

**Bachelor of Music  
Conservatorium Maastricht  
Zuyd University of Applied Sciences**

***Report of the limited programme assessment  
19 and 20 June 2023***

## Colophon

### Programme

Zuyd University of Applied Sciences

Bachelor of Music

Location: Maastricht

Mode of study: fulltime

Croho: 34739

Result of institutional assessment: positive

### Panel

Raoul van Aalst, chair

Maarten Weyler, domain expert

Robert Ehrlich, domain expert

Eva Muskens, student

Jesseka Batteau, secretary

The panel was presented to the NVAO for approval.

The assessment was conducted under responsibility of

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*This document is best printed in duplex*

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## Summary

On 19 and 20 June 2023 an assessment panel of AeQui visited the Bachelor of Music of Maastricht Conservatorium. The panel judges that the programme **meets each standard** of the NVAO-framework and that the overall quality of the programme **meets the standard**. The four-year full-time programme of 240 ECTS is taught in English and consists of two distinct programmes: Jazz and Classical Music. Both programmes are based on the same learning outcomes and aim to train students to become skilled musical professionals who are able to carve out a place for themselves in the working domain. The programme is characterised by its international orientation and the emphasis on contemporary cognitive apprenticeship.

### Intended learning outcomes

The panel concludes that the programme **meets the standard**. The programme has formulated intended learning outcomes in close consultation with the (international) professional and educational fields. The panel judges that the intended learning outcomes meet the current demands of the professional domain of classical music and jazz. The panel values the programme's reorientation regarding its vision and goals and encourages the programme to continue to embed this new direction within the whole curriculum.

### Teaching-learning environment

The panel concludes that the programme **meets the standard**. The panel is positive about the orientation, contents, and teaching philosophy of the programme. According to the panel, the programme offers its students a challenging, inspiring curriculum, strongly based on craftsmanship and musical excellence, and taught by outstanding, accomplished teachers of international reputation. The main subject forms the core of the educational programme, supported by clusters and modules focusing on different aspects of the musical profession. The panel highly appreciates the progress the programme has made in the past years to improve its curriculum. The panel observes that the programme has good connections with the working field through its (Euro)regional networks as well as through the professional networks and expertise of its teachers. Students are highly appreciative of their (main subject) teachers and study coaches, they receive good guidance and support in their development, and feel themselves to be very much part of a close-knit community. The programme sustains an open culture of evaluation and discussion, students' perspectives are taken seriously. The programme is selective in admitting students and has an effective

intake procedure that ensures that it enrolls highly talented students whose level and qualifications are aligned with the content and goals of the programme.

### Student assessment

Based on the interviews and examination of the underlying documentation, the assessment panel concludes that the programme **meets the standard**. The panel has established that the assessments of the programme are valid, objective, and transparent. Student assessments are based on clear procedures, rubric course manuals and assessment forms and the four-eyes principle is applied in the assessments of the main subjects. Furthermore, the programme ensures good communication with students about the goals and objectives of the assessments. The panel appreciates that the programme has invested in the improvement of its assessments in the past years and is also positive about the dedicated involvement of the Examination Board. In its evaluation of the assessments of the final projects, the panel observed that these were constructive, realistic, and constituted an accurate reflection of the quality of work presented.

### Achieved learning outcomes

Based on the interviews and examination of the underlying documentation, the assessment panel concludes that the programme **meets the standard**. The final presentations are of a high level and the 'Your Art as Business'-reports provide a good representation of the students' individual development and goals for the future. The majority of alumni work as professional musicians in the professional field and many students are able to further develop the route they have taken in their training and implement it in professional practice.

### Recommendations

The panel is positive about the programme and has the following recommendations for further development:

- The panel recommends that CM connects its strong focus on craftsmanship to a more student-centered approach within its didactic-pedagogical paradigm which will support students in their development as complete artists.
- The panel sees opportunities for integrating the focus on craftsmanship with a wider spectrum of competencies essential to the contemporary musical artist, such as research and entrepreneurial skills.
- The panel encourages the programme to further develop its collaborations in the region, and to investigate how it might diversify and broaden its scope and orientation. The panel also strongly urges the programme to find ways to increase opportunities for students to gain experience in playing in (chamber) orchestras.
- The panel encourages the programme to close the feedback-loop when it comes to changes and improvements, so students and teachers are aware of how their feedback is processed and implemented.
- With regard to the facilities and infrastructure, the panel concludes that the programme is doing a good job under less-than-ideal circumstances. The plans for the new building will offer an opportunity to invest in better and more rooms and new instruments.
- The panel urges the programme to further improve the written feedback to students and their link with grading in the (final) assessments.
- According to the panel, further integration of competencies in the final projects (such as research and entrepreneurship, as well as organisational and teaching skills) and increased engagement with musical diversity will strengthen the end level of the programme.

All standards of the NVAO assessment framework (2018) are assessed positively; the assessment panel therefore awards a **positive recommendation** for the accreditation of the programme.

On behalf of the entire assessment panel,  
Utrecht,  
October 2023

Raoul van Aalst  
Chair

Jesseka Batteau  
Secretary

## Introduction

This report describes the outcome of the evaluation of the Bachelor of Music of the Maastricht Conservatorium, part of Zuyd University of Applied Sciences, on 19 and 20 June 2023. In addition to the Bachelor's programme in Music, the Maastricht Conservatorium offers Master programmes, Bachelor programmes in Music in Education, a Junior conservatorium as well as tailor-made programmes for contract students. Over 500 students are enrolled at the Maastricht Conservatorium, 85% of which are international students. The Bachelor of Music is a four-year course with two distinct programmes: Jazz and Classical Music. Both programmes are based on the same learning outcomes and aim to train students to become skilled musical professionals who are able to carve out a place for themselves in the working domain. The programme is characterised by its international orientation and the emphasis on contemporary cognitive apprenticeship.

