

Executive summary

Report

Programmes Quality Enhancement Review

BA Music, BA Music and Movement, MA in Performance, MA in Pedagogy, MA in Specialised Music Performance, MA in Composition

Conservatorio della Svizzera Italiana (Lugano, Switzerland)

Site-visit: 23 – 25 October 2018

Introduction

The Conservatorio della Svizzera italiana (CSI) is a private foundation with public mandate and public support, that manages three operationally autonomous departments: the *Scuola universitaria di musica/ University of Music (SUM)*, affiliated with the *Scuola universitaria professionale della Svizzera italiana (SUPSI)*; the *Pre-Professionale/Pre-College (PRE)*, for high school students; and the *Scuola di musica/Music School (SMUS)*, non-professional section. The three departments have financial autonomy, operate separately as regards contracts, accountability, and public support. The SUM is mainly financed by cantonal and federal contributions, through the intermediation of the SUPSI; the PRE is partly financed by cantonal subsidies, and responds to the Cantonal Division for professional education (*Divisione della formazione professionale DFP*); and the SMUS is partly financed by cantonal and municipal subsidies, and responds to the Cantonal Division for Culture and Academic studies (*Divisione per la cultura e gli studi universitari DCSU*).



The governance of CSI is further referenced in the Self Evaluation Report and outlined in the following documents: the Charter of the Foundation (*Statuti della Fondazione*), the “constitution” of the Foundation, which determines its Mission; the Organisation regulations (*Regolamento d'organizzazione -RO*), which discipline the bodies, their function, rights and duties; the Internal control system (*Sistema di controllo interno SCI*), accompanied by regular risk analysis, which establishes the principal processes and the control mechanisms.

The principal bodies of the Foundation are outlined in the self-evaluation document, along with an Executive Summary, a history of the institution and of the programmes and a context for the national music education system. The SUM became affiliated to the *Scuola Universitaria Professionale della Svizzera Italiana* (SUPSI) by an accord of March 2006. Its relationship with the SUPSI is based on the maintenance of the dual status of a school of the *Fondazione CSI* and an affiliated department of the SUPSI. The SUPSI will be undergoing through the process for institutional accreditation in the near future. As part of this process, a number of key procedures are being implemented across all schools, including affiliated ones such as SUM.

Since 2008, additional federal contributions allowed CSI to develop much needed internal services, to raise the number of students and courses, and to work on the consolidation of the system and the improvement of quality. The opening of the new LAC cultural centre in Lugano in 2015 has offered new perspectives for CSI productions, and has worked as a real catalyst in CSI's performance development and regional awareness. Orchestral performances have now finally found an adequate and a wonderful acoustic context and a large and representative public.

Specific data on the institution is provided as part of the self-evaluation report. It appears that the institution is able to exercise a reasonable amount of flexibility with respect to students with artistic potential in regard to both admission and completion requirements. Examples include offering access to the PRE programme for students who do not yet meet the language or theoretical requirements and/or extending the study period if a student is not deemed ready to undertake a final examination (meetings with management, meeting with heads of studies).

Context of the review

The Conservatorio della Svizzera Italiana in Lugano commissioned MusiQuE to organise a programme quality enhancement review of six programmes (two Bachelor programmes, four Master programmes). Following an intense period of reorganization, the rationale for commissioning MusiQuE for the review was summed up by the institution as follows:



“In a period of an intense transformation, a period which has not finished yet the institution believes that an external review, made by people who know the business, will be an important milestone in the development of CSI, beyond the precious expertise the Advisory Board already gives. Also, as the SUPSI – to which the CSI-SUM is affiliated – is going to face the mandatory institutional accreditation, a procedure that will necessarily include CSI-SUM, a separate and anticipated programme review for the musical sector could reduce the risk of being judged within a system which is not particularly adapted to music standards.”

The MusiQuE Review Team was asked to assess the compliance of the BA and MA programmes with the MusiQuE Standards for Programme Review and to present their objective findings, as well as their recommendations in a quality enhancement report.

Procedure

The procedure leading up to the writing of this report was the following:

- CSI prepared a Self-evaluation Report (*SER*) based on the *MusiQuE Standards for Programme Review*, and supported by many other documents, which were made available in hard copy and online to the review team.
- An international review team convened by MusiQuE studied the *SER* and conducted a site-visit at CSI during 23-25 October 2018. The site-visit comprised of meetings with representatives of the CSI management, including the Director and senior administrative officers, as well as with the President of the CSI Foundation, member of the Advisory Board, teaching and administrative staff, students, alumni, employers and external stakeholders. The review team was provided with samples of students' work and members of the review team visited classes, rehearsals and lectures.
- The review team produced the following review report, which is structured according to the Standards mentioned above.

