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From HarMA+ to HarMA HUB – The New Erasmus+ Project, Supporting the Professional Development of Music Theory Teaching Staff

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In higher music education institutions, music theory is everywhere. It is taught across the board to musicians of all kinds: instrumentalists, singers, composers, conductors, music teachers. Yet it is also taught in many different ways, depending on the place. Different countries and regions, based on their various historical influences and local traditions, employ different terminology, different approaches to the curriculum and different ways of conveying material to their students.

For the second time in a row, the Stanisław Moniuszko Academy of Music in Gdańsk is honoured to be part of a unique project dedicated to addressing those issues and coming up with some helpful solutions. The project is titled HarMA HUB,¹ and it is funded within the framework of the Erasmus+ programme, in the category ‘Key Action 2 - Cooperation among organisations and institutions’.

¹ HarMA is an abbreviation of ‘harmony and music analysis’, used first in 2018 in the name of the HarMA International Seminar Event, then in HarMA+, the name of another Erasmus+ project carried out mostly by the same institutions, which is described later in the text.

With the purpose of said cooperation, it brings together five higher music education institutions from different European countries:

- Conservatoire royal de Bruxelles / Royal Conservatoire of Brussels
- Eesti Muusika- ja Teatriakadeemia / Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre, Tallin
- Liszt Ferenc Zeneművészeti Egyetem / Ferenc Liszt Academy of Music, Budapest
- Conservatori Superior de Música ‘Joaquín Rodrigo’ de Valencia / Joaquín Rodrigo Conservatoire of Music in Valencia
- Akademia Muzyczna im. Stanisława Moniuszki w Gdańsku / Stanisław Moniuszko Academy of Music in Gdańsk.

The Conservatoire royal de Bruxelles, which initiated the project, has a leading role as project coordinator. The sixth participating organization is the Association Européenne des Conservatoires, Académies de Musique et Musikhochschulen, which provides support for the project activities.

From an idea to the team: origins, concepts, people

To fully grasp the idea and the structure of the project, it is important to note that it is a continuation of its predecessor, titled HarMA+, carried out between 2020 and 2023 by almost the same set of partner institutions (with Leipzig Hochschule für Musik und Theater instead of the Valencia conservatoire), also led by the Conservatoire royal de Bruxelles. Its full name was “HarMA+: European landscape of teaching practices and pedagogical innovation in HMEIs – Music theory fields”, and it was also carried out within the K2 Erasmus+ projects.²

The idea that lies at the core of both ventures is more or less the same: to integrate and solidify the music theory community of Higher Music Education Institutions (HMEIs) in Europe, and to facilitate the teaching and learning of music theory in a way that prepares the students of said institutions for their future careers, which in today’s reality will inevitably be developed to some extent in an international environment. This goal will be achieved on one hand by

² A report on the HarMA+ project was published in issue 11 of this journal. See S. Gioveni and R. Skupin, ‘HarMa+ Project: European Landscape of Teaching Practices and Pedagogical Innovation in HMEI’s – Harmony and Music Analysis Fields’, in *Aspekty Muzyki 11*, 143–153.

providing teaching and learning tools that will help to spread information about methods, practices and resources used in different European countries, and on the other hand by creating possibilities for music theory teachers and students to share and compare their knowledge and experiences.

An early attempt to bring together the community of music theory educators was the first edition of the HarMA International Seminar Event, which took place in 2018 in Brussels. The founder and the president of this event was Salvatore Gioveni, music theory professor and international relations coordinator at the Brussels conservatoire. The HarMA+ project was Gioveni's next initiative, prompted by the same aspiration, and it is now continued in the HarMA HUB project.

Team

Most of the partner institutions in the HarMA HUB project also took part in HarMA+. They are conservatoires and music academies from Brussels, Budapest, Tallinn and Gdańsk, now joined by the conservatoire from Valencia. Although some team members have changed since the previous project, it can safely be said that HarMA HUB relies on the same people, which provides a level of consistency and deep understanding of the tasks undertaken. Currently, the people involved in the project, including teachers, international relations coordinators and other administration staff, are the following:

Conservatoire royal de Bruxelles

- Salvatore Gioveni
- Edwin Clapuyt

Eesti Muusika- ja Teatriakadeemia

- Kerri Kotta
- Aare Tool
- Kädi Kallau

Liszt Ferenc Zeneművészeti Egyetem

- Boglárka Terray
- Máté Balogh
- Barna Szabó
- Orsolya Freytag

Conservatori Superior de Música ‘Joaquín Rodrigo’ de Valencia

- Vicent Sanchis Caparrós
- Marc Garcia Vitoria
- Pedro Vicente Caselles Mulet
- Paloma Musté Ferrero
- Iluminada Pérez Troya
- Jorge Sevilla Llisterri

