

15 May 2018

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

We the undersigned have recently taken part in **YoungEM-ping**, a two-day conference organised by **NORDEM** as a contribution to the **European Year of Cultural Heritage**, and held at the Nordic House in Tórshavn in the Faroe Islands. The aim of the conference was to investigate the role of early music in the education of children and young people (from pre-school to college level) in the Nordic-Baltic area. Delegates (aged from 16 to over 60) included students, professional musicians, teachers, festival directors and artistic administrators, who were drawn from Denmark, the Faroe Islands, Finland, Latvia, and Sweden. Classes of local pre-school children and adult *kvædi* performers took part in some conference sessions, and there were guest speakers from the Faroe Islands, Portugal and the UK.

"Early Music," which includes over 600 years of "invisible" European cultural heritage, stretches from indigenous folk music traditions (such as the Faroese *kvædi*) to the beginnings of romanticism in the late eighteenth century. We believe that the repertoires of this amazing collection of musical styles and traditions is an ideal way of introducing children to music. This is because

- it is based on participatory group work,
- it does not require prior knowledge (except on the part of the teachers),
- it can easily be related to other subjects within the curriculum, and
- it is the perfect way of learning the rudiments of music theory, which can lead to a life-long interest in musical culture.

As a result of our deliberations we agreed on the following four points, which a local member of NORDEM would be pleased to present to you in more detail in person:

1. In the Nordic-Baltic area there are already many examples of good practice in Early Music education, often based on baroque repertoire (c. 1600-1750). These include, for example:

- In Denmark a co-operation between the orchestra Concerto Copenhagen and the national Musikalisk Grundkursus was initiated in 2013. This programme is designed to put young advanced players (i.e. those aiming for a solo career) in touch with the expertise of CoCo, and enable them to discover Early Music as soon as possible in their professional lives.
- In Finland the Collegium of the Finnish Baroque Orchestra (based in Helsinki) has successfully collaborated with both municipal and private music schools throughout the country since 2008.
- In Sweden, Drottningholms Barockensemble works regularly with pupils at Nacka Music School just outside Stockholm, and Karlsson Barock from Gothenburg has developed a baroque Youth Orchestra drawing young musicians from the west of Sweden.

In addition there are several large and small scale interNordic collaborative projects, such as:

- Viking Baroque is the result of an initiative taken by FiBO and in 2018-19 will involve four Nordic countries, each providing one national professional ensembles and—together—about 1500 children and young people.
- The EARly competition organised by NORDEM since 2008, enables older students and younger professional musicians up to the age of 33 to take part in a competition with an international jury, resulting in the opportunity for the winning ensemble to present concerts at some of the festivals organised by NORDEM.

Finally, many professional Early Musicians and smaller ensembles are deeply involved in educational work of one sort or another.

2. Despite all this activity, however, **there are still large gaps in the provision of regular music education in our schools**. The excellent examples mentioned above are mostly project-based, rather than being part of national educational provision. In comparison with some other countries, music education in the Nordic-Baltic area is considered a less important part of the curriculum. During our conference we learnt about three specific initiatives that present us with healthy challenges:

- In Portugal, an initiative called "Orelhudo," based at the Casa da Musica in Porto has been running since 2013. It is a web-based programme that offers schools (and families too) a 90-second musical experience for every day of the year. The range of the music is vast, stretching from the earliest times up until today, and including all genres except for pop and rock, which it is considered do not need any special introduction. 365 new musical excerpts are chosen each year, and the "back catalogue" (but not tomorrow's excerpt) is available on the website. The programme is designed for a variety of web browsers, tablets and smart-phones. This programme is financed by the Casa da Musica and costs the equivalent of one full-time person's salary per year. As yet it has NOT been incorporated into the national curriculum.
- In the UK, the Orchestra of the Age of the Enlightenment, a well-established baroque and classical orchestra has established an ambitious programme of work in schools that covers the entire age-range from "tots" through "teens" to college students and young professionals. It is based on members of the orchestra regularly visiting a large number of schools over the entire UK, working with school children, training their teachers and linking up with the orchestra's local concerts. After 12 years the programme now has a budget of around £300,000 (i.e. almost 3,5 mkr). The content of the programme is based around the repertoire of the orchestra, and also involves professional composers.
- In the Faroe Islands, we heard about the way in which the government recently passed a law, which means that the Faroese medieval song-dance tradition, called the *kvæði*, is now a separate subject in the school curriculum. All pupils now study this ancient practice, which will ensure its survival and development. We also learnt how in the space of just 40 years the musical landscape of the Faroes has been transformed by visionary musicians and teachers.

