

**External Quality Evaluation Process of the
National University of Music Bucharest**

2-4 June 2010



Foreign External evaluators:

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Introduction and Schedule of the Visit

The institutional external evaluation mission to the National University of Music Bucharest took place between the 2nd and 4th of June 2010. The individuals forming the mission team comprised three groups, each with its distinct role in the process: the group of Romanian experts; the group of students from other Romanian higher education institutions; and the group of external experts. Each of these groups had opportunities to work separately during the visit, although there were also a number of occasions when all three groups came together in plenary meetings with staff, students, alumni and employers. Similarly, separate reports are being produced by each of the groups. What follows is the report of the external experts.

At the beginning of the first day of the visit, the three groups comprising the mission were all introduced to each other. The members were as follows:

Romanian Expert Group:

Mission Director

Prof. dr. Romiã IUCU
University of Bucharest

Mission Coordinator

Prof. dr. Rãzvan NISTOR
Babes-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca

Scientific Secretary

Lecturer dr. eng. Marius LUCULESCU
Transilvania University of Braşov

Advisory Commission Expert

Prof. dr. Mircea MUTHU
Babes-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca

Institutional Commission Expert

Prof. dr. Gheorghe POPA
Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iai

Study Programme Expert

– *Sacred Music*
Prof. dr. Nelida NEDELCUȚ
"Gheorghe Dima" Music Academy of Cluj-Napoca

Study Programme Expert

– *Musicology*
Prof. dr. Adela BURLUI
"George Enescu" University of Arts Iași

Study Programme Expert

– *Conducting*
Prof. dr. Ilie DUMITRA_CU
Transilvania University of Braşov

Student Evaluators:

Iulian POP
North University of Baia Mare
National Alliance of Student Organizations in Romania

Allina SANDU
POLITEHNICA University of Bucharest

Two external experts had been invited to join the mission. They were:

Prof. Elisabeth Gutjahr
Rector, Staatliche Hochschule für Musik Trossingen
Germany

Dr. Jeremy Cox
Honorary Sabbatical Fellow
Royal College of Music, London, UK

This report has been compiled jointly by the two external experts, with first drafts of different sections being completed by one or other expert and the final text agreed jointly.

During their visit, Professor Gutjahr and Dr Cox had the benefit of conducting a range of discussions with senior staff, teachers and students, hearing a good variety of student performances, reviewing a sample of Doctoral theses and touring the facilities of the building, including performance spaces, library and audio-visual resources. This gave them a well-rounded picture of the institution in action and complemented the documentation which they also received.

The procedures applied during the institutional external evaluation mission, and in particular, the areas, criteria, standards and performance indicators used by the external experts during their visit and in the compiling of this report, were the product of work undertaken jointly by the Agenția Română de Asigurare a Calității în Învățământul Superior (ARACIS) and the Association Européenne des Conservatoires, Académies de Musique et Musikhochschulen (AEC). This joint work resulted in a document, produced in January 2010, setting out clearly the common ground and distinctions between the parameters used by the two organizations. What the document shows is the high degree of correspondence between the two systems, whilst it also highlights very helpfully the special factors relating to an accreditation process conceived and operated by a subject association and then applied to its own subject area.

The external experts would like to put on record their firm belief in the strength and efficacy of this joint process, especially when set up in such a professional manner between the two associations. They have found it to provide a robust and supportive framework within which they could carry out their work, combining in a balanced way the perspectives of generalized quality assurance and a specific evaluation of the distinctive work carried out in an institution devoted to music.

Finally, the external experts would like to express their thanks to the Rector of the National University of Music, Prof. dr. Dan Dediú-Sandu and his team for their work on the self-evaluation document, their helpful, frank and informative approach to the visit and their warm hospitality throughout. As a result of these qualities, the entire evaluation visit took place in a spirit of mutuality, shared understanding and respect.

1. Mission and Vision

1a. What is the statutory context in which the institution operates?

The National University of Music Bucharest (UNMB) is a higher education institution for music in Romania that functions on the basis of its University Charter and of its own set of regulations. These conform to the Education Law (including its subsequent amendments), to the Statute of the Teaching Staff, and to the official documents concerning the founding and functioning of the institution. The Founding Decree for a *Conservatorul de Muzică și Declamațiune* (Conservatory of Music and Declamation) was signed by "His Highness the Prince Alexandru Ioan Cuza", on the 6th of October 1864.

After more than 100 years of development under various titles, using the appellations 'Conservatory', 'Academy' and, for one year in 1949, 'Faculty of Music', the institution took the title of 'University of Music Bucharest' in 1997 and, in February 2010, became the 'National University of Music Bucharest'. The present document, on the basis of which the UNMB functions, was published in the Official Monitor number 86 on the 9th of February 2010.

1b. What is the institution's mission, aim or goal and how are they being reviewed?

In its own words, the UNMB *'defines its mission in accordance with the traditional values conferred by its existence of 146 years, but also with the requirements of the artistic practices of present times, as well as with the pragmatic vision of the future. This mission consists in offering a quality framework for development to the young talents of Romania and from abroad, in modelling their personality and in shaping them as professional artists, capable of achieving top performances. From this point of view, the University's characteristics can be systematically expressed through the following:*

- *a university of advanced musical education*
- *a university of scientific research/artistic creation*
- *a university with internationally strategic visibility*
- *a university with a high level of musical performance*

The UNMB defines its mission with regard to the areas of scientific research and artistic creation as follows: *'UNMB is connected to the international research and artistic milieu and is setting a "fine tuning" between the various components of this process that is as cumbersome as it is fascinating, i.e. on the one hand, the objectives and intentions of education and research, and on the other hand, the current and future educational strategies and policies. Equally, UNMB not only possesses the framework to carry out the education process, but it is also involved in the proliferation of the necessary resources and instruments for Quality Assurance, competitiveness and individualisation in the European Area of Higher Education and Research, as defined by the Declarations of Bologna, Copenhagen and Lisbon, promoted by the National Strategy for Higher Education in Romania, the National Researching, Development and Innovations Plan for the period 2007-2013, as well as by the documents referring to the researching policy elaborated by the European Commission, centred on creating a European Research Area (ERA).'*

In terms of reviewing this mission, the UNMB is, at present, nearly halfway through its current five-year period of more specific strategic planning (2008-13). Its institutional mission will therefore be due for thorough periodic review around 2012. The main features of the Strategy 2008-13 are described in 1.e, below.

1c. What are the goals of its educational programmes?

The goals of the UNMB's educational programmes are set out in the form of objectives for each programme. They are stated as follows:

Bachelor Programmes

Musical Interpretation – instruments. Four years full-time

Objectives: education of instrumentalists specialised in: flute, oboe, clarinet, saxophone, bassoon, trumpet, trombone, tuba, percussion, piano, harp, violin, viola, cello, double bass, pan flute, guitar

Musical Interpretation – singing. Four years full-time

Objectives: education of singers

Musical composition. Four years full-time

Objectives: education of classical or jazz/pop music composers

Musicology. Four years full-time

Objectives: education of researchers of musical phenomena

Conducting (of orchestra and academic choir). Four years full-time

Objectives: education of conductors of vocal and instrumental ensembles

Musical Pedagogy. Three years full-time

Objectives: education of music teachers

Religious Music. Three years full-time

Objectives: education of researchers and practitioners of Christian religious music (of Byzantine and Gregorian rite)

Masters Programmes

Instrumental and vocal interpretative stylistics. Two years full-time

Objectives: education of professional instrumentalists specialised in: flute, oboe, clarinet, saxophone, bassoon, horn, trumpet, trombone, tuba, percussion, piano, harp, violin, viola, cello, double bass, pan flute, guitar. Education of professional singers

Compositional Style and Language. Two years full-time

Objectives: education of professional composers

Musicological Synthesis. Two years full-time

Objectives: education of professional researchers of the musical phenomenon

Conducting Stylistics. Two years full-time

Objectives: education of professional conductors for vocal and instrumental ensembles

Contemporary Music education and Religious Music Cultures. Two years full-time

Objectives: education of music teachers, as well as education of professional researchers and practitioners of Christian religious music (Byzantine and Gregorian)

Pop Music and Culture. Two years full-time

Objectives: education of specialists in the field of pop music and jazz

No generalised objectives are defined for Doctoral Studies. However, since 2005, Doctoral research has been organised into two categories: Scientific Doctorates (Musicology) and Professional Doctorates (Musical Interpretation).

