



Committee for the Evaluation of Music and Musicology Study Programs

General Evaluation Report

January 2016

Introduction

Israeli higher education in music is vibrant, of high quality in many ways, and deservedly admired by university administrators. The faculties of the institutions visited by the quality assessment committee include internationally recognized scholars, composers, and performers. Students at all levels are being challenged by their faculty to succeed and to raise their aspirations ever higher. At leading universities, schools of music, and conservatories worldwide, Israeli-educated scholars, composers, and performers are widely admired for their solid training. Most important of all, musicians educated in the programs reviewed by this committee occupy leading positions in the music world throughout Israel and in Europe, the Americas, and the Far East: numerous performers in the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra and the Jerusalem Symphony as well as other orchestras and chamber ensembles in Israel and around the world, many of the faculty members in music departments in Israel's universities and other institutions of higher education as well as faculty in prominent positions abroad, music educators in Israeli elementary and high schools, and music therapists.

In every institution the music quality assessment committee visited, there was a deep sense of dedication to the programs' missions, and of well-earned pride in the department's or school's accomplishments.

Simultaneously, Israeli higher education in music is beset by the sorts of problems that plague higher education in music everywhere: limited budgets, inadequate facilities, lack of acoustic isolation in teaching and practice spaces, too few faculty doing too many tasks, too many entering undergraduates who need remedial work, outdated technology, essential faculty facing retirement with no assurance that their lines will be filled, and the like.

The five programs visited by the committee each have distinctive profiles – profiles appropriate to the history of each institution as well as its setting. For instance, the Department of Musicology in Hebrew University and the Jerusalem Academy for Music and Dance (itself now located on one of Hebrew University's campuses) have evolved separately over many decades and offer quite different sorts of programs to different sorts of students. In the north of the country, the young Music Department at Haifa University has yet a different profile, imaginatively exploring how to create programs that bring together and serve students of different ethnicities who live in that region, while at the same time teaching many first-generation college attendees. Each of the two major conservatories (the Jerusalem Academy and the Buchmann-Mehta School of Music at Tel Aviv University) has a distinctive profile: the Buchmann-Mehta School with its close interactions with the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, and the Jerusalem Academy with its interdisciplinary programs.

The distinctiveness of all these programs is fully appropriate to Israel, a small country with a heterogeneous population. The various programs should continue focus on what they do successfully and not be too concerned about trying to duplicate other programs that are already thriving in their individual missions. There is no single model for a scholarly music

program, for the education of composers, or for a program training professional performers. But at the same time, collaborations should be explored – especially between pairs of institutions within a single city – so that each program does not have to offer everything on its own. For instance, in recent years, the two programs located in Jerusalem – the Musicology Department at Hebrew University and the Jerusalem Academy of Music and Dance – have begun to think of ways that they could benefit from drawing upon each others’ resources. A signal achievement (“a first in Israel,” as the President of Hebrew University happily proclaimed) is the newly approved joint Ph.D. program in composition. Several other areas of mutually beneficial collaborations between these two institutions suggested themselves to the committee, and are discussed in the individual reports.

Beyond collaborative efforts, broader interconnections between music and the social and cultural contexts in which it exists merit study. Israel is especially rich in its musical diversity, and this diversity merits more robust exploration. Many of the institutions visited, for example, had some form of “world music” and/or ethnomusicology courses and some offered graduate degrees in this discipline, but these appeared to be marginal rather than lying at the core of the institution’s mission. Examining music more broadly helps students reframe their basic notions and also construct new meanings of music as social practice as well as sound. Furthermore, becoming familiar with different music systems will benefit student’s performance and musicianship skills in their chosen areas.

The energy and contradictions of Israeli society and culture rose to the surface in discussions at each program. The committee heard students, faculty, and administrators at various institutions proudly speak of their international character and call attention to how many of their courses and dissertations are in English, and also heard voices who urged that scholarship should be written in Hebrew to build a corpus of Hebrew literature on music. Performance ensembles in the two conservatories (the Jerusalem Academy of Music and Dance and the Buchmann-Mehta School of Music at Tel Aviv University) measure their students’ creativity against the top international standards while at the same time fostering Israeli music.

In general, the faculty members in each of the music programs are eminent scholars and creators, active in their fields of expertise, and deeply dedicated to educating their students and promoting the importance of the art of music in Israel. This eminence and dedication is clearly recognized by all the university administrators who met with the committee, each of them highly praising the quality of the faculty and the achievements of the department or schools they oversee.