Akademia Muzyczna im. Stanisława Moniuszki w Gdańsku

- Renata Skupin
- Piotr Jędrzejczyk
- Agata Krawczyk
- Milena Osiecka

Association Européenne des Conservatoires, Académies de Musique et Musikhochschulen

- Alfonso Guerra (until January 2024)
- Stefan Gies (until January 2024)
- Finn Schumacker (since February 2024)
- Alessandra Callegari

From the formal standpoint, the project is organized into four sections, called Work Packages:

- WP1 – Management,
 - WP2 – Music Theory Tools,
 - WP3 – Training and Capacity Building in Music Theory,
 - WP4 – EU outreach and dissemination,
- with each of the Work Packages containing one or more specific tasks, and each task having a dedicated team responsible for its development.

From language to books: existing tools, new developments

As mentioned above, one of the goals of the HarMA HUB project is to provide music theory teachers and students with tools facilitating the sharing of teaching resources and methods across Europe. This forms the core of WP2 (Music Theory Tools). Two of those tools originated in the previous project:

- a European Bibliography,
- a multilingual Glossary.

The third tool from the HarMA+ project, the repository of music theory courses, has been discontinued. However, as of June 2024, the Repository is available on the HarMa+ website.³ It is a database designed to gather information about music theory courses available to students of European higher music education institutions, in terms of both content and organization.

Since the beginning, the idea was for those tools to be made available on a modern and user-friendly online platform for teaching staff and students worldwide. Even though a website was created for the first project, once the HarMA HUB edition was set in motion, in late 2023, work began on a brand-new platform, in the hope of creating a better environment that could support all the tools with their new and enhanced functionalities and integrate them by providing multilateral connections. The development of the platform is a long and complex process, carried out by IT specialists hand-picked by the team from the Conservatoire royal de Bruxelles, which is responsible for managing this task. At the time this text is submitted for publication, the HarMA HUB website is not yet available.

Glossary

The exchange of ideas inevitably starts with language. Neither dialogue within the community nor the sharing of teaching materials is possible without an understanding of what is meant by what is said. In the field of music theory, reaching this understanding can be particularly tricky, since it is not just a question of simple translation of a word from one language to another. Due to differences in both national traditions and methodology, terminology varies significantly from country to country.

Hence, it seems justified to predict that a multilingual glossary of music theory terms has the potential to be used the most widely and have the greatest impact on the music community across the spectrum of its various professions and levels of education.

The concept of the Glossary is to gather the music theory terms used in teaching practice. The HarMA project employs 9 languages: 5 of them are the

³ www.harmaplus.eu

most used European languages (English, French, German, Italian, Spanish), with the other 4 being the languages of the project partners (Hungarian, Polish, Estonian and, thanks to the Valencia team, Catalan). Having been previously managed by a team that is no longer part of the project (Hochschule für Musik und Theater ‘Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy’, Leipzig), in the HarMA HUB edition, the Glossary has naturally become the responsibility of all the project partners under the direction of Conservatoire royal de Bruxelles.

The challenge of constructing this multilingual tool has proved to be quite considerable, for the very same reason that underpins the concept. As mentioned above, there are considerable differences in terminology from language to language. There are multiple terms that exist in some but not all of the languages, and the way some terms are understood in different countries may also vary depending on local traditions. However, this only proves the importance of such a task and allows us to foresee the prominent impact it will have on the community when ready.

Bibliography

Like the Glossary, the idea of gathering detailed information on textbooks and other teaching resources published in book form originated in 2020 with the HarMA+ project. Over the course of that project, the database of bibliographic data was created, with 190 entries submitted by the end of the project in April 2023.⁴

The object of this tool is to provide the community of music theory teachers and students with access to knowledge about teaching resources used in other parts of the world – primarily Europe, of course, but with a few entries from the US having been submitted to the database already, it can be cautiously said that the tool has the potential to be worldwide.

In an age of global access to international markets of all kinds, we no longer have to limit ourselves to the teaching resources published in our own country. Of course, the accessibility of foreign publications depends strongly on the language. But with music notation being in a way a language of its own, on one hand, and tools like Google Translate developing quickly, on the other, one can hope that some music theory educators will find some of the foreign books at least partly accessible and usable in their classrooms.