### The Institute

Zuyd University of Applied Sciences (Zuyd) offers a wide range of study programmes in various disciplines, ranging from economics, business and management to law, health care, art, education and society, as well as language and communication, life sciences, engineering and construction and IT. Zuyd puts three principles first: 'passion for development', 'the application of high-quality knowledge' and 'anchoring education in practice', to ensure that students are motivated and acquire the knowledge and expertise necessary for a successful professional career. With 12 sites in three cities in the region, 29 research centres, it is strongly anchored in Limburg and the Euregio Meuse-Rhine. The institute offers 34 bachelor's programmes, 9 master's programmes, 3 associate degrees and 1 pre-bachelor programme. Zuyd enrolls around 14,600 students and around 1,800 employees working at Zuyd, two-thirds of whom have a teaching appointment.

Conservatorium Maastricht (CM) hosts over 500 students and is part of the Maastricht Academy of Performing Arts (which also includes the Toneelacademie, i.e., the Theatre Academy, with 200 students) of Zuyd University of Applied Sciences. Apprenticeship, excellence, and mutual inspiration are central to the teaching philosophy of the conservatorium. It offers Bachelor, Master and post-graduate programmes in Jazz, Classical Music and Music in Education, as well as more tailored programmes for contract students. CM has formulated the following mission statement, which ties

in with the mission of Zuyd: *"Empowering Moving Musicians. Reaching their own ambitions within diverse musical fields...to touch, move, excite."*

### The programme

The Bachelor of Music is a four-year, full-time programme, amounting to 240 ECTS. The course is taught in English. It consists of the Bachelor programme Jazz and the Bachelor programme Classical Music: the programmes share the same learning outcomes, assessment system and educational philosophy. The Bachelor programme is taught by an international team of lecturers and guest lecturers, most of whom are active musicians both in the Netherlands as well as abroad. The student body is international as well, with students coming from over 45 European and non-European countries.

The Jazz and Classical Music programme differ when it comes to curriculum structure. In the Classical department, there is a strong focus on the main subject and one-on-one lessons with the subject teacher. These lessons serve as a flywheel for personal and professional development, supported by Musical Theory and Professional Development courses. For Jazz, the Craftmanship cluster plays an important role in connecting the main subject with band performance, theoretical knowledge, composition, arrangement and producing. The Jazz department also offers educational clusters focusing on research and critical reflection as well as on entrepreneurial skills.

Common threads throughout the whole curriculum are the practice-based nature of the education, and the strong connection with the region through active involvement in theatres and art organisations.

#### **Developments since previous assessment**

The programme has gone through several developments, in part based on the results of the former assessment:

- Practice-based research has received more attention through teacher-training, as well as in different courses and assignments that challenge students towards critical reflection and working with research questions.
- The quality of assessments has been improved through the introduction of rubrics that stipulate the relationship between assessment criteria and the learning objectives.
- Improvement of the admission procedure, in particular the streamlining of communication and procedures.
- Improvement of the educational affairs office to ensure that it serves the needs of both students and teachers.

In 2019, the composition of the management of CM changed, with the appointment of a new Dean of Performing Arts (2019), a new Head of Programme Classical Music (2021) and a new Head of Programme Jazz (2021). More than 20 new lecturers were appointed because of natural turnover and the development of the programme. The renewal of management and staff is part of the transition CM is going through, which will lead to a clearer profile and mission, and a revision of the curriculum. To ensure goals, mission and curriculum content, a Curriculum Committee was installed since January 2023. This committee consists of teachers, Zuyd curriculum experts and representatives from the professional field. Their main task is to review the curriculum of the Bachelor of Music Classical and Jazz in alignment with the new strategy.

#### **The assessment**

Zuyd University of Applied Sciences assigned AeQui to perform a quality assessment of its Bachelor of Music. In close cooperation with the programme management, AeQui convened an independent and competent assessment panel. A preparatory meeting with representatives of the programme was held to exchange information and plan the date and programme of the site-visit.

In preparation for the site visit, the assessment panel studied the self-evaluation report of the programme and reviewed a sample of student final projects. The findings were input for discussions during the site visit.

The site visit was carried out on 19 and 20 June 2023 according to the program presented in attachment 2. The panel has carried out its assessment in relation to, and in consideration of, the cluster of programmes in which this programme is placed. The contextualisation of the programme within its cluster was conducted by the complete panel during the preliminary meeting and the final deliberations. The knowledge required for this was present in (part of) the panel.

The panel assessed the programme in an independent manner; at the end of the visit, the chair of the assessment panel presented the initial findings of the committee to representatives of the programme and the institution.

In this document, the panel reports on its findings, considerations, and conclusions according to the 2018 NVAO framework for limited programme assessment. A draft version of the report was sent to the programme management; its reactions have led to this final version of the report. Initiated by the programme, a development dialogue will be planned in the fall of 2023.

## 1. Intended learning outcomes

The programme aims to train talented students to become outstanding, professional, and reflective musicians who are able to carve out a career for themselves in the working domain. To this end, the programme has formulated intended learning outcomes in close consultation with the (international) professional and educational fields. The panel judges that the intended learning outcomes meet the current demands of the professional domain of classical music and jazz. The panel values the programme's reorientation regarding its vision and goals and encourages the programme to continue to embed this new direction within the whole curriculum. It recommends connecting CM's strong focus on craftsmanship to a more student-centred approach within its didactic-pedagogical paradigm, which will support students in their development as complete artists. The panel judges that the intended learning outcomes **meet the standard**.

### Findings

The profile and intended learning outcomes of the Bachelor of Music are derived from the Dutch National Training Profile for Music (DNTP), validated by representatives of the professional field in 2017. The professional profile and skills set incorporate the international frameworks for Bachelor programmes (in Music), such as the Dublin Descriptors, the Polifonia version of the Dublin Descriptors and the Sectoral Qualifications Framework for Humanities & Arts descriptors for the bachelor's level (Level 6).

The skills set and connected qualifications/competencies have been divided into 7 categories:

1. Technical skills: the student has a wide range professional knowledge and skills, and applies them in different musical contexts;
2. Creative skills: the student can shape musical expression based on his/her own artistic vision and aims;
3. Contextual focus: the student identifies developments in the national and international professional world and in society at large, positioning himself/herself and his/her work in relation to these;
4. Research and development skills; the student evaluates his/her own artistic performance by reflection on and exploring the development of his/her own identity, personal actions and work, and those of others, with the aim of continuously improving that performance;

5. Communication skills: the student interacts effectively in the various professional contexts, using appropriate forms and means of communication;
6. Organisational skills: the student creates sustainable work situations and networks, enabling himself/herself to achieve his/her goals;
7. Teaching skills: the student uses his/her own musical knowledge and skills to facilitate the musical development or performance of others.

