

# REACT

## ARTISTIC CAREER IN MUSIC Stakeholders Requirement Report

# ARTISTIC CAREER IN MUSIC

## Stakeholders Requirement Report

PROJECT 2020-2023

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## Title

Artist Career in Music: Stakeholders Requirement Report

## Authors

### **REACT - Rethinking Music Performance in European Higher Education Institutions**

Jorge Salgado Correia, Gilvano Dalagna and Clarissa Foletto (University of Aveiro)

Ioulia Papageorgi, Natassa Economidou Stavrou and Nicolas Constantinou (University of Nicosia)

Heidi Westerlund, Mieko Kanno and Guadalupe López-Íñiguez (University of the Arts Helsinki)

Stefan Östersjö and Carl Holmgren (Lulea University of Technology)

Randi Eidsaa and Tanja Orning (University of Agder)

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# PROJECT SYNOPSIS

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*REACT - Rethinking Music Performance in European Higher Education Institutions* is an Strategic Partnership project 2020-2023, funded by ERASMUS+, European Commission. REACT is a reaction to a current problem arising from the long-established model for teaching music performance in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs): musicians are trained for acquiring readily available competences instead of educating them to become creative professionals. HEIs are not helping musicians to meet the challenges of working life (López-Íñiguez & Bennett, 2020). REACT mobilises a knowledge-creating international cooperative network to develop a new pedagogical model for HEIs – the Artistic Research-Based Learning (AR-BL) model, inspired by the epistemological framework proposed by the project’s leading team (Correia & Dalagna, 2020). The novelty of this project resides in shifting the focus from technical skills to material thinking, i.e., a specific mode of thought resulting from how ideas and works shape each other, reconfiguring the established mythopoetic configurations. The AR-BL model aims at encouraging a shift towards developing students’ creativity, proactive critical thinking, and reflexive musical practice.

The main objective is to offer alternatives that will link artistic research, artistic education, personal development, and career management. This model will: (i) increase articulation between HEIs and current professional requirements in the field of performance; (ii) promote a teaching/learning environment based on critical self-reflection and wider societal reflexivity beyond the existing practice; (iii) promote awareness that artistic productions involve knowledge production (material thinking) and exploration of means to share this knowledge academically and via practice (artistic research); and (iv) stimulate and exemplify the integration between different fields of artistic expression in the teaching of musical performance. The implementation of the AR-BL model will not only impact current students and professionals

but also aims at having a long-term impact on musical performance teaching practices.

Consequently, degree structures and curricula in HEIs, both on a European and wider international scale, are expected to be influenced as well. Using this critical and reflexive approach, based on the epistemological framework, the project will pioneer the use of artistic research in music performance teaching and learning practices. Aware of the shifting role of artists and musicians in rapidly changing societies, REACT offers new potential for development in the arts.

The added value of REACT is mirrored in its goal of encouraging the education of academics in music performance and the exchange of both existing and new practices developed within the project.



# CONSORTIUM

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The consortium features 5 members and their wider national and international networks, each bringing specific expertise to REACT with a diversity of perspectives and experience. The partners represent different European contexts for higher music education, an asset for REACT in devising feasible recommendations. The overall team combines expert researchers with early-stage researchers, creating a balanced consortium in terms of age, gender, and scientific capabilities.

The research unit *Instituto de Etnomusicologia - Centro de estudos em Música e Dança* (INET-md), namely its branch at **University of Aveiro (UAveiro)**, fosters a culture of excellence in advanced training, transdisciplinary research, performance, creation and artistic research, and awareness of the social responsibility of researchers and artists. Specific experience in developing degrees and activities focusing on music performance and artistic research, alongside the provision and promotion of educational resources, is of value to the consortium in the development, implementation, and dissemination of the AR-BL model.

**University of Nicosia (UNIC)** is very pertinent to this project to ensure the successful development and implementation of the AR-BL model for use in HEIs, involving qualified psychologists and experts with experience in the field of music performance. UNIC has been awarded the highest accolades for e-/distance learning excellence. An integral part of UNIC's approach to the learning design of these courses is its commitment to helping students develop higher-order competences of critical analysis, reflection, and problem-solving. UNIC also supports its learners in building knowledge collaboratively and engaging in social learning. UNIC's experience of online educational resources ensures a sustainable future for REACT.

**Luleå University of Technology (LTU)** has a strong background in artistic research and has previously collaborated with UAveiro. At the Piteå School of Music, part of LTU, Musical Performance is the main subject. The school is developing a general study plan for doctoral studies in musical performance, which will include tracks focusing on Music Education and Higher Music Education (HME), with the aim of producing research that can generate novel approaches to the tuition of performance skills in HME.

**University of the Arts Helsinki (Uniarts Helsinki)**, with its CERADA research centre and Sibelius Academy, has a wealth of experience in innovative teaching and learning practice in music performance and artistic research, which will provide insights and knowledge for REACT. Uniarts Helsinki was also selected due to the collaboration of Heidi Westerlund, PI of ArtsEqual project, the largest arts and arts education project in Finland's history, that investigates the changing professional responsibilities of artists and arts' institutions. Within the Uniarts team, Westerlund as well as López-Íñiguez have published several papers and books on topics central to REACT.

**University of Agder (UiA)** is one of the most modern universities in Norway. The Faculty of Fine Arts departments of Classical Music and Education and Popular Music offer programs up to PhD level, including a variety of programs in Music Performance, Masters of Fine Arts and of Music Business and Management. A close relationship with the regional professional music and art institutions is fostered and is characterized by a culture of cooperation, a clear international strategy and innovation. The department established a Bachelor's Programme pilot project which highlights music performance, music communication and collaborative practices in 2015. Members of staff have extensively managed and partnered in international projects. The internationally experienced staff members contribute to the project in areas such as Classical Music Improvisation, Music Performance, Music Didactics, as well as collaborative partnerships and concert production.

# INTRODUCTION

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The teaching of western art music performance still relies on 19th-century values and standards, which promote the reification of the score by concentrating on realising the composer's intentions, while often ignoring the performer's innovativeness and potential for interprofessional collaboration (Dalagna, Carvalho & Welch, 2021; Ford & Sloboda, 2013; Westerlund & Gaunt, 2021). They also ignore the audience and importance of the performance context but continue to inform most music performance guides, critical editions of scores and, crucially, the siloed practices in higher music education (HEIs). Therefore, they neither prepare today's musicians for fast changing societies, nor support students' development of agency to cross boundaries of traditions and create their own careers<sup>1</sup> (López-Íñiguez & Bennett, 2020). Such crossings of artistic boundaries take place on an individual level in HEIs (Stepniak & Sirotnin, 2020), but rarely on the collective level of these institutions (see, Carey & Coutts, 2021). Currently, there is substantial research evidence that the career imagined by students is vastly different to the career realised as emerging professionals in music industries<sup>2</sup> (López-Íñiguez & Bennett, 2020; 2021; Bennett & Bridgstock, 2015). Since careers in music are unpredictable (Weller, 2012), very few music students are employed in a full-time performance role (Bennett, 2018, 2008; Beeching, 2004; Perkins, 2012).