The MusiQuE Review Team consisted of the following peers:

- Janet Ritterman (Chair) - Chancellor, Middlesex University; Vice-President, Royal College of Music, London
- Helena Maffli (Review team member) - Former President of the European Music School Union (EMU)
- Michael Uhde (Review team member) - - Former Vice-rector of the Hochschule für Musik Karlsruhe, Germany
- Federico Forla (Student) - Student at the Royal Conservatoire The Hague, The Netherlands



- Gabriela Mayer (Secretary) - Head of Department of Keyboard Studies (and Erasmus Coordinator), CIT Cork School of Music, Cork Institute of Technology, Ireland

Review Team Comment

The review team was impressed with the professional approach and the total commitment of the CSI and the various groups that were present at the meetings during the site visit. They sensed a great sense of common purpose and a willingness to work together that is admirable. While the staff of the institution consider the school relatively young and small, they also feel that this allows them to adapt quickly and pride themselves on the informal, close-knit atmosphere of the school. Furthermore, the general course offer and the structure of the programmes allow for a great mix of students across the six programmes.



Summary of the compliance with the Standards and recommendations

The review team concludes that the Programmes comply with the *Standards for Programme Review* as follows:

MusiQuE Standards	Compliance	Remarks
<i>Standard 1</i> The programme goals are clearly stated and reflect the institutional mission.	Fully compliant	
<i>Standard 2.1</i> The goals of the programme are achieved through the content and structure of the curriculum and its methods of delivery.	Fully compliant	
<i>Standard 2.2</i> The programme offers a range of opportunities for students to gain an international perspective.	Fully compliant	
<i>Standard 2.3</i> Assessment methods are clearly defined and demonstrate achievement of learning outcomes	Substantially compliant	Assessment methods are not always clearly defined in all areas, and links to learning outcomes not demonstrated.
<i>Standard 3.1</i> There are clear criteria for student admission, based on an assessment of their artistic/academic suitability for the programme.	Fully compliant	
<i>Standard 3.2</i> The programme has mechanisms to formally monitor and review the progression, achievement and subsequent employability of its students.	Substantially compliant	The programmes do not yet have formal mechanisms to monitor the subsequent

		employment of their students.
<i>Standard 4.1</i> Members of the teaching staff are qualified for their role and are active as artists/pedagogues/researchers.	Fully compliant	
<i>Standard 4.2</i> There are sufficient qualified teaching staff to effectively deliver the programmes.	Fully compliant	
<i>Standard 5.1</i> The institution has appropriate resources to support student learning and delivery of the programme.	Substantially compliant	Rehearsal spaces and additional improvements needed.
<i>Standard 5.2</i> The institution's financial resources enable successful delivery of the study programmes.	Fully compliant	
<i>Standard 5.3</i> The programme has sufficient qualified support staff.	Fully compliant	
<i>Standard 6.1</i> Effective mechanisms are in place for internal communication within the programme.	Substantially compliant	Internal communication within the programmes often relies on informal means of dissemination, which on some occasions may benefit from more formal approaches.
<i>Standard 6.2</i> The programme is supported by an appropriate organisational structure and clear decision-making processes.	Substantially compliant	The organisational structures do not consistently

		facilitate participative decision-making.
<i>Standard 7</i> The programme has in place effective quality assurance and enhancement procedures.	Substantially compliant	SUM has a strong internal quality culture but the procedures and processes used to review, monitor and enhance the quality of provision needs to be more clearly documented and systematically applied.
<i>Standard 8.1</i> The programme engages within wider cultural, artistic and educational contexts.	Fully compliant	
<i>Standard 8.2</i> The programme actively promotes links with various sectors of the music and other artistic professions.	Fully compliant	
<i>Standard 8.3</i> Information provided to the public about the programme is clear, consistent and accurate.	Fully compliant	

Conclusion

The CSI has a clear sense of identity and has made successful efforts to develop a distinctive profile through its programmes, quality of staff and students and active involvement in the cultural life of the region. The institution is committed to delivering music education that includes two other departments, SMUS and PRE, with respective clear mandates, as well as continuing education provision. Its affiliation to SUPSI anchors the SUM department into the university sector, with significant mutual benefits, including new avenues of professional recognition for particular programmes and development of further research areas in the future. Within the institution there is a strong and shared vision of its role, responsibilities and priorities. A healthy and ambitious drive to improve is balanced by a realistic sense of what can be achieved. Clear targets as well as flexibility of approach are commendable. The leadership of the institution has ensured that CSI has been active in helping to shape policy and practice at the national level, and, as a result, the institution is highly respected by colleagues in other institutions.

The geographical location, the function of this institution as a cultural bridge and its many layered international activities as well as the excellent quality of teaching and individual care given to students have ensured that a unique, vibrant conservatoire exists here and that it has established itself as a highly attractive place to study.

In conclusion, the review team wishes to acknowledge the unquestionable value of the ethos of quick, direct responsiveness and flexibility prized by management, teachers and students in CSI. The review team is confident that CSI can implement some changes without losing this quintessential quality.

Overall, the picture presented by the institution is a vibrant one, where challenges and opportunities are carefully considered and balanced by practical plans for future development. Dynamic interaction, adaptability and growth are fundamental values, which are expressed constantly at many levels. The programmes have regional, national and international relevance and are mindful of career development and employability for their graduates.

The review team wishes to commend the institution as a whole for its enthusiasm and dedication to music education and to the wellbeing of all students.

