



# **INTERNATIONALISATION AT THE ROYAL CONSERVATOIRE**

## **STATUS REPORT**

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## INTRODUCTION

A strong international dimension has always been part of the Royal Conservatoire's DNA. Even though the Conservatoire does not have a tradition of writing specific strategies for internationalisation, various documents that have been produced in the framework of the restructuring process of higher arts education in the Netherlands over the past few years (such as *'Nowhere but in The Hague'*), mention a strong international dimension as an integral part of the overall vision for both the University of Arts The Hague and the Royal Conservatoire. It is worth pointing out here that the Master of Music and Master of Music in Sonology programmes received a NVAO Distinctive Quality Feature for internationalisation during their last accreditation in 2012.

However, the following question can then be raised: what is meant by a 'strong international dimension'? If this dimension would be limited to having students and teachers coming to the institution from other countries, then one could certainly say that such a dimension is already a reality, but this would not distinguish the Conservatoire from many other institutions, as the presence of foreign students and teachers has been traditionally high in many conservatoires. So if institutions claim to have a strong international profile, what does this actually mean? How do we ensure that a qualification like 'international' (or even 'world-class' - another qualification often used to highlight a strong international profile of institutions) is not just politically correct rhetoric used by institutions that in fact have a regional or even local character but (for whatever reason) have large numbers of international students?

As a reply to these questions, a vision on internationalisation has emerged at the Royal Conservatoire, which is seeing internationalisation from a much broader perspective as a strategic tool for institutional development and the preparation of its students for the highly international music profession. The Conservatoire also believes that if an institution is serious about its international dimension, it must be able to demonstrate in which ways its objectives and activities are framed within an international context, and how its objectives are reached and assessed at an international level. At the Royal Conservatoire, this is being achieved by:

1. Using an international qualifications framework as a basis for its curricula;
2. Offering an international learning environment for its students, which will prepare them for the demands of the international music profession;
3. Permanently monitoring and improving the quality of its activities through:
  - fostering a strong international dimension in its curriculum development policies and its continuing professional development activities;
  - constantly comparing and engaging itself internationally in international projects, international strategic partnerships and international benchmarking initiatives.
4. Actively recruiting international students and teachers to support points 2. and 3.
5. Using tools for assessment, review and accreditation developed with an international dimension that will not only verify if the objectives of the conservatoire are being achieved according to international standards but also support the institution in its strive for continuous improvement.

## I. USING AN INTERNATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK AS A BASIS FOR CURRICULA

In order to support an international focus of the study programmes, it is important to establish how the programme objectives (or intended learning outcomes) of the study programmes are formulated in such a way that they refer to internationally accepted qualification frameworks that describe the level and content for the three cycle programmes in music.

The Royal Conservatoire has made the strategic choice not to use the national framework of competence profiles for the first cycle as developed in 2002, but rather the European-level framework developed by the European Association of Conservatoires (AEC) in the 'Polifonia' Network with the 'Tuning' Methodology as its main framework of reference for the objectives of its study programmes. This European-level qualifications framework consists of the 'AEC/Polifonia Learning Outcomes for the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> cycles in music' and the 'Polifonia/Dublin Descriptors', the musical translation of the 'Dublin Descriptors'. These 'Dublin Descriptors' are a set of internationally recognised descriptors that define the level and the content of the three cycles in higher education in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), and form the basis for many national qualifications frameworks, including the Dutch National Qualifications Framework. The Conservatoire has made this choice for the following reasons:

- Because of its international orientation, it sees less relevance in the use of a nationally based qualifications framework (institutions in the Netherlands are free to choose a qualification framework provided they can explain how and why it is being used, and it is compatible with the Dutch National Qualifications Framework), but rather connect into an internationally based framework so that an international context to the objectives of programmes can be provided.
- The 'AEC/Polifonia Learning Outcomes' have been developed through a careful process taking many years and through several consultations with institutions throughout Europe. Furthermore, they have been (contrary to the Dutch competence profiles) validated by representative international organisations for music employers and musicians in extensive validation sessions.
- The 'AEC/Polifonia Learning Outcomes' have been mapped in detail against the 'Polifonia/Dublin Descriptors'. Because of their compatibility with the 'Dublin Descriptors', the 'AEC/Polifonia Learning Outcomes' are therefore fully compatible with the Dutch National Qualifications Framework.
- The Royal Conservatoire fully supports the philosophy behind the 'AEC/Polifonia Learning Outcomes': once many institutions across Europe will start using this framework (and in many countries this is increasingly the case), it will be easier to compare curricula, which will have a positive effect on cooperation, exchange and the recognition of diploma's and mobility periods.
- The 'AEC/Polifonia Learning Outcomes' are currently being reviewed by the AEC and it is expected that a revised version will be presented in the autumn of this year. This is considered to be a strong point by the Royal Conservatoire, as it prefers to be connected to a dynamic qualifications framework being reviewed on a regular basis. The Dutch competence profiles are currently being updated for the first time since their emergence in 2002.
- The 'AEC/Polifonia Learning Outcomes' and the 'Polifonia/Dublin Descriptors' are not the only European-level qualifications framework specifically developed for higher music education in

Europe. Another framework has been developed for the arts and humanities, entitled HUMART, which includes a component specifically for music. However, HUMART has not seen the same level of consultation and validation, and in fact has never gone beyond an experimental stage. Because of their European-wide consultation and validation, as well as because of their current review, it is more likely that institutions will be using the 'AEC/Polifonia Learning Outcomes' instead of HUMART.

Each department has used these 'AEC/Polifonia Learning Outcomes' to describe its programme objectives by adapting them to the specificities of each department but leaving their original structure intact. In this way, the Conservatoire wants to put its entire curriculum into an international perspective instead of formulating a set of isolated international or intercultural competences which, in view of the already existing international reality of higher music education and of the music profession, may seem to give an artificial impression. Nevertheless, in the generic outcomes of the programme objectives that each department has formulated separately, reference is being made to intercultural and international competences, in particular with regards to the learning outcomes on 'Critical Awareness' and 'Communication Skills'.

