic institution led by a fresh and dedicated leadership team with an emerging vision for the future. There is a positive and stimulating atmosphere between students and teacher, as well as a very strong willingness, shared by the whole institution, to develop and improve. Improvements have been made already over the last years.
- **Teaching staff:** CONSMUPA's teachers are very dedicated and committed to the development of their students at artistic and personal level.
- **Decision-making processes:** the structure in place allows for the involvement all stakeholders, including students, for a good distribution of work and for a good flow of information in both directions.
- **Students' opportunities to perform in public:** participation in the numerous concerts organised by CONSMUPA during each academic year provides students with experience in concert practice, not only as soloists but also as members of the various ensembles and orchestras created by the institution.
- **Involvement in public discourse on cultural and musical policy:** much effort is put in order to maintain the institution at the forefront of the cultural and musical scene in the city and the region, through the organisation of concerts and the publication of CONSMUPA's magazine. In addition, the leadership team is active at the regional level, at the national level (through the director, member of the Higher Education Council) and at the European level (through its representative at the AEC) in order to increase the influence of the institution at all levels and to position it as a key institution in the decision regarding cultural and musical policy.
- **Future pedagogic section:** the plan to establish a pedagogical section in CONSMUPA is totally appropriate for the institution, as teaching should become one of the main activities of the graduates in the next future.
- **Curriculum and study programmes:** even if it is too early to assess their impact, important and necessary changes have been implemented in the curriculum and in study programmes during the last years in order to implement Bologna principles.
- **International involvement:** a very hard work has started in order to open CONSMUPA to other countries and to promote international cooperation.

Potential for development

- **Status:** in order to enable CONSMUPA to develop further and become comparable to and competitive with other music academies in Europe, its status in the framework of the new situation of the education sector - established by the Organic Law of Education of 2006 - needs to be defined in more details soon, and in a way which will benefit the institution. Higher music institutions should be considered as providing the

same level of education as universities, but should have a specific status different from the university one, which would take into account the specific needs of music education. The current situation of Spanish conservatoires is at a severe disadvantage compared to the rest of Europe, where music education is fully recognised at higher education level in practically all European countries. Such a situation proves to have a very negative impact on the conservatoire's teaching staff given the difficulty with the recruitment of professionals active on the artistic scene and given the lack of flexibility the conservatoire is able to provide for teachers' artistic and/or scholarly production. Such a practice is also strongly divergent from the situation in other European countries and the competent authorities are strongly encouraged to undertake the steps necessary to improve the situation of Spanish conservatoires within Europe.

- **Mission:** the institution is encouraged to set priorities among its objectives to be achieved as the policies or regulations of the new 'Consejo Superior de Enseñanzas Artísticas' come into practice.
- **Facilities:** CONSMUPA's regular activities are obviously hindered by the obligation to share the building. The access to practice rooms and the availability of rooms are reduced, with a negative impact on the activity of teachers outside the institution because of the impossibility to postpone lessons. In addition, it is essential for the success of students to open the conservatoire during weekends and holidays¹. Furthermore, students should be provided with an adequate library: working conditions for the students should be improved by the provision of a silent place suitable for concentration and an extension of the collection of the library must be undertaken.
- **Contacts with music schools:** the institution is encouraged to develop formal partnerships with music schools: first, as teaching in music schools represents the main occupation of CONSMUPA's graduates, the cooperation could include the opportunity for CONSMUPA's students to make work placements in these schools; second, the conservatoire could consider cooperating with the music schools in order to secure the quality of the applicants by implementing a marketing strategy to attract good students and influencing the curriculum at music schools, and also in order to pick out talents and bring them closer to CONSMUPA.
- **Links with the profession:** the institution is encouraged to develop formal partnerships with the professional organisations in the city and the region, in order to provide students with work placements, but also in order to keep up to date with the latest developments in the music profession. CONSMUPA could consider developing an alumni system for this purpose as well as for developing a network of contacts for the students who graduate each year.
- **Internal quality assurance system:** CONSMUPA is subject to an evaluation system set up by the regional government, which is very close to a quality assurance system. However, the institution is encouraged to develop the internal aspect of such a system as a tool for quality enhancement. Information could be drawn from students, former students, teachers and representatives of the profession and analysed in a critical way for the internal use of CONSMUPA.

¹ Since the AEC visit, CONSMUPA has developed a system through which the conservatoire opens during the weekends for students who want to come and practice.