The formulation of the objectives for Bachelor and Masters programmes requires some comment. First, they are all based on the broad concept of providing 'education' in the area being described (musical interpretation, musical composition, etc). Second, a distinction is made between 'education of instrumentalists, singers, composers, etc' at Bachelor level and 'education of professional instrumentalists, singers, composers, etc' at Masters level (with the exception of the Masters in Pop Music and Culture, where the word 'professional' does not appear).

During the visit, there was discussion of what was meant by this distinction: whether the Bachelor programmes were therefore seen as emphatically 'pre- or sub-professional' and therefore somewhat out of alignment with the Bologna concept of 'employability' at the end of the first cycle. The concept of employability is, in any case, acknowledged to be problematic in relation to the training of professional musicians, where entry to the profession may take place at many levels (from rank-and-file to soloist) and at many stages (often considerably earlier for some instruments than for others). It became clear that the distinction being used by the UNMB was not a crude one between pre-professional and professional but was more a matter of the Masters programmes being seen as conferring a fuller and more thoroughly finished professional preparation, and carrying a stronger and more specialised professional orientation, than their Bachelor equivalents. Staff identified three key characteristics of the Masters programmes in relation to their Bachelor counterparts:

- Diversity
- Complexity
- Specialisation

They also explained that the closer professional orientation of the Masters programmes was underlined by the fact that the students themselves were frequently active in the professional environment *alongside* their Masters studies (this factor does have implications for the full-time status of the Masters Programmes, as will be discussed later).

Once more fully explained, the institution's view of the respective goals of its Bachelor and Masters programmes is in accordance with, for example, the description of European Higher Music Education given in the Tuning document for the subject area (*Reference Points for the Design and Delivery of Degree Programmes in Music*, 2010). Even so, it might be worthwhile if, as part of the review of strategy in 2012-13, further thought is given to how best to articulate the respective professional dimensions of these programmes – and perhaps also to defining the objectives of the various programmes in more specific ways than just the 'education' of instrumentalists, singers, professional instrumentalists, professional singers, etc.

1d. How do the curricula/ programmes address the institutional mission?

The range of programmes offered addresses very clearly and comprehensively the institutional mission. These are the kinds of programmes one would expect to find in an institution that is a 'university of advanced musical education, a university of scientific research/artistic creation, a university with internationally strategic visibility and a university with a high level of musical performance'.

1e. Does the institution have a long-term strategy?

As referred to above, the UNMB does have a five-year strategy. A translation of this document was prepared for the External Experts during the visit. The Strategy 2008-13 re-states the Mission and four key characteristics of the institution before going on to define a series of General Objectives, Specific Objectives and Strategic Means. The General Objectives are as follows:

- *the development of composition and performing creativity and research, in compliance with the research strategy validated by the UNMB Senate*
- *the improvement of the educational system by the consideration of the Bachelor, Master and Doctorate programmes as well as the development of specific programmes, in accordance with Lifelong Learning principles*
- *the active involvement of students in UNMB management and strategy development*
- *further extension of international cooperation between institutions in specific teaching, research performing and interdisciplinary activities*
- *increased labour market awareness and further development of partnerships with important institutions including philharmonics and foundations and important personalities (guest teachers, guest performers, etc)*
- *involvement of Bachelor, Master and Doctoral students with outstanding achievements in scientific and artistic research activities*

Specific Objectives are then formulated under the two headings of 'Educational Level' and 'Administrative Level'. As one would expect from a Strategy that is now two years into its period of running, some of these objectives have already been achieved, including the founding of an alumni organisation – a step achieved in 2010.

Strategic Means are categorised under four headings:

- International Cooperation and Partnerships
- National Partnership Development
- Modernisation Programmes for the Curriculum and Didactic Methods
- Proficiency Encouragement

The external experts were pleased to receive this document and felt that it provided a sound basis for strategic planning across a five-year period. They did wonder, though, whether it might be more widely and clearly communicated across the Institution. There seemed to be the potential for confusion, for example, between the General Objectives set out above and the identically titled, but significantly different, general objectives set out in the UNMB's self-evaluation document:

1. *Ensurance of a university framework beneficial for the proliferation of quality outcomes, and of a constructive organisational ethos*
2. *Furthering of university programmes that should allow students to assert their personality, and develop their intellectual abilities and professional knowledge according to their aspirations, as well as adapting of teaching and learning methods to the requirements of the labour market*
3. *Encouraging excellence in the field of research, innovation and artistic activity through scholarships, prizes and other means*
4. *Promoting the university as a key element on the Romanian and international cultural scene.*
5. *Ensuring of an ethic context according to the spirit of democratic values, of moral and spiritual requirements, of equal opportunities, of academic and other kinds of liberty, of intellectual honesty and transparency*
6. *Developing of an efficient management system, based upon university autonomy and the legislation in force*

For there to be strong and widely-shared ownership of strategic plans, it is important not to have any more documents than necessary, and for their respective functions to be entirely clear.

2. Educational Processes

2.1 Programmes

2.1a. Do the programmes take into account the various aspects of the 'Polifonia/Dublin Descriptors' (PDDs) and/or the AEC learning outcomes?

The UNMB has had extensive contacts with the AEC for a number of years. Staff at the UNMB have a high level of awareness of documents such as the Polifonia/Dublin Descriptors and the AEC Learning Outcomes. Indeed, some staff members have been involved in the preparation of some of these materials, for example the Learning Outcomes for the 3rd Cycle. This awareness translates itself into the institutional documentation: the Polifonia Dublin Descriptors and the AEC Learning Outcomes have fed directly into the official curricula of the License studies (bachelor level) and the Masters studies.

2.1b. Where appropriate, is there a connection/progression between the various cycles?

Mention has already been made of the apparent distinction between the Bachelor and Masters cycles on the basis of the latter being about the education of *professional* musicians. In practice, this means that special emphasis is put, in the latter, upon additional key qualifications and the connection with the professional work.

Over the period from 2007 to 2010, the UNMB has experienced a progressive transfer of student numbers from the Bachelor to the Masters. The ratio between Bachelor and Masters students was 84.3% to 15.7%; now it is 73.8% Bachelor to 26.2% Masters. This is a development that allows several interpretations. On the one hand, in a fully-operational Bologna-style system of cycles, the current balance between Bachelor and Masters students is probably closer to what one would expect than previously. On the other, different factors may be at work, most notably the decline in new entrants to the Bachelor programme. This has an explanation in the decline in population size for the age group entering higher education (a trend that is predicted to continue until 2013).

Against a background of falling student numbers, it is important that the UNMB do everything possible to maximise the attractiveness of its programmes. In this context, it is important to emphasise the professional dimension of the bachelor, even whilst making a distinction between this and the more complete professional preparation offered by the end of the Masters.

Various strategic statements of the UNMB emphasise the importance of a connection between musical development and that of the research ethos and the increasing autonomy of the student: 'involvement of Bachelor, Master and Doctoral students with outstanding achievements in scientific and artistic research activities'; 'furthering of *university programmes* that should allow students to assert their personality, and develop their intellectual abilities and professional knowledge'; 'encouraging *excellence* in the field of research, innovation and artistic activity'. Such developments align with the progressive evolution that is envisaged for students moving through a Bachelor/Master/Doctorate sequence.

The UNMB is aware that it is on a journey towards full achievement of this progressive trajectory through the programmes, but it is reassuring to see the prominence given to it in the strategic documents of the institution.

2.2 Delivery

2.2a. How is the institution utilizing different forms of teaching supporting the delivery of curricula/ programmes?

The UNMB utilizes a good range of different forms of teaching to support the delivery of its programmes. These range from the core 1-to-1 training, through small group and ensemble teaching to work in larger ensembles and orchestras.

One interesting feature of the teaching philosophy is the use from the first year of the Bachelor programme of some forms of teaching and assessment which, in other institutions, are sometimes held in reserve for later years. These include chamber music for instrumentalists and work on opera scenes for singers. The approach at the UNMB has the advantage of familiarising students with these sophisticated performing contexts from an early stage and giving them the maximum opportunity to return to them and refine their accomplishments in these areas. At the same time, it may be a valuable exercise for the institution to review whether an early focus on the development of individual skills and a later introduction of more complex, interactive performance situations might have certain benefits in guiding students in a progressive, developmental way through the musical challenges they will need to master finally to enter the profession.