In addition to the generic profile of the Bachelor of Music, the CM profile is characterised by a strong focus on musical excellence and craftsmanship, supported by the didactic-pedagogical approach of the master-apprentice. Its central position in the region of Maastricht as well the Euro-region, and its international orientation are also specific to the programme's profile.

### *Links with professional and educational field*

The programme ensures that its objectives are aligned with the developments and requirements of the profession in several ways. As described, the current programme was set up in alignment with the international professional and educational standards for Bachelor of Music. This alignment of profile, position and goals is further supported by the regional connections of CM with the professional field. To keep in touch with significant trends in society and the professional field, CM holds regular meetings with represent-



tatives of the professional community. Besides inviting guest teachers and external jury members, professional field consultations are held at departmental and cross-departmental levels. In the Round Table Sessions experts are invited depending on the topic to talk to students, alumni, teachers and boards. The first professional field consultation about the conservatorium's profile took place in March 2023.

### Considerations

The panel judges that the goals and profile of the programme meet the expectations of the professional field of music. The panel is positive about the programme's ambitions to educate outstanding, professional, and reflective musicians. The panel supports the programme's focus on excellence and craftsmanship, and congratulates the programme with the many initiatives it has taken for the transformation and reorientation of its vision, goals and curriculum in response to the changing demands and dynamics of the professional field. The panel urges the programme to continue to develop its vision for the future, embedding its plans within the whole curriculum and ensuring that students and teachers are involved

in the process. More specifically, the panel recommends integrating and connecting the programme's emphasis on excellence and craftsmanship with a more student-centred approach, with attention for the training of students as complete and multi-disciplinary artists. It thinks that a stronger managerial approach, with a clear timeline and concrete goals and milestones, can help the conservatorium move forward in a controlled and sustainable manner. Finally, the panel would encourage further defining what the programme understands and wants to achieve when it comes to practice-based research and entrepreneurial skills, especially in the context of classical music education. By integrating and connecting these different elements from the start of the curriculum as well as in the assessments, and by putting the student in the lead, the panel thinks the programme could realize the high potential already visible in the current steps it has taken.

Based on the interviews and examination of the underlying documentation, the assessment panel judges that the intended learning outcomes **meet the standard**.

## 2. Teaching-learning environment

Based on the interviews and examination of the underlying documentation, the assessment panel concludes that the programme **meets the standard**. The panel is positive about the orientation, contents, and teaching philosophy of the programme. According to the panel, the programme offers its students a challenging, inspiring curriculum, strongly based on craftsmanship and musical excellence, and taught by outstanding, accomplished teachers of international reputation. The main subject forms the core of the educational programme, supported by clusters and modules focusing on different aspects of the musical profession. The panel highly appreciates the progress the programme has made in the past years to improve its curriculum. To enable a shift towards a more student-centred approach, the panel sees opportunities for integrating the focus on craftsmanship with a wider spectrum of competencies essential to the contemporary musical artist. The panel observes that the programme has good connections with the working field through its (Euro)regional networks as well as through the professional networks and expertise of its teachers. It encourages the programme to further develop its collaborations in the region, and to investigate how it might diversify and broaden its scope and orientation. The panel also strongly urges the programme to find ways to increase opportunities for students to gain experience of playing in (chamber) orchestras. Students are highly appreciative of their (main subject) teachers and study coaches, they receive good guidance and support in their development, and feel themselves to be very much part of a close-knit community. The programme sustains an open culture of evaluation and discussion, students' perspectives are taken seriously. The panel encourages the programme to close the feedback-loop when it comes to changes and improvements. The programme is selective in admitting students and has an effective intake procedure that ensures that it enrolls highly talented students whose level and qualifications are aligned with the content and goals of the programme. With regard to the facilities and infrastructure, the panel concludes that the programme is doing a good job under less-than-ideal circumstances. The plans for the new building will offer an opportunity to invest in better and more rooms and new instruments.

### Findings

#### Orientation

The orientation of the Bachelor of Music can be described as international, practice-based and strongly connected to the wider (Euro)region of Maastricht. The practice-based nature of the curriculum is the common thread through all the educational clusters of the curriculum. The main subject is taught in a master-apprentice setting by a lecturer who is an actively practicing professional. In the Classical department, the ensemble is closest to professional practice. Every year, there is a concert with the specialist chamber choir and a presentation of the bachelor's 1 and 2 choir, two symphony orchestra projects, a wind band orchestra project, and one or two opera projects. In addition to the regular opera class, the opera class has a collaborative project with conducting students in the conducting masterclass.

Students are offered the opportunity to gain experience in the working field by participating in professional ensembles and orchestras. For example, parts of the main subject are taught in collaboration with Philharmonie Zuid Nederland, Opera Zuid and Opera Compact, which may lead to students being selected for internships.

For the Jazz department, musical interplay forms the basis for their professional development. Students work together in bands from year one, learning all aspects of playing together in practice, under the supervision of a coach. There are instrument-based group lessons, theme combos, and students' own bands are coached as well. Many projects and workshops led by jazz musicians are organised every year. Students make studio recordings in the professional studio of the conservatorium of music they have composed and/or arranged themselves.

The programme components in the cluster 'professional development' are also practice-based. Courses such as Your Art as a Business, Basic Teaching Skills and Studio Recording Preparation prepare students for the mixed professional practice of the musician and help them develop entrepreneurial skills. Students experience teaching practice, draw up a business plan, a biography, a CV, etc. This category also comprises supporting subjects such as Basic Digital Tools and Applied Theory for Combos in Jazz. The music theory subjects work in a practice-based way as well. Students learn about harmony in classical music and theoretical analysis in Jazz by, among other things, creating compositions in the style that is being discussed.