In this stakeholders' requirement report we present a transnational (i.e., pan-European) perspective concerning the requirements for an artistic career in music performance found in five European countries: Cyprus, Finland, Norway, Portugal,

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<sup>1</sup>Career in music has been conceptualized here as 'something that people use to organize their behaviours over the long term and that offers a form of meaning making in individual lives' (Perkins, 2012, p. 10). The author defines career as a way of life that allows people to account for effort, plans, goals and consequences and to frame internal cognitions and emotions. Perkins (2012) presents two dimensions in a musical career: objective and subjective. Objective dimension includes: (i) the time spent on different activities; and (ii) the proportion of income generated from these activities (recognising that these may well be different). Subjective dimension includes: (iii) how a person identifies themselves (how they see themselves); and (iv) their vision for the future. According to the author, musicians who can align the subjective and objective factions of their career are those who are potentially successful (Perkins, 2012)

<sup>2</sup> Music industries have been recognized as a set of companies and individuals that generate revenues by creating and selling music (Dromey & Haferkorn, 2018; Krasilovsky et al., 2007). Due to the difficulty to conceptualize it as a single industry, some authors have asserted the expression 'music industries' in the plural (Williamson & Cloonan, 2007). The rationale is based on six reasons related to history (i.e., the term 'music industry' has been used as synonymous to the recording industry, which has been facing a considerable decline in recent years); geography (i.e., the paradigm of the music industries differ among countries); inequality (i.e., the lack of participation of small companies and lesser-known artists in the debate about a single music industry); conflict (i.e., there are conflicts concerning this sector due to the inequality of the companies); plurality (i.e., the variety of courses concerning music industries suggests that, in educational terms, this sector is not being approached in a homogeneous way) and policies (i.e., the existing notion of a one single industry constrains the development of policies due to the lack of understanding and recognition of this plural sector).

and Sweden. The requirements for a career in music have been constantly discussed in the last twenty years and several indications can be found in literature:

- regular and strategic self-renewal of skills, competences, and knowledge (Gill, 2002);
- developing a learner identity before entering the profession (López-Íñiguez & Bennett, 2021, 2020; López-Íñiguez & Burnar, 2021);
- the need to build and run a 'small business', finding their niche, and the need to retain and refine their technical skills even when undertaking other work, complex web of motivation, time, educational systems, vocational concerns, and long-held perceptions of success (Bennett & Bridgstock, 2015);
- philosophical underpinning, music-technical skills and interpersonal competencies (Durrant, 2005);
- transformational leadership, trans-/inter-cultural understanding, creativity, and awareness of the contexts within which music work takes place (Berger, 2019; Thomson, 2021);
- professional networking (Bennett & Burnard, 2016) and critical thinking (Dylan Smith, 2015);
- exploring multiple genres (Deliège & Wiggins, 2006), hybrid forms of music (Thomson, 2021), improvisation and compositional practices (Burnard, 2013; Thomson, 2021); and
- disciplinary agility, beyond the music discipline, entrepreneurial mindset: this includes those competences involved with the application and distribution of a creative work; and finally, career self-management (Bartleet et al., 2012).

Although the existing literature has revealed some of these requirements in countries like the United Kingdom, USA and Australia, there is still a lack of knowledge concerning this topic in several European countries. Thus, it is not possible to understand how close these results are from other realities, especially in the European Union, where the music sector has played (and will play) a special role, particularly in the pandemic time (EY, 2021). The Stakeholders' requirement report, was conceived to bring to light insights on current issues relating to the teaching and learning of music performance, professional requirements, curricular structures and assessment and how they influence teaching and learning in various European contexts and career development for performers. These insights supply a framework of reference for the curricular development and assessment of artistic outputs in European HEIs.



# METHODS

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## Sampling

The five teams comprising the Consortium of the project each interviewed individuals representing several stakeholder groups in their countries. In total, 76 interviews were conducted (see figure 1)

## Interviews

Data were generated via semi-structured interviews. An interview schedule was created per each stakeholder group, which touched upon matters pertaining to their expertise and reflected their experiences and interests. The interviews included aspects such as the challenges in the contemporary music performance industry for a performer, strengths, and weaknesses of HEIs curricula in preparing performers for the demands of the profession, how well-prepared performers are upon entering the contemporary performance industry, and suggestions for changes in the model of performers' education in HEIs. The full interview guidelines can be found in Appendix A.