Coping with continual budgetary restrictions (sometimes routine, occasionally severe) adds to the demands facing administrators and their programs. Creative leadership will engage the faculty in shaping that institution’s identity within given restrictions, balancing the desire and need to conserve the past with addressing present and future challenges in a changing world. As discussed in the individual reports, the committee found different degrees of success in handling these issues.

This report to the CHE focuses on issues common to many or all of the programs. Issues pertaining to individual programs are discussed in the individual reports.

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Re: Impending faculty retirements

Some of the institutions visited face a significant number of impending retirements in the next few years. These retirements will affect a wide range of features in each program. Some programs will be unable to continue their distinctive curricula if one or more key faculty lines are not filled. Other programs will be unable to introduce more diversity to the faculty and to curricula if they cannot fill these faculty lines as they become vacant.

The committee strongly recommends that lines vacated by attrition and retirement be preserved. The number of faculty lines is already diminished in many programs because of previous budget crises. And all of the programs facing impending retirements are already valiantly trying to fulfill their missions with a faculty too small in size.

In any event, strategic planning must begin early in the process if the programs are to address these changes effectively. We urge each of the universities to give the departments or schools authorizations to replace lines two academic years prior to the time of each retirement. That will allow careful planning for successful searches and smooth transitions, and for attracting the right candidates who will allow the programs to maintain their strengths and to cover new curricular areas.

Such a two-year authorization will also allow the various programs to negotiate collaborations of various sorts with other institutions, finding ways to share resources creatively so as to benefit both institutions faced with budgetary shortfalls.

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Re: Collaborations between different institutions

In individual reports, the committee suggests various collaborations between different institutions to enhance programs without the need to hire additional faculty or create additional physical facilities. In each case, the committee believes that the suggested collaborations will benefit both institutions.

For instance, we propose three faculty positions, jointly appointed by the Musicology Department at Hebrew University and the Jerusalem Academy of Music and Dance. The three positions would all relate, broadly, to “performance studies” – research and pedagogical areas deemed by both institutions as important. One position would be in historical performance practices – ideally filled by a scholar with strong skills in performance. The second would be an ethnomusicologist, preferably with strong ensemble performance skills (an expert in gamelan, for example). The third would be a research position with a focus on performance and computation (examples might include a music researcher doing motion tracking and/or imaging studies of music performers, conductors,

and/or dancers). Each position would be housed in either the Jerusalem Academy or the Hebrew University Department of Musicology, and would involve teaching at both institutions.

We are well aware of the bureaucratic obstacles that often make such collaborations more trouble than they are worth. We urge the CHE to provide incentives to institutions to foster creative interaction between institutions.

Inter-university Research Institutes? Selected sub-fields of music research could benefit from the creation of inter-university institutes. Three areas should consider such collaborative alliances:

1. Research domains that require costly and rapidly evolving technology and/or equipment, methods, and resources (e.g., music and neuroscience). This would include a Center for the Study of Music Perception and Cognition, which would consolidate domain specific needs (for example, imaging equipment, eye-tracking technologies, etc.), and expertise for collaborative research.
2. Cross-disciplinary areas (e.g., music technology and ethnomusicology) in which programs are currently represented by a single faculty member in different departments, where sharing of knowledge and expertise would benefit both pedagogy and research.
3. A Center for the Study of Mediterranean Music, perhaps located in Haifa, where current practices in the history and contemporary performance of musics of all kinds could be studied using contemporary theory and method in history, culture and performance studies, and ethnomusicology methods. Combining resources for such a Center would celebrate Israel's diversity and position it as the world's leader in such studies.
4. A Center for Research and Innovation in Music Education, which hopefully would spur more widespread music education in Israeli schools from elementary through high school.

Some suggestions along these lines appear in the individual reports.

The purpose of all these suggestions is to inspire conversations among the various programs – conversations in which administrators, faculty, and students imaginatively consider mutually beneficial collaborations. The most successful joint programs will arise when there is active buy-in from all parties.

Lastly, options for distance learning merit exploration, especially as the technology evolves.

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Re: Issues common to undergraduate programs

1. The need for remedial courses for some incoming students. In some of the music programs reviewed, there is a vast disparity in the musical background of entering undergraduates, especially in Western music theory and ear training. This places a particular burden on undergraduate education. Preparatory courses are offered in several institutions either in the first year or during the summer preceding the first year of studies to bring the students up to an appropriate level in these areas.

