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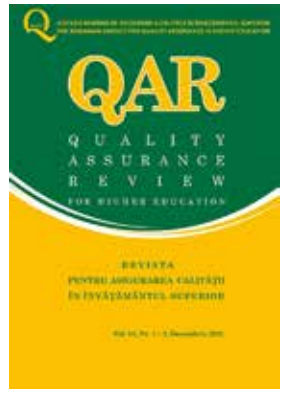

Quality Assurance Review for Higher Education

Învățământ superior cultural și creativ și a 4-a revoluție industrială

Grzegorz Kurzyński

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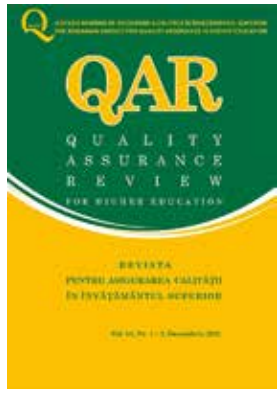

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Cultural and Creative Higher Education and the Fourth Industrial Revolution

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Cultural and Creative Higher Education and the Fourth Industrial Revolution[1]

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Abstract: *Every two or three years, there are meetings of ministers responsible for the countries' higher education that participate in the Bologna Process - and there are already 48 of them. The results of these meetings are Communiqués (statements) regarding new steps and activities within the European Higher Education Area.*

The Bologna Follow-up Group, which supervises the progress of the Bologna Process in the periods between ministerial meetings, implements the decisions contained in individual Communiqués and proposes the new activities for the coming years. In the last BFUG report, BFUG work on vision and thematic priorities after 2020 the text was partially determined by the Fourth Industrial Revolution and its premises – robotics, artificial intelligence and digitization. In my article, I am trying to answer how Higher Music Education responds to the challenges of these new circumstances.

Keywords: *Music, AEC, MusiQuE, Polifonia, Fourth Industrial Revolution*

Rezumat: *La fiecare doi sau trei ani, există reuniuni ale miniștrilor responsabili pentru instituțiile de învățământ superior din țările care participă la Procesul de la Bologna - și există deja 48 dintre acestea. Aceste reuniuni sunt sub formă de Comunicate (declarații) privind noi etape și activități în cadrul Spațiului European al Învățământului Superior.*

Grupul de monitorizare de la Bologna, care supraveghează progresul Procesului de la Bologna în perioadele dintre reuniunile ministeriale, pune în aplicare deciziile cuprinse în comunicatele individuale și propune noile activități pentru următorii ani. În ultimul raport BFUG, textul BFUG lucrează la viziune și priorități tematice după 2020 a fost parțial determinat de cea de-a patra revoluție industrială și de premisele sale – robotică, inteligență artificială și digitalizare. În articolul curent, am încercat să răspund la modul în care Învățământul Superior Muzical răspunde la provocările acestor noi circumstanțe.

Cuvinte cheie: *Muzică, AEC, MusiQuE, Polifonie, A 4-a Revoluție Industrială*

[1] This article is partially based on the text edited by the Bologna Follow-up Group BFUG WORK ON VISION AND THEMATIC PRIORITIES AFTER 2020 - Summary of the current state of affairs (June 2019).

The fundamental question is how Higher Education will respond to the requirements of the so-called Fourth Industrial Revolution (a term that appeared for the first time at the Hannover Fair in 2011) regarding a world that will increasingly depend on robotics artificial intelligence and digitization[2]. By introducing new technologies and areas related to digitization, robotics and artificial intelligence, it is expected that about 50 new professions will appear in the coming years, and many more will disappear. Consequently, people probably will have numerous different jobs in the future, and they will have to be prepared for them. It will require many 'smaller pieces' of learning in the form of specific modules or short programmes offered by the universities to update or enhance their existing knowledge and competencies.

Furthermore, now it is the role of the Universities to raise learners awareness that graduation does not mean completing their learning: they must be prepared to become self-guided learners. They must understand the importance of lifelong learning and training instead of one-time learning/training followed by employment. It means that people will not go through a single degree programme and expect to be employed for life in a single career path.

Since the specific skills, competencies and knowledge needed in the future are uncertain, curricula will need to be frequently revised and updated. Universities will need to adapt rapidly and form broad sets of competencies for a very diverse group of students. Flexibility will be a keyword, and it must be seen in different ways: programmes need to be more flexible to adapt to societal changes and a greater diversity of students.

To meet the challenges of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, universities will need to take specific actions on foresight and planning. After the Bologna Follow-Up Group meeting (held in Bucharest in April 2019), the following conclusions and premises have been articulated:

The first premise is to increase the social role of higher education and demonstrate that it provides tangible benefits to society. Universities should work to increase public understanding of their role and importance and ensure that they actually provide benefits for society.