Next to the practice-based content of the curriculum, the professional networks and collaborations of the programme play a role in preparing students for the musical profession. Every year, the conservatoire organises around 300 public events, of which the majority take place outside the institute. Performances are held at venues in Maastricht and its surrounding area, in the Euro-region (Brussels, Cologne), and in other countries. CM was the initiator of the European Opera Academy, founded in January 2016. The European Opera Academy offers a range of distinctive, high-level modules in the field of opera and music theatre within 13 specialist degree programmes across Europe. A few of the programme's specialisations work closely together with partners in the professional world, e.g., the Classical Vocal Studies department with Opera Zuid, the jazz department with Jazz Maastricht and EUjazz, the classical department with Philharmonie Zuid Nederland.

CM encourages students to practice their art through paid musical activities besides their studies. It has set up a booking agency for both departments to arrange professional-level concerts for students. CM also works with organisations which facilitate paid concerts, such as the Young

for Old Foundation (performances in care centres), Centrummanagement Maastricht (Lazy Sunday Concerts) and Theater aan het Vrijthof (supporting programmes for the chamber music series).

Furthermore, and as described in chapter One, the annual Round Table Sessions are used to support the connection with the professional field and the improvement of the curriculum for both departments.

In its Self-Evaluation Report and in the discussions the panel conducted with representatives of the programme, it became clear that there are several challenges that the programme needs to address in the coming years. First of all, the cooperation with the other programmes of the academies of Performing Arts and the Faculty of Fine Arts and Design has proven to be difficult. For this reason, CM organizes interdisciplinary experiences on a project basis. It aims to improve and intensify these collaborations in the coming years.

The regional orientation of the programme could be reinforced as well. The regional scene of brass and wind band orchestras has expressed its need for training amateur conductors. Furthermore, the choral world needs conductors. To establish closer ties between these professional fields and CM, the three existing conducting programmes of the Classical Music department will merge, and the internships will be arranged in partnership with the professional field. Jazz students have already started (weekly) jam sessions in the city and region and the department have strengthened its bonds with Jazz Maastricht, resulting in the extension of the Jazz Out Festival. Nevertheless, the (EU) region lacks a stable jazz scene. Commissioned by the Province of Limburg, a cooperation with Stichting Popmuziek Limburg will start in 2023-2024 with the main purpose of taking stock of the existing and new jazz initiatives throughout the province and the Euregion.

Finally, in its discussions with students, the panel learned that there is relatively little opportunity for gaining ensemble experience since the CM does not have its own orchestra or chamber music ensembles. This is particularly challenging for the students following the conducting specialism.

### **Contents**

The Jazz and Classical programmes each have their own content and structure, though they share the same intended learning outcomes. The cluster 'Main subject and related components' (126 EC) is central to the **Classical** curriculum. The one-on-one lessons and the direct connection with ensembles/chamber music education and projects provide space for the characteristic cognitive apprenticeship. The intended inspiring relationship with the main subject teacher acts as a flywheel for the further application of what has been learned. The 'Music Theory' (60 EC) and 'Professional Development' (9 EC) clusters guarantee the development of deeper and broadened knowledge and skills, but also profession-specific competencies. The curriculum also contains a cluster of courses for Ensemble (30 EC) and free space (Minor, 16 EC).

The **Jazz curriculum** is differently structured. The Craftmanship cluster contains the courses 'Main subject and related Components' (EC 122), 'Band Performing' (40 EC) and 'Tools in Creation' (26 EC) which emphasise the development of theoretical knowledge directly related to interplay. Learning how to 'Compose & Arrange' (6 EC) and 'Record and Produce' (5 EC) are also closely intertwined with the development of jazz theory knowledge and its application towards improvisation, while the course 'Research and development skills' (6 EC) focuses on the students' reflective competencies. Furthermore, students follow courses that prepare them to position themselves in the professional domain: 'Health and Well-Being (1 EC), 'Your Art as a Business' (1 EC) and 'Teaching & Outreach' (2 EC). Students of the Jazz programme have a total of 15 EC in elective modules.

The different programme components are divided into a major and a minor component. The minor part (from year 3) contains the electives (Jazz/Classical elective modules) and free space (Classical), in which students are encouraged to take their own study initiatives and to make use of facilities outside CM. Some electives are connected to a certain cluster of subjects like Music Theory. This gives the student the chance to delve deeper into specific music theory topics during his third year. The free minor allows students to engage in internal or external activities (participation in competitions, youth orchestras etc.) that will benefit their studies, to be chosen at their own discretion, but in consultation with the main subject lecturer, academic guidance counsellor and head of department. The free study space may also be used to take minors from other programmes within Zuyd.

### *Development curriculum*

The Classical Music Theory section has created a new curriculum in which the application of theory skills is used in creative assignments. This has resulted in new subjects like Skills Lab and Creative Lab (Classical) in which research skills and practice-based education are used. The curriculum revision of Classical Music Theory started in 2018 as an ingrowing process and was evaluated on a regular basis. Now, the whole programme (3 years including electives) has been accomplished and will be evaluated. The Curriculum Committee has the task of developing a blueprint for the revision during the curriculum development in the next years.

### *Research education*

In the programme, research competencies are not addressed in separate courses, but integrated in the educational clusters and courses of the curriculum. Examples include the duo presentations in Skills Lab and Creative Lab year 1-2. In Capstone year 3, Classical students develop their own concept for a performance by analysing a piece of music, researching the historical context and creating their own music, based on the features of the original repertoire. They write a history paper,

using valid sources. Finally, they perform their music and develop the whole performance from a concept in which they integrate and present historical/analytical aspects.

In the final assignment of Advanced Teaching Skills, students conduct research into an instrument-specific theme which leads to a methodological product. These teaching methods are centred around critical reflection. In the **Jazz** department, Critical Listening includes the explicit development of research skills. The programme aims to increase focus on the integration of contextual and historical knowledge in relation to the student's main subject, based on the experience from the Classical department.

In the SER and in the discussions with the panel, the programme identified practice-based research as an area that needs more development. Apart from the development of a research attitude, attention for certain research and critical-reflective skills such as analysing, writing and source handling are needed in preparation for the Master programme. The Curriculum Committee will therefore be supported by experts in the field specialised in practice-based research.