⁴ The database is accessible via the HarMA+ website (see footnote 3).

The database will also allow attention to be drawn to books that so far have been known only locally. Very often they are books published by HMEIs themselves. As some academic teachers (in any field, not just music theory) consider it an important part of their output to have their methods and/or materials published in book form, there are many ‘local markets’ all over Europe, accessible and known to the students of the given institution, but not really heard of anywhere else.

There is also a possibility that getting the international music theory community more informed about teaching resources used in different countries will enhance interest in some of those resources to the point where it will prompt some translation activity. As a result, it would allow a book to become more widely accessible and to be added to recommended literature in music education institutions outside its country of origin.

The database, managed from the outset by the team from Stanisław Moniuszko Academy of Music in Gdańsk, collects bibliographic data according to a template based on the tree of disciplines (Harmony, Music Analysis, Ear Training, Instrumentation/Orchestration, Counterpoint, History of Music, Other), enhanced by further classification criteria. Records are submitted via an open online form. It is understood that representatives of European HMEIs, who have all been informed about the project, will submit data about books used in their institutions. For each book, besides the title under which it functions in the country of the submitter, an English title should be provided, as well as a short summary, also in English, in order to give international users an idea of what the book is about.

In the current HarMA HUB project, besides being moved to the new online platform, the Bibliography will have a couple of new features and enhancements. The main innovation is that it will now include not only books, but also papers, journal articles and chapters from multiple-author publications (on condition they are in fact used in music theory classrooms). In order to make the database more practical, links between different versions of the same book will be provided, be they different editions or different language versions (translations). With the current project based on the ‘hub’ approach, a connection between its various parts becomes a primary goal; therefore, there will be a link between the content of the Bibliography database and other tools (the glossary, the analytical case studies repository and the peer-reviewed journal).

At the same time, the database is in constant need of new submissions from HMEIs. It is greatly hoped that thanks to all the dissemination activities carried on within the framework of HarMA HUB and the networking opportunities that

come with them, the project's visibility will constantly increase and the number of items in the database will continue to grow.

From what we teach to what we say of what we teach: new tools, new concepts

Naturally, developing previously introduced tools has not been the only goal of the HarMA HUB project. In fact, two new components have been launched: a repository of analytical case studies (HarMAanalysis) and a peer-reviewed journal on music theory pedagogy.

HarMAanalysis

One of the core disciplines within the music theory area is analysis. It is taught to students of all majors, as it benefits each of them in a particular way. It helps performers – whether they are instrumentalists or singers or conductors – understand their repertoire and recognize it in a wider context. It can reveal to composition students the ‘backstage’ of the composer’s creative strategy and process. It provides future music educators with a deep comprehension of the music they are going to teach about.

Therefore, music analysis has always been an important part of HarMA activities, in both the original HarMA+ project and even the preceding HarMA Seminars. The significance of this discipline is evident from the HarMA+ project’s Bibliography: out of 190 publications submitted to the database, 52 are classified in the Music Analysis category. In the HarMA Seminar, in all its editions to date, a significant number of presentations were also associated with this area of music theory education. In addition, a tradition is starting to emerge of encouraging Seminar participants to share their analytical approaches. In advance of the 1st (Brussels, 2018) and the 3rd (Gdańsk, 2023) editions, participants analysed a piece chosen and submitted by the organizer. In the former case, it was Robert Schumann’s song ‘Aus meinen Tränen sprießen’; in the latter, Fryderyk Chopin’s Mazurka Op. 30 No. 2 was the mandatory piece and Karol Szymanowski’s Mazurka Op. 50 No. 1 was optional. The results were presented in the Seminar during a Comparative Analysis Session (chaired by Edwin Clapuyt in Brussels and Renata Skupin in Gdańsk).

Yet music analysis in itself is a very broad discipline. It has developed a variety of different methods and approaches, as is visible even in the tree of categories of the HarMA European Bibliography database: as many as eight categories relate to different analytical methods. The existence of conferences devoted specifically to music analysis (with EuroMAC being the most prominent one) is living proof of the wide spectrum of this discipline. Also, as the Seminar analytical tasks have shown, some innovative individual methods are being introduced by educators or researchers in the field. To sum up, the landscape of music analysis in Europe is very diverse, depending on such factors as geographical location (with some countries being diversified even locally), the impact of the specific school of thought and the type of educational institution.