The content of such basic courses is largely the same from institution to institution. The various programs might wish to consider collaborations with other institutions to offer these summer-semester preparatory courses, and also might consider having these courses taught by graduate students under mentorship by more senior faculty (which would give the graduate students valuable teaching experience).

Such summer courses could also make use of online resources and/or distance learning so that students can work on these basic skills outside of the classroom and beyond specific course-related homework.

2. Courses for advanced undergraduates. Undergraduate programs are also urged to offer advanced courses, advanced sections of required courses, and/or independent study options for extraordinarily well-prepared students. When necessary, perhaps students should be allowed to do the project at another institution, and have those credits accepted in the program at which the student is matriculated.
3. Scheduling courses for undergraduates pursuing teaching certification along with their B.A. in music. Among the specific challenges of music education is the necessity of creating teaching schedules that allow for sufficient time for individual instrumental practice.
4. Teaching Western music history. Although the consistency and level of core musicianship and theoretical training is high in all the institutions visited, the teaching of music history is inconsistent. Furthermore, in addition to covering the traditional Western concert-music canon, the required curriculum should also expose students to diverse musical cultures, not only the cultures beyond the Western tradition but also the cultures beyond the Classic-Romantic core within the Western tradition itself.

Perhaps the CHE could create a task force with one musicologist (a music historian and/or ethnomusicologist) from each degree program to strategize and exchange ideas about how to meet the challenge of covering Western music history while at the same time broadening the areas of study. This is important for educating today's students, whose careers will extend past the middle of the 21st century.

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Re: Doctoral programs in music

The committee is concerned that even in the finest doctoral programs, students are not receiving a sufficiently broad perspective on the ever-broadening world of scholarly research in music. Hence the following recommendations:

1. A core curriculum should be required in all doctoral programs in music. The committee strongly recommends that all Israeli doctoral programs contain a core curriculum consisting of courses required of all doctoral students with the goal of establishing a baseline of general knowledge and fluency in a range of aspects of musicology and theory so that students are at least introduced to the widest possible perspectives of current music scholarship. At least some of these required courses should include a significant research and writing component with a required final paper that would demonstrate proficiency in the subject (including awareness of the relevant primary and secondary literature) as well as skills in scholarly writing.

The entire doctoral faculty of each institution should establish these core curricular requirements for all doctoral students in all areas of concentration (musicology, ethnomusicology, theory, and composition).

These core curricular requirements should be clearly laid out to entering students in all major concentrations (such as music history, music theory, ethnomusicology, composition, etc.), and adhered to in a manner that is transparent and equitable.

2. The curriculum in individual major concentrations. Beyond the collective core curriculum required of all doctoral students, required courses specific to individual major concentrations (such as musicology, music theory, ethnomusicology, composition, etc.) may be specified by the respective faculty of these sub-fields. These courses should be specified in writing, including sample syllabi, to the entire doctoral faculty, and clearly laid out to all entering students.

Any changes in these requirements should be made in writing, and presented to the Department Chair, faculty, and students.

3. Qualifying examination. Upon completion of required coursework, doctoral students should take a comprehensive qualifying examination that tests their knowledge of the core curricular areas mentioned in point 1 above prior to the process for approving their individual dissertation topics.
4. Doctoral colloquia. Each doctoral program should have regularly scheduled graduate colloquia that occur at least several times per semester, with attendance required by all doctoral students. The content of the colloquia should be decided upon by the doctoral faculty, and should include some combination of presentations of research and/or creative work by doctoral students and faculty, as well as by outside researchers or creative musicians covering over time the range of topics studied by students in the program.
5. A Director of Graduate Studies. The doctoral faculty or the Department Chair should appoint a doctoral faculty member to be Director of Graduate Studies. The Director of

Graduate Studies should keep track at least once per year of the progress of all students through the curriculum.

Re: Doctoral degrees in performance

Creating excellent doctoral degrees in performance is the vital next step for Israeli higher education in music, a step that should be taken with care.

The committee understands the reluctance of the CHE to approve programs leading to the Doctor of Musical Arts (DMA) degree, fearing that approving a third degree that is not a Ph.D. might open the door to numerous other non-Ph.D. third degrees in other fields. Unfortunately, that position leaves performers with no way to pursue their education in musical creativity at the doctoral level within Israel. Unlike doctoral programs in composition, which in many countries can lead either to a Ph.D. or a Doctor of Musical Arts (DMA), doctoral programs in performance worldwide lead only to the DMA degree.