### Structure

The didactic-pedagogical model of the programme can be described as based on the master-apprentice approach, supported by a practice-based education. To reach its goals, the Bachelor of Music programme uses a variety of teaching formats in its curriculum. Individual instruction, group work, project-based learning, group instruction, presentation, paired assignments, and independent study. Distance learning has become an important educational tool for the programme since the COVID19-pandemic: teachers and students have seized the opportunity to stimulate learning through an electronic learning environment, e.g., online masterclasses with guest teachers connected via Teams. The

curriculum descriptions describe the teaching methods of each curriculum component.

### Recent developments

The COVID19-pandemic had a major impact on the recent academic years of CM. Because of the practice-based nature of education, the conservatorium received permission from the government to keep buildings open under strict safety standards. This gave the programme the opportunity to provide most students with access to the study facilities; lessons were held wherever possible. Zuyd University of Applied Sciences invested in the purchase and use of technology to enhance distance education and learning. CM set up a digital community of practice that supports and trains students and employees in making streams, audio, and video recordings. During this COVID19-period, an internal survey on health and wellbeing among all students and employees helped to identify what kind of support was needed. Students have also been able to profit from the support offered by the National Programme for Education.

### Staff

The staff policy of the Bachelor of Music is rooted in the policy of Zuyd University of Applied Sciences. As part of that policy, Conservatorium Maastricht requires main subject lecturers to combine their teaching appointments with active careers as performing musicians at an international level.

In 2022-2023, 25 FTE of the teaching staff was allocated to the Bachelor of Music programme, excluding guest teachers. CM appoints teachers on a temporary basis or combines partly permanent with partly temporary appointments. The current team consists of internal lecturers who have a permanent position in the programme, guest lecturers for temporary classes and professionals from the field who give lectures or workshops and guest lecturers for masterclasses or projects. The lecturers are qualified professionals in their field and form a link between the programme and

the professional practice. Most lecturers work in various professional situations, both in music performance and professional teaching practice. A substantial number of the lecturers have teaching qualifications.

#### *Professionalisation*

Staff policy of CM is aimed at enabling individual members of staff to develop their full potential. Training and professional development are an essential part of the staff policy. There is a budget for professional development which teaching staff use for specific education, training or coaching. Teaching staff are encouraged to attend international conferences or make use of other forms of international exchange such as the Erasmus programme.

Finally, the Examination Board has developed a tailor-made training programme for art teachers in consultation with the management team to boost the quality of its assessments and examination skills of staff members (see below, chapter 3).

#### **Incoming students**

The entrance examination for the Bachelor of Music programme consists of several stages. Admission requirements for the main subject vary, depending on the chosen instrument and department. All information and requirements for the main subjects are presented on the CM's website. The audition is assessed by a committee of main subject teachers; the theory exams are assessed by music theory teachers. The head of the department makes the final decision whether a student can be admitted to the Bachelor programme. Students may be exempted from parts of the programme based on subject-specific level tests or recognition of prior learning or qualifications (so-called RPL, in Dutch EVC). Exemptions are granted by the Examination Board, based on the outcome of the entrance examination and on the proof provided. Students will receive the official result of the entrance examination no later than May 1st. Students can be rejected, admitted to year one or higher, or to the preparatory class. A remedial summer jazz theory course is offered after the first round of auditions. In all parts of the

entrance examination, the assessors use standardised assessment forms.

CM invests in reaching talented students from the region (the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany) and from around the world. It maintains good contacts with music schools, has a junior conservatorium and organises sessions and open days so young people can come to discover the programmes at CM. Students coming from challenging social-economic backgrounds can apply for financial support through a foundation.

#### **Language of Instruction**

English is the language of instruction at the Conservatorium Maastricht. This choice is made because of CM's international orientation, the international composition of the student body and the wide range of international destinations of the graduates. CM is recognised as one of the four international conservatoria in the Netherlands and the CM bachelor's programme obtained the ECA Certificate of Quality for Internationalisation during the last accreditation. Students who enrol must comply with the language requirements of CM; if necessary, students receive additional training through an internal language training programme. All staff members also have access to the English courses. New lecturers are also expected to master the language according to the staff policy.

#### **Infrastructure**

The bachelor's curriculum is offered at two locations in Maastricht. The Classical department is housed in the main building of Conservatorium Maastricht, situated in the centre of Maastricht at Bonnefantenstraat 15 (BON). The Jazz department is also housed in the centre of Maastricht, at Franciscus Romanusweg 90 (ROM), at walking distance from BON.

The BON building has a large and a small concert hall, 42 classrooms (including practice rooms), a recording studio and workspaces for staff. The ROM building has 19 classrooms, including recording and production facilities and an acoustically adjusted concert hall at its disposal. The programme also uses several churches for organ

lessons. The studio is used for audio and video recordings. The classrooms and practice rooms have musical instruments and the necessary equipment. Both buildings have IT facilities for the benefit of the students. ROM has a purpose-built music information technology room for lessons, computer practice and digital music notation. In addition, there is a room for Electronic Music Performance (Jazz) and post-production for recordings.

In 2020, more than 20 new Steinway grand pianos were purchased, giving CM the status of All Steinway School. CM has also invested in its facilities in other ways, for example by creating quiet workplaces and meeting places for students (3rd floor BON) as well as providing electric pianos. The ROM Hall Wyck was completely renovated in 2021.

CM has a library specializing in (full) scores and sheet music (BON). Students can also use the library facilities of Zuyd University of Applied Sciences, Maastricht University and of other institutions of the Infostructure Higher Education Limburg (IHOL). Students also have access to all relevant digital music libraries (through LibGuide), scientific national and international publications and periodicals.

From the SER and the conversations of the panel with representatives of the programme, it becomes clear that the capacity of the buildings is limited and that more investments are needed to update the quality of the instruments. Together with the Academy for Performing Arts, CM is investigating plausible alternatives for the realisation of more spacious accommodation in Maastricht.