## II. OFFERING AN INTERNATIONAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

The music profession has always had a strong international dimension both in the fields of performance and composition. International festivals, tours, ensembles and competitions are regular components in the careers of musicians. It is therefore important to prepare students for this international reality already during their studies by offering them an international learning environment, so that they know how to operate in an international context and how to collaborate with colleagues with different educational and cultural backgrounds. Such an international learning environment can be created by a) offering students and teachers the opportunity to have an international experience through exchange and collaborative activities, and b) providing various 'Internationalisation@Home' measures for those students who have less opportunity to travel.

### *a) Providing opportunities for international experiences to students*

At the Royal Conservatoire, opportunities for students to gain international experiences are offered in various ways:

- Within the context of the ConNext Network (see below for further information), opportunities are created for students to participate in intensive programme activities organised by the ConNext partners, such as the participation of The Hague students in an early music project at the Yong Siew Toh Conservatoire in Singapore in January 2016 and in a contemporary music project organised by the Sibelius Academy during the summer of 2016.
- Opportunities for international experiences for students are also created outside the ConNext Network, such as the cooperation in early music with the Juilliard School in New York, which will see a joint performance of Bach's *Hohe Messe* during the academic year 2016-2017.
- Within the context of the various ERASMUS+ Strategic Partnership projects (see below for further information) in which the Royal Conservatoire currently participates, students are given the opportunity to participate in intensive programmes organised by these projects. Examples of such activities are the intensives of the METRIC project (2017 and 2018), the ECMA project (2016, 2017 and 2018) and the VoxEarlyMus project (2016, 2017 and 2018). Students were also actively involved in the intensive programmes as part of the project 'Improvisation in European Higher Music Education', which was coordinated by the Royal Conservatoire and funded by the ERASMUS programme for the period 2011-2014.
- By an active participation in the ERASMUS+ programme for student mobility. Students at the Royal Conservatoire have full access to the opportunities offered by the ERASMUS exchange programme. For this purpose, Bilateral Agreements with 72 institutions have currently been signed. However, as illustrated by the table below, the numbers of outgoing ERASMUS students is not yet in balance with the numbers of incoming ERASMUS students. For the coming academic years, the Conservatoire has therefore, starting from the academic year 2016-2017, agreed on a minimum target number of outgoing ERASMUS students per department, which departments are expected to reach each year.

	Applications SMS-IN	Admitted SMS-IN	SMS-OUT
2010-2011		18	5
2011-2012		19	8
2012-2013	77	21	7
2013-2014	111	31	7
2014-2015	94	31	7
2015-2016	124	31	7

On the other hand, the Conservatoires welcomes quite a large contingent of incoming ERASMUS students each year. As teachers in the Netherlands are paid on an hourly basis, the Conservatoire must invest in a substantial amount of extra teaching hours to be able to accept these students: in the academic year 2015-2016 this additional teaching load amounts to about 0.45fte, which is equivalent to about 40.500€ for additional staff costs for the entire academic year. This promotion of mobility is part of an active internationalisation policy of the entire University of the Arts The Hague, which in 2015 was found to be the Hogeschool in the Netherlands with the highest number of ERASMUS student scholarships relative to its overall number of students.

- The Sonology department has been the initiator for the creation of the website [www.electroacoustic-music-education.net](http://www.electroacoustic-music-education.net), which lists a group of institutions providing education in electroacoustic and computer music education and includes information per institution for students interested in an ERASMUS exchange.

As can be read in more detail in the section of this document about the policy of the Royal Conservatoire on the continuing professional development of teachers, opportunities for teachers to gain international experience are offered in various ways:

- The participation of teachers in international conferences is actively supported through the continuing professional development budget of the Conservatoire.
- The participation of teachers in international assessment panels for examinations in other institutions is actively supported through the connections within the ConNext Network.
- The participation of teachers in various training sessions (e.g. the Innovative Conservatoire – ICON sessions) is actively supported through the continuing professional development budget of the Conservatoire.
- By a high level of participation in the ERASMUS+ programme for individual teacher mobility.
- The participation of teachers in working groups and intensive staff training seminars organised by the various ERASMUS+ Strategic Partnership projects in which the Royal Conservatoire currently participates.

*b) Supporting 'Internationalisation@Home'*

An international learning environment can not only be reached by implementing an active policy towards individual mobility. Various other factors will also determine the international character of the Conservatoire's learning environment, especially for those that have less opportunity to travel

but also for incoming international students. At the Royal Conservatoire, the international character of the learning environment is high due to the following facts and activities:

- As the table below illustrates, the Conservatoire hosts a large number of foreign students, which has a strong impact on the learning environment.

Royal Conservatoire international student numbers 2014-2016

	NL students	EER-students (excl. NL)	Non-EER students	Erasmus	Total
2014-2015	257	316	121	32	726
2015-2016	276	344	134	32	786

- As can be seen in the teachers' biographies that are posted in the website, most of the teachers at the Royal Conservatoire are active on the international stage and many are from outside the Netherlands. Furthermore, 47 teachers living outside the country currently teach at the Conservatoire as regular visiting professors.
- The Conservatoire offers master classes with international experts on a regular basis. During the academic year 2014-2015, 51 of such international visiting teachers visited the institution. The Sonology department has created the Konrad Boehmer Visiting Professorship, which will invite an expert in the field on an annual basis to spend a period of several weeks at the Conservatoire for lessons, concerts and workshops (in 2016 composer Trevor Wishart was appointed for the professorship).
- The Conservatoire offers all classes in its bachelor's and master's programmes in English.
- The Conservatoire provides all information on education and practical issues in both Dutch and English. From the academic year 2015-2016, curricular information is published in English only.
- The Conservatoire employs a fulltime International Student Adviser to provide support to foreign students coming to study in The Hague, but also to Dutch students wanting to go on an exchange through the ERASMUS programme.
- The Conservatoire offers English language courses to its teaching and non-academic staff as part of its continuing professional development policy. During the academic year 2014-2015, 33 teachers followed such a course, during 2015-2016 18 teachers and 17 non-academic staff. Language training of non-academic staff is seen as important, so that high-quality services can be provided in English to international students.