Hence, one of the new components introduced in the HarMA HUB project is a repository of analytical case studies, provided with the catchy name HarMAAnalysis. The goal of this initiative, devised and managed by the team from the Stanisław Moniuszko Academy in Gdańsk, is to collect examples of analyses which could serve as material for inspiration or comparison for lecturers in the subject across European HMEIs. A call for texts will be issued once the project website is ready, encouraging music analysis teachers from all over Europe to submit their own analytical case studies which they would consider a model work for the course they teach. The studies may concern pieces from any historical period and use any method and any reference material. All submissions will undergo a review process, carried out in cooperation with European societies of music analysis.

Besides the case studies submitted via the open call, the repository will also preserve the works submitted for the above-mentioned Comparative Analysis Sessions of the HarMA Seminar. With a crop of over 30 analyses from the 3rd edition, and the 4th edition (Valencia, 2025) on the way, the prospects for the repository look very promising.

Peer-reviewed journal on music theory pedagogy

Sharing resources and material is one thing, but one of the important needs of the music theory community is to exchange ideas regarding the teaching process itself. As teachers, we always should be, and we most often are, capable of forming some conscious reflection concerning our teaching work, and sharing this reflection with our peers is something that should be widely encouraged.

One of the new tools introduced in the HarMA HUB project is an online journal meant to serve this purpose. It is an initiative of the team from the Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre in Tallinn. Although at the moment of submitting this text for publication the title of the journal has not yet been decided, the concept is already designed. The journal will include articles and papers focused on aspects of music theory pedagogy, either written by teaching staff from the partner institutions, particularly the HarMA teams' members, or submitted via an open call. All texts will be submitted to the standard peer-review process.

It is believed that the journal will help to strengthen the community of music theory lecturers and fill an empty space in the landscape of scientific periodicals related to music. Between musicology journals, which serve as an outlet for research carried out by both musicology and music theory specialists, and journals in the area of general music education, there seems to be a niche for a publication that would concentrate specifically on the pedagogical aspect of music theory.

This initiative also relates to the fact that some music theory lecturers, depending on their country, institution or position, are obliged not only to teach but also to conduct research and publish the results. The journal will provide another opportunity for them to fulfil that obligation. It is worth emphasizing that this particular opportunity will let them stay close to the practical aspect of what they do in the classroom, which is sometimes not the case with other research publications. One of the goals of this tool is therefore to bridge the gap between theory and practice, by inspiring practising teachers to voice their experiences and thoughts in a systematized form and encouraging researchers to examine issues connected to educational practice.

Due to the wide and complex spectrum of music theory education across Europe, a lot of what was said above about the diversity of music analysis may be also said about the diversity of teaching methods or practices in the music theory field in general. Therefore, the journal has the potential to become another step on the road to integrating the music theory community. At the same time, by reaching the meta-level of 'discoursing about how we teach' instead of simply 'showing what we teach' (which is the case with the Bibliography and other previously described tools), it gains the status of a 'discourse space' rather than simply a 'tool'; hence, in the project's organizational framework, it has been placed as a part of WP3 (Training and Capacity Building in Music Theory), along with the training activities.

From educating to being educated: training activities

Since the beginning of the HarMA projects, there has been a strong emphasis on exchanging educational experiences in practice, via a real-life classroom situation. In order to achieve that goal, ‘both sides of the barricade’ need to be addressed: those who teach and those who are taught. Hence, the training activities included in WP3 are designed twofold, in the form of week-long programmes for teachers and for students.

HarMA Training Week for Students

Following its very successful first edition, held in the spring of 2022 in Tallinn, the Training Week for Students within the HarMA HUB was taken over by the Ferenc Liszt Academy of Music in Budapest. It took place from 23 to 27 April 2024, with 21 students from all five partner institutions participating in the event within the framework of the Erasmus+ programme. Over the course of the week, the students had the opportunity to attend ten lectures and classes on the topics of music analysis, harmony and ear training, given by teachers also from the partner institutions.

The goal of the event is to give students a glimpse of how music theory is taught in different institutions and countries. By participating in the classes, they get the possibility of confronting their knowledge, skills and experiences with what is done elsewhere, and by meeting their peers from other European institutions, they can learn about it in the most inspiring and friendly environment. Among the participants of both the Tallinn edition of 2022 and the Budapest edition of 2024 there are students for whom music theory is their major. This event is a one-of-a-kind opportunity for them in particular. Not only because it provides them with some food for thought that will prove beneficial for their future profession, as most of them find employment in the educational field. But also, with so many Erasmus+ projects in the domain of music being focused around performance, the music theory majors are usually slightly underprivileged when it comes to participation in Erasmus+ activities. That alone is sufficient cause to state that the ‘HarMA Student Week’ has filled a gap in the Erasmus+ map of events.