### **Tutoring and student information**

Student guidance and coaching are organised in various ways at CM. First of all, the (main subject) lecturers provide students with support relating to the content of the study material. They can give advice and if necessary, refer students to the right

person for further help. The heads of programme support students in all matters concerning their department. The Education & Quality Management team leader helps students with matters concerning their academic progress and handles complaints about the quality of courses or the curriculum. Student ambassadors guide incoming foreign students and provide support during the admission phase.

The team of study coaches for both departments was established in 2022 to support individual coaching and guidance of students. The study coaches are the first point of contact for all questions relating to studies or facilities. They guide students through the choices they make within the context of their studies and know who the student can turn to for other questions. The study coaches monitor the progress of the students allocated to them by consulting the student progress monitoring system (Osiris). Study coaches always also fulfil a teaching role, and the team is coordinated by an experienced musician with a strong affinity with coaching approaches.

Each semester, a student progress meeting is arranged with theory teachers, the study coach(es), Examination Board and the head of programme, at which all the students are discussed. Every year music theory lecturers of the Classical department are asked to indicate which students are experiencing problems, have fallen behind or are regularly absent. In the Jazz department, theory teachers, the study coaches and the administration office meet to monitor the students' development.

From 2020, every first-year student is given a personal recommendation regarding their studies. Two measures have been taken for the sake of close follow-up and guarantee of academic success. Firstly, a continuation requirement has been established in the Education and Examination Regulations. If students do not obtain a minimum number of credits, a study plan will be drawn up under the supervision of the academic career

counsellor for as long as needed. To support and assure this, a new academic career policy was introduced in 2020-2021 with fixed contact moments for all students with an assigned study coach and with more capacity allocated to the study coaches.

Other sources of support for students include: two student counsellors; the Ombudsman for complaints about the institution, the programme or employees; the Health and Prevention Centre for questions regarding workspace and health; the student psychologist. The Zuyd confidential advisors can be consulted in cases of discrimination, bullying or other forms of transgressive behaviours (Discrimination, Equity, Integrity). To ensure social safety and security, the Conservatorium Maastricht has recently developed a Code of Conduct tailored to its diverse and international community, together with the management team, the Academy Council and a student working group. Social safety sessions are regularly organised for students and social safety is frequently reflected in team meetings.

Communication with students and staff takes place through various tools and applications. CM uses Microsoft Teams and intranet, as well as Moodle, Osiris and Asimut. Asimut is an important tool for scheduling rooms and spaces. A Digital Community of Practice (DiCoP) has been established to support and train students, teachers and facility staff in the creation of streams, recordings and productions. Lending sets have been purchased, consisting of microphones, cameras and recording devices for direct use by students and teachers.

### **Considerations**

The panel is positive about the orientation, contents, and teaching philosophy of the programme. According to the panel, the programme offers its students a challenging, inspiring curriculum, strongly based on craftsmanship and musical excellence, and taught by outstanding, accomplished teachers of international reputation.

The panel observes that the programme has good connections with the working field through its (Euro)regional networks as well as through the professional networks and expertise of its teachers. It encourages the programme to further develop its collaborations in the region, and to investigate how it might diversify and broaden its scope and orientation when it comes to its engagement with other performing arts and fine arts departments within Zuyd, different types of (socio-economic, ethnic, cultural) communities, different musical cultures, traditions and genres, etc. The panel thinks that it is important to involve diverse role models in the programme's teaching environment, and that it should pay attention to diversity in its preparatory courses and admission procedures as well. This opening up to other influences can enrich the curriculum and play a role in developing CM in alignment with the changes taking place in the working field without affecting the core and basis of CM's distinct profile.

The content of the curriculum is aligned with the goals and intended learning outcomes. The main subject forms the core of the educational programme, and is supported by clusters and modules focusing on different aspects of the musical profession. The panel highly appreciates the progress the programme has made in the past years to improve its curriculum and is positive about the appointment of a Curriculum Committee to directly involve its teachers in this transformation. The panel also strongly urges the programme to find ways to increase opportunities for students to gain experience in playing (chamber) orchestras.

The panel fully supports the decision to choose English as a principal language of instruction. The clear benefits of the programme's proven international nature in terms of attracting students - especially from neighbouring countries, and in providing a modern international curriculum is wholly appropriate for the international character of the working field for Zuyd graduates, and specifically for the position of CM as a conservatorium on the border of several different EU



member states. Furthermore, the ideally diverse composition of staff and incoming students requires high proficiency in the English language as a prerequisite for successful training for future professional success. English proficiency of both students and staff is ensured in an adequate manner.

The panel is positive about the didactic-pedagogical model of the programme, which can be described as based on the master-apprentice model, whereby musical excellence and craftsmanship takes centre stage. To enable a shift towards a more student-centred approach as complete artist, the panel sees opportunities for integrating the focus on craftsmanship with a wider spectrum of competencies essential to the contemporary musical artist, such as critical reflection, practice-based research skills and entrepreneurship. This is a model that can be realised without too many adjustments to the curriculum or in the assessments, according to the panel. The panel also encourages the programme to clearly define what research and entrepreneurship means for Jazz and Classical musicians specifically and to incorporate these visions into the programme's curriculum.

The panel notes that the programme has an effective personnel policy in place, ensuring that it has a team of highly qualified (guest) teachers able to educate and guide students in their development as professional musicians. The panel is positive about the professionalisation and training opportunities the programme offers to its teachers. The evaluations and conversations with students and alumni show great appreciation for the musical expertise and involvement of the teachers. Students are very positive about their teachers and study coaches; they receive good guidance and support in their development as

musicians and feel themselves to be very much part of a close-knit community; students stay in the region and there is a strong sense of a shared identity. The panel valued the openness of the programme when it came to discussing issues brought up by students in the student chapter of the SER. It shows that the programme sustains an open culture of evaluation and discussion, and that students' perspectives are taken seriously. The constructive way the Student Council, Curriculum Committee and Academic Council function is another case in point. The panel encourages the programme to make sure to close the feedback-loop when it comes to changes and improvements, so that students and teachers know how the programme has implemented their feedback.

The programme is selective in admitting students and has an effective intake procedure that ensures that it enrolls highly talented students whose level and qualifications are aligned with the content and goals of the program. Here the panel would like to stress the importance of diverse role models and reaching out to other communities to find and attract students with different backgrounds.