#### *International learning environment and student satisfaction surveys*

Evidence for the level of student satisfaction on the international learning environment can be found on the Conservatoire's student satisfaction survey and the national 'Kunstenmonitor'.

In the student satisfaction survey (Studententevredenheidsonderzoek – STO) sent out by the Royal Conservatoire on an annual basis, several questions ask for students' opinions about the international learning environment and the access to international opportunities. With regards to this STO, it is important to mention that the Royal Conservatoire (as the only conservatoire in the Netherlands) does not participate in the centralised National Student Survey (NSE). The reason for developing its own survey was that it was felt that many questions of the generic NSE were not

relevant for music students, difficult to understand for international students even if provided in English and formulated in such a way that music student would not feel addressed by them, leading to very low response rates. One of the crucial issues seen as lacking in the NSE and which led to the decision to develop a more relevant survey, was a section with questions on the international dimension of the institution and its programmes, which are not asked for in the NSE. Because of its international profile, the Conservatoire has explicitly formulated several questions in this area for its own STO. In the tables below, the scores (on a scale of 1–5 from low to high satisfaction) can be found, which indicate that students are largely satisfied with these issues.

<b>General questions</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>
<b>The international orientation of your study programme</b>	<b>3,6</b>	<b>3,7</b>	<b>3,7</b>

<b>Specific questions on international dimension</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>
<b>The international dimension of your institution</b>			<b>4</b>
The international nature of your learning environment			4,1
The information you have been given before your enrolment as an international student	3,5	3,6	3,3
The availability of information on international study opportunities (Erasmus)		3,1	3,1
Quality of the information provided before and after your enrolment	3,5	3,4	3,4
The assistance provided by the international student advisor (international office)	4	3,7	3,2
The assistance provided by the student administration	3,6	3,6	3,1
The assistance by other support/administrative staff	3,6	3,6	3,1
The range of English-taught subjects available	4,2	4,3	4,2
The quality of English-taught subjects available	3,9	3,9	3,8
The extent to which teachers are ready and able to respond to your specific questions as an international student	4	4	3,4
The extent to which supporting staff are ready and able to your specific questions as an international student	4	3,8	3,4

In the nationwide Kunstenmonitor (a Dutch system being used by all Dutch conservatoires, which surveys all alumni of higher arts education programmes in the country 1.5 years after their graduation on their experience of their education and on their current professional situation), one question focuses on international orientation: "The programme has sufficient international orientation". On this question, the Bachelor of Music at the Royal Conservatoire has scored consistently high and substantially higher than the national average:

Bachelor of Music programme KC		2012	2013	2014	National average 2014
Programme has sufficient international orientation	% agree	33	64	59	33
	% disagree	11	24	21	43

### III. MONITORING AND IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF ACTIVITIES THROUGH INTERNATIONALISATION

As mentioned in the introduction, the Royal Conservatoire believes that an active international policy goes beyond individual mobility and should therefore be an integral part of the institutional strategic policy for development and improvement. This can be achieved by fostering a strong international dimension in its overall curriculum development and continuing professional development policies, and by constantly comparing and engaging itself internationally in various international initiatives.

#### *International strategic partnerships: 'ConNext'*

The Royal Conservatoire is a founding member of the international network 'ConNext', which consists of eight conservatoires worldwide (Royal Conservatoire, Guildhall School of Music & Drama London, Sibelius Academy Helsinki, Norwegian Academy of Music Oslo, Schulich School of Music – McGill University Montreal, Queensland Conservatorium Brisbane, Yong Siew Toh Conservatory Singapore and the Orpheus Institute Gent) of similar size, profile and artistic and educational ethos that have expressed the ambition to develop and maintain an intensive cooperation with regard to exchanges, advancement of expertise and curriculum development. 'ConNext' has formulated a 'ConNext Charter' signed by the directors of the eight institutes, consisting of ten shared principles agreed upon by all participating institutions (this 'ConNext Charter' is included with this document as an appendix). 'ConNext' management and teaching staff are meeting on a regular basis for management trainings (taking place every year in the beginning of June), seminars on specific themes (research, chamber music), and as international external examiners in assessment panels, while opportunities are created for students to participate in activities of 'ConNext' partners (examples of these are a collaboration of the Royal Conservatoire and the Yong Siew Toh Conservatory for an Early Music project in January 2016, and the participation of 'ConNext' partners in a summer camp on contemporary music organised by the Sibelius Academy in the US in summer 2016) and as part of regular student exchange programmes. The main principle of 'ConNext' is that institutions can greatly benefit from each other's resources and expertise on a non-competitive basis and that it can serve as an international level tool to assist institutions in their institutional development. As can be seen in the activities mentioned in this document, the Royal Conservatoire has been able to profit substantially from the 'ConNext' partnership in terms of curriculum development, continuing professional development and quality assurance.

Institutions outside the 'ConNext' partnership with which the Royal Conservatoire has established close formalised connections are the Royal Conservatoire in Antwerp (for the exchange of international external examiners), the Janáček Academy in Brno (in the fields of composition and early music), the Juilliard School in New York (in the field of early music) and the Groupe de Recherches Musicales (GRM) in Paris (for Sonology).

#### *Curriculum development and internationalisation*

With regards to curriculum development and its international dimension, it is important to establish:

1. how the programme objectives (or intended learning outcomes) of the study programmes refer to internationally accepted frameworks
2. how the development of the study programmes is informed by relevant international expertise.

