

Rethinking music performance in European higher education: testing an artistic-research-based approach

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Abstract: Practices associated with the teaching and learning of music performance historically focus on values and expectations established in the 19th century Western conservatory context and its master-apprentice pedagogical model. In this presentation the impact of a new approach to teaching music performance, based on artistic research, will be described. Such an approach was offered as a teaching and learning activity (REACT training school) promoted by a strategic partnership, funded by the ERASMUS+, that involved 5 European higher music institutions. A total of 17 higher education students took part in the REACT training school. The course was unpacked in 40 hours during one academic week at the University of Aveiro in Portugal. Topics included artistic research, ethics and remix culture, artistic career, artistic projects, health and well-being, social intervention in arts and artistic documentation. The impact of REACT training school was assessed through a qualitative study based on interviews, which were analyzed using a thematic approach. The questions addressed students' perspectives on the role of an artistic-research-based learning approach to performance teaching and learning in higher education music institutions. From the thematic analysis two main themes emerged: impact and improvements. The first is related to how the activity affected their artistic and professional path. The second refers to changes to be implemented in future editions. Results suggests that REACT training school opened space for students to think "out of the box", developing a critical and reflexive attitude that embraced news aspects regarding a set of diversified topics as funding, score, curriculum, creativity, theory and practice. At the same time, the results suggests that future editions must open more space to individual mentoring, integrating more profoundly students and instrumental teachers in the activities proposed. The results here presented play an important role in the current discussion regarding the role of artistic research in higher education and how institutions can improve existing artistic and academic practices.