With regard to the facilities and infrastructure, the panel concludes that the programme is doing a good job under less-than-ideal circumstances. The plans for the new building will offer an opportunity to invest in better and more rooms and new instruments. The new online environment is fully appreciated by students, the panel compliments the programme for getting everyone on board in this regard.

Based on the interviews and examination of the underlying documentation, the assessment panel establishes that the programme **meets this standard**.

### 3. Student assessment

Based on the interviews and examination of the underlying documentation, the assessment panel concludes that the programme **meets the standard**. The panel has established that the assessments of the programme are valid, objective, and transparent. Student assessments are based on clear procedures, rubric course manuals and assessment forms and the four-eyes principle is applied in the assessments of the main subjects. Furthermore, the programme ensures good communication with students about the goals and objectives of the assessments. The panel appreciates that the programme has invested in the improvement of its assessments in the past years and is also positive about the dedicated involvement of the Examination Board. In its evaluation of the assessments of the final projects, the panel observed that these were constructive, realistic, and constituted an accurate reflection of the quality of work presented. It encourages the programme to further improve the written feedback to students and their link with grading.

#### Findings

The assessment programme of the Bachelor of Music Classical and Jazz ties in with Zuyd Assessment Compass and is outlined in the Examination and Education Regulations and in the Assessment Policy Document in which the test formats and the connection between learning outcomes, curriculum, assessment, and credits are outlined.

The programme uses interim tests and formative forms of evaluation to bring structure and continuity to learning complex skills. Summative tests are used in the programme to determine how the student has progressed in acquiring skills and achieving learning outcomes. The programme's assessments are designed to be as authentic as possible in that they resemble a realistic situation in professional practice. Procedures for reassessment are described clearly in the EER. The feasibility of the curriculum has been improved in recent years by increased spreading of assessments and reassessments, and by scheduling reassessments sooner after the initial assessment.

Teachers are qualified as assessors through their professional education and are able to develop their assessing skills through further training at Zuyd (Basic and Senior Qualification for Examiners, in Dutch BKE or SKE). The quality of the assessment content is assured by the involvement of an internal educational specialist in the development of tests.

The programme involves panels of internal and external experts assessing the main subject examinations. The programme uses an assessment protocol to assess recitals, which includes assessment forms for the main moments of assessment, as well as formats for reports. These are integrated in the Osiris study progress system and are directly available for students. The organisation and implementation of the final assessments are evaluated annually by the group of chair examiners, heads of programme and the educational affairs office.

In recent years, the programme has invested in improving its assessment culture, in particular focusing on the feedback-protocols. In line with Zuyd's policy, the Examination Board has developed a tailor-made training programme for art teachers in consultation with the management team. In this professionalisation course, teachers learn more about the current assessment criteria and how to apply them when giving feedback. The teacher-training 'feedback and assessment' started in the academic year of 2022-2023 and 18 teachers have recently completed the course. The second and third tranches will be offered in 23-24.

#### *Examination Board*

The Examination Board monitors the quality of the assessment system of the programme. It determines whether students meet the conditions

laid down by the EER regarding the knowledge, understanding, and skills required for the degree. The Examination Board gives solicited and unsolicited advice to management. The composition, tasks, responsibilities and organisation of the Examination Board are described in full in the Examination Board Handbook 2022-2023.

The Examination Board consists of six members: a chair, an official secretary and four members of the teaching staff. The chair of the Examination Board is also a coach of the Curriculum Committee. In this way, affinity with and knowledge of the various bachelor's (and master's) programmes is ensured. The examination safeguards the level of the programme by monitoring and evaluating assessments, checking whether the learning objectives are in line with national competencies, gathering information from students and teaching staff, attending examinations, handling complaints from students and teaching staff, attending network meetings and setting up training activities in the field of testing, assessment and legal aspects of the tasks. As mentioned, it has set up teacher-training for 'assessments and feedback'. For the future, the Examination Board would like to help design a portfolio system to keep track of students' development and progress. Every academic year, the Examination Board reports on its activities in the annual report.

### Considerations

The panel concludes that the assessment system of the programme meets the standard, and ensures that assessments are transparent, objective and valid. The course manuals give clear information about assessment forms, timing, criteria, weighing and feedback. The programme uses different kinds of assessments in alignment with the learning goals per course and the intended learning outcomes. The transparency, objectivity and validity of the assessments are ensured through the use of good course information, clear guidelines/protocols for assessments, clear assessment forms, course evaluations and the application of

the four-eyes principle during main subject examinations.

The panel received a positive impression of the way the Examination Board fulfils its duties and concludes that the board members take their responsibilities in the quality assurance of assessments very seriously. The panel is pleased to hear that the Examination Board has initiated a teacher-training course focussing on assessment criteria and feedback.

In preparation for the site visit, the panel reviewed a total of 17 final graduations (12 Classical students and 5 Jazz students) including portfolios and final reports for the course Your Art as a Business (Classical and Jazz). According to the panel, the programme makes use of structured and constructive assessment forms. It observes that the assessments of final recitals and reports are clear, transparent and objective, providing a constructive but realistic reflection of the qualities of the students. Written feedback to the student could in some cases be improved; it is also not always clear why a student receives the grade in question. Additional comments are in most cases highly constructive, and the panel urges the programme to give more written feedback in addition to verbal feedback, to further improve transparency and traceability.

The panel is pleased to hear that the programme is improving and streamlining its feedback protocols through intervision and teacher-training. The panel encourages the programme to continue this pathway. Students show themselves to be quite satisfied with the feedback they receive and indicate that the assessments indeed help them in their development as professional musicians.

Based on the interviews and examination of the underlying documentation, the assessment panel establishes that the programme **meets this standard**.

## 4. Achieved learning outcomes

Based on the interviews and examination of the underlying documentation, the assessment panel concludes that the programme **meets the standard**. The final presentations are of a high level and the 'Your Art as Business'-reports provide a good representation of the students' individual development and goals for the future. The majority of alumni work as professional musicians in the professional field and many students are able to further develop the route they have taken in their training and implement it in professional practice. The panel encourages the programme to further integrate competencies such as research and entrepreneurship, as well as organisational and teaching skills, in the final projects, and to stimulate engagement with musical diversity.