The second premise is to expand the accessibility of higher education - universities should focus on the needs of all learners, regardless of their origin (this also applies to migratory movement), social status and age. This requires the delivery of more flexible and diverse education programmes.

Finally, the third premise, closely related to the second, is the introduction of innovative, flexible and relevant ways of learning and teaching.

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[2] The first industrial revolution used water and steam to mechanize production (the end of the eighteen century), the second used electric energy to create mass production (late 19th and early 20th century) and the third used electronics and information technology to automate production (1970s); the fourth is the age of the disappearance of the barriers between people and machines (second decade of the 21st century).

These are the three main topics and principal social responsibilities of Higher Education. Of course, quality of teaching and learning is essential, but quality assurance mechanisms may constitute a barrier to innovation in program design. We should address this contradiction by analyzing current regulations, standards, and guidelines and ensuring that the quality assurance mechanisms help respond to new and different types of requirements.

There is another danger: in a world that starts to be increasingly dependent on robotics, artificial intelligence and digitization, the premises of the Fourth Industrial Revolution bring the threat of dehumanization. Digitization should not change the deepest premise of higher education, which is its human dimension. We need to take action to face this risk. Furthermore, here art plays an important role: fulfilling to a large extent the premises and guidelines of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, art can serve as a specific moderator in the ongoing activities.

In what direction is music going? Technology and digitization now enable an entirely new approach to the musical matter. Nevertheless, we cannot neglect the current formula of student education based on classical music because it represents the essence of our cultural heritage. Nevertheless, we are in the period of the digital revolution; previous innovative trends in music - Serialism, Punctualism, Aphoristic music, Bruithism, Concrete music, Aleatoric music, Stochastic music, Microtone music, Minimal music, Spectral music and the instruments used in them are becoming a thing of the past, replaced by entirely new instruments offered by electronics. An example of Stanford University (one of the foremost universities in the world, and its music department, especially electronic music, is one of the leaders in the world) proves that possibilities arising from it are enormous.

The Association Européenne des Conservatoires, Académies de Musique et Musikhochschulen (AEC), a European cultural and educational network founded in 1953, and now associating almost 300 professional music training institutions from 57 countries in Europe, and also in US, Asia, South America and Australia, plays a leading role in the development of music in Higher Music Education in Europe. The main aims of AEC are to promote European cooperation in higher music education and address European issues. AEC has had programmes in Socrates, Erasmus-Mundus, EU/USA, eContent – distant learning, Culture 2000, Leonardo, Erasmus+ and Full Score. The main office of the AEC is in Brussels.

In the frame of AEC has been established Polifonia - the European Thematic Network for music. 55 higher music institutions from 26 European countries and four countries outside Europe (Australia, Canada, USA and Hong Kong) contributed to 'Polifonia' as official project partners and participated in its activity. Now Polifonia does not exist, but its 3 European Platforms are still working: Early Music Platform, Jazz and Pop Platform, European Platform for Artistic Research in Music (EPARM).

In November 2015, at the annual AEC Congress in Glasgow, AEC identified three themes that reflected its core values in the new Strategic Plan for 2016 – 2020.

These are summed up in the Plan's title: 'Pursuing Quality; Sharing Knowledge; Strengthening Partnerships'. As a part of the new AEC' Strategic Plan has also presented a new project entitled FULL SCORE reflecting its overall aim of ″FULfiLLing the Skills, COmpetences and know-how REquirements of cultural and creative players in the European music sector″. FULL SCORE promotes *quality* in the education delivered to musicians (giving them the best skills and competencies), spreads *knowledge* relating to that quality (helping in the sharing of these skills and competencies) and strengthens *partnership* (involving a range of stakeholders in helping to define the skills and competencies required for the future).

Other FULL SCORE' topics were also important:

- to set up an online platform for application and administration of exchange and mobility activities;
- to create a common European platform for advertising job vacancies for instrumental and vocal musicians and composers;
- AEC will engage young musicians in sharing their views about how best to facilitate their access to professional opportunities and engage with contemporary audiences.
- to take a leading role in developing a European Agenda for Music, together with the European Music Council (EMC).

European Agenda for Music was a proposal of the European Music Council. The main goal of this initiative was to constitute a platform that brings together the whole music sector to allow stakeholders to participate more effectively and with one voice in European cultural policy-making. Working in close cooperation with the European Association for Music in Schools (EAS) and the European Music School Union (EMU) under its project 'FULL SCORE', the AEC offered to jointly coordinate work on that part of the Agenda which deals with music education. As part of this work, AEC, EAS and EMU committed to consulting their respective members about the priorities to be addressed in the European Agenda for Music: what should be in it and how it should be constructed and, eventually, used.

