



Association Européenne des  
Conservatoires, Académies de  
Musique et Musikhochschulen

## AEC Artistic Training Panel - Early Music Summit 2020

### Statement by Anna Danilevskaia, Sollazzo Ensemble

« What guidelines should influence relevant artistic training for our students in Early Music? »

-The hard task of finding the delicate balance between practice and theory (in a schedule). Still today, only few institutions have a good balance between the time theory lessons and practicing/playing take in a usual week of a student. It has been a problem since many years, it was my experience too, and echoes about this still come to me from different corners of Europe, from people studying now. I think a structure should be ensured that allows to give the necessary tools to students in an efficient way, but also guaranties them to be able to keep the playing at the center of their lives. Compressing the theory into a package (like they do for instance in Lyon) rather than many separate time consuming lessons seems an efficient way to deal with this for me, despite the risk of not being exposed to enough different opinions to be able to form your own.

« What is the relationship between the subjective and objective aspects of music, research and the actual performance? Is there a dichotomy between theory and artistic practice? »

-I don't think there needs to be a dichotomy between theory and artistic practice, but this touches something that is different for each of us, meaning the reasons and motivations of doing music.

Sometimes I get the feeling that musicians see the research as something restringing them. This is far from the experience I had (of course that concerns my repertoire), reading articles and books usually at the contrary opens doors and options. We are still in a learning dynamic during our studies which was developed when musicians came from later repertoire and teachers were introducing them to the early repertoires with a list of « no »: don't do this because it's romantic », « it was good but stop doing this and that ». At the contrary when you read you mostly get a set of options rather than of prohibitions. It makes an interpretation live through ideas and inspirations.

Getting to know the context might also make you play in a completely different way. For me, what could get from musicology was never a constriction, something restrictive. So I believe there doesn't need to be a dichotomy.

However, I am cautious with one aspect of research: the fact that something is described at a certain point in history is often seen as we shouldn't do it before it was written down. There is a gap between a phenomenon and the theorization of it. Thinking about what could have appeared when is a very delicate process because it makes you question every musical decision you take. But this disorientation and questioning is part of a beautiful process of decision making.

The last aspect I would like to speak about is how different the tandem of composer - interpreter has been during history. It's a completely different dynamic in my repertoire than in French baroque for instance. In many of the medieval repertoires, the space for interpretative decisions by the performer is very big, the ratio of the influence about the sound of medieval music is distributed in an almost equal way between composer and interpreter. This space for decisions is in my opinion not something you can choose to take or not: it has to be taken because it's part of being a musician. What decisions you take is another story, but I think we should get away from the idea that a more minimalistic, plane approach is more right, because it is safer. I would even go further and say that in my opinion it is not « correct », because you don't take a responsibility that is yours as a player, and by doing that your attitude as an artist is not « authentic ». I'm using « correct » and « authentic » with a bit of irony of course, since I'm no one to judge.

« How does EM/HiP/HP contribute in a meaningful way to society? »

-I think one of the beauties of early music is to trace back our roots. It's more and more important to people to know where they are coming from. The current situation also shows how reassuring it can be, when the future is uncertain, to know about the far past.

Beyond that I think there is also an incredibly touching moment: when an audience listens to something that at first sounds completely foreign (it happens often with the late medieval repertoire), and then finds in it something resonating in them. The texts are describing timeless experiences, even if the cultures and the emotional life was completely different. There are common points with us and for me sharing this aspects with the audience, make the link between a passionate lover sitting in the audience and a lovesick poet from the fourteenth century, makes me think that we are touching the few things that stay over the centuries no matter what the context is, maybe the essence of the humanity.