As well as the different forms of teaching, there is an important point concerning the mode of delivery of the programmes, especially the Masters. As stated in 1.c, many Masters students are, in practice, already embedded in the profession – during discussions, it was suggested that that this was the case for up to 70% of students. This statistic must make it relevant to pose the question as to why the Masters programmes are all structured as full-time patterns of study. It does appear that students find the balancing of their educational and professional commitments difficult and that this affects attendance, orchestral participation, etc. Cases of students having to intermit their studies (with the risk that they might not then re-start them) are not unknown.

Whilst part-time modes of study can bring their own problems and, as things stand, there is no legal framework that explicitly provides for part-time provision, this option might nevertheless merit closer consideration. Similarly, it might be fruitful to look at ways in which students might gain recognition and credit within their study programmes for suitably evaluated achievements in the professional sphere. This point will be taken up in 2.4a.

2.2b. What role does research play within the curricula/ programmes?

There is a clear institutional drive to make research an integral element of all programmes, building in a progressive manner from relatively modest aspects of the Bachelor programme (eg 'involvement of Bachelor [...] students with outstanding achievements in scientific and artistic research activities') to the strong focus upon research in both the scientific and artistic Doctorates. This drive is a key aspect of the UNMB's strategy 2008-13 and should strictly be judged on the basis of the level achieved by the end of this period; in terms of the Masters programme – and based, of course, upon a small sample of students and their work witnessed during the site visit – the External Experts felt that there was still some way to go to ensure that a perceptible change of approach from 1st Cycle to 2nd was taking place from the perspective of research orientation.

The sample of written thesis work reviewed showed that some Doctoral students are engaging with tremendous enthusiasm, and at a high level, with research issues. However, there may be a need to internationalise this Doctoral work further, ensuring that students' searches of research already

undertaken elsewhere extend to other countries and, in particular, to the dominant research languages of German, and English. Similarly, the emphasis upon Romanian subject matter among research topics, whilst entirely understandable and to be encouraged from many points of view, needs to be more outwardly directed. International scholars should be encouraged to access this work and a dialogue between national cultures and traditions should be cultivated. For this, there may be a need for wider availability of the actual research – and not merely summarising abstracts of it – in one of the wider international research languages.

Especially in the area of artistic research, there can be a danger of student researchers working only with reference to themselves and their own artistic experience. This is a phenomenon to be found across institutions and countries. As a leading national institution with an international perspective, the UNMB needs to ensure that its artist researchers recognise that they have as much of a duty as their scientific counterparts to relate their own research within the wider context of what is going on elsewhere. New developments such as the European Platform for Artistic Research in Music (EPARM) and the Journal of Artistic Research (JAR) should make it easier for institutions and their students to familiarise themselves with work going on elsewhere. They may even facilitate international cooperation in artistic research – a development which would help to put this area of research activity on a more equal footing with its scientific equivalent.

2.2c. How are the students offered opportunities to present their work?

The opportunities are described thoroughly in the self-evaluation report: *'Students are offered opportunities to present their own production within the frame of concert series, contests, and public conferences organised by UNMB in collaboration with various educational and cultural institutions, such as the „George Enescu” Philharmony (the UNMB concerts), the Union of Composers (the concerts of the composition classes), the Romanian Radio Broadcast, the Romanian Opera. Research done by students is published in students' journals or the UNMB journals.'*

The students identified the connection with professional ensembles and institutions as a very attractive aspect of the institution. They did feel that the spectrum of performances might be enlarged by increasing the opportunities for them to mount their own concerts and projects. Aspects of presentation and promotion for student projects could be discussed within their study programmes, in areas of the curricula dealing with preparation for professional practice, and might then be realised in the frame of the performances of the UNMB.

One specific area of tension – and one that frequently arises in conservatoires – is between the desire of student conductors for more time in front of an orchestra and the sense of the student orchestral musicians that the demands on them are already more than sufficient. The discussion with students revealed this issue as the focus of strong feelings and intense controversy. Whilst there is no definitive solution to this problem, the UNMB might wish to consider whether the number of students it accepts as conducting specialists is appropriate in terms of the opportunities they then have to hone their talents. Rationing the number of student conductors, while arguably a negative action, can safeguard the learning experience of those who are accepted.

2.2d. Are there formal arrangements for students to receive academic, career and personal guidance?

The UNMB emphasises the counselling and tuition of the students for their professionalization: *'In view of providing career guidance for the students, the professors adapt and personalise the guidance at the student's request. At each faculty there are tutors by year of study and by programme*

(involving also the doctoral candidates on scholarship); professors have at least two counselling hours per week for the students. Within UNMB there is a Centre for the Professional Path Choice and Career Guidance for students.'

All-in-all, this adds up to a comprehensive set of arrangements, both formal and informal, for academic, career and personal guidance. As well as being important in its own right, this is crucial for the UNMB in relation to aspects of its funding. 30% of the funding received by the institution is for various quality factors, of which student support, including career counselling, is one. The External Experts are happy to confirm that they would regard the UNMB as meeting quality expectations in this area.

2.3 International Perspectives

2.3a. Does the institution have an international strategy?

Of the four aspects identified in the UNMB's Mission, the last is that of 'a strategic university of international visibility'.

International recognition and importance is one of the core aims of the institution's development. The strategy of the UNMB is orientated towards the European Higher Education Space, as defined by the Berlin Declaration (2003). As an active member of the AEC, the UNMB is engaged, both as a partner and an initiator, in various projects of the European university landscape of professional musical education. Examples of this active participation include: the Socrates-Erasmus Programme and the CEEPUS Program, Cultura 2000, and co-operations with European orchestras which offer internships for the UNMB students.

The UNMB has a separate Department of International Relations and Community Programmes (DRIPC) with the following functions: *'The activity of the department is unfolding on several levels including: elaborating and communicating information requested by youth from other countries who wish to study at our university; counselling of the foreign students from our university; organising visits and teaching programmes for professors within the frame of institutional exchanges and partnerships assumed by the university; participation in conferences and meetings of international relations coordinators from faculties, academies and universities of music in Europe, by means of communication and reports concerning examples of good practice achieved by the National University of Music Bucharest; ensuring a collaboration of the Senate Bureau, with the faculties, departments and chairs in the aim of monitoring international activities and projects, and of creating a database for this sector.'*

It must be mentioned that the total number of students or teachers who participate in an international programme, is not very impressive (see also 2.3c.). International projects and the maintenance of contacts need time and often develop only slowly. Nevertheless, it is recommended that the international strategy be elaborated, with quantified targets for participation, in order to make it more effective, eg: What does UNMB exactly want to achieve in the next three years (ie to 2013)? What would be rewarding sub-goals that can to be defined?

2.3b. To what extent is the international strategy reflected in the curricula/ programmes offered?

The individual study guidance of the UNMB offers the chance for the students to gain experiences in other European countries. There are close contacts with Como (Italy) and Oslo (Norway) in the field of performance practice (orchestra, chamber music) and agreements with libraries in Berlin and

Leipzig for musicological research. For the Doctoral studies, it is planned to introduce a second, international, common language additional to the Romanian national language – an initiative which would address some of the remarks in 2.2b. Already, as indicated above, there are summaries incorporated within the dissertations in one of the main European languages (English, German or French). Further internationalisation, as described above, would explicitly encourage – and even oblige – students to take an active part in the international scholarly or artistic research community. The number of the articles published in international-language journals has increased over recent years and should be developed further. Similarly, Doctoral students from various European countries and the USA have visited the UNMB as part of their studies and this trend should be encouraged.

2.3c. *Is the institution participating in international partnerships?*

The UNMB has 65 partner institutions (universities, Musikhochschulen and conservatories) in more than 21 European countries. But, as indicated in 2.3a, only a relatively small number of students take part in the exchange programmes (the total number of outgoing students in the years 2006-2009 was 56, less than 6% of the total number of students, compared with 20 incoming students during the same period). The students say that the teachers encourage them to take part in an exchange programme. The constraint therefore seems to lie within the students themselves.

In the year 2006 to 2009, 16 professors of the UNBM took part in an international exchange compared to 28 incoming professors.

2.4 Learning and Assessment

2.4a. *What are the main methods for assessment and how do these methods support teaching and learning?*

The UNMB uses a broad range of assessment methods. As is the norm in conservatoires, the solo performance exam/recital (or portfolio submission for composers) is at the heart of its assessment strategy. Ensemble-based assessments, such as in chamber music, are also common; the External Experts witnessed one such examination.

As befits an institution very much alive to the blend of theory and practice required in modern conservatoire training, written and spoken assessments are also used, up to and including the substantial written theses used at Doctoral level.