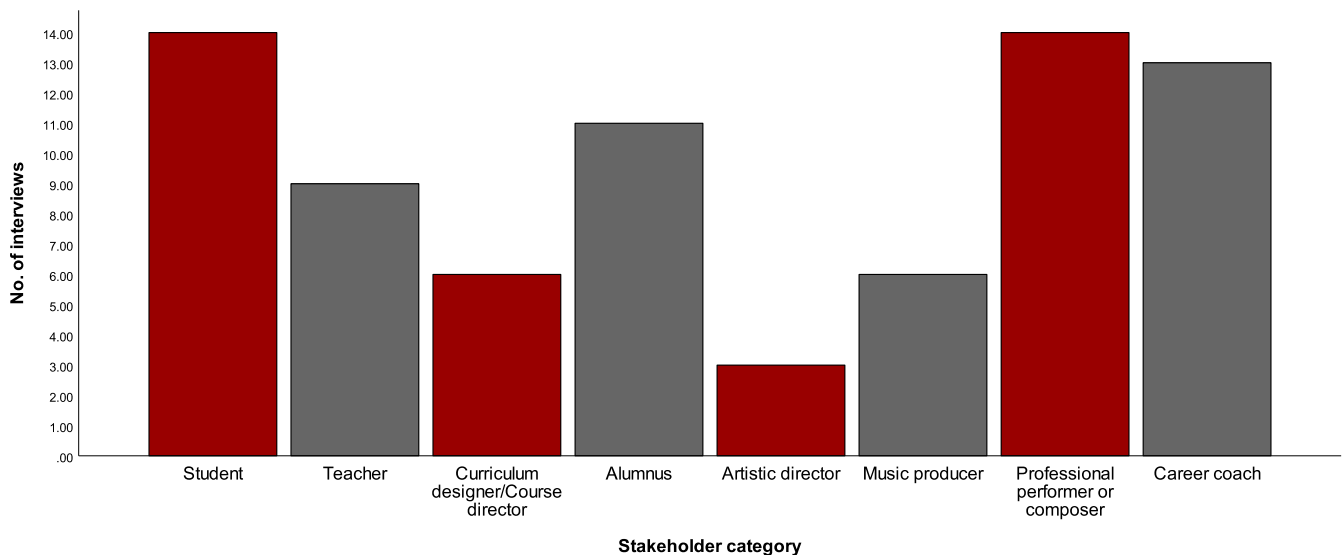


Figure 1: Number of interviews conducted by stakeholder category

# PROCEDURES AND RESEARCH ETHICS

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Each team recruited participants from professional and personal contacts (i.e., purposeful sampling). Interviews were conducted mostly online and each interview lasted between 30 and 90 minutes. In some cases, prior to the interview, participants were asked to complete an online questionnaire requesting demographic information such as gender, age, qualifications, professional role/function, and experience. Prior to the interviews, participants were informed about the aim of the study and the ethical issues such as their right to withdraw at any time. In addition, participants retained the right to refuse to answer specific questions in the interview and their requests were respected. Pseudonyms were used in the transcription in order to preserve the anonymity of each participant. Each Consortium partner institution followed the national protocol in obtaining approval for conducting the interviews.

## **Portugal**

As a coordinating member of the consortium, Portugal received approval for conducting the study by the Ethics and Deontology Committee of University of Aveiro (Approval no. 18-CED/2021) and by the Data Protection Officer of University of Aveiro. All the procedures were based on a written Informed consent. Participants were invited to take part in this research voluntarily. Data collected (audio and video of the interviews and the answers of the characterization form, which include personal data), was confidential. It was stored in encrypted files in UA's database according to institutional data retention Policies and stored in a shared folder deposited in an online drive protected by a password. Only the team members of the consortium responsible to analyse the data and the project coordinator had access to the raw data. This data will not be used for future research and after 5 years it will be destroyed.

## **Cyprus**

Approval for conducting the research was obtained by the Cyprus National Bioethics Committee (Approval No.: EEBK ΕΠ 2021.01.89). Participants provided consent for participating in the study through an online demographics form that was completed prior to conducting the interview. Participants responded to the statement "I have read and have been informed about the research. The researcher has offered to answer any questions I may have concerning the study. I hereby consent to participate in the study".

## **Finland**

The sub-study in Finland was reviewed by the Research Ethics Committee at the University of the Arts Helsinki. The participants provided their written informed consent to participate in this study that followed the guidelines of the Finnish Advisory Board on Research Integrity (TENK). The sub-study attended to the voluntary nature of participation of all

participants, including their right to discontinue participation. The participants were not compensated for their time. The official documents can be requested from the Uniarts team.

### **Norway**

The data-collection in Norway was reviewed by the Research and Innovation Department at the University of Agder and The Research Dean at the Faculty of Fine Arts. The participants were invited to take part in the interviews voluntarily. They received a written informed consent to participate in the study and were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time without giving any explanation to the Norwegian REACT-team. The content from the audio and video recordings were transcribed and stored in an online folder which was accessed by the researchers and a representative for the Research Dean

at the Faculty. All interviews were anonymized.

### **Sweden**

According to Swedish legislation (SFS 2003:460), the study was not found to demand official approval. Participants were invited to take part in this research voluntarily. The participants provided written informed consent to participate in the study. Moreover, they were promised confidentiality and that the created data was to be stored on servers at LTU and handled in collaboration with the unit for Archive and Registry at LTU.

## **Data analyses**

Each interview was transcribed verbatim in a Word document. Each country team conducted thematic analysis of the transcripts obtained from the interviews they conducted, through a process of reading, re-reading, and coding the information provided by the interviewees and organising them into themes and thematic categories. The analysis followed an iterative process of categorisation into themes according to a seven-stage process (Cooper & McIntyre, 1993):

1. Reading a representative selection of interview transcriptions.
2. Identifying points of similarity and difference among these transcriptions in relation to the research questions.
3. Generating conceptual bases from step 2, describing emergent preliminary-hypothetical interpretations for the research questions.
4. Theoretical reading analysis (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012) of interview transcriptions.



**Perspectives  
concerning the  
requirements for  
an artistic career  
in music  
performance**

# RESULTS

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The following sections present the results from the thematic analyses of the interviews separately for each country, followed by the presentation of a model developed from the collective stakeholder interviews (i.e artistic directors, composers, music producers, studio directors, teachers of related educational programmes, students of music performance, alumni, course directors responsible for curricular design and development at HEIs, Career Coach and Professional performers), arising from the common themes across the interviews conducted.

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## Cyprus

Cypriot stakeholders indicated that the *competition is fierce*, and were of the opinion that it is particularly important for musicians to know where they stand in the music industry, who they are as artists and what their role and status as artists in the society is. They also commented on the *importance of authenticity in performance*:

*What makes every artist stand out is their authenticity. It is the only thing that will make you stand out in the end, from all the clutter, because we are talking about a large clutter of artists, who often copy each other and this is a quite common phenomenon.*

Moreover, they alluded to the *financial constraints* music performers face today, a result of professional instability, poor income, and lack of financial security, which, in turn, inhibits them from investing, especially at the onset of their careers:

*Upon returning to my country, I found it extremely hard to travel for auditions and seminars, as such endeavours required big budgets, but with time, and as you start your mobility, one thing leads to another. The first year took a serious psychological toll on me, as you suddenly find yourself from being constantly active to not being active.*

*First, it is the financial aspect, which is a bit of a vicious circle, if you do not have money, you cannot start and then we all know how the artist's finances go.*

A big part of the discussion focused on the *numerous professional challenges* music performers face in regards to poor education in areas relating to marketing, management and promotion of their work, networking, funding opportunities, the writing of proposals and branding as well as public relations.

