

Case study: The Observatoire for Professional Integration and the Professions at the Paris Conservatoire

Missions and objectives

Founded in 2004 as part of the Division of External Affairs with one full-time staff person, the mission of the Observatoire is to track the integration of alumni within the profession, to study evolutions in the profession and the kinds of employment available, to create a methodology, and, in the future, to create an alumni data base and dedicated web site. The results of studies conducted should enable the Conservatoire to adjust the curriculum to professional realities and to optimize both tools and activities which can facilitate students' entry into the profession.

Areas of Study

These include professional activities, the annual remuneration, geographic situations, types of contracts, legal status (tenured, non-tenured), multiple activities (or not) and or employers, benefits gained from the so-called French "intermittent" unemployment scheme, employers, and use (or not) of artistic agents to further musicians' careers.

Methods

The Observatoire first defines the target population with the help of school records and academic assistants, then designs a specific questionnaire. Telephone interviews are made, and results are then analyzed and synthesized.

Studies to date

Initial studies looked at dancers who graduated between 1999-2003, conducting graduates (1995-2005), diploma graduates in all areas from the year 2002, and graduates of the Pedagogy Department (a post-diploma course preparing for teaching in music conservatoires).

2002 Diploma Graduates

The Conservatoire is not yet aligned with the Bologna process, and at present delivers a "Diplôme de Formation Supérieure" (or DFS) following four years of study. There is a possibility for a limited number of soloists to continue in the "cycle de perfectionnement," but the diploma awarded is not listed in the national list of professional certifications (whereas the DFS is). This study is the first of its kind and constitutes a legal requirement: from now on, the Conservatoire will furnish an annual study of graduates 3 years following completion of their studies.

Criteria for professional integration

First and foremost, the principal employment of graduates needs to fall within the norms of certification for the specific diploma. This means that a violinist teaching violin would not be considered "integrated" as the violin diploma is geared to performance and contains no pedagogy course.



Education and Culture

Socrates
Erasmus

Results of the study of 2002 DFS Graduates in all disciplines (music, sound engineering, and dance)

- 172 graduates : 80% are performers in classical music
- 147 individuals contacted (86% response rate)
- 106 (72%) are “integrated” according to certification norms – this number rises to 90% if teaching in the major discipline of the graduate is included

“Integrated” graduates include

- 87% performing musicians
- 8% dancers
- 5% other

What is the situation of “non-integrated” musicians (28% of all graduates)?

- 67% teach in their original field of study
- 18% are pursuing studies in music
- 12% have converted to another field
- 3% are working in other artistic activities from those in which the diploma was granted

Geographical situation and principal activities of 2002 graduates

- 62% worked only in France
- 37% also worked abroad
- 58% made less than 20 000 Euros/year including unemployment benefits
- 42% hold teaching occupations in addition to their principal activity (excepting dancers)
- 49% are permanent salaried employees in an institution
- 51% are employed intermittently

Performers

- Represent 95% of those “integrated”
- 81% are classical musicians (78% of all vocal and instrumental graduates in early, classical, contemporary music)
- 7% are lyric artists (100% of graduates in voice)
- 3% are jazz musicians (80% of all jazz graduates)
- 9% are dancers

Classical performers

- Brass and woodwind players: 78% hold permanent salaried positions in ensembles
- Strings and keyboard players : 68% are primarily employed intermittently

Conclusions

- For 2002 graduates, two activities predominate :
 - Performance
 - teaching in the area of one’s discipline
- Those who perform and teach include 44% of performers, 100% of teachers
- “Integrated” graduates and those who claim teaching of their discipline of study as a principal activity represent 90% of all graduates
- Those teaching as a principal activity have, for the majority, obtained teaching diplomas elsewhere and are teaching in regional conservatoires or municipal schools of music; those teaching as a secondary activity do not generally hold additional teaching diplomas and are often either giving private lessons or teaching within privately run associations not subsidized by the State.

- Depending on the field, use of the specific “intermittent” French unemployment scheme varies widely.
- Pianists are in the greatest financial difficulty
 - They are employed irregularly
 - Most of them earn less than 10 000 Euros/year

Study of 2002 Graduates of the Pedagogy Department

- All received the Certificate of Aptitude (those who hold this diploma are eligible to teach in state funded conservatoires and music schools)
- The course is post-graduate : the Conservatoire DFS is a pre-requisite for entry
- 26 graduates, 81% contacted in 10 instrumental specialties
- 72% are tenured civil servants
- They work principally in national schools of music or regional conservatoires
- Piano and guitar are predominant teaching specialties
- The majority teach 16 hours/week
- All graduates see themselves as artist-pedagogues, that is they all perform and teach

In addition to instrumental teaching

- 2/3 lead ensembles
- 1/3 teach chamber music
- 1/3 conduct the orchestra
- 1/3 train teachers
- Many hold management responsibilities
 - participate in the Faculty Council
 - coordinate a department
 - coordinate a sector of the school

These additional responsibilities are particularly striking in the light of the young age of these graduates and would tend to demonstrate that the nature of the teaching profession now requires a host of differing competencies, and that the rigorous nature of the course arms these young graduates to take on positions of leadership early on.

Conclusions

It is too early to tell if these initial studies will be confirmed over the course of several years, however they do indicate that performance and teaching predominate. The plight of pianists suggests they will need to broaden their palette to include various forms of accompaniment and teaching in order to survive. The Conservatoire will need to encourage pianists to become more polyvalent in their skills, thereby ensuring their success as they enter the profession. The question of providing teaching skills to larger numbers of graduates is also posed, given the results of the 2002 DFS graduates’ study.

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