

YoungEM: Early Music in Children's Education

YoungEM aims to strengthen the position of early music education in the Nordic-Baltic area (N-B) by establishing a viable network linking practitioners, teachers and cultural administrators. The presence of festival directors, concert promoters, and audience development officers, will enable YoungEM to straddle the fields of education and performance, showing that early music is one of the most appropriate musical repertoires for use in education today. YoungEM will initiate a longer-term programme of collaboration within the N-B area by formulating a joint statement of intent.

"Early music" stretches from the very beginnings of social music making until the end of the early modern period (c. 1800), and includes the baroque, renaissance and medieval repertoires. This important part of our cultural heritage has been increasingly marginalised in the education of children in the N-B countries, despite its representing an ideal means of realising cultural history, and its collaborative potential with other subjects. Complementary threads within early music can be fashioned to allow children to connect with local and national folk music traditions as well as with music composed for specific purposes in differing historical and social contexts. The positive effect of music on both performer and listener has, at the same time, been increasingly recognised. Because approaches to early music making are diverse and flexible, they lend themselves to almost any educational environment and level of experience, and can make a huge contribution to children's physical and mental well-being. Fantasy, storytelling, and improvisation are central to the world of early music, and create exciting synergies with today's virtual realities. Early music develops social skills away from the world of smartphones and computers, which can be creatively shared through today's social media.

Early music is already well established in higher education, but its connection with the primary and secondary sectors is weaker. YoungEM aims to develop the relationship between the professional early music community and both the general and the musical education of children.

For festival directors the event will provide models for reaching out to new audiences in their local communities, in particular to families with young children. YoungEM aims to present a model of early music sustainability in which educational initiatives in schools are linked with local festivals and other performance platforms. This will in turn contribute to audience development and reinforce the place of early music in local cultural life, including the creation of business partnerships.

YoungEM will both be a platform for the sharing of ideas, and a conference for the sharing of best practice. It will include workshop labs in which theoretical perspectives are put into practice. Through key-note addresses early music pioneers from the N-B area will meet colleagues with the experience of working in parts of Europe where early music is more deeply rooted. Each participant will be equipped to return home with a specific project to work on. This in-built competence development will ensure that the perspectives of YoungEM spread throughout the N-B area. By partnering with the Faroe Islands, participants will be able to experience the Faroese *kvæði*. This will form a living example of a tradition that by becoming more widely known in the N-B area, will contribute to a deeper understanding of our common heritage.

YoungEM will conclude with a concert in which Faroese children who have participated in one of the workshops will perform to other schoolchildren.

To ensure the success of YoungEM an element of organised follow-up has been built in. This will take place through a series of digital initiatives including written evaluative exercises and report-back sessions via skype. These activities will in turn lead to further local, national and international events.