As described in Chapter I, the Royal Conservatoire has chosen to use, because of its international focus, the European-level framework developed by the European Association of Conservatoires (AEC) in the 'Polifonia' Network with the 'Tuning' Methodology, as its main framework of reference instead of the national framework of competence profiles from 2002.

Furthermore, the Royal Conservatoire has the ambition to provide its students with curricula that are informed by the latest developments at international level so that they meet the highest standards in terms of expertise and relevance. It is therefore constantly developing its curricula by working intensively together with other institutions in various European-level initiatives. Very few institutions in Europe will have such an extensive portfolio of participation in European projects, but European cooperation is not a goal in itself. Rather, the Royal Conservatoire is seeking out relevant information at international level as part of its ever-lasting ambition to continuously improve its study programmes. Examples of curriculum development that have been directly influenced by international cooperation are:

- The introduction of a new music theory curriculum in the bachelor's curriculum in 2014 was strongly influenced by information collected in the European Improvisation Intensive Programmes, which the Royal Conservatoire coordinated annually from 2012 to 2014 with support from the ERASMUS programme. In particular, the new course 'Aural Skills and Improvisation' was a result of work being done in the European intensives.
- The work on improvisation and its place within a Conservatoire's curriculum now continues in 'METRIC', an ERASMUS+ Strategic Partnership project coordinated by the Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre (2015-2018), which is currently working on teaching methodologies for improvisation and the development of joint modules in improvisation at both bachelor's and master's level, in which institutions will be able to share expertise and resources in this particular area of expertise that holds much potential for the artistic and instrumental development of music students.
- The introduction of a new pedagogical component in the bachelor's curriculum in 2011 was supported by an external review visit of experts from the European INVITE (Instrumental and Vocal Teaching)-group, who studied the curriculum, visited classes, spoke to teachers and students, and wrote a comprehensive report with suggestions for improvement.
- The Art of Sound department has seen a major curricular reform during the past two year, which has resulted in a completely new curriculum for its bachelor's programme. The new programme is more focused on practice through an earlier choice by students for a specialisation and a greater interaction between theory and practice. The development of this new curriculum was informed by reciprocal visits to the sound engineering programme in the Schulich School of Music of McGill University (a 'ConNext' partner) and to institutions with similar programmes in Detmold and Paris. The information on how to deal with student projects gathered through the contacts with McGill was in particular instructive in the development of the new curriculum.

- With the support of several European projects, the Royal Conservatoire has recently started with the introduction of long-distance teaching. In the project 'European Mobile Baroque Academy' coordinated by the European Union Baroque Orchestra and supported by the Creative Europe programme, the Conservatoire participates as a full partner with the task to set up long distance teaching activities in the area of early music with institutions in Central and Eastern Europe. Furthermore, in the project 'NAIP – Innovation in Higher Music Education' (see below) experiments are taking place with online real-time improvisation as part of the blended mobility (i.e. integrating physical and online mobility) activities in the project.
- The Royal Conservatoire has been involved in the development of the oldest Joint Master Programme in music in Europe, the Music Master for New Audiences and Innovative Practice (NAIP), since its beginning in 2007. At this moment, NAIP is receiving funding from the ERASMUS+ programme as a Strategic Partnership project entitled 'NAIP – Innovation in Higher Music Education' coordinated by the Icelandic Academy of the Arts (2014-2016). Even if most of the activities are taking place a master's level, there is a clear effect of this programme on curriculum development in the Bachelor programme at the Conservatoire: the educational modules for the bachelor's programmes of Sonology and Composition are based on the NAIP methodology, as are various modules in the Minor Education and the course Personal Professional Preparation.
- The Royal Conservatoire is a partner in 'ECMA – the Next Step', an ERASMUS+ Strategic Partnership project coordinated by the Norwegian Academy of Music and the European Chamber Music Academy - ECMA (2015-2018), which not only aims at the development of a joint European master's programme in Chamber Music, but also studies methodologies for chamber music teaching overall as well as ways to organise chamber music within the bachelor's curriculum. Through the participation in this project, the Conservatoire hopes to improve the organisation and content of its chamber music curriculum at both bachelor's and master's levels.
- The Royal Conservatoire also participates as a partner in 'VoxEarlyMus', an ERASMUS+ Strategic Partnership project coordinated by the National University of Music Bucharest (2015-2018). Even if the Royal Conservatoire already has a strong tradition in early-music singing, it is expected that participation in this project will bring students and teachers interesting opportunities for development and networking in this specialised area.
- Plans exist for new applications for ERASMUS+ Strategic Partnership projects to be submitted at the end of March 2016, one in the area of entrepreneurship (the 'ReNEW' project coordinated by the Royal Academy of Music Aarhus), one in the area of research supervision (the 'RICERCAR' project coordinated by the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland), and one in the field of the Kodaly music education methodology (the 'Kodaly Hub' project coordinated by the Franz Liszt Academy Budapest), which are all areas in need of further development at the Conservatoire. It is expected that these projects will inform improvements of the course Personal Professional Preparation, the role of research at both bachelor's and master's level, and the music theory curriculum.
- The Royal Conservatoire, in cooperation with the European Association of Conservatoires (AEC), was the coordinator of the ERASMUS Network for Music 'Polifonia', the largest European project in the field of higher music education to date. In this project, which consisted of more

than 55 partner institutions in 28 countries in- and outside Europe, many topics relevant to higher music education (e.g. curriculum development, the use of learning outcomes, employability, quality assurance and accreditation, research) were addressed by working groups and resulted in handbooks, guidelines and newly developed frameworks. Several developments at the Royal Conservatoire were informed by the work done in this project, such as the practice of International External Examiners (see below), issues related to research and developments with regards to entrepreneurship. The work being done in 'Polifonia' has been selected as an example of good practice in internationalisation in higher education by the European Consortium for Accreditation – ECA, while the European Commission has nominated 'Polifonia' as an 'ERASMUS Success Story' for 2015.

