



Association Européenne des  
Conservatoires, Académies de  
Musique et Musikhochschulen

## AEC Session on The Future of Early Music Departments - Early Music Summit 2020

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**The Future of Early Music Departments. *What is Early Music's relationship with elitism and excellence and what do we hope to achieve for future generations of students?***

Is it necessary to have a more precise definition of EM/HiP/HP within the education sector, or is EM/HiP/HP enough as a definition?

The label EM has been a comfortable label with its advantages for a fast communication, but we realize nowadays that this label has become too narrow for describing the complexity of experiences developed in the last 50 years in Europe, in relationship with the « rediscovery » of the old musical textes.

It is the moment of a deep epistemological reflection, in order to clear and teach correctly the permanent complexity of the process of interpretation (hermeneutic process). The construction of *cheaprules*, most of which completely or partially wrong, brought to a process of standardization in the esthetic and quality of sound used for early music in Europe. In this some of the leading schools of EM had a great responsibility (the so called « baroque police »). This has to be strongly criticized, revised and corrected. No true art can be created or judged through the application of extra-artistical rules.

The gap between the many studies in the field, representing a indiscutable acquisition of shared knowledge and always opening new borders, and the « resistance » of the mainstream reproducing mainly the same « sound image » all around Europe since many years, is a clear sign that something has to be be changed in the teaching, perception and production of the so called EM.

The development of the *Performance Practice* in a better defined science (from *Aufführungspraxis* to *Aufführungs-Wissenschaft*? as proposed by prof. Goebel in the presentation of his course 2020/21 in Mozarteum) and the conscience that this science is a *pre-artistic* knowledge and *cannot be normative*, should create the correct relationship between the always tremendously necessary « research » and the artistic production, clearing once for ever that the second is a completely different « activity of the spirit » and cannot be judged with the criteria of the first.

In this sense we should definitely renounce as musicians (I did since my beginning as an artist), to be judged or even to try to be judged *also* because of the *philologic correctness* of our playing, but just and only because of the deepness of our art. The musical art, as every art, cannot tolerate any extra-artistic judgment. The creation of a musical language (baroque, modern, jazz, new one) is a pre artistic act. This has not to be intended as a decadent *aestheticism* but just as the tentative to clear the difference between two different layers of the artistic act: the preparation (studies etc.) and the act, which has to be purely artistic. The long historical introduction of many cds sounded always to me as excuses most of the time. The masterpiece of jazz came in a bare box because their impact was artistic and didn't need any explanation but the music. We do not need to *justify* anything. The process of knowledge and confrontation with an artistic object, can lead to very different choices. Is the result that has to be judged *as a piece of music*.

In this direction I enclosed in our cd *Gypsy Baroque* (2018) all possible perspectives in the same moment: a piece played *à la baroque*, or arranged, or rewritten in modern style etc. All processes have to be understood and judged as possibilities contained in the *original*.

For the same reason I consider not necessary and even negative the expression HIP: the indication of the preparation act is not guarantee of anything, it is tautologic and didascallic, so strictly negative.

This doesn't mean that a later speech and study on the musical process (historical or not) cannot have the greater interest, if moved in the correct perspective of *understanding* not of *judging*.

Is it necessary to have separate EM depts., or should they be absorbed into more general schools? What has EM/HiP/HP brought to the Conservatoire paradigm? How would the cultural life within the Conservatoire be different had there been no EM/HiP/HP in the last 40-50 years? How has the Conservatoire paradigm influenced/shaped/affected the world of EM/HiP/HP?

In the present moment we still need to have separate departments underlying: the importance of the *Performance practice (science)* as a critical tool on one side (for all periods), and for keeping alive the repertoire forgotten in many conservatories programs (before Mozart).

In the future my idea is that we shouldn't need a separate dep., the conscience of the historical development of the musical language and instruments should become a normal acquisition and the different instruments should have 2-3 professors aware of everything but specialized each in one century or similar.

The teaching in the conservatory has always tended to bring to a standardisation. This should be avoided.

What is Early Music's relationship with elitism and excellence and what do we hope to achieve for future generations of students?

I do not understand this question, and speaking with some colleagues they also didn't.

About excellence, it is the aim of teaching, but of course intended not as prevarication of the others, but as total knowledge of the art. So I see it as a positive point. It the deepest humility in the *apprentissage* which bring to true excellence....