



CONNECT



AEC PROJECT 'MUSIC EDUCATION IN A MULTICULTURAL EUROPEAN SOCIETY' NEWSLETTER I

The *Association Européenne des Conservatoires, Académies de Musique et Musikhochschulen* (AEC) has successfully applied to the European Commission DG for Education, and Culture (DG EAC) for funding for a project named 'Music Education in a Multicultural European Society'. The project, which is supported by the CONNECT programme of the European Commission, is one of the Association's new initiatives and considers the increasingly multi-cultural aspects of our society, relevant to music education and music performance practice.

Never before has this subject been studied on such a European-wide scale, which shows the highly innovative character of this project. For the first time, the subject was discussed during the annual AEC Conference in Bucarest in November of last year, where people showed their interest in the project by spending many hours in debating the issues that will arise over the next few years. During the discussion, the following questions related to this topic emerged:

- How do conservatoires recruit and react to students from different cultural and socio-economic backgrounds?
- How does the multi-cultural society affect developments in the music profession?
- Can conservatoires offer education and training in the performance of music for all sectors of society and the widest range of musical genres?
- What influence will students from different cultural backgrounds have on existing curricula? Will curricula need to be rewritten to respond to different approaches to music (e.g. music theory, notations), musicality and creativity?
- How will the cultural and musical diversity of society be absorbed into curricula, and how will conservatoires prepare students for professional work within a multicultural society?
- How will conservatoires initiate programmes for training professionals and outreach programmes in the community?

WORKING FORMS AND ACTIVITIES OF THE PROJECT

The project is running until July 2001 and will call on many different institutions, teachers, and experts from across Europe. The following activities will be realised in this project:

- The creation of working groups (appr. 17 persons) for research, evaluation, development of pilot projects/ seminars and dissemination of project results.
- A needs analysis will be made, looking at a number of important areas including recruitment of students, curricula, retention of students, multicultural programmes, access, outreach, professional development and assessment.
- The development and realization of innovative pilot projects/seminars during the first half of 2001. These pilot projects will be organised as intensive training modules of short duration, during which professionals in the field of music and staff members from various European conservatoires can receive information and training in the field of music education in a multi-cultural society on a European level.
- Production of various publications, such as separate project newsletters, reports, web pages and the use of other dissemination methods with information on project results, conclusions and recommendations.
- A database of existing examples of good practice on European level will be created.
- Important events will be the AEC-conferences: during these full-scale conferences the project's work will be one of the main topics of discussion.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES OF THE PROJECT

- Clearer knowledge on the impact of the multi-cultural society on the music profession.
- A commitment by the AEC and its members to the training of professional musicians within a multicultural society.
- Clearer knowledge within the AEC of the potential for multicultural education within conservatoires.
- New programmes of study reflecting the findings of the project in a significant number of conservatoires. These new study programmes should also target music professionals in the framework of continuing education.
- Performance indicators of wider access to conservatoire education, curriculum development, outreach and professional development.

THE FIRST WORKING GROUP MEETING

The first working group meeting was held at the Birmingham Conservatoire on 3rd & 4th March where people from the partner institutions involved with the project (representatives of the AEC and staff members of conservatoires in Birmingham, London (Guildhall School of Music and Drama), Vienna, Paris, Groningen, Malmo, Lisbon, the Yehudi Menuhin Foundation in Brussels and The World Music Centre) gathered to spend two days debating and discussing new flexible approaches to Multicultural Music Education.

The main aims of the meeting were to set the objectives, set the timetable and find out from various different areas of Europe what specific subjects and pilot projects we should be establishing. Six working group meetings were scheduled and from these at least three pilot projects/seminars will be set up.

The meeting began with Ian Horsbrugh (President of the AEC) giving an overview of the whole project and a keynote speech from Guest speaker Roi Kwabena - a cultural activist originally from Trinidad but now living in Birmingham. Roi Kwabena has been lecturing and writing on various cultural issues all his life and has very strong views about the subject of multiculturalism and how it should be approached and taught.

It was discovered that some of the partner institutions are already actively working on various different programmes of multicultural study, so it was decided that before starting to look at new flexible approaches to Multicultural Music Education, the AEC CONNECT Project should undertake an extensive amount of research into what is currently happening in this field in European higher education establishments. One of the emerging problems that the CONNECT project is going to encounter throughout the course of this project is term definition. People from different parts of Europe use many definitions for terms such as Multicultural Education, World Music, and Cultural Diversity.

It was also decided that the project should be split up into three working group parties from which the research projects will emerge. They are:

- Teaching - How will the cultural and musical diversity of society be absorbed into curricula, and how will conservatoires prepare students for professional work within a multicultural society? Should conservatoires offer specialist courses in world music and generate relevant pedagogical programmes? Should special subjects be embedded within existing curricula? How should they be constructed?
- People - How do conservatoires recruit and react to students from different cultural and socio-economic backgrounds? How does the multicultural society affect developments in the music profession?
- Music - Can research findings from ethnomusicology and music anthropology be of interest to new directions to be taken in traditional conservatoire education? The music market place has recently shown a development in the direction of increasing diversification and specialisation: will this affect the Conservatoire environment?

It is these three sub-headings which will form the basis for the next working group meeting in June of the CONNECT project. It was also agreed that the objectives for the project would be shown in written documentation and by presenting the findings at a conference after the period of the project has ended. The wide dissemination of the project will help to develop practice, outreach and curriculum development on a truly European level.

Should the subject of 'Music Education in a Multicultural European Society' be of interest to you
or should you have anything at all that you think could help us with our quest,
please contact the CONNECT Project Administrator Richard Shrewsbury at:

BIRMINGHAM CONSERVATOIRE • PARADISE PLACE • BIRMINGHAM • B3 3HG • UNITED KINGDOM

TEL +44 121 331 7207 • FAX +44 121 331 5906

E-MAIL richard.shrewsbury@uce.ac.uk

If you would like any further information about the AEC, please contact the AEC office at

CONSERVATOIRE DE PARIS • 209 AVENUE JEAN JAURÈS • 75019 PARIS

FAX +33 1 4040 4603 • E-MAIL aecinfo@aecinfo.org • WEB-SITE www.aecinfo.org