*It is a big deal to be able to promote yourself. Most artists, being artists, are more sensitive than other people. They cannot really negotiate, neither in hard discussions nor in bargains?*

*The big trap that many artists fall in, not only in the beginning but also later in their career, is making constant concessions to the value of their work. One should always remember one's value and resist lowering the bar as much as possible.*

**This lack of competences was also highlighted by music producers and artistic directors.**

*That is, if one is to play at the festival, one must, first, be ready with one's accounting and receipts. One must be able to read a contract, ask questions and talk about copyrights, to know the basic things so to say. Musicians come to play at the festival and have no idea how to prepare an invoice and how to read a contract. Secondly, they must have skills in self-promotion. There is no way we can invite someone to the festival, if we sense that one cannot promote his own participation, either of one's band or of himself.*

**The *music performer as entrepreneur* was a topic brought up by many stakeholders, underlying the need for more opportunities to become creative and flexible as performers during studies, and see what the possibilities could be and learn to create their own opportunities, or take advantage of given situations. Also, a better *connection of the university with the music performance industry* would have been welcome. In that sense, the versatility of the music performer was discussed, and it was suggested that universities and academies should provide more opportunities to perform in diverse settings, with different musicians and genres as well as more performance opportunities within one's own area of specialisation.**

*Yes, in the classical field, I was not prepared for the outside world, but seeing the jazz students, they were required, as part of their curriculum, to go out to popular jazz bars and their teachers would encourage them to go on stage, while for us [classical music students] it was not like that, they left us on our own.*

*It's good for universities to offer this versatility, and not be 'narrow-minded,' e.g., the classical interpreter should only deal with the classical repertoire and not attend a class that deals with the general aspects of jazz.*

**Stakeholders would have welcomed *courses* in teaching management competences and marketing techniques, in networking and promoting one's work and one's self as an artist. Furthermore, they felt they would have benefited from *seminars* focusing on preparing competitive proposals for festivals, looking for opportunities or creating their own, forming their image and working towards branding. Additionally, stakeholders would have liked to have had *more opportunities* to discuss various professional possibilities and work towards a portfolio career.**

*A course like digital marketing should be included in education, covering issues like, how to secure your sponsorships and all that, dealing with procedures in both national and European levels and tell you: 'these are the programmes, you have to do this and you have to write your proposals in this way.' This is necessary, so that the student is introduced, not only to digital marketing but also to the process of writing and searching, making him feel the difficulties and realise the stamina needed.*

The need for more diverse and in-depth musical competences was also highlighted, especially from the perspective of active music performers and music producers, who are directly involved with performers. Interviewees highlighted the need for more engagement in sight reading, staging, improvisation, as well as more hours of private instrumental tuition during studies.

In terms of musical competences, stakeholders would have benefited from *technology-oriented knowledge* (such as recording, mixing, equipment needs for performances), and felt that it is vital for musicians to be educated in promoting their work. In addition, they expressed the need for more opportunities to regularly perform during studies, be exposed in real music industry situations and experience collaborative performances.

Another issue they raised was the need for a *deeper and substantial connection of music performance modules in HEIs curricula with other music related courses* such as Music History, Music Theory, and Music Analysis. Furthermore, they called attention to the *connection of music performance with other art forms*, such as theatre/drama, literature, visual arts, and dance, as well as other disciplines such as communication, pedagogy, and literature.

*At university when we took theory, harmony classes and all, I felt that they were out of context.*

Stakeholders thought that HEIs curricula should offer a *holistic education*, focusing on a stronger connection between the arts and other disciplines, music performance and fields like psychology, communication, staging elements related to their instrument/genre, music pedagogy, and music history and analysis.

*Yes, and I would have liked to have more contact with other art-forms, through compulsory courses within the university. That is: understanding what it means to be a dancer, what it means to be an actor, to know art history, to see a painting and to be able to analyse it, because you know the movement that the painter belongs to, etc., to know the basic literature. These, for me, are necessary and what I know is because I looked it up myself. I must admit that the experiences I gained from these things helped me more in my stage presence than studies themselves.*

A recurring theme raised was how to manage and cope with performance anxiety and develop *psychological endurance, resilience, and wellness*.

*I lacked audacity, creative audacity. [Relevant modules] would have helped strengthen my perception, giving me the means of not being afraid of certain things and teaching me how to protect myself from going through painful procedures, mental, emotional, that come out on stage, right? So, I would have the necessary 'audacity' to be on stage. That is, artistic stage behaviour, where he exists and others must admire him, without the arrogance of imagining that you are someone else, while you are not. But you need psychological endurance to be able to face the stage each time.*

Finally, stakeholders expressed the profound need for flexible HEIs curricula that follow a *more student-centred approach*, where students are given the opportunity to find their own pathways according to their interests and needs.

*I am generally in favour of having a system which would be able to offer those that are at a high level opportunities and elevate them. But, at the same time, it should help others achieve great progress. Having a general curriculum is a positive thing, when not too restrictive. Schools that allow excess freedom without much supervision for students not at a very high level are not good. I believe that enough supervision without it being necessarily restrictive is of essence.*

Students and alumni thought that they would have benefited from more opportunities and encouragement to make their own *performance/interpretative decisions*.

*I feel a weakness in performing new pieces, say playing a new Beethoven sonata. I feel like I need to play it to a colleague or an old teacher, making sure that what I do is ok; I think I can't trust myself. [...] I miss believing that my opinion is enough.*

*There should be a kind of guided freedom.*

The interviewees also suggested that the role and strength of *music as art-form in society*, as well as the role and status of the *artist in society* should be stressed through university courses:

*[Universities should invest in] informed performing but also in a philosophy about what an artist is and what he does [...]. Things should be examined from different angles in curricula that promote debates and discussions, and help define what it [art] actually is. You see it in the older generations of artists as well; they were active in creating musical trends based on philosophy, etc. Everything should be placed on a philosophical base; that is what an artist is. Is a musician a simple instrument player, or should he/she have an opinion and create new tendencies?*

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## Finland

The Finnish stakeholders (i.e., composers) underlined that the main challenges in contemporary music performance industry for composers is that although they develop their craft through their education at Music Universities and Academies, they do not experience the *practicalities/working life competences of freelancing* in actual situations and in varying contexts and sites. In that regard, they commented on the *lack of opportunities and support* in finding their own niche and building an individual profile that will allow them to become competitive. They indicated that graduates are not equipped with what is needed to become proactive professionals with the competences and experience that would allow for a flexible and creative



navigation through diverse genres and multidisciplinary collaborations. As a result, for many music performers, music keeps on being unprofitable.

*I really think that we should have clever knowledge, we should be aware of the practical things that are needed, we should be aware of the conditions, what are the things that give money in this field, because even if we might be lucky composers who get a lot of commissions and have done so many other things as well, so what are the things that give a little income that might be the organizational work [...]*

According to the participants, for one to be successful as a composer in the music industry, one needs to be *artistically well-prepared, technology-savvy* and demonstrate an understanding of, as well as their *adjustability to the “sound-bite” culture and “liquid” society* (social competences when dealing with different kinds of partners and ways of consuming music when people do not have time: shorter compositions, shorter videos/streaming of performances).

