

Weimar Declaration Music Schools in Europe

On the occasion of the General Assembly of the European Music School Union (EMU) which was held from 6th to 10th October 1999 in Weimar, the 1999 Cultural Capital of Europe, the following declaration was unanimously adopted by the representatives of the National Music School Associations.

The European Music School Union addresses the following declaration to the Committee on Culture, Youth, Education, Media and Sport of the European Parliament and to the Council of Europe, urging its members to do all in their power to actively support the promotion of music schools in Europe, in the spirit of the EMU's Weimar Declaration.

It is our expectation that those agencies and persons responsible for music schools at European, national and local level will come to see the Weimar Declaration as a guide for the elaboration of a policy with respect to music schools which contributes to the building of a culturally active

1. 'Cultural education' – a human right made possible by music schools

1.1 At its World Conference on Cultural Policy on 2nd April 1998 in Stockholm, UNESCO adopted an action plan, the focal point of which is the right of all persons to education, art and culture. For the first time, the development of a cultural identity was granted the status of a human right. Moreover, in article 31 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child of November 20, 1999, the States Parties to the Convention agreed, among other things, to respect and promote the right of the child to participate fully in cultural

and artistic life and to encourage the provision of appropriate and equal opportunities for creative and artistic activity.

• As institutions providing cultural education, music schools make these basic rights a reality.

1.2 Music promotes the free development of the personality. The ability to feel music and to express it expands a person's ability to experience themselves and the world around them. Playing music encourages a person to grapple creatively and sensitively with the fruits of another individual's creativity. Playing music cultivates a person's ability to communicate and trains individuals in social behaviour.

• The teaching ideal pursued by the music schools is committed to this educational process.

1.3 Playing music trains important secondary abilities in a person – abilities which are also of benefit in other life contexts, for example in professional life. These include concentration, stamina and motivation, creativity, communication and expression skills, social role behaviour and teamwork.

• Qualified music training, such as that offered by the music schools, is able to achieve this „added value'.

The EMU calls upon

the European Union and the national governments to implement the UNO Convention (rights of the child) and the UNESCO postulate (rights of all persons to education, art and culture), to recognise, formulate in policy and establish firmly in the education system, the great significance which cultural and, specifically, musical education

has in the context of society. Music training – both in schools providing general education and in music schools – is an intrinsic component of the general education, which it is the State's obligation to guarantee.

2. Music schools are a building block of the European identity

2.1 What holds Europe together at its core is its nature as a cultural space – its shared cultural tradition. This common culture provides people in Europe with a sense of security as individuals within their society as well as sense of belonging which transcends national borders.

• Music schools constitute one of the building blocks of Europe's common cultural tradition.

2.2 European musical culture has created a language of music which can be understood by all peoples of Europe. Traditional folk music elements are an integral part of this language, as are jazz and popular music. It has been enriched by musical traditions from other parts of the globe and has come to be part of a truly international language.

• Music schools teach their students this international language of music.

2.3 Music has many faces and provides links to many of the other fine arts.

• Music schools are open to the 'crossing of borders' as is evidenced in music theatre, dance/ballet, cabaret and many other genres. They co-operate with other institutions that provide cultural education as well as with schools offering general education. In some countries, music schools also offer courses in the other arts.

2.4 Like all other aspects of culture, music is dependent on both tradition and innovation. Musical culture must be cultivated, shared, enriched with new perspectives and then imparted to the younger generations that must be inculcated

with an understanding of it.

• Music schools make it possible to experience music as something which is alive and vital and ensure the rise of a new generation who will be able to keep music alive in its multitude of forms.

The EMU requests,

that music schools be recognized for the role they play in nurturing Europe's cultural dimension which provides the foundation for political and economic co-operation. They do not only serve the specific interests of the individual; they also play a role in society, indeed they represent the interests of the community in a unified Europe. In order to discharge this function, music schools need to be protected and promoted by means of legislation at national level.

3. Music schools contribute to the attainment of peace and international understanding

3.1 The globalization of our political, economic and communication structures instils fears in many people and these fears lead to an inclination to retreat into national, local and in some cases even isolated, individual horizons of awareness. This can lead to new isolationist attitudes and exclusionary tendencies.