#### *Continuing professional development and internationalisation*

The Royal Conservatoire has an active policy for the continuing professional development of its teachers, which is based on the view that it is vital for the further development of a higher education institution to continuously invest in the expertise of its teaching and supporting staff. This view has been supported by an agreement with the unions, which stipulates that a fixed percentage of the university's budget should be used for the continuing professional development of its employees.

In order to ensure that its teachers have access to the latest expertise in the field internationally, the Royal Conservatoire has decided to give a strong international dimension to its continuing professional development policy, either by supporting international activities of its teachers or by inviting international experts for continuing professional development activities at the Conservatoire. The following activities are the result of this policy:

- The Royal Conservatoire has started a new programme for its teaching staff, entitled the 'KC Staff Development Programme' in October 2015. This staff development programme aims at helping teaching faculty members with their needs in relation to continuing professional development, in particular with regards to pedagogical skills. Various issues such as one-to-one teaching, group teaching, assessment and entrepreneurship are being discussed in eight seminars over one academic year. Currently, 18 teachers are participating in this course, which will lead to a certificate (entitled 'Basiskwalificatie Didactische Bekwaamheid (BDB) – Basic Certificate Didactic Capacity') that is supposed to be recognised by other institutions for higher education whenever a teacher accepts a job at another Dutch conservatoire. Government regulations increasingly require institutions to ensure that teaching staff is sufficiently trained with regards to pedagogical skills and is encouraging institutions to offer continuing professional development courses for their teaching staff. It is not inconceivable that in the near future the government will request from institutions to ensure that all teaching staff will be (re)trained towards such a BDB. What has been unique within the context of this development, is that the Royal Conservatoire is the only conservatoire in the Netherlands that has developed its own programme for this purpose with crucial input from the international 'ConNext' partners. More specifically, many of the techniques used in the programme are based on the ICON methodology and for the launch conference of this programme, international experts from 'ConNext' Partners (Norwegian Academy of Music and Guildhall School of Music

and Drama) were invited to present their views on the topics of the programme, to give the first seminars to the participants and also to discuss the content of the programme in detail. For the further development of the KC Staff Development Programme, a connection has also been established with the Centre of Excellence for Music Performance Education (CEMPE) at the Norwegian Academy of Music, which focuses on research in the area of teaching in higher music education and specifically with an emphasis on the training of performers.

- Several teachers (17 in total over the period 2007 – 2015) have participated in the activities of *Innovative Conservatoire – ICON*. ICON is an international group of conservatoires, which is coordinated by the Guildhall School of Music and Drama and which organises intensive training sessions for conservatoire teachers twice a year around certain themes (one-to-one teaching, assessment, improvisation, group teaching, etc). One Royal Conservatoire teacher belongs to the steering group of ICON Creative Directors and has organised a *ICONGo* seminar in 2015 that was specifically targeting Royal Conservatoire teachers only, so that more teachers would be able to benefit from the ICON methodology.
- By an active participation in the ERASMUS+ programme for teacher mobility. As the table below shows, the Royal Conservatoire boasts a high number of outgoing teachers in ERASMUS teacher mobility. In the statistics collected by the European Association of Conservatoires (AEC) on ERASMUS mobility, the Royal Conservatoire belonged to the Top-5 of institutions throughout Europe with the highest number of ERASMUS outgoing teacher mobility in 2014. The active promotion of teacher mobility is strongly connected to the policy of the Royal Conservatoire, which sees teacher mobility as an important form of continuing professional development and student recruitment, as explained in the paragraphs below.

Royal Conservatoire ERASMUS Teaching Staff Mobility (STA) 2010-2016

Academic year	Staff-In	Staff-Out
2010-2011	3	4
2011-2012	5	8
2012-2013	16	24
2013-2014	17	41
2014-2015	14	31
2015-2016	15	33

This large number of outgoing teachers has not yet been matched by a similar number of incoming teachers within the ERASMUS+ programme. Even with the Conservatoire having an active approach towards inviting visiting professors, the potential of using ERASMUS for this purpose has not yet been fully explored. For the coming academic years, the Conservatoire has therefore agreed with its departments to primarily use ERASMUS incoming teacher mobility for master classes and workshops starting with the academic year 2016-2017.

- Within the context of the various ERASMUS+ Strategic Partnership projects (see below for further information) in which the Royal Conservatoire currently participates, teachers are given the opportunity to participate in working groups and intensive staff training seminars organised by these projects, which are important tools for expertise development and continuing professional development. Examples of such activities are the participation in the Teaching &

Learning, Joint Curriculum Development and Blended Mobility Working Groups of the 'NAIP – Innovation in Higher Music Education', 'ECMA – Next Step', 'METRIC' and 'VoxEarlyMus' Strategic Partnership projects.