It was also stated that AEC would ensure a full and effective engagement of conservatoire leaders in the development of a European Agenda for Music that seeks:

- to stimulate musical creativity and creation;
- to improve the circulation of European repertoire and the mobility of artists throughout Europe;
- to support musical diversity and ensure music education for all;
- to strengthen the recognition of the societal value of music;
- to reach out to new audiences and develop new publics.

Another essential element of AEC activity was establishing an independent European subject-specific review body for higher music education institutions and programmes - MusiQuE. The program of MusiQuE is dedicated to the continuous improvement of the quality of higher music education across Europe and beyond and assisting higher music education institutions in their enhancement of quality.

The AEC Quality Enhancement Committee, with the help of the 'Polifonia' Working Group on Quality Enhancement, Accreditation and Benchmarking, worked since 2011 on bringing AEC to the point where it was ready to launch this body. As a result, the statutes establishing MusiQuE – were signed by AEC president Pascale De Groote in The Hague on 7 October 2014.

This step had enormous significance for AEC because it moved the responsibility for the AEC institutional and programme reviews to an independent external review body – MusiQuE.

MusiQuE offers a range of reviews and accreditation processes tailored to the needs of Higher Music Education institutions:

- Quality enhancement processes for institutions, programmes and joint programmes;
- Independent accreditation procedures for institutions, programmes and joint programmes;
- Joint procedures with national quality assurance and accreditation agencies.

The process of the evaluation procedure is very similar to processes conducted by national Accreditation Agencies: preparation of self-evaluation report, an onsite visit of 1.5 to 3 days by the international peer-reviewers (at least four persons, including a student), accompanied by a secretary. The outcome is either an advisory report highlighting good practices and including a set of recommendations or a report that concludes with a formal recommendation to award accreditation.

The areas to be reviewed are as follows:

- Mission, vision and context
- Educational processes
- Student profiles
- Teaching staff
- Facilities, resources and support
- Communication, organisation and decision-making processes
- Internal quality culture
- Public interaction

After the accreditation visits, one recommendation is very important in the conclusions of many reports: greater emphasis should be placed on developing "soft" skills. As part of the "broadly defined education," it is essential to focus on accomplishing various types of generic outcomes: graduates will need such competencies as critical thinking, creativity and the ability for autonomous learning, instead flexibility, teamwork and leadership skills, communication skills and skills related to digital technologies. In the assessment process, too much attention tends to be paid to practical outcomes and too little to academic and generic outcomes (social competencies). Although the so-called technical (practical) skills are essential, the AEC Learning Outcomes and the "musical version" of Dublin Descriptors also provide for some theoretical and generic learning outcomes. Therefore, creativity,

the ability to independently integrate the acquired knowledge and take new and comprehensive activities in an organised way, and the use of psychological mechanisms that support taking action should be appreciated and evaluated. Students should be more prepared for a rapidly changing world. Knowledge should be seen in a context that includes ethical dimensions. The broader role of education in shaping character and transmitting values, not just content, should always be considered.

Creating and implementing new solutions and innovative approaches that European universities have identified as helpful in their work requires:

- taking measures aimed at establishing new programmes and specialisations, in particular, those of an interdisciplinary (inter-university) character;
- developing student-centred curricula, i.a., by enabling students to shape their learning pathways;
- consolidating measures taken by various faculties to improve their cooperation, in order to make broader and more diverse use of the academic staff (inter-faculty classes, combinations of knowledge dissemination methods, increased flexibility), and discussing the Academy's curricula at the inter-faculty level aimed at a better integration of the curricula offered by various units within the Institution (faculties, institutes, chairs, departments, etc.);
- enabling students to gradually synthesize and develop the ability to practically use the disseminated knowledge, which appears crucial given the emerging needs of the labour market;
- preparing students for an international career: a portfolio career and/or travelling career, and familiarizing them with subjects related to copyright, tax law, fundamentals of marketing and administration – better tailored to the modern labour market;
- introducing new learning methods: Tutoring, Design thinking, Problem-based learning, Case learning, Flipped education and Peer learning;
- further developing the e-learning methods;
- developing well-balanced curricula, comprehensive but not overloaded, flexible and progressive, and student-centred and oriented to the learning process.

In the context of the initiative of the European Commission regarding the creation of *Creative Europe - Cultural and Creative Higher Education*, the graduates of our artistic academies will be the leading players in the future – that is why they have to be equipped with the best skills, competencies and *know-how* requirements.