What about other countries? We would like to discuss how similar projects could be developed in Nordic and Baltic countries, and how we can work together with local and national politicians to develop appropriate initiatives. This would entail, for example:

- making sure that the importance of music as a whole is enshrined in national curricula,
- developing teacher training programmes in collaboration with professional musicians able to work with Early repertoires,
- strengthening the relationship of music with the rest of the curriculum; we are surprised that in this year of European Cultural Heritage there seems to be so little Nordic-Baltic activity in this area, and
- working towards a better understanding of how Early Music can play a fundamental role in music education, especially of younger children,
- not shying away from the financial implications, and together finding creative solutions.

3. We propose that **six practical steps** should be taken:

1. **Create** further opportunities for national and international collaboration, such as our ping. These could include annual national conferences to formulate new initiatives (including digital platforms) in the area of traditional musics, and interdisciplinary artistic collaborations.
2. **Establish** relationships between music and other school subjects, which evince the central place of music in cultural life.
3. **Provide** opportunities for Early Music teachers in tertiary education to meet and discuss the role of Early Music in the conservatoires.
4. Since there are few funding foundations that accept applications for intra-Nordic collaboration: **increase** an awareness of this problem among grant-making bodies, and also find ways of enabling longer-term financial support programmes.
5. **Remedy** the general lack of knowledge concerning Early Music through the development of national strategies for the spreading of information about the positive values of Early Music in cultural life.
6. **Strengthen** the role of NORDEM (founded in 2006) as a platform and central reference point for putting together documents such as this one which aim to articulate future possibilities in the area of Early Music. This will enable action to take place more easily at both regional and national levels.

Nils My
Niklas Mellberg

Erik Rønne

ERIK RØNNE

Emil Hjelmholtz

A. Kalucicma

Peter Pontvik

Mig Martain

Karin Lindström

KARIN LINDSTRÖM

Kirstine Skov Hansen

PETER SPISSKY

Ami-Louise Johnson

Ami-Louise Johnson

Mark Tallow

Ann Willebrand

Eleonora
Eleonora
Sjöström
Granström

Karin Bengmark

KARIN BENGMARK

APPENDIX

General information about YoungEM-Ding circulated before the conference. The third point specifically relates to the development of the above document.

1. Early music in education

YoungEM straddles the fields of education and performance, showing that early music is one of the most appropriate musical repertoires for educational use today. Through partnering with musicians and teachers from the Faroes, participants will learn about the *kvæði*, a unique Nordic expression of history and culture. They will observe local children's experience of it and reflect on the ways in which this Faroese tradition is being developed today. YoungEM will thus contribute to a deeper understanding of our common Nordic cultural heritage, and how it can be shared throughout the Nordic-Baltic area.

2. Educational initiatives linked with festivals and other performances

YoungEM aims to strengthen the position of early music education in the Nordic-Baltic area

YoungEM aims to present a model of sustainability in which early music educational initiatives in schools are linked with festivals and other performances in the community. It will be a platform both for learning, and for sharing ideas and best practices. It will include workshop labs and key-note addresses, where early music experts from the Nordic-Baltic area will meet colleagues from other parts of Europe.

3. Joint action plan and continued work

YoungEM will initiate and stimulate long term collaboration within the Nordic-Baltic area by formulating a joint action plan for the implementation of early music education in schools, and by signing a statement as a basis for further dialogue with education authorities in each Nordic-Baltic country.

After the event, participants of YoungEM will be in position to set up workshops, create new contacts, develop networks, write debate articles etc. Through both traditional and social media they will be able to act strongly in putting the place of music in education, specifically early music, back on the public agenda.