Whilst the picture of how assessments support teaching and learning is clearly therefore a strong one, there may be scope for further consideration of how students' professional experience and achievements might be validated through assessment by the UNMB. This last point links particularly to the fact noted earlier that up to 70% of Masters students are busily active in professional situations alongside their studies. Provided that evaluations made outside in the 'workplace' could be conducted with the same rigour and consistency as those inside the institution (and close links with key individuals in the relevant professional organisations are crucial for this) such realistically contextualised assessments would not only be, by definition, relevant to the students' professional development but could also ease the burden on time and space within the institution being taken up by assessments. Moreover, they could reduce the number of situations where students' attendance for formally-scheduled assessments produced problems through clashes with their professional commitments.

A system such as that proposed here could build upon experience already gained in the area of student placements. Although these represent workplace situations instigated, and therefore somewhat more closely controlled, by the institution, they have clear parallels with arrangements to recognise student-instigated workplace activity. Since 2007, student placements have operated within the UNMB's system of credit allocations.

2.4b. *What kind of grading system is being used in examinations and assessments?*

The UNMB uses a ten-point grading system where grades 1-4 are in the Fail category and grades 5-10 in the Pass category. There is a further subtlety applied to this grading system in that students are required to achieve overall averages in their performance that represent a higher performance than bare minimum passes in every element. Thus, Bachelor and Masters students must achieve an overall average of 6 or higher and Doctoral students 7 or higher.

This system provides a good balance between where the threshold is set for each individual assessment and how well a 'successful' student is expected to perform overall. Students are further protected by having the opportunity for up to two re-assessments. The main practical assessment period is in June; a student who fails may attempt a re-take the following February and, if still unsuccessful, has one final chance the following June.

Whilst the grading system and framework for re-assessment are therefore both robustly organised, the UNMB is conscious of being at a more rudimentary stage in terms of attempts to establish criteria for assessments. A system of written criteria was trialled in the Keyboard Department, but so far, it has neither become embedded there, nor has it spread to other departments. Opinion is, in any case, somewhat divided about the efficacy of written criteria and, in particular, how applicable they may be in practical and artistically-driven disciplines. Nevertheless, the External Experts would encourage the UNMB to revive and expand its experiments in this area. If nothing else, such activity provides a healthy stimulus for debate about how musical judgements are made and what, if anything, is the objective basis that underpins them.

3. Student Qualifications

3.1 Entrance Qualifications

3.1. *In what ways do the entrance requirements assess the artistic, technical, academic and mental capacities of the applicants to accomplish the various aspects of the study programmes within the expected timeframe?*

The UNMB operates a transparent policy in terms of the recruitment and admission of students. The admissions methodology, organisation and the structure of the admissions examination to be used by each faculty is published on the UNMB website at least 6 months prior to the date of the auditions. These details are also available in the form of printed brochures, leaflets and posters that are distributed to schools and neighbouring areas.

Admission is based exclusively on the candidate's academic competences and does not make use of any discriminatory criteria. Admission of applicants to the bachelor programme is made on the basis of an admission examination that places applicants in rank order according to their skills and specialised knowledge; this exam carries 90% of the weight of the final entrance examination grade, the other 10% being the represented by the grade gained in the Baccalaureate exam. In the other cycles, the tests are conceived so as to have professional relevance.

3.2 Employability

3.2a. *Is there a policy for data collection on alumni?*

In the UNMB Strategy 2008-13, one of the specific objectives on the educational level is the founding of an Alumni organisation. This objective was fulfilled earlier this year when an Alumni department (Alumni club) was founded, affiliated directly to the Rectorate.

A census of student destinations for the period 2004-5 to 2008-9 has been taken and the results of this will inform future planning.

3.2b. *Are graduates successful in finding work/building a career in today's highly competitive international music life?*

Data in relation to this question come from the census referred to above. A report was compiled from these data in 2009 by the Department for the Professional Path Choice and Career Guidance. This report states that 'more than 70% of the graduates are unfolding their activity in the field and at the level of the university qualification obtained.' In the same survey, the grade of satisfaction with the study and education programme was more than 75%. About 50% of the Bachelor (Licence) graduates go on to Masters study. However, as already discussed, most of them are already professionally active during this time and undertake their Masters study fitting it around their professional commitments.

3.3 Equal Opportunities

3.3. *To what extent are equal opportunities taken into consideration?*

Musical talent and appropriate qualifications are the deciding entry requirements for a place to study at the UNMB. The former is evaluated in an entrance examination and the latter by the applicant's Baccalaureate results for the Bachelor degree and his or her degree result for each successive cycle.

The current ratio between female and male students is roughly evenly balance balanced, so no special measures have so far been taken or felt necessary. In the medium-term, it might be worth the institution devoting attention to this topic despite its apparently satisfactory state. It would serve in the long-term development of the university to gather statistical data and to analyse the various areas of studies and work and consider the way the balance alters amongst them (for example the administration department that is staffed mainly by women). Even the ability to bring hard statistical evidence that the issue is not problematic would, of itself, be valuable.

As part of its focus upon student-centred learning methods the UNMB believes that it can show itself to be operating with great flexibility in relation to students with disabilities, as the following case study shows: *'Persons with disabilities are supported in a creative way by the university. In this respect, the case of the sightless candidate can be quoted, who has graduated from Licence and Master studies in composition, with the support of professors that have even learned the Braille alphabet to be able to communicate with him and adapted their requirements so as to compensate for his disability. Further on, the case of the doctoral candidate, Alin Ionescu, can be quoted, who has partially lost the mobility of his right hand as a result of an accident, for whom solutions were found to enable him to continue his piano studies by finding an alternative repertoire for the left hand. UNMB also creates environments and pedagogical experiments that encourage students' desire to manifest themselves in a creative way'.*

4. Teaching Staff

4.1 Artistic and Scholarly Qualifications

4.1a. Are members of teaching staff active as artists and/or scholars/researchers?

There is clear evidence of teaching staff being active as scholar researchers and in ways equivalent to this in the area of artistic creation. Although the ratios of scholarly and artistic activity are not specified, the following table, drawn from the UNMB's self-evaluation document, shows a commendably high level of engagement on the part of teaching staff.

| Specific forms of scientific research and artistic creation | | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 |
|---|---|------|------|------|
| 1 | Articles published in internationally acknowledged journals, ISI WEB of Science rated (and equivalents for artistic creation) | 139 | 77 | 133 |
| 2 | Articles published in international journals, non-rated by ISI, but BDI indexed (and equivalents for artistic creation) | 20 | 23 | 35 |
| 3 | Works (articles) published in the volumes of international conferences, ISI rated, and of conferences organised by international professional societies (and equivalents for artistic creation) | 9 | 20 | 23 |
| 4 | Articles published in journals recognised by CNCISIS – category B and B+ (and equivalents for artistic creation) | 725 | 483 | 613 |
| 5 | Books published by national publishing houses, recognised by CNCISIS (and equivalents for artistic creation) | 187 | 22 | 36 |
| 6 | Books published in international publishing houses of prestige (and equivalents for artistic creation) | 69 | 2 | 76 |
| 7 | Licences / Products with intellectual property rights | 20 | 22 | 34 |
| 8 | Projects / research contracts / counselling / technical and technology services (and equivalents for artistic creation) | 2 | 13 | 53 |

Overall, the pattern shown here shows a positive trend, with many categories of output showing their highest return in the most recent year, 2009. It is good to see the UNMB not only performing to this level – which fully meets what one would expect of an institution with international aspirations – but also keeping statistics, measuring trends and planning pro-actively for the future.

4.1b. Is there an institutional policy and practice to support and enhance the teaching staff's artistic and scholarly/research production?