### Findings

In year three and four, students must demonstrate that they have achieved the seven intended learning outcomes. Technical Skills, Creative Skills and Communication Skills are assessed in the Final Recital at the end of the fourth year, which is the concluding assessment of the main subject. In the fourth year, students are also assessed for their role in Ensemble and Band, for their Teaching Skills and Work Placements. Music Theory and Entrepreneurial skills are assessed in the third year.

### Alumni

The programme invests in its alumni-network in various ways. Through recurring surveys, alumni are asked to give information about their career and about where they live and work or study. Alumni are invited as professionals to be part of a jury or ad hoc advisory boards, to give presentations or workshops, and to apply for vacancies. Apart from their importance for the programme's network, alumni play an important role in the recruitment of new students. CM regularly collects information about the professional activities of the students after their graduation and alumni are often invited to participate in projects and asked as guest teachers in several lessons to share their entrepreneurial experiences with students.

### Considerations

The panel concludes that the course succeeds in training outstanding and skilled musicians, and it therefore achieves the intended learning outcomes. The 17 final presentations viewed by the panel demonstrate good craftsmanship and artistic skills and are of a high level across the board. The panel notes that stronger integration and assessment of competencies such as (practice-based) research and entrepreneurial skills in the final presentations is desirable. Such integration will not only contribute to the artistic and musical identity of the student as a complete artist, but also help to strengthen the further development of the overall profile of the Bachelor of Music. The panel urges the programme to further explore how it can stimulate active engagement with musical diversity in the final recitals. It also urges the programme to (continue to) encourage students to be proactive in organizing their exams on their own terms.

Alumni end up well. The vast majority start working in the music sector and most alumni show themselves to be satisfied with the training and preparation they received, as the alumni evaluation demonstrate.

Based on the interviews and examination of the underlying documentation, the assessment panel establishes that the programme **meets this standard**.

## Attachments

## Attachment 1 Assessment panel

### **Raoul van Aalst**

Raoul is an independent organizational consultant and a cultural and organizational philosopher. He has extensive experience chairing assessment panels.

### **Robert Ehrlich**

Robert is tenured professor at University of Music and Theatre Leipzig and visiting professor at Guildhall School of Music and Drama London. Until 2019, he was Principal of Hanns Eisler School of Music Berlin.

### **Maarten Weyler**

Maarten is a musician and music teacher at the Ghent Conservatory.

### **Eva Muskens**

Eva is a fourth-year student at the B Music in Education at HKU. She is also a developer of teaching materials for Music box in secondary education.

The panel was supported by **dr. Jesseka Batteau**, external secretary and certified by NVAO.

All committee members and the secretary have signed a declaration of independence. The assessment committee has been submitted to, and validated by, NVAO prior to the site visit.

## Attachment 2 Programme of the assessment

19 June 2023

Time		Activity/place <u>Bonnefantestraat 15</u> Jeker Room	Function
12.00	13.15	Lunch committee (Room 108)	
13.15	14.15	Interview with curriculum responsi- bles Jeker Room	Head of Programme Jazz
			Head of Programme Classical
			Teamleader Education and Quality Assur- ance
			Dean Performing Arts
14.15	14.30	Private Consultation Committee	
14.30	15.45	Interview with students	Classical Theory of Music yr 4
			Jazz Guitar yr 4
			Jazz Piano yr 2
			Classical Piano yr 4
			Jazz Vocal yr 1
			Jazz Bass yr 3
			Classical Guitar yr 3
			Classical vocal yr 4
15.45	16.00	Private Consultation Committee	
16.00	16.15	Break	
16.15	17.30	Interview with teachers	Jazz Composing Arranging
			Study coordinator
			Teacher Your Art as a Business CLA and jazz
			Classical Accompaniment teacher chamber music and member academic council
			Jazz Theory
			Jazz Vocal
			Jazz Bass
17.30	17.45	Private Consultation Committee	
17.45	18.15	Leave for Diner/Hotel Adress: Au Quartier	
19.00		Diner at Petit Bonheur	

20 June 2023

Time		Activity/location <u>Franciscus Romanusweg 90</u> Room 10	Function
9.00	9.30	Private Consultation Committee	
9.30	10.30	Interview with the academical board representatives	Chair Examination Committee
			Chair Academic Board
			Member Examination Board - Classical
			Coordinator Education Office
			Member Academic Board
10.30	10.45	Private Consultation Committee	
10.45	11.45	Interview with the field experts and alumni	Director Philharmonie Zuid
			Director/intendant Opera Compact
			Director Jazz Maastricht
			Director Theater a/h Vrijthof
			Alumnus MA Student Jazz Vocal
			Alumnus Jazz Bass
			Alumna Jazz Vocals
			Alumna Classic Flute
			Alumnus Classical Tuba
11.45	12.00	Private Consultation Committee	
12.00	12.30	Guided walk back to the Bonnefantenstraat	
12.30	13.45	Lunch and first steps debriefing room 108	
13.45	14.15	Optional: final interview with the management team/curriculum re-sponsibles. Jeker Room	Heads of Programme, management team
14.15	15.00	Debriefing Committee	
15.00	15.30	Reflection and first impressions	Management Team
			Teachers Staff members
			Students
			Board representatives
15.30	16.30	Informal meeting with a drink	
			Committee, colleagues and students.



## Attachment 3 Documents

- Self-Evaluation Report Maastricht Conservatorium
- Graduation Projects of 17 students, (12 Classical students and 5 Jazz students); Final Recital, portfolios and final reports "Your Art as a Business"
- EER BaMu Classical 2022-2023
- EER BaMu Jazz 2022-2023
- Curriculum overviews Classical Bachelor 2022-2023
- Curriculum overviews Jazz Bachelor 2022-2023
- Assessment Policy Document CM
- Test Schedule Classical 2022-2023
- Test Schedule Jazz 2022-2023
- Handbook Examination Committee 2022-2023
- Annual report Examination Committee 2021-2022
- Competency matrix BA Classical and Jazz
- Overview Collaborations in the Professional Field CM