



44th AEC Annual Congress and General Assembly

9-11 November 2017

Academy of Music, University of Zagreb

Leadership in the Arts - the Arts of Leadership

The motto of this year's AEC congress might seem like a simple play on words, but a second glance reveals a deeper meaning. The arts nourish imagination and inspiration. To question habits and daring to cross borders is part of their *raison d'être*. Leadership, on the other hand, is a concept which we tend to associate with rules and regulations, reeking of loyalty and obedience and which does not at all seem to fit into the idea of the freedom of the arts.

The arts do not exist in isolation. They are part of society, a society which, in the best case, is positively impacted by the contribution of the arts towards society's continued evolution. And, the opposite is also true that the arts depend on a societal climate of esteem and appreciation which recognizes and values all of their aspects: art production, as the subject of an aesthetic education and as the object of a self-developed participation in culture as part of one's human rights.

Art and culture are also important bearers of identity. Especially in times of political uncertainty, in times when the European idea might be questioned by new nationalisms and populist slogans, it is worth highlighting the importance of art and culture and that of artistic and cultural education for democracy and self-development. The motto of this year's congress is also intended as AEC's contribution to that public debate.

The AEC Congress 2017 deals with the subject of "Leadership in the Arts - the Arts of Leadership" in various aspects, but it will in the core always be about the relationship between freedom and governance, the tension between top-down and bottom-up. Of course, at an event whose target audience are, to a large extent, the leaders and representatives of Higher Music Education Institutions, the focus will be on how to chair a Music HEI. This includes the crucial question whether a good director is characterized as such by the fact that he or she has outstanding artistic skills and competences, or whether administrative, political, economic and legal know-how are more important to be a successful leader.

The issue of leadership in the arts, however, arises in quite diverse contexts. How to organize playing together in an ensemble? What does leadership mean when performing with in a string quartet or a jazz combo? How to lead students as a teacher? How can a study program enable future musicians to carry out leadership tasks that will be required of them? Or, more generally, what is the balance between intrinsic and extrinsic development in art, what kind of hierarchies do the arts need and are the arts able to withstand?

Beyond the specific congress motto, however, the 2017 congress will also give the opportunity to discuss some burning questions and the issues of diversity, identity and inclusion that were raised at the last congress, will still be on the agenda.

You are warmly invited to join us in Zagreb on the AEC journey to explore the role of the modern Music HEI in our society.