• Music schools maintain a great variety of international relations and are important vehicles for official, political town-twinning efforts. They facilitate cross-border encounters, precisely among young people, with music as the theme and open up common horizons of understanding and communication.

3.2 The growing together of the countries of the European Union goes hand in hand with the elimination of the barriers which once separated East and West. A large number of neighbouring states in Eastern Europe are seeking a new political direction in joining the European Union, the

basis of which is the living idea of a shared European culture.

• Long before the notion of EU Enlargement gained currency, the EMU already had as its members, countries which either only joined the EU at a relatively late stage or, in some cases, are not yet even partaking in Europe's political dimension. This is an indication of the enormous power of integration wielded by the cultural education imparted by the music schools – a power which is superior to the political and economic problems which currently exist.

The EMU requests,

- that national governments provide generous support for international musical encounters that music schools organise for young people, within the European framework and beyond;
- that it be allowed to participate together with other cultural associations in the shaping of the EU's cultural promotion programmes to a greater degree than has hitherto been the case and that it be able to do so on a permanent basis;
- that its Europe-wide projects like the IMEE (Intercultural Music Education in Europe) be adequately supported from European Commission funds.

4. Music schools – a pan-European idea

4.1 Music schools have developed in the different European countries from various traditions which consist of imparting serious education and training in the field of music: the conservatories, school music and 'youth music'. Today, the educational goals of all of these traditions flow into the objectives pursued by Europe's music schools, in the field of musical education:

- bringing music to large groups of the population;
- empowering large numbers of people to make music actively themselves;

– discovering talented young persons and nurturing them all the way up to professional studies in music.

4.2 The fact that all of Europe's music schools stand out for their scholastic and curricular structures, the variety of subjects they offer, the following of syllabuses, the employment of qualified specialist staff, are all elements which contribute decisively to the achievement of these objectives.

4.3 The marks of quality which distinguish the European music schools also include the consistent further development and innovation of their activities, their teaching methods, the further training of teaching staff as well as technical and professional discussion and exchange.

4.4 Since its foundation, the EMU has strived to facilitate and intensify the exchange of information and the transfer of organizational, pedagogical and cultural policy know-how so that similarities can gain greater significance and differences become more enriching. The creation of music school networks in many member states is the result of this aspect of the EMU's work.

The EMU requests,

- that the special term 'Music School' and its equivalents in the other European states, be granted state protection within the meaning of the guidelines defined by the national associations of music schools so that they can be clearly differentiated from commercial leisure activity on offer;
- that it be given a mandate by the European Commission as a supranational organization, furnished with the corresponding financial support, in recognition of its efforts to achieve a consensual 'harmonization' of the work of music schools in Europe.

5. Music schools are a public responsibility

5.1 Every person who has the corresponding inclination and perhaps even talent should be able to attend a music school. The financial burden on the pupil may not be allowed to become too onerous.

5.2 People's interest in music and their willingness to educate themselves should not be surrendered to the vagaries of the culture market and the leisure activity industry.

5.3 The quality of the structures, the activities offered, and the teaching staff necessary for the music schools to fulfil their educational task and for them to participate in musical life, can only be guaranteed if the State assumes its responsibility on the basis of a clear declaration of its political will and its financial commitment.

5.4 In the interest of safeguarding their public support and the widespread recognition they enjoy, the music schools will continue to increase and consolidate the quality of their services and activities. Alongside their technical skills, they will also be increasing their economic efficiency.

The EMU requests,

- that music schools be recognized by those who are politically responsible, as an integral part of the basic cultural input to which every citizen may lay claim, and thus as an indispensable public responsibility;
- that music schools continue to be the subject of cultural, educational and social policy and that politicians and public administrations do not shirk their responsibility for shaping this public task which music schools embody;
- that it be recognized that, although private sponsorship is welcome, it does not constitute a reliable basis for planning. Music schools cannot fulfil their educational mandate without public funding. The fees should not be such that they deter anyone.