As indicated above, the UNMB clearly takes this area seriously, but it does more than simply record the achievements of its staff. It also supports them in a variety of ways. These include the organisation of events and support from the institution for publications. The UNMB's self-evaluation document singles out the following as examples of this practice:

- *Scientific sessions of the chairs (annual), published in the issues of the Akademos Journal, nr. 1, 2, 3/2009, UNMB Publishing House (ISSN 1453-5981, ISSN 1453-5982, ISSN 1453-5983)*
- *Scientific sessions of Old Music (annually in the period 1995-2009), published in the Akademos Journal nr. 4/2009*

- *“Chel” Festival of UNMB, 2009, 2010*
- *Collaboration on an annual basis in the organisation of the international festival “The International Week of New Music”, together with the Union of Composers, the Ministry of Culture and the Romanian Radio Society*
- *Organisation of the “Eurovision Young Musicians 2010”, as a partner of the Romanian TV and the Romanian Radio Society*
- *International Festival and Symposium “Frederic Chopin 200”, 28th of February 2010, organised by UNMB/DCSAA in collaboration with the Polish Institute*
- *Participation in the “George Enescu” Festival, contributing with ensembles, professors and organisation of events*
- *Participation in the “Se caută Enescu” Festival [Looking for Enescu], sponsored by Orange Romania*
- *The UNMB Glissando Publishing House has published to date 121 titles of books and music scores, its activity acquiring importance in the national context, owing to the high academic level of its content and academic level.*
- *Likewise, UNMB has issued three publications that have become traditional: the journals Acord and Akademos, as well as an on-line journal of musicology, Musicology Today, that has already earned the appreciation of the Romanian university community, due to its intellectual quality of the content and the attractivity of its format.*

4.2 Qualifications as Educators

4.2a. Does the institution ensure that all members of the teaching staff have appropriate qualifications as educators?

The teaching staff of the UNMB fall into three categories: Tenured Professors (currently 130), Associated Staff Members (79) and Consultant Professors (7). The category of Tenured Professors is further divided as follows: Professors, Associate Professors, Senior Lecturers, Assistant Lecturers and Junior Assistants. The table below, from the self-evaluation document, shows the distribution of these over the last four years:

| | 2006 – 2007 | 2007 – 2008 | 2008-2009 | 2009 – 2010 |
|----------------------|-------------|-------------|------------|-------------|
| Professors | 30 | 25 | 25 | 30 |
| Associate Professors | 33 | 36 | 36 | 40 |
| Senior Lecturers | 38 | 38 | 38 | 37 |
| Assistant Lecturer | 29 | 27 | 27 | 22 |
| Junior Assistants | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| TOTAL | 132 | 127 | 127 | 130 |

Vacancies are announced and selection procedures followed in accordance with the legal requirements of the Ministry of Education. According to the self-evaluation document, tenured staff at the level of Associate Professor and above are required to have a 'Ph.D in the field of the position occupied'. Assistant Lecturers and Junior Assistants 'have either completed a psycho-pedagogical module or are enrolled and attend these courses.'

4.2b. Are policies and strategies in place for continuing professional development of teaching staff?

The measures described above, which ensure that Assistants and Junior Assistants have at least completed an appropriate module, is one example of the UNMB's policies for supporting the continuing professional development of teaching staff. Crucial to the Institutional strategy is the work of the Teaching Staff Training Department (DPPD). This department supports all the pedagogical training carried out within the institution and explicitly addresses continuing professional development. The self-evaluation document describes this aspect as follows:

'Within the frame of continuing education of teaching staff, the Department organises examinations for the obtaining of didactic degrees. For the purpose of sitting these exams for didactic degrees, the Department organises preparation courses in the fields provided for in the study programmes; the activities are taking place during the school holidays and semester breaks, included.'

4.3 Size and Composition of the Teaching Body

4.3a. Is the number of teaching staff adequate to cover the teaching volume and curriculum within a frame of acceptable quality?

At present, 216 teaching staff deliver the institution's programmes to a total of 1,083 students. The UNMB is currently facing a situation of declining student admissions which is discussed at some length in the self-evaluation document. The main reason for this is attributed to the general decline in birth rates which affected the country and is now being reversed. Current planning suggests that the number of young people reaching the age of entering higher education – and hence demand for student places – should stabilise by 2013 and may rise thereafter.

Against this background, the current number of teaching staff is not currently problematic, although planning must be implemented for the next strategic period 2013-18 so that the institution is not caught unawares by increasing demand.

Meanwhile, in common with all institutions in Romania, the UNMB faces the problem of posts being frozen and therefore of solutions other than fresh appointments having to be found when vacancies arise. This is a potentially serious concern and threatens the ability of the institution to develop its staff through promotions into tenured posts.

4.3b. Does the composition of the teaching staff allow flexible adaptation to new professional requirements?

The freeze on new appointments described above poses a major threat to flexible adaptation. Nevertheless, staff have clearly adapted to the new Bachelor, Master, Doctorate degree structure and there appeared to be an attitude of openness to further change and development amongst those teachers whom the External Experts met for their discussions.

5. Facilities, Resources and Support

5.1 Facilities

5.1a. Are the building facilities (teaching and practice studios, classrooms, rehearsal places, concert venues, etc.) adequate to support curricula/programmes requirements?

The UNMB self-evaluation report details the facilities as follows:

The situation of spaces, for each component (teaching/seminar rooms, rooms for practical works and laboratories, reading-rooms within the library) is the following:

| Type of space | | Number | Surface (m ²) |
|--|---------------------|--------|---------------------------|
| Class-rooms | | 37 | 1276.32 |
| Seminar rooms/ Rooms for practical works | | 48 | 1028.20 |
| Laboratories, music studios | | 22 | 1048.97 |
| Media library | Library | 2 | 179.00 |
| | Audio-visual | 4 | 115.34 |
| | Book holding spaces | 7 | 273.26 |

The report continues as follows: *'It is worth mentioning that UNMB possesses a competitive Opera Studio, which was rehabilitated and opened in December 2009, (building A1, 300 seats), with state-of-the-art equipment (lights, stage amplifying, extended orchestra pit, changing rooms, costumes and settings); the "George Enescu" Concert Studio (276 seats, 2 concert pianos – Steinway, Kawai –, organ, recording studio); the Chamber Music Studios ("Frederic Chopin" / 100 seats, and "Dinu Lipatti" – 50 seats). UNMB also possesses a sports hall of 230 m², currently under rehabilitation, a public eating place (Buffet-Cafeteria, in the basement of building A1) and a students' housing area with a capacity of 192 places, situated in the neighbourhood of UNMB, at 8, General Henri M. Berthelot St., as well as a car-park.*

Already since 2006, the UNMB investment plan comprises the building of a new objective destined for the Media library, for which the "Ion Mincu" University of Architecture has elaborated a feasibility study that was approved by the Technique-Economic Commission of the Ministry of Education and Research. During the following years, the legal procedures aiming at the construction continued by going through all the phases of elaborating the construction plan, and of obtaining all necessary approvals, and – eventually – the construction authorisation. It is a multi-storey building with 2Bs+GF+5Fs, intended to host the book holding, rooms for preparation and catalogue compiling, various laboratories, a library, reading-rooms, auditions and video projection rooms, the doctoral school, a recording studio, orchestra rooms, housing space, underground car park, and all necessary technical facilities. At the beginning of 2010, the procedure for public acquisition of the construction contract was completed, and the work will be concluded in 2012.'

The existing renovation works are already well advanced. The situation of the premises currently in use is good to very good. There are sufficient teaching rooms and rehearsal rooms. The UNMB guarantees three hours per day for each student to practise in the rooms of the institution. The opening hours are from 7am to 10pm seven days a week. However, against this broadly positive picture, it must be noted that funding for the completion of existing works has recently been

drastically reduced and therefore that for the new construction must be regarded as questionable. The UNMB is doing all it can to ensure that existing work can be carried to completion. It would be most unfortunate if the significant improvements of recent years were to be halted when the full realisation of the renovation project is relatively close to being achieved.

5.1b. Are the instruments (pianos, organs, percussion, etc.) of a number and standard adequate to support curricula/programmes requirements?

The UNMB self-evaluation report contains the following statement:

'The constant renewal of the material resources was considered by UNMB as a priority. By furnishing the learning and research area with high-performance music instruments (i.e. the sole organ built in Bucharest after 1989 is standing in the "George Enescu" concert hall of UNMB; Steinway and Kawai pianos; Kawai and Yamaha upright pianos, wind and percussion instruments, harpsichords, master violins, chords, music stands, etc.), with IT equipment (soft and hardware), audio-video consoles and electro-acoustic rooms, books and music scores supplies, UNMB proves to have an unfailing preoccupation for the acquiring of know-how and technology necessary to ensure the quality standards of the educational process.'

It is clear that the UNMB focuses considerable attention on the issue of equipment. There are generally sufficient instruments and technical equipment for the students. However, equipment must be maintained and the costs, for example, of maintaining piano stock at appropriate levels are a significant drain upon the resources of any conservatoire. This has been a serious problem for the UNMB, but two initiatives suggest possible ways forward. The first is the securing of private sponsorship for the re-conditioning of two grand pianos; the second is the plan to establish internships and study programmes in the field of instrument building (piano making) tuning and maintenance.