HarMA Training Week for Teachers

Naturally, students are not the only ones who benefit from this kind of cross-national inspiration. Within the community of music theory teachers, there is also a need to share information about curricula and teaching methods used in the field in different European countries. Especially today, given that students, as they become graduates, are often bound to work in a more or less international environment, the situation demands from a teacher of any kind, including a music theorist, some openness to, and some interest in what is taught in other parts of the world and how it is taught. But that is possible only with some level of knowledge about that ‘what and how’, and the Training Week for Teachers provides an opportunity to deepen that knowledge.

The participants are representatives of the teaching staff of the partner institutions. The event consists of five days of lectures, workshops and seminars, allowing the project partners to share the methods used in their country, or, specifically, their institution, as well as to compare experiences and mutually inspire each other.

The HarMA+ edition of the Training Week for Teachers took place in October 2021 in Leipzig. The forthcoming HarMA HUB edition will be hosted by the Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre in Tallinn and is scheduled for the spring of 2026. As yet, little is known about the details of this event, as it is still in the making. One of the plans is to give focus to music analysis, which, as mentioned above, is a particularly broad and diverse discipline, so there is always a need to discuss and explore its various intricacies and nuances. Another is to include microtonal solfeggio, which by contrast is a narrow segment of a wider discipline, i.e. ear training, and one that is in fact not talked about that much; hence, it deserves more recognition and may potentially prove inspiring for the participants in the event.

From creating to advertising: dissemination activities

An important part of the project is dissemination, which serves to increase its visibility and promote its results. This is something each of the partner institutions plays a part in, be it locally or through their external contacts. Thanks to those joint efforts, HarMA HUB has a chance to gain international recognition and acquire not only potential users of the project output, but also

potential new contributors, particularly welcome with regard to the Bibliography, HarMAanalysis or the journal.

A huge part of the dissemination work is carried by the Association Européenne des Conservatoires, Académies de Musique et Musikhochschulen, which is the leader of WP4 (EU outreach and dissemination). Since the original HarMa+ project, the AEC has been the partner responsible for the digital dissemination strategy. Through their various online channels, i.e. their website and social media, they have been spreading information about the project, first HarMA+, now HarMA HUB, the events and new developments associated with it. To date (June 2024), since the launch of the HarMA HUB, the AEC has also presented this information at the following events:

- AEC Annual Meeting for International Relations Coordinators – Leuven, September 2023,
- AEC Annual Congress and General Assembly – The Hague, November 2023.

The AEC will be also holding a midterm conference, in September 2025, in Budapest.

Another prolific team as regards dissemination is the Coordinator, i.e. the Conservatoire royal de Bruxelles. So far, presentations of HarMA HUB have been held by them at the following events:

- Symposium Ear Training in Progress – Catania, November 2023,
- EURIE – Eurasia Higher Education Summit – Istanbul, February 2024,
- EPARM – European Platform for Artistic Research in Music – Ljubljana, March 2024,
- ERACON – Erasmus Congress and Exhibition – Porto, June 2024.

But the most important dissemination outlet is the HarMA International Seminar Event – a three-day gathering of music theory teachers from HMEIs across Europe, filled with presentations and training sessions. Originated a couple of years before the project and originally designed as a stand-alone event, the Seminar has been a unique opportunity for European music theory lecturers to share their knowledge, skills and experiences. Recently, it became the biggest platform for spreading information about the HarMA projects. The Gdańsk edition of 2023 was officially the final dissemination event of HarMa+. During the first day of the Seminar, a presentation was given by the project partners, describing the outcome of the respective parts of the project and encouraging

further contribution from HMEI representatives. The forthcoming edition of the Seminar, to be held in April 2025 in Valencia, will simultaneously serve as a HarMA HUB networking event, since it falls in the middle of the HarMA HUB timeframe. Considering such a dynamic start to the project, with some of the activities continued from the preceding project and therefore well established, and others well thought-out and pre-planned, surely there will already be a lot to talk about and to promote at that point. And the timing of the Seminar will make it possible for those participants inspired by HarMA presentations to still actively contribute to the project – whether by submitting data for the Bibliography, analysis to the HarMAanalysis repository or a paper for the peer-reviewed journal.