- The Royal Conservatoire has a tradition of organising an annual 'Studium Generale' for its teachers focusing on specific topics, which always includes a strong international dimension through the participation of international experts. During the ERASMUS intensive projects on improvisation in the period 2011-2014, annual one-day seminars with international experts were organised for local teaching staff on themes around improvisation (these were the role of improvisation in the curriculum, how to teach improvisation and employability aspects of improvisation). In October 2014, a symposium entitled 'From Potential to Performance' was organised for teachers around topics on Performers Science and Health & Well-being with several prominent international experts in these fields. These events were very well attended and resulted in the publications 'Improvisation? Just do it!' and 'From Potential to Performance'. As mentioned above, an international symposium was organised to launch the KC Staff Development in October 2015.
- As another tool for the advancement of expertise and continuing professional development of teachers, the Royal Conservatoire has launched a publication series in 2012, entitled the 'Royal Conservatoire Publications'. Four of such publications have been published during the past few years: one on improvisation as a result of the ERASMUS intensive projects on improvisation entitled '*Improvisation? Just do it!*', the above-mentioned publication '*From Potential to Performance*', a publication on research that was executed in the area of one-to-one teaching entitled '*Help, a Talent!*', and the publication '*A Laboratory for Sonology*' with articles written by teachers and alumni of the Sonology department. All publications have been published in English so that a wide dissemination among colleagues internationally is possible.
- Within its overall policy for the continuing professional development of teachers, various international activities of teachers are being actively encouraged and supported, such as:
  - the participation in international conferences: in case teachers are invited to conferences to give presentations based on a competitive (usually peer review) selection process, the Royal Conservatoire contributes to the costs for their participation. During 2015, teachers have presented at the European Platform for Artistic Research in Music (EPARM), the International Bass Convention and the American Society for Music Theory and International Computer Music Conference. Sonology teachers are invited for guest professorships at the Technical University Berlin and the Max Planck Institute on a regular basis.
  - In the section on quality and internationalisation below, the practice of international external examiners is being described as a tool for the Conservatoire to establish how it is reaching internationally accepted standards with its outcomes. The Royal Conservatoire sees this process as a reciprocal activity, which means it not only intends to bring in such international external examiners but also to offer its teachers to play a similar role in other institutions. In this way, teachers are confronted with artistic standards at the international level and other assessment practices, which can be a powerful experience in terms of continuing professional development. Over the recent years, the Royal Conservatoire has sent teachers to act as international external examiners in various 'ConNext' partner institutions (Norwegian Academy of Music, Sibelius Academy and the Guildhall School of

Music and Drama), but also elsewhere, such as the Royal Conservatoire in Antwerp and the Janáček Academy in Brno.

- One other successful opportunity for continuing professional development at the Royal Conservatoire is the possibility for teachers to upgrade their pre-Bologna 2<sup>nd</sup> cycle diploma to an officially recognised master's degree. In order to obtain this degree, teachers can get exemptions for all performance components of the master's programme on the basis of their 2<sup>nd</sup> cycle diploma (usually a Performance Diploma or a 2<sup>nd</sup> cycle Music Diploma) and their long-term musical practice, but they still need to fulfil the research component that was introduced into the 2<sup>nd</sup> cycle programmes with the introduction of the Master of Music degree in music. As part of their research assignments in this programme, teachers often are given the opportunity to hire international research supervisors or create their own master's electives, which are often executed in the form of international study visits. Examples of such international study visits are visits by music theory faculty to McGill University in the fields of improvisation and analysis, a visit to the US by a teacher researching aspects of jazz drumming and a visit to Estonia in the fields of improvisation.
- The Royal Conservatoire is also involved in several developmental activities, which are aimed at sharing expertise with institutions in developing parts of the world. Examples of these activities are visits to the Conservatorium Suriname in Paramaribo by teachers of the jazz department, activities of early music teachers in Cuba, annual teaching visits of the composition department to Ghana, activities of the Conservatoire in China (see below) and the participation of the Royal Conservatoire as a full partner in the large EUREQA project funded by the TEMPUS programme of the EU and coordinated by the European University Association (EUA) with the aim to assist universities in the Western Balkans to develop strong and relevant quality management systems. Even if these activities mainly aim at capacity building in these countries with the help of expertise present at the Royal Conservatoire, the Conservatoire believes these activities to be reciprocal in nature, as they should not be seen only as activities where expertise is being disseminated but also as important opportunities for Royal Conservatoire staff to get acquainted with other cultures and other styles of music, and to be able to operate in (often very) different circumstances.

#### *The active role of Royal Conservatoire staff in various European and international organisations*

The Royal Conservatoire believes it is vital for its management and teaching staff to stay updated of the latest developments at international level in both the higher music education context and the music profession. Furthermore, the Conservatoire believes it has a collegial responsibility to be actively involved in international initiatives that can further develop the higher music education and the music profession sectors as a whole. The Royal Conservatoire therefore has an active portfolio in terms of the participation of its staff in various international projects and organisations:

- The European Association of Conservatoires (AEC): vice-principal Martin Prchal (Chief Executive AEC 2001-2010), head of early music Johannes Boer (member of steering group AEC Early Music Platform), quality assurance official Janneke Ravenhorst (member 'Polifonia' working group on quality assurance and workshop leader EUREQA project), lector Henk Borgdorff (member 'Polifonia' working group for Artistic Research in Music and chair Society of Artistic Research – SAR)

- The European Music Council (EMC): head of jazz Wouter Turkenburg (chair 2006-2009)
- The International Association of Schools for Jazz (IASJ): head of jazz Wouter Turkenburg (co-founder and chair 1989-2004 and executive director 2004-present). The Royal Conservatoire also hosts the international secretariat for the IASJ.
- The European Association of Music in School (EAS): Master of Music Education course leader Adri de Vugt (President 2011-2015)
- The International Music Council (IMC): former director of the Royal Conservatoire and current director of the Academy of Creative and Performing Arts, Leiden University, Frans de Ruyter (president 1993-2001 and 2009-2013)
- European Festivals Association (EFA): former director of the Royal Conservatoire and current director of the Academy of Creative and Performing Arts, Leiden University, Frans de Ruyter (president 1989-2003)
- European House for Culture, Brussels: former director of the Royal Conservatoire and current director of the Academy of Creative and Performing Arts, Leiden University, Frans de Ruyter (chair since 2008)
- IMZ (Music in the Media): director Henk van der Meulen (president 2000-2008; vice-chairman since 2008)
- The Television Academy Foundation (Emmy Awards): director Henk van der Meulen (since 2000)

#### IV. INTERNATIONAL RECRUITMENT

As described in chapter III, the presence of international students and teachers is essential for the creation of an international learning environment. Furthermore, international students have a positive impact on the artistic quality of the Conservatoire. This is influenced by the lack of a well-structured pre-higher education level music training system in The Netherlands, which is evident at the entrance examinations of the Conservatoire during which international students regularly demonstrate a higher level of instrumental and musicianship skills. It is therefore important for the Royal Conservatoire to have a continuous intake of international students of high quality.