The UNMB is fortunate in having an in-house workshop/atelier for stringed instrument building and maintenance, with an emphasis on violin making. Having a luthier on site is of tremendous value when students encounter problems with their instruments.

5.1c. Are the computing and other technological facilities adequate to support curricula/programmes requirements?

A special feature of the UNMB's facilities is its own copy and printing centre, where in-house literature is produced for publication. It is available to all teachers and students. There are plans to link this facility with the Media Library and to enlarge it.

The University supplies computers with internet access especially for the doctorate studies. In the evaluation report, the computer equipment is mentioned as a weak point. The management of the University is addressing this deficit with a development plan that refers specially to modern media. The UNMB plans to upgrade and modernise its software and equipment, and to integrate an element of e-learning during the period between now and 2013.

5.1d. Is the library, its associated equipment (listening facilities, etc.) and its services adequate to support curricula/programmes requirements?

The library is currently housed in temporary accommodation pending the realisation of the projected new building referred to in 5.1a. This situation is only sustainable in the short term and, if at all possible, should not be allowed to continue beyond the current projected completion date for the

new building of 2012. This issue further emphasises the importance not only of the current phase of upgrading of the facilities being seen through to its conclusion but also of approved plans for new construction being protected, as far as is possible, from postponement or cancellation as a result of the wider economic situation.

In its self evaluation report, the UNMB declares that:

'The book holding, periodicals, audiovideo materials, and scores existing in the library correspond to the disciplines foreseen by the syllabuses per university programme cycles.

In the library of the institution there are sufficient subscriptions to periodic publications from Romania and from abroad, by domains of specific study fields of our university, necessary for a good instruction process, artistic creation and scientific research. The number of seats in the study rooms of the library corresponds to and respects the specific standards in the field of Arts. The opening hours of the library are in correlation with the students' programme, with regard to both borrowing activity and studying in the reading room.'

Without necessarily disagreeing fundamentally with these assertions, the External Experts would warn of the need for the UNMB to consider the dynamic nature of international music scholarship, the dominance of the German and English languages in the dissemination of such scholarship and the necessity for an institution with an international profile of having learning resources (or electronic access to such resources) that fully reflect this. Materials fall rapidly out of date and new disciplines, such as that of Artistic Research, develop at a dramatic pace. The UNMB must ensure that it can adapt and constantly update its resources in a way that matches this pace and contuse to give its students – especially those working at Doctoral level – the opportunity to compete on equal terms in the international research environment with their peers from other countries.

5.2 Financial Resources

5.2a. What are the institution's financial resources and are they adequate to support curricula/programme requirements?

The financial situation of the UNMB has to be regarded in the national political context which, in turn, has been affected by the global economic situation. The Romanian state is confronting problems related to the current global economic and financial crisis and is not alone in having had to freeze projects, put a cap on fresh appointments and even withhold promised payments. The UNMB is already suffering as a consequence of these measures. The cut in funding for completion of current building works has already been mentioned; to this should be added the fact that a number of vacant administrative posts have not been filled, resulting in the institution functioning at something in the order of 20% below its nominal allocation of administrative staff.

The self-evaluation report of the UNMB shows the overall budgetary situation for 2007, 2008 and 2009. During this period, overall funding rose from 26,984,136 Lei to 34,063,460 Lei but this masks a fall in state funding in 2009 (from 26,894,360 lei to 25,866,573 Lei) which was outbalanced by a rise in independent income from 1,445,840 Lei to 1,795,907 Lei. The UNMB recognises the need to put concerted effort into increasing still further the income generated independently, but it is also aware that such income is correspondingly harder to find in times of global financial restraint.

The UNMB has had some success with project funding, most notably the POS-DRU project 'From Apprenticeship to Mastership in Conducting Practice', which was supported with 690,000 Lei (approx.

250,000 Euro). The total value of independently-generated revenue now amounts to 5.34% of total UNMB revenues. In the long run, this share must be increased to grant more independence. The financial funding can currently be described as sufficient, but there must be doubts as to the state's capacity to maintain, let alone increase funding over the coming years.

The UNMB has been resourceful in the way that, for example, it has fostered good relationship with local partners to gain access to additional teaching space during its own major renovations. Creative solutions of this kind may be as important as actual additional funding in the years to come.

5.2b. Is there long-term financial planning?

As seen from 5.2a, long-term financial planning is not made any easier by external financial factors which can change with great rapidity. The only prudent course in longer-term planning is to assume a pessimistic outlook. One of the pillars of future strategic planning for the UNMB is named as: *'The Identification of new financing sources for specific activities, through the promotion of new projects concerning contemporary realities'*.

The UNMB intends to set itself apart with its innovative projects, for which it hopes to be able to gain substantial financial support. There is no doubt that the institution must increase the proportion of its total income which it generates in the way. However, its general dependence on the economic and financial situations of the state will nevertheless continue in the medium term. In so far as it can be, the long-term financial strategy of the UNMB is therefore sound. An important next step would be to quantify a series of targets for independent income generation, setting timescales for these and giving consideration to what happens when each tranche of funding runs out.

5.3 Support Staff

5.3a. Is the technical and administrative staff adequate to support the teaching, learning and artistic activities?

As already indicated in 5.2a, the numbers of technical and administrative staff are currently some 20% below the full establishment for the institution because of a freeze on new appointments. This is being addressed through a variety of short-term measures and the general impression given to the External Experts was that the situation remained manageable, although with only limited scope to take forward major developments.

There was a palpable sense of dedication amongst the administrative staff interviewed, fully comparable with that of academic staff. In particular, the collective loyalty and respect towards the UNMB's Rector shone through abundantly. It would therefore seem that the UNMB is achieving as much as it can in this area, given the prevailing external situation. This should not be allowed to mask the underlying truth that to move forward as an internationally competitive institution, the UNMB will need to be allowed to resume recruitment to vacant posts as soon as possible.

5.3b. Are policies and strategies in place for continuing professional development of technical and administrative staff?

Senior administrative staff indicated that such policies and strategies did operate. Inevitably, there is less scope for continuing professional development when a workforce is under-staffed, but wherever possible, staff are encouraged in their aspirations for continuing professional development. In some cases, this might extend to financial support being given.

6. Organisation, Decision-making Processes and Internal Quality Assurance

6.1 Organisation and Decision-making Processes

6.1a. *How are the curricula/programmes and the teaching and learning processes supported by:*

- *the organisational structure of the institution?*
- *decision-making on curricular affairs?*
- *decision-making on strategic affairs?*

The organisational structure of the institution places great emphasis upon the role of its Senate – a body with wide representation and which wields considerable decision-making power. The Rector is a member of the Senate and clearly retains autonomy to take necessary managerial decisions unilaterally; nevertheless, in matters relating to the programmes and to learning and teaching processes, the Senate, operating as a group, is essentially the body that determines which developments should take place and in what ways.

Decision-making on curricular affairs is generally ratified by the Senate but taken forward at Faculty or Department level. The distinction here is not strictly hierarchical since the Faculties and departments are well-represented among the membership of the Senate. The vertical structures of Faculties and Departments therefore intersect with the horizontal cross-representation of the Senate in a matrix fashion.

The UNMB has two Faculties as follows:

- Faculty of Musical Performance (FIM)
- Faculty of Composition, Musicology and Musical Pedagogy (FCMPm)

These are complemented by four departments as follows:

- Teaching Staff Training Department (DPPD)
- Department of International Relations and Community Programmes (DRIPC)
- Department of Scientific Research and Artistic Activities (DCSAA)
- Department of Continuing Musical Education and Postgraduate Studies (DEMCS)

Finally, there is a Centre for Electro-acoustic Music and Multimedia (CMEM), set up in 2008 and, for the time being, reporting directly to the Rector.

On strategic affairs, it is once again the Senate which ratifies important decisions. For example, the UNMB's Research Strategy is described in the documentation as being 'validated by the UNMB Senate. Similarly, the self-evaluation document upon which this accreditation visit has been based was itself approved at the Senate meeting of 17th March 2010.