*What has changed of course is the way music is being consumed and I am literally, let's say intentionally using that consumed word, because it seems to be different nowadays. So, people consume music a lot via digitized platforms [...] they need more overwhelming experiences as well as shorter pieces. People consume sounds but they don't consume so much music nowadays. The people consume art or music via mobile devices and laptops and stuff like that more and more which means the level of quality of sound is just rubbish, more or less, most of the time.*

A recurring subject of the interviews was the notion that there is a need to enrich the curricula of music programs at HEIs with developing and *acquiring professional competences*, such as learning media representation, preparing applications for grants, and taking advantage of funding opportunities, networking, filling applications, learning about the professional financial aspects, becoming familiar with issues pertaining to royalties, as well as building a portfolio. However, the work realities were described as multi-professional, including often, for instance, teaching.

In general, it was admitted that graduates in music performance as well as in composition are artistically/technically highly trained, but are not prepared to understand and act when faced with challenges, and dealing with the conditions and practicalities of career building. Also, the tuition offered in *HEIs does not always cover the societal challenges that performers will face when entering the professional world*. Due to the dense, broad, and overloaded curricula, there is limited time, if any, to deal with the deficiencies identified by the participants. The *lack of opportunities to apprehend while “on the job”* was repeatedly stressed, suggesting that there is a need to enrich the curricula with project-based learning, which includes a variety of requirements and therefore support the learning more holistically, which includes a variety of requirements and therefore support the learning more holistically.

*We need to be more and more aware sooner and sooner what kind of future they are visualizing for themselves. If they see themselves as, let's say as a film composer, they need*

to like to take this and this courses. Or if they see themselves more like a video music video artist or something like that then they can learn to work as soon as possible with these video materials. But of course, at the same time, at the beginning you also have to learn some of the basic skills, like writing melodies and like that's also like enhancing your musicianship. But I think that's like the bottom line is that [HME curricula] is going to be more and more individual, that's what I think in the future [...] we also need to really carefully look through what to take off because we can't just add because it's already now that many are suffering, composers are suffering that there's not enough time to compose actually because they are so many other subjects that you have to do.

These findings reveal that more *flexible curricula are needed, tailored to meet the competences, motivation, interests, as well as visions of each student*. Stakeholders consider particularly important that during studies, students should be able to gain experiences related to how to look for, find and seize job opportunities, curate concerts, work on their artistic identity, discover their role as artists in society and create their artistic profile and work on their visibility in the music industry. Furthermore, participants highlighted the value of more opportunities for musicians, during university years, the expansion of their pedagogical knowledge and the understanding of the diverse opportunities one has for teaching in various educational contexts. They also suggested that they would have benefited from being more exposed to different ideas and alternative perspectives through *international dialogue, collaboration, and exchange of ideas with other universities' students and faculty*.

According to the participants, universities should consider performers' need for knowledge, help prepare students for professional work and contribute to the development of metacognitive competences (learn how to learn).

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## Norway

Today, Norwegian musicians are facing numerous financial challenges and find it hard to find employment as performing musicians, taking into consideration the closing down of many orchestras and the increase in music performance graduates. Additionally, acquiring full-time work in music institutions is highly competitive. One needs to investigate the possibility of becoming one's own producer and promoter. As a result, and to establish themselves, performers need to find their own voice, enhance their performance skills, articulate their artistic identity, and create their own working situations.

They believe that, in addition to their musical education, it would be quite beneficial if they were to receive *education in other relevant competences*, such as entrepreneurship and studies in digital technology. This would facilitate their efforts

in the areas of building and managing ensembles, communicating through digital media, and using streaming technology.

*There is far too little talk about how to develop as an artist in an educational trajectory. We need artists that relate to their own time and who have something to say and that can contribute with artistic utterances, create their own space, and take a place in the world.*

It is pertinent that musicians understand *the role of music and that of the musician in today's society*, and learn of their historical function. The learning experience should be related with the professional demands of society, social knowledge, insight into financial opportunities and working environments. Furthermore, education should be based on a holistic learning experience, one that not only helps guide students towards an interdisciplinary understanding of music and other art forms, but also, one that relates and prioritises research and development with musical entrepreneurship. This in turn would allow them to become more *flexible and versatile* musicians/performers leading to originality and individuality.

*Musicians must be informed about what is happening around them, and know the trends in society. We tend to take the context out of everything! We perform music without really knowing the circumstances of its conception, or why it is so special.*

In addition, music students would benefit from *more modules in music pedagogy*. Many graduates feel that they would have benefited from engaging in dialogue with their professors and mentors, and be given the freedom to express their worries without judgment and receive guidance.

*Everything seems to be about 'talk less, play more.' But there is something about the fact that those who need to speak are not given the opportunity to do so.*

For instance, *having an artistic mentor* would be "an exciting solution." Such a person would function as a supporting agent, one that assists and assures students when trying to articulate their artistic identities, and assess their thoughts and feelings.

*An artistic tutor/supervisor in addition to the main instrument teacher would be an exciting solution, precisely because you could take the time to follow your own trail of thought or your feelings. We need to prepare ourselves even better for our professional life.*

Students would benefit from having modules on- and experiences with other music-related jobs. This could include, but is not limited to, competencies about how music could be used in various *community settings and communal institutions*, such as hospitals and retirement houses, and learn how music can be used in the health sector.

*They need competencies about how music is used as a tool in many different contexts and institutions, for example in hospitals, old people's homes, a "community music" mindset, or knowledge about music and health.*

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## Portugal

Participants from Portugal mentioned several challenges of the music industry, and discussed individual requirements for professional performers. Many talked about the *need for developing non-musical competences* to succeed as a musician, such as technological literacy, entrepreneurship, critical thinking and self-reflection skills, career management and networking.

*On the other hand, I also feel a lack of training in music technologies for instrumentalists. How can a cellist, how can a flautist take a microphone, know what kind of microphone to use, which recording instrument, which recording platform to use [...] So, training in music technology is fundamental.*

*The work of promoting events, the work of, isn't it, promoting, career management or whatever. So, I think there are many variations to take into account, but above all the question of open-mindedness and an entrepreneurial spirit.*

*In order to idealise and create an artistic project, a person has to have a critical, informed and developed vision of history, of technology, of marketing and entrepreneurship, of sound aesthetics, of many, many things. And so, I think we should continue to fight so that students can continue to develop and increasingly develop a critical vision in relation to all these nuances that are fundamental.*

*We are not just musicians, we are agents, ourselves [...] We are builders of a lot of things. (Laughs) From creating concerts, from...now with COVID we have to know how to use the...the technologies to do, for our own promotion. Marketing ourselves is also super important, and we are not taught how to do that, for example [...]*

They also referred to the necessity of having a *diversified and flexible profile*, as well as a creative and contemporary artistic approach, attributes that would make them more competitive.