At the same time, the Conservatoire is conscious of the fact it is operating in an international context in which expertise levels are rising and the competition for talent is increasing. In order to reach high levels of quality and to sustain an international learning environment, the Conservatoire is therefore organising several activities that will bring in international students of high quality.

##### *ERASMUS incoming students*

Even if the Royal Conservatoire is fully committed to the exchange principle of the ERASMUS programme and its responsibility of giving its own but also other students in Europe the opportunity to spend a study period abroad, it is also aware that the ERASMUS system can be seen as an efficient tool for student recruitment. Statistics show that over the past 3 years, almost 30% of all incoming ERASMUS came back as regular students. This is one of the reasons why the Conservatoire is supporting incoming ERASMUS student mobility financially, as described in Chapter 1 on the learning environment. Furthermore, the Conservatoire is keen to host Erasmus students the best it can. In order to collect feedback from ERASMUS students on their experience at the Royal Conservatoire, an exit questionnaire is given to these students at the end of their study period. Feedback from the 2015 questionnaire shows that incoming ERASMUS students are overall happy about their experience at the Royal Conservatoire (and indeed some of them mention the ambition to come back), but that improvements can still be made with regards to the welcoming of the ERASMUS students at the beginning of the year and the construction of their curriculum for their study abroad period. The following improvements are therefore planned:

- ERASMUS students will receive an earlier confirmation for their study period at the Royal Conservatoire. This will be made possible by a further streamlining of the admission procedures in the weeks after the annual deadline of 1 March, which has been made much more efficient through the use of new digital application and admission systems.
- By admitting the students earlier, it will also be possible to agree on the Learning Agreement of the student before the summer, which is essential for the planning of the student's schedule which usually takes place during the summer. This ambition, however, also depends on the cooperation of the home institutions of students, which sometimes send incomplete dossiers or are slow with the negotiations of the learning agreement.
- During the First Year Festival, a special morning or afternoon for ERASMUS students will be organised for the first time in September 2016, during which all main stakeholders (heads of departments, international office, student administration, planning office) will be present to welcome the students and help them with their formalities and study programme.

### *International auditions and recruitment activities*

In addition to this role of the ERASMUS programme, the Royal Conservatoire has also started with several international auditions and activities that are expected to bring international students:

- Since 2012, the Royal Conservatoire is organising auditions in London with the aim to recruit UK students attracted by what the Conservatoire has to offer but also by its tuition fees that are significantly lower than in the UK. At this moment, the Conservatoire is reviewing this practice, as it has not yet fulfilled its expectations. For 2016, it has been agreed that a local contact (a former vice-principal of the Conservatoire now living in the UK) will be coordinating the auditions instead of organising these from The Hague and that the timing will be changed from January to November/December when the UK colleges are holding their auditions as well.
- The Royal Conservatoire has organised in 2014, 2015 and 2016 workshops and auditions for Portuguese students at the Escola Profissional de Artes de Covilhã (EPABI) in the Portuguese city of Covilhã. Through personal contacts in the Classical Music department, the Conservatoire sends a small team of teachers to this pre-college level institution to work with the students in workshops and give those students interested in studying at the Royal Conservatoire an opportunity to play an audition and do a theory test. The auditions are recorded and then shared with teachers in the classical music department. For the academic year 2015-2016, this has led to the admission of a small contingent of Portuguese students of good quality in the classical music department.
- The Royal Conservatoire is also involved in various types of activities in China. These range from the organisation of auditions for students interested in studying at the Conservatoire (these are organised by an alumnus in Ningbo for the vocal department and in Shanghai for the classical departments) to more intensive collaborations that are not just focused on recruitment but also on the development of expertise in China with regards to teaching and specific areas of specialisation in higher music education. A Memorandum of Agreement has been signed with the Shenzhen Art School, in which both institutions not only agree on personal exchanges but also on exploring the opportunity of developing a Bachelor of Music programme in English onsite. With the Shanghai Jazz Club, the jazz department has signed an agreement for mutual visits and the sharing of expertise.

## V. USING INTERNATIONAL TOOLS FOR ASSESSMENT, REVIEW AND ACCREDITATION

In addition to its efforts to inform the curriculum from an international point of view in terms of using European frameworks for its programme objectives and European cooperation for curriculum development, the Royal Conservatoire also believes it can only call itself truly international when it can find ways to assess its activities and results at an international level. It is therefore using several internationally developed and internationally based tools that can provide the Conservatoire with an indication of where it stands internationally from a qualitative perspective.

In the current debate about quality in higher music education, a concept of quality is being used which addresses both standards and educational quality, i.e. standards in a particular artistic discipline on the one hand and educational quality that includes generic issues (such as the organisation and management of the curriculum, governance, internal and external communication, and student involvement) on the other. It is fair to say that an attention on educational quality has developed only recently in higher music education institutions and this development has been greatly influenced by the emergence of quality assurance as part of the Bologna Process during the past decade. For decades, the main focus of the sector has been on artistic standards, for example in the way the institutions assess their students through performance examinations and the importance given to music competitions. Nevertheless, there is now an increased understanding that the existence of an overall 'quality culture' in which artistic standards and educational quality go hand-in-hand will further reinforce the learning experience of students.