6.1b. *Is there a long-term strategy for the improvement of the organisational decision-making structures?*

The UNMB's Strategy 2008-13 identifies as its first specific administrative objective the '*Decentralisation of management for the university faculties, chairs and functional departments*'. It also identifies under educational objectives the provision of '*a quality learning process, through smart, flexible and efficient specifically adapted management*'. This implies a sense that decision-making needs to be capable of being taken more swiftly, flexibly and adaptively. The precise mechanisms and timescales for achieving this are not specified, but it is encouraging to see that the institution is reflective and self-critical about its capacity for rapid and effective decision-making.

6.1c. Is there a risk management strategy?

One of the main ways in which the UNMB sees scope for risk minimisation is the cross-linkage and networking that it has been carrying out in a range of fields of co-operation and partnership. The institution has developed this network consciously and systematically. The already-established co-operation with the AEC has been actively enlarged and further international relations established and maintained for quality assurance and international recognition.

The introduction of the Artistic Doctorate programme places the UNMB in line with progressive thinking in higher music education. Its educational objective, identified in its Strategy 2008-13, of developing Masters and Doctoral programmes in international languages is a further sign of how curricular developments are since as valuable tools in the process of minimising risk.

The UNMB's self-evaluation document concludes with a SWOT analysis and identifies a number of 'Measures to improve future activity'. These are as follows:

- *Initiating and modelling of study programmes taught in internationally widely-spoken languages*
- *Promoting UNMB on national and international level toward visibility in the public area*
- *Continuing of new project initiation in the spirit of public-private partnership*
- *Developing of music projects together with the pre-university environment, i.e. secondary- and high-schools.*
- *Offering educational alternatives, by inviting great personalities in music for intensive, short term residencies*
- *Attracting extra-budget funds to be used for the diversifying of students services*
- *Intensifying of professors and students mobility with partners from the European area*
- *Improvement of quality culture at the institutional level through the enhancing of teaching staff awareness and by involving them in the implementation of quality benchmarking*
- *Supporting of students in view of implementing initiatives*
- *Implementing the register of unique matriculation number*
- *A better correlation between achievements and their recording*
- *Observing of terms and of responsibilities incumbent on all factors involved in the fulfilment of assumed commitments*

One of the key threats identified in the SWOT analysis was the '*decrease in the number of students, due to both demographic decrease and lack of interest in the profession of musician*'. This decrease has amounted to more than 13% over the last 3 years and the number of new entrants is some 20% lower. It was therefore somewhat surprising not to find this issue addressed in the list of actions above – at least not explicitly (the development of joint projects with the pre-university environment might be seen as directed towards improving recruitment). Insofar as the matter is within its control, the UNMB should be exploring every possible strategy to recruit new talented students. Whilst the problem of reduced recruitment does not appear to be pressing at the moment, this tendency is expected to continue at least until 2013 and may be causing a much bigger problem by then.

6.1d. How is information being published and made transparent for students and staff?

The improvement and intensification of communication is explicitly listed in the UNMB's Strategy 2008-13: '*Improvement of communication both within and outside of U.N.M.B. through publications*

(Acord, Akademos, Glissando Publishing House), online magazines (Newsletter and Musicology Today), an extended web site, online broadcasting, festival and competitions.'

The UNMB publishes a newsletter every semester to report about all important new projects and to serve as a forum for messages. The musicology department has its own series of publications and publishes relevant articles in the internet. On more day-to-day matters, it is essentially the teachers who carry the responsibility of informing and counselling the students. Up to two hours per week are included in their teaching allocation for this purpose. Additionally, information is published on the notice-boards located in the departments.

As in most conservatoires, it seems to be a special challenge at the UNMB to persuade students to acquire and process information more pro-actively and on their own initiative. Students are represented in most boards of the self-administration, but the student representatives are not always known to the students whom they nominally represent. Many students show only a low interest in information and self-organisation. Whilst recognising the widespread nature of this phenomenon, the External Experts would therefore recommend an explicitly formulated strategy for the improvement of communication. It is noteworthy that the educational objective for improvement of communication quoted above from the Strategy 2008-13 seems largely outwardly directed. Mention is made of extending the website and, more specifically, the creation of a portal to simplify students' online access to information might be a way to consider of addressing issues of internal communication.

6.2 Internal Quality Assurance Systems

6.2a. What reference is made to national and local legislative requirements with regards to quality assurance (where appropriate)?

The self-evaluation document addresses this issue explicitly in section C.8 of its Table of Standards and Performance Indicators. Its response is as follows: *'The evaluation procedures and activities concerning the quality of education were elaborated and approved by the university Senate. The Commission for Quality Evaluation and Assurance (CEAC), constituted in accordance with the Law nr. 87/2005, elaborates an annual report of internal evaluation, makes it public by debate in the university Senate and by posting it in electronic format, and formulates proposals for the improvement of education quality. The Commission collaborates with other universities from Romania and from abroad, as well as with ARACIS and AEC experts in order to identify and adopt good practices in the quality area. There is a permanent communication of the CEAC president with ARACIS (Commission 3), as well as that of the former president with the AEC Bureau.'*

Reference is also made in the document to the 43 regulations that are appended to the UNMB's Charter and which regulate its organisation and functioning (Annex 1.53). Many of these have a direct bearing on quality assurance, for example, Regulation 6 *'concerning the periodic quality evaluation of teaching staff'*.

6.2b. What quality assurance and enhancement systems are in place for the continuous improvement of curricula/programmes and the learning environment?

The UNMB's Commission for Quality Evaluation and Assurance (CEAC), referred to above, is the body within the institution that is *'in charge with culture quality promoting, with establishing qualitative and quantitative references, as well as with the elaboration, coordination and implementation of*

evaluation and quality assurance procedures and activities'. As indicated above, it is charged with producing an annual report.

The continuous improvement of curricula/programmes and the learning environment are objectives that recur throughout the various strategic documents produced by the UNMB. What these objectives generally lack are targets and specific timescales. As one possible example, a commitment to produce annual monitoring reports for each of the programmes would not only ensure that matters requiring attention were gathered together and addressed, but would also provide a resource upon which the annual CEAC report could be based.

6.2c. How are staff, students and former students involved in these quality assurance and enhancement systems?

Staff and students are represented on the important Senate, already referred to. The UNMB's recently formed 'Alumni-club' will enhance the ways in which former students might become involved in the processes of quality assurance and enhancement. In the present ARACIS/AEC accreditation exercise, the contribution of students, former students and representatives from the profession was noticeable and appreciated.

6.2d. To what extent are these systems:

- *used to improve the educational programmes?*
- *continuously analysed and reviewed?*

It is clear that these systems have been used, with the intention of improving the educational programmes, to produce the suite of programmes currently offered. It is also clear that some of the proposed new programme developments – vocational programmes in piano tuning, sound engineering, etc – are the product of analysing and reviewing requirements, both institutional and national.

In general, the UNMB seems to have made concerted efforts to adapt to the culture of continuous quality enhancement that is now the recommended norm across Europe. The close involvement of key members of staff with working groups of the AEC has doubtless been influential in ensuring this. There seems to be a clear, and widely shared, institutional recognition that the processes of quality assurance, once embarked upon, are cyclical and continuous.

7. Public Interaction

7.1 Influence on Cultural Life

Is the institution involved in the development of cultural and musical activities internationally, nationally and regionally?

The UNMMB is characterised by a close network of various partners on regional, national and international levels. A grant system – about 80% of the students are supported by a scholarship for outstanding students – gives young people the chance to advance themselves musically, which gives a corresponding impulse to the home towns of potential students. Students of the UNMB take an active part in the national opera, the orchestra, the European Student Chamber Orchestra and in music broadcasts. The public is welcome to the numerous concerts at the UNMB. The attractiveness of the Opera Studio was significantly increased by the refurbishment of the hall and the installation of modern lighting and sound equipment. However, according to the students, the response of the public has not been as pronounced as would be desirable. There is perhaps potential for further public relations work and profile-raising to be done here.

Co-operations with a variety of professional organisations enable students to come into contact with those who will supply their future professional work. Meanwhile, there are a few areas where the presence of the UNMB itself ensures the continued survival of activity. One of these is certainly the commitment to sacred music. In co-operation with theological seminaries and colleges, there are intensive researches and the cultivation of traditional chant. The rediscovery of Orthodox choir music deserves particular mention in this context.

The UNMB is also dedicated to contemporary music with numerous projects and the realisation of outstanding performances. Along with its focus on the development of the Masters and Doctoral curricula it should also be encouraged to raise still further its profile as an artistic venue in its own right through greater publicising of its own programmes and through innovative projects that catch the public imagination.

7.2 Interaction with the Profession

7.2a. How does the institution communicate and interact with various sectors of the music profession in order to keep in touch with their needs?