*I think the big challenge now is exactly the diversity that exists of musical genres, of musical practices and, and the way that this permeates the whole music industry. To say what? To say that when we are a specialist nowadays, how do we react, right, to having to move around, to having to interpret and play in an extremely diverse panorama, and what does this ask of each interpreter, right, how do they have the tools, they have the cultures, they have, they have the way of being to be able to move around in a working environment that tends to be more and more global.*

*Development of stylistic versatility in terms of musical genre, i.e., knowing and mastering the various musical genres. Various approaches to performance. Composition, improvisation.*

*Of course, in reality we also have to accumulate many of these functions, we often have to be producers of our project, we have to be interpreters and everything else.*

Interviewees also spoke about *curricular changes needed at the HEIs institutional level* to support professional performers. They felt that student centred education is key, and suggested the development of a more flexible curriculum encouraging a diversified artistic education.

*The tuition programs should be more flexible precisely because the musical and social realities change now quicker than before. Very often the subjects that are given are more an expression of what the teachers know than what the students actually need. A permanent update is necessary.*

*Above all I think that what has to happen is to break down these boundaries between the styles of music, isn't it? [...] Plenty of people do that but the idea of the classical compartment, and the jazz compartment, and the traditional compartment. That has to be [...] That has to take a turn, because in fact people want an artist who makes music. And more and more [...] We're so connected by everything, by the internet, by media, by social networks, aren't we. More and more it makes less and less sense to be locked into a music framework, doesn't it? In one (unnoticeable) style of music. I think that's perhaps the most important thing: to be eclectic. To be able to look at all musical panoramas, maybe that's it, isn't it.*

*One first thing is: we live in the 21st century and in the 21st century there is a diverse set of work possibilities from the musician's point of view, right? Whether he is a clarinettist, a pianist, a guitarist, whatever. Because there are different types of musical typologies, different types of markets and it's very curious that even today, at least here in Portugal, no higher education institution offers training in, for example, rock music.*

**Participants also spoke about the importance of *project-based learning* approaches.**

*To develop more this question of project-based learning, i.e., to actually have these projects, things that would be done at school with guest artists, I think this would be super important and it doesn't happen at all, i.e., it would be more structured, maybe in a year, or in a year and a half [...]*

*"Creative Based Learning", which is very project based, is very much based on very practical questions from which questions of a theoretical nature are studied and developed, isn't it? I think this could be a way forward because, in fact, there are many, in some contexts, particularly in the contexts of people who have a very strong inclination towards issues of a more practical nature.*

**This also related to the identified need for *collaborative music making*:**

*More and more, schools are investing a lot in the practice of collective music, chamber music. They were already doing it before, but I think that... slowly they're giving more value to it. Also, because solo performance is much more difficult and collective music practice is quite... Actually, there are more, there are probably more professional outlets out there. And, I think, schools are working more on that, and rightly so. And that's a very positive thing. I think collective practice is in fact something that you should focus on.*

*Working in a team, which is something that even in a solo recital you need to know that there are several people behind that recital.*

**Interviewees also discussed the necessity of a *more holistic education approach*, not to be limited to the development of musical skills, but to also cater for other important needs such as career mentoring, supporting students' transition and promoting psychophysiological well-being.**

*Then, besides this, there should also be a... a... almost an advisory of... of helping to find each person's path [...] of rethinking what I could do artistically, not only to worry about the flute, isn't it? In my case, but artistically... what could I develop, outside the university. Outside the academy. [...] And I think it should be like that, really, we should take advantage of the academy to work on things that we can take to the job market.*

*It's important to have contact with the funding scene, with the producers, because that happens a lot in England, in England, the music schools in England are basically [...] schools where you learn, but which function as an incredible management for their students [...] Their job is to have a team that produces for the students, to allow the students to be better known, more recognised, and [...] and to be successful, right? in their careers.*

*I believe that the people who study things like theatre, give similar things with emotional management, for example. I think [...] there are ways [...] I don't know if there are universities that do that. But I've been learning a lot [...] There you go, the guitar teachers, and me, by myself. Doing, and experimenting, and exchanging ideas with colleagues, isn't it? With nervousness, the psychological management, our own psychology, isn't it? And discovering ourselves.*

**Finally, participants felt that it was important for HEIs to prepare musicians for the contemporary demands of their profession, by offering *training in the development of musicians' technological competencies*:**

*That allows students, from a technical point of view, to be knowledgeable and eventually autonomous, in terms of capturing, recording, editing, dissemination of music, handling software, such as DAW's, right? the Digital Audio Workstations. ProTools, Logic, I don't know, the (not understandable) etc [...] Plugins, what are plugins, how do you work with plugins. Apps. There are more and more apps for making music. Which allows us to make music and therefore the use and manipulation of these apps. Working with MP3 formats, AAC, AVA etc. So, subjects. In this case I would say that it makes more sense to have a specific discipline or several specific disciplines in music technologies.*

*As I say, I find it inconceivable for a musician to leave college and not have any notions of how a Home Studio works, [...] and must learn with tutorials. Tutorials should be at the university.*

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## Sweden

The Swedish stakeholders found that *artistic research is not fully implemented in the current curricula*, and especially in the first and second cycle. As a result, students do not gain enough experience of and skills in critical thinking and academic writing. They felt that the aim of the curricula should contribute both to the development of general musicianship and an individual artistic voice. Through this dual focus basic skills and discipline specific qualities relevant for a professional career are established. HEIs should encourage individual initiatives, which in turn could lead to the amendment of curricula, and, at the same time, ensure that the quality of their music programmes is not dependent on individual instrumental teachers. Additionally, a *better theoretical understanding of music* would enhance performance and would feed artistic development.

*In the beginning of my PhD studies, I experienced a huge gap between theory and practice. But as I now have come further into my studies, I find the two sides better linked together. The theoretical framework has helped me to develop a more nuanced observation of my own practice, and further, to develop a language for such observation.*

However, some informants underlined that basic skills need to be secured before a further focus on artistic expression and novelty is possible. Further, some course leaders expressed concerns that as the academic profile of HEIs in music becomes more articulated, the ability to attract the most skilled performers may decrease. Then again, others felt that instrumental teaching would benefit greatly if it were to be more clearly based on artistic research and students encouraged to develop their individual artistic voice. To this end, it is important that students leave their HEIs with a *desire*

*to develop a lifelong love for learning and the ability to analyse the learning process, in a way that serves them throughout their lifetime.*

Given the *lack of opportunities for new graduates in the art worlds of classical and contemporary music*, and to ensure a steady income, musicians look for complementary employment such as teaching. At the same time, they need to invest their efforts in establishing themselves as performing artists and in *finding their own voice*. Furthermore, it is essential that musicians understand how the various elements of the music industry, such as agents, management, and marketing, are interconnected.