Based on this concept of quality combining artistic standards and educational quality within one 'quality culture', the Royal Conservatoire has devised a new approach to quality and quality assurance<sup>1</sup> that is using several internationally based tools with the aim to assess both artistic standards and educational quality:

- Since 2012, the Royal Conservatoire has been using International External Examiners to assess artistic standards from an international point of view. These are specialists in a specific discipline (e.g. a teacher in violin, composition, voice or sonology) with the task to serve on assessment panels in formative and/or summative performance examinations. Even if a longstanding experience in The Netherlands with external examiners exists, these were usually experts from within the country. International experts can bring an additional external and international perspective to the assessment of (final) examination performances, which give institutions a sense of where they stand in relation to internationally accepted artistic standards. The Conservatoire has served as a pilot institution to test this methodology in the ERASMUS Network for Music 'Polifonia' and in the Dutch pilot 'Vreemde Ogen Dwingen'.
- With regards to feedback methods for students after their performance assessments, the Royal Conservatoire experimented, inspired by discussions on this theme in the ICON-group, with online peer-assessment and feedback methods in cooperation with the Guildhall School of Music & Drama and the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland in 2013 and 2014. Videos of chamber

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<sup>1</sup> See document 'Quality Culture at the Royal Conservatoire – 2016 and beyond' for further information.

music recitals were placed onto a Moodle site, and students and teachers were asked to give feedback online to these films which would be shared with all contributors. This led to a lively and interesting debate about quality, assessment and feedback among students and teachers online. This experiment was not continued in this form, but led to a new approach for feedback, in which students are asked to engage in self-assessment following performance assessments and share these with the assessment panel on a reciprocal basis with the aim to avoid that feedback is given in an one-dimensional way and without a sense of ownership of students.

- At department level, the Royal Conservatoire organises regular consultations with representatives from the profession ('werkveldoverleg'). During these meetings, experts from the music profession are being invited to give their opinion on the curricula and the results of the Conservatoire. In all cases, these consultations with representatives from the profession included experts from abroad in addition to Dutch experts and were held in English.
- At programme level, the Royal Conservatoire will start with a new tool for quality management with an international dimension in 2016, entitled 'the Critical Friend'. This will be an external international reviewer who will be visiting the Conservatoire for a few days to visit final recitals (but not be part of the assessment panel), lessons, sample written materials and talk to students and teachers to get an impression of the quality of the programme both in terms of artistic standards and educational quality, which he/she then writes up in a short report. In order not to overburden the Conservatoire in terms of workload and keep costs manageable, it is anticipated that each programme should be visited by such a 'Critical Friend' within one accreditation cycle at least once. The first 'Critical Friend' appointed by the Conservatoire is Prof. Gustav Djupsjöbacka, pianist and former rector of the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki, who will be visiting the Classical Music department at the end of May 2016.
- An interesting approach to address issues on educational quality from an international perspective can be found in the International Benchmarking Exercise (IBE), which the Royal Northern College of Music (RNCM) in Manchester initiated in 2011 with partners from Oslo, Graz, The Hague, Montreal, Sydney, Singapore and Boston. The aim of the project is to obtain a set of comparative data from similar institutions against which they can compare themselves and which can be used for internal analysis (and not to obtain a common set of threshold data which institutions should meet). All partners joined the project because they were interested in finding out their strengths and weaknesses with the aim to identify areas of improvement. The first experiences show that the participation in such an international benchmarking exercise can provide institutions with highly relevant management information, in particular with a view on educational quality issues. By making an international comparison with institution with a similar size, structure and artistic ethos, the institutions are able to put the management information they collect through their own internal quality assurance activities on a regular basis into an international context. An example of how IBE addressed issues based on the information collected was the discussion about music theory in the bachelor's curriculum during one of its meetings. The approach to this issue differs widely in the participating institutions, but is also seen as an important area of development and this is reflected by the curricular reforms taking place at the Royal Conservatoire in this field.
- The Conservatoire is also a test institution for a pilot organised by the European Association of Conservatoires (AEC) for the European U-Multirank project. U-Multirank is a multidimensional

ranking system that compares institutions according to 4 dimensions and 32 indicators. During the spring of 2016, the Royal Conservatoire will be one of 19 institutions world-wide, which will be participating in the collection of data through an institutional and a student questionnaire, which will then be published according to the U-Multirank methodology. The intention is that the results of the U-Multirank process will be published publicly (contrary to the International Benchmarking Exercise, which is much more seen as an internal quality tool). The result of the first round of U-Multirank data collection will become available during June 2016 and should provide the Conservatoire with a qualified comparison of where it stands in the dimension that are important to its mission, such as research and international dimension.

- In terms of external quality assurance, the Royal Conservatoire supports the aim of *MusiQuE – Music Quality Enhancement*, an independent European foundation with the aim to support the enhancement of quality in the higher music education sector. *MusiQuE*, which has been established by the European Association of Conservatoires (AEC), the European Music School Union (EMU) and the Performing Arts League Europe (Pearle\*), offers various external quality assurance services in the form of evaluation and review visits, and formal accreditation procedures. For this purpose, it has developed a set of criteria and procedures that are subject-specific and international. In *MusiQuE* the focus on artistic standards and educational quality come together: in its procedures attention is not only given to processes and educational quality issues, but also to artistic standards and musical content. The role of peers is therefore at the core of the system: their expertise is primarily as teachers within their discipline, but many of them also possess significant administrative experience and understand the issues of higher music education from this perspective as well. Another important dimension of the *MusiQuE* approach is the use of international peers. This will increase the objectivity of the comments made by the peers and provide the institution with a possibility to underpin its international claims by having undergone an international evaluation based on internationally accepted standards and the use of international experts. The Royal Conservatoire strongly believes that for any conservatoire with claims or ambitions for a strong international dimension it should not suffice to be reviewed or accredited according to national standards but should be assessed through the *MusiQuE* methodology in addition to or instead of the national procedures. In 2012, the Royal Conservatoire was the first Dutch conservatoire using internationally developed standards and the international experts of the *AEC Review Scheme* (the predecessor of *MusiQuE*) in a formal accreditation procedure for its Master programme.