The UNMB maintains active partnerships with the Romanian National Opera Bucharest, the Romanian Radio Broadcasting Society, the G. Enescu Philharmonic and the Philharmonies of Târgoviște and Pitești. It also has a partnership contract with the 'Eurovision Young Musicians 2010'. Students are offered internships in professional ensembles. Additionally, they have the chance to gain experience through temporary employment or to participate in some projects after auditioning.

The co-operations described above are set up through formal agreements but, beside these, there are obviously many more informal initiatives that are implemented from both sides and are no less worthwhile. As an example, many members of Romanian orchestras teach part time as honorary professors at the UNMB. There are also regular internships in European orchestras.

In the field of musicological research, the number of publications in professional magazines and international renowned publications is an outstanding measure of professionalism and quality. As seen earlier, between 2007 and 2009 there was an increase in most of the categories listed.

7.2b. Is there a long-term strategy for the development of the links with the profession?

The Strategy (2008-2013) of the UNMB expressly emphasises the increase and the intensification of co-operations with partners in the professional music arena. Especially important artistic personalities could be invited as guest professors or for co-operation in workshops and musical performances.

It would be worth establishing some kind of mechanism to evaluate the quality and frequency of the various co-operations so as to be more efficient in long-term planning. Defining the respective goals of the various partnerships – for UNMB and for the partner institution – might not only help in the evaluation of success but actually enhance the success itself. Similarly, a report on the completed activities would be valuable for each of the partners, but also as an objective measure for other stakeholders, funding agencies, etc.

7.3 Information to Potential Students and other Stakeholders

7.3a. Is the published information consistent with what the institution offers in terms of educational programmes?

The UNMB's website (accessible in English as well as Romanian) carries the following information about its educational programmes:

The academic community of the UNMB offers a well-balanced combination of past achievements and the dynamics of an ever changing world. The high standards set by our teaching staff find themselves reflected in the careers of alumni who became acclaimed soloists or took positions in some of the best orchestras around the world. Taking pride in its 140-year tradition, the UNMB defines its strategic objectives with an aim towards being an active part in building the European area of higher music education. We are particularly interested in encouraging critical thinking, creativity, intellectual freedom and professional development of our students and teaching staff. More than 1000 undergraduate students enrolled during the academic year 2009-2010. There are also students attending Master Studies and over 300 graduates attending Doctoral Studies in various musical fields.

In its attempt to integrate better into the international educational system, the UNMB has recently added to its traditional subjects the new developments in jazz-pop and church music.

The University hosts two faculties: the Faculty of Performing Arts (all classical instruments and voice) and the Faculty of Composition, Musicology and Music Education.

This information is supplemented by more detailed specification of the Bachelor, Master and Doctorate programmes, including specialisms available, duration of programmes, etc.

The UNMB self-evaluation document makes the following statements about programmes:

'Study programmes are thoroughly formulated, taking into account the learning outcomes that correspond to the university qualifications. Each study programme constitutes a didactic unit that is defined by general and specific objectives, a syllabus, a description of the discipline, an evaluation and examination methodology. Within the frame of each programme the co-operation between faculties, students' mobility, and the transferable credits system (ETCS) are functioning. The structure

of the study programmes is flexible, and allows students to chose his/her own learning direction, so that at least 30% of the total number of accumulated credit points by the end of the study programme should result from the optional disciplines.'

The close co-operation of the UNMB with the AEC provides another measure of consistency and transparency, as the self-evaluation report also indicates: *'UNMB study programmes are permanently relating to the standards set by the "Polifonia/Dublin/Descriptors" and to the "AEC Learning Outcomes", as they result from the AEC publications. These constitute a valuable guide and a very useful instrument of self-control in the process of adapting UNMB educational system to the European Higher Education benchmarks, while preserving its individuality.'*

Through their own scrutiny, and through discussions with students and staff, the External Experts can confirm the consistency of these statements with the reality of what is offered by the institution.

The Strategy 2008-13 speaks of: *'constant providing of a quality learning process through smart, flexible and efficient specifically adapted management'*. This could be defined more precisely. An important mechanism for achieving it could be the: *'further development of the chairs role in the organisation of didactic, research and other specific activities and programs'*, also mentioned in the strategy.

The UNMB's experiences with its Artistic Doctorate are relatively new. The planned implementation of international languages for Masters and Doctoral programmes is potentially an important step for developing the comparability of the institution's activities in the research field within an international context.

7.3b. What are the communication strategies for the publication of information?

As already quoted in 6.1d, the UNMB's Strategy 2008-13 identifies the following strategies for enhancing communication during the current period: *'Improvement of communication both within and outside of U.N.M.B. through publications (Acord, Akademos, Glissando Publishing House), online magazines (Newsletter and Musicology Today), an extended web site, online broadcasting, festival and competitions.'*

In 2007 the UNMB founded an agency, in which also the students can participate (with validation by credits) to grant an effective student counselling and monitoring. The extension and permanent development of the institution's home page are additional measures to improve the flow of information. Moreover, the implementation of an intranet and an internet portal are planned.

But the current budgetary reductions arising from the national and international situation have led to the postponement of numerous projects in the field of communication. The UNMB needs to develop parallel strategies that might help to improve the flow of information but with less additional cost.

8. Standards Summary

This summary comprises two sections; firstly a list of items which stand out as being very strong in relation to the AEC criteria, secondly an outline of some of the areas in which there seems to be potential for further development.

8.1 Strong Points

- The powerful team spirit evident throughout the institution; open-mindedness; good contact and rapport between management, teachers and students; widespread respect for the Rector
- Good international networks and links; AEC; bilateral European partnerships; dialogue
- Links with employers; a range of partnerships and projects with important orchestras, opera companies and choirs in Romania
- 3rd-cycle developments; plans to offer Masters and Doctoral programmes in international languages
- The establishment of an alumni association
- The general quantity and quality of rooms, their fitness for purpose and their availability to students for practising

8.2 Potential for Development

- Fuller realisation of the stated aim of originality and creativity in Masters programme
Improving how information is shared (identified as goal in SP)
- Continuing to search for creative solutions to tensions between the needs of student conductors for experience with ensembles and pressures upon student players/their reluctance to work with inexperienced conductors
- Further work on creating explicit criteria for assessment (NB students must know how they are being assessed and what they must do to succeed)
- Increasing students' general awareness of activities, events, issues and developments within the institution
- Encouraging wider involvement of students in the processes of strategy-forming and development
- Facilitating greater dialogue and interaction of Doctoral students with fellow-students internationally; setting competitive standards and generating greater awareness of the range of research activity published in international languages
- Simplification of the range of strategic statements – general objectives, etc – currently available and wider dissemination and embedding of awareness of these statements
- Agreement of 'SMART' targets in relation to key strategic objectives
- More concerted discussion of alternative strategies which might be needed if current strategic objectives cannot be fulfilled (eg for external financial reasons)

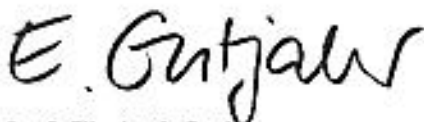
9 Conclusion

The External Experts have attempted to offer an objective and dispassionate view of the workings of the National University of Music Bucharest as they were able to evaluate them through the documentation provided and their experiences and discussions during the institutional external evaluation mission. The fact that they were working to the template devised by the AEC for accreditation exercises gave them a ready set of comparators with other institutions which they have visited on similar exercises in other countries.

Based upon the evidence available to them, and informed by careful review and consideration of the issues during the compiling of this report, the External Experts both feel confident in pronouncing their Broad Confidence in the UNMB. They believe that it represents an institution that is fully living up to its role as a national flagship for higher music education and a respected participant in the international development of this discipline.

In the opinion of the experts, the key threats facing the institution do not come from within. On the contrary, they found evidence of outstanding vitality, team spirit and determination to succeed amongst all those whom they encountered during their visit. Where threats do exist, they can almost invariably be traced back to concerns arising from the external financial situation and the consequences of this in the short, medium and longer term for funding. Although they may perhaps be exceeding their role in doing so, the Experts would urge that everything possible be done to ensure that adequate funds continue to be provided to support the UNMB in the continuation of its mission of:

'offering a quality framework for development to the young talents of Romania and from abroad, in modelling their personality and in shaping them as professional artists, capable of achieving top performances'.



Prof. Elisabeth Gutjahr



Dr. Jeremy Cox