It would be a great advantage if curricula would be implemented with *modules that help make Western Classical music relevant within contemporary society*, and if performers, and musicians in general, would be viewed as music creators rather than just pure instrumentalists. One informant drew even wider conclusions and observed how

*Western Art Music has failed to make itself relevant within contemporary society, the funding is in fact shrinking and so is the possibility of tenured positions. It is against this backdrop that I have worked as an artistic director, performer, and composer since the beginning of the Millennium. In that period, I have developed various skills (that were never part of the curriculum during my eight years in higher music education) that have allowed me to enjoy an international career.*

Among alumni and professional musicians, the impression was that educational institutions do not promote a broader vision of what a professional music career could look like, and they often tend to marginalise non-mainstream genres. This also entails the persistent focus on educating orchestral musicians, rather than providing tools for a broader conception of performer identity and skills. Hereby, the possibility for students to develop the *necessary versatility and flexibility*, demanded for a professional career is limited.

To improve curricula, many stakeholders recommended that audition panels should consider the possibility of accepting students that demonstrate significant creative potential, rather than focus on those that are technically best prepared. It would be a great advantage if HEIs in music would consider *finding alternatives to the accepted master-apprentice format* and their curricula should be adapted to the needs of students, and at the same time *reflect current environmental tendencies*. Furthermore, HEIs in music could allow students to benefit from collaborative learning, a higher awareness of artistic matters, the combination of artistic research with musical education, and the promotion of critical thinking, and individual musical expression.

*A higher awareness and focus on artistic aspects would be desirable, most importantly, a more varying range of individual musical expressions amongst performers. I believe [that] this could be addressed in Higher Music Education by attending concerts or masterclasses that are combined with discussions on matters/aspects of artistic expression amongst students, teachers, and expert active performers.*

Furthermore, a *closer collaboration with professional music industry partners* could prove beneficial. Such collaborations would allow students to learn from professionals from various fields, such as performers, composers, producers, mixing engineers and other people in the music business, hereby securing a much wider perspective on learning in HEIs.





# Synthesis Towards a Model

# COMMON THEMES AND EMERGING ISSUES ACROSS THE INTERVIEWS

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## SYNTHESIS TOWARDS A MODEL

The analyses of the interviews across all participating countries suggest that there are shared challenges and demands for an artistic career. The identified needs and challenges as discussed by interviewees extended well beyond the musical aspects and can be divided in two main categories professional and curricular competences, professional competences and the needs for HEIs curricular change and emerging competence areas.

### Professional competences

- Entrepreneurship, versatility, flexibility, and networking competences;
- Psychological endurance, resilience, and wellness;
- Competences regarding the practicalities of working life, financial constraints of the profession in which competition is fierce;
- The capacity to rethink music as an artform in a rapidly changing society and the role of the artist in such a society;
- Improvisation;
- Agile musicianship, e.g., adjustability to the “sound-bite” culture and “liquid” society;
- Competencies in working in community settings and communal institutions.

### The needs for HEIs curricular change and emerging competence areas

- Holistic and tailored education with a student-centred approach;
- Increased tuition in music pedagogy;
- A deeper and substantial connection of music performance modules in HEIs curricula with other music related courses, with other art forms, and with the music performance industry as a whole;
- Establishing an international dialogue, collaboration, and exchange of ideas with other universities' students and faculty;
- Courses on technological literacy and competences;
- More practical opportunities and artistic mentoring support as well as career management;
- Development of critical thinking and self-reflection skills;
- Importance of understanding authenticity in performance.

These identified challenges of the music industry and of a professional career mean that curricula in HEIs should be modified to better prepare students to face this complex “reality”. According to the Australian higher music education researchers Carey and Coutts (2021), “[o]ver the last decade there has been general academic consensus (e.g., Bartleet et al., 2012; Creech et al., 2008) that HEIs should prepare students for performative musical outcomes, while also developing their entrepreneurial professionalism (Dent et al., 2016) whereby they are equipped to manage their own livelihoods” (p. 43). In this project, participants across all consortium countries suggested that a) a student-centred curriculum, b) a project-based-learning approach, and the c) development of a flexible curriculum in order to cater for the needs of individual students are important steps to be taken if HEIs are to support students in their transition to a professional career in music. This points towards a holistic education, where musical skills are taught side-to-side with transferable skills and career management skills, whilst at the same time supporting musical competences development, and psychological endurance in educating performers is the way forward. These suggestions are not new as such (e.g., Bennett, 2019; López-Íñiguez & Bennett, 2020; 2021; López-Íñiguez & Burnard, 2021; Westerlund & Gaunt, 2021) and can be found in previous literature, however, not necessarily presented together. In that line, Carey and Counts (2021) write that the changes in the working environments and conditions under which professional musicians work



necessitates a shift in the conceptualisation of professionalism towards transformative professionalism (Sachs, 2003), with a focus on lifelong learning, critical engagement, collaboration, and being driven by moral and social purpose. Such an objective requires institutions to implement an innovative, transformative, and holistic approach to curriculum design and pedagogy that equips students with skills and attributes required to thrive and adapt in today's society. (p. 42)

Participants identified various challenges of the music profession and industry that can be translated into needs of performers at an individual level. They also made suggestions for the improvement of HEIs curricula at an institutional level, to meet those needs. The model below summarises the findings from the stakeholder interviews:

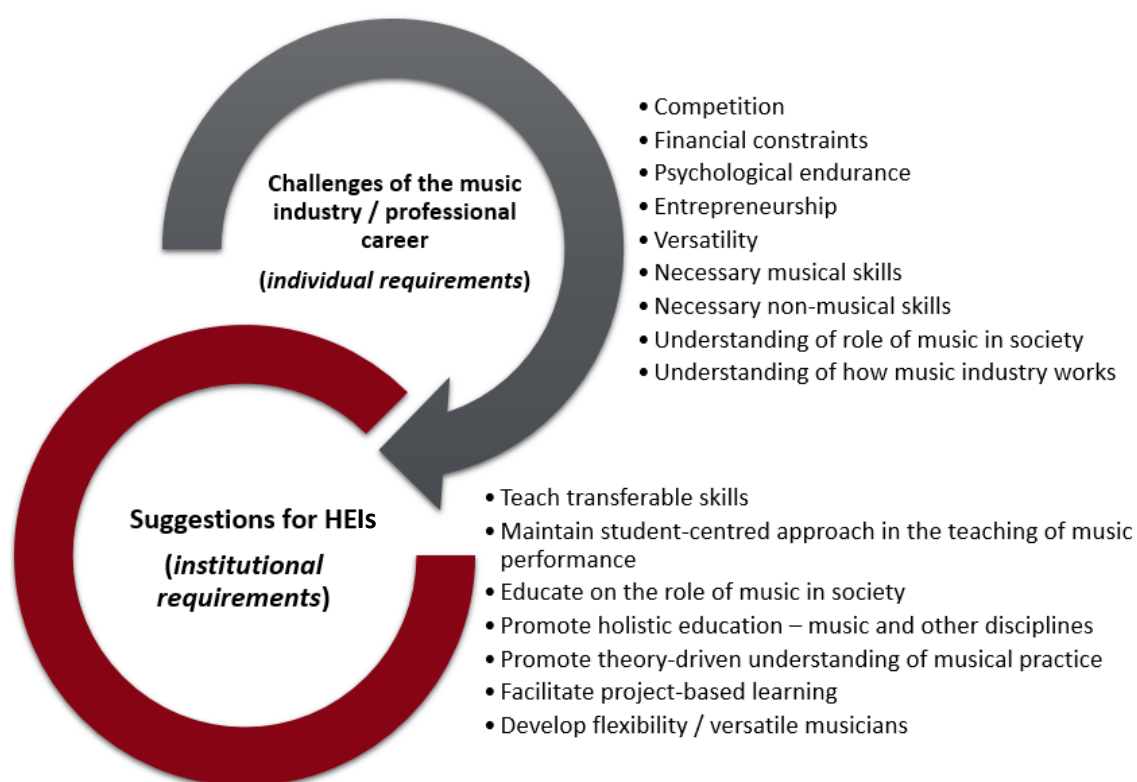


Figure 2. Common themes and emerging issues across the interviews

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# Appendix – Interview Guides

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## 1. INTERVIEW GUIDE for Students of music performance/doctoral students of music performance (artistic research line)

- 1) What do you think are the main professional and artistic challenges in the contemporary music performance industry for a performer?
- 2) In your opinion, how prepared were you and your colleagues when you started your training in this institution?
- 3) What kind of practices take place in your centre that help building cooperation across the curriculum?
- 4) Do you have evidence of successful practices in your centre that manage to connect theoretical knowledge with instrumental performance? / How do you connect different knowledge to inform your performance?
- 5) Which aspects of your instrumental guidance do you feel are addressed the most and to what extent do you feel that these are related to your perception of the music that you perform? These topics may include, but are not limited to, aspects such as technical and anatomical issues, historical information, stylistic information, sound production and meaning.
- 6) According to your experience, can you identify the main curricula strengths and weaknesses in the current performers' training programs offered by HEIs?
- 7) What changes should be done to improve the HEIs' curricula to thrive as a performing professional in changing environments?

## 2. INTERVIEW GUIDE for Teachers of related educational programmes

- 1) What do you think are the main (artistic, practical, economic, social etc) challenges in the contemporary music performance industry for a performer?
- 2) What are, in your view, meaningful and valuable experiences in music performance that higher music education is offering to its students?
- 3) How prepared are the alumni to face the demands of the music performance industries?
- 4) What is the prevalent way of teaching performance in your instrument and your institution? How do you find this model of music performance teaching in higher education?
- 5) According to your experience, can you identify any curricula weaknesses in the current performers' training programs offered by HEIs? Any strengths?
- 6) What changes should be done to improve such a model to thrive as performing professionals in changing environments?

## 3. INTERVIEW GUIDE for Course directors responsible for curricular design and development at HEIs

- 1) What do you think are the main challenges in the contemporary music performance industry for a performer?
- 2) How do you find the current model of music performance teaching in higher education?
- 3) In your opinion, how prepared are the incoming students to face the demands of the performance training offered by your institution?
- 4) How could the alumni be better prepared to face the demands of the music performance industries?
- 5) According to your experience, can you identify any curricula weaknesses in the current performers' training programmes offered by HEIs?
- 6) What are the latest revisions that you have done in your programme curriculum to support your students to successfully enter the competitive profession of a music performer in contemporary rapidly changing environments?
- 7) What changes should be done to improve such a model?

## 4. INTERVIEW GUIDE for Alumni (up to 5 years after concluding a master degree)

- 1) What do you think are the main challenges in the contemporary music performance industry for a performer?

- 2) How do you find the current music performance teaching in higher education?
- 3) In your opinion, how prepared were you and your colleagues when you started your training in this institution?
- 4) Do you find that your, and your colleagues', training was helpful to face the demands of the music performance industries? Why?
- 5) According to your experience, can you identify the main curricula weaknesses in the current performers' training programs offered by HEIs?
- 6) What changes should be done to improve it?

## 5. INTERVIEW GUIDE for Career Coach

- 1) What do you think are the main challenges in the contemporary music performance industry for a performer?
- 2) How do you find the current model of music performance teaching in higher education?
- 3) In your opinion, how prepared are the incoming students to face the demands of the performance training offered by your institution?
- 4) How prepared are the alumni to face the demands of the music performance industries?
- 5) According to your experience, can you identify the main curricula weaknesses in the current performers' training programs offered by HEIs?
- 6) What changes should be done to improve such a model?

## 6. INTERVIEW GUIDE for Artistic directors or for Funding Bodies

- 1) What are the shortcomings of the incoming proposals by performers?
- 2) Looking only at the proposals, can you identify if they are coming from HEIs' connected performers (teachers or alumni) or not? If yes, what are their differences?
- 3) How prepared are the alumni to face the demands of the music performance industries?
- 4) How do you find the current model of music performance teaching in higher education?
- 5) According to your experience, what would you say the main curricula weaknesses in the current performers' training programs offered by HEIs are?
- 6) What changes should be done to improve such a model?

## 7. INTERVIEW GUIDE for Music producers and studio directors

- 1) According to your experience and view point, what are the requirements of a sustainable artistic proposal in music industries?
- 2) How prepared are the alumni to face the demands of the music performance industries?
- 3) According to your experience, what would you say the main curricula weaknesses in the current performers' training programs offered by HEIs are?
- 4) How do you find the current model of music performance teaching in higher education?
- 5) What changes should be done to improve such a model?

## 8. INTERVIEW GUIDE for Professional performers & Composers reflecting on professional performers

- 1) What do you think are the main challenges in the contemporary music performance industry for a performer?
- 2) What do you identify as essential to be successful, as a performer, in the music industry?
- 3) In your opinion, how prepared are graduated higher education students to face the music industries?
- 4) What challenges did you face upon entering the performer's profession as a newly graduate?
- 5) How do you find the current music performance curricula in higher education in relation to the challenges you identified?
- 6) What additional experiences/ training/ knowledge or skills, when at university, you think would have made you a more competitive professional in your field?
- 7) According to your experience, can you identify the main strengths and weaknesses of graduated higher education students?



# REACT

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