In addition, the DMA degree is offered around the world as the third degree in music performance by top conservatories (both self-standing conservatories, such as Juilliard, and conservatories within universities, such as the Yale School of Music) and also by top research universities with eminent doctoral programs in music (such as the City University of New York Graduate Center). Given that Israel already has two widely recognized conservatories, one within an eminent research university and the other a self-standing Academy (the Buchmann-Mehta School of Music of Tel Aviv University and the Jerusalem Academy of Music and Dance), not to offer this degree in Israel is odd.

The committee believes that excellent DMA programs in performance in Israel could and should be built on the nation's undergraduate and master's level programs.

"Excellent" is the crucial word here. Adding the DMA degree would require performance schools to strengthen the scholarly side of their faculty (as well as some aspects of their performance programs), which in turn would enormously benefit the intellectual development of performance studies at the bachelor's and master's level. This would necessitate that the Buchmann-Mehta School of Music strengthen its musicology faculty, and also deepen its connections to its parent institution, the research-oriented Tel Aviv University. In Jerusalem, it would spur deeper interactions between the Jerusalem Academy of Music and Dance and the research-oriented Musicology Department at Hebrew University.

The committee recommends that the CHE take a first step by appointing an international committee to produce a document about DMA degrees in performance. Such a committee might consist of three or more former or current directors of DMA programs from other countries and also two Israelis, at least one nominated by the Jerusalem Academy of Music and Dance and by the Buchmann-Mehta School of Music of Tel Aviv University. The committee would be charged with surveying the various sorts of DMA degrees in performance at major institutions abroad and describing their varying balances of artistic/creative courses and scholarship in the curriculum, the presence or absence of doctoral qualifying exams, and the nature of the dissertation requirement (i.e., the mix of

performances, lecture-performances, and written research). With such a report in hand, the CHE could determine how one or another type of DMA degree in performance might accord with the standards for Ph.D. degrees in music and other fields in Israel.

In short, creating one or two first-rate DMA programs in Israel at the institutions cited above should be undertaken to create doctoral degrees sought and coveted internationally, while fostering the continued enhancement of the quality of Israeli bachelor's and master's education in music performance.

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Re: Employment conditions for adjunct teachers (“morim min hakhutz”)

During the various site visits, the committee members became aware of the harsh working conditions for adjunct teachers (“morim min hakhutz”) who are employed in the programs under review: an annual contract under which they are paid during only eight months of the year, the minimal employee benefits, the lack of job security, and so forth. (This category is not to be confused with the so-called “adjunct track” or “maslul nilveh,” to which most of the tenured faculty in the performance- and composition-oriented programs belong.)

The economy-based issue of working conditions for adjunct teachers is complicated and not limited to any one learning field or country. Increasingly in recent decades it has plagued academia in most of the Western world. The situation in Israel may be an especially acute case, because educational budgets are limited and dramatic, and sudden budget cuts seem to be the norm more than the exception.

Given the highly important tasks performed by adjunct teachers at schools the committee visited, the committee urges that every effort be made to improve the employment conditions of adjunct teachers by examining carefully every possible avenue toward creative solutions. Bar Ilan University and Tel Aviv University seem – more than other institutions – to be moving toward better conditions.

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Re: Music education in Israeli elementary and high schools

A common theme in many of the undergraduate programs in Israel is the need for remedial courses (given by some institutions during the summer before the first year of baccalaureate studies) because admitted students lack knowledge of many basics of Western music theory and ear training. Ultimately, this speaks to the absence of systematic musical pedagogy in elementary and high schools in Israel.

Over time, this problem may be alleviated by the many higher-education music programs that collaborate with schools of education so that undergraduates earn teaching certification along with their B.A. or B.Mus. degree.

The committee was also happy to hear that a program modeled on the internationally famed Venezuelan “El Sistema” program has recently been started in Israel.

The benefits of teaching music to children extend well beyond learning music itself. Among many valuable skills, studying music familiarizes children with a non-verbal system of notation, develops the ability to learn complex tasks and perform them for an audience under strict temporal restrictions, engages children’s innate creativity, and develops strong social skills by learning to play and/or sing in ensembles.

The committee urges the Ministry of Education and Council for Higher Education to encourage dialogue and collaborations between academic institutions and primary and secondary schools that have music programs. The committee believes that this will increase the extent of musical studies in elementary schools, high schools, and pre-college conservatories nationwide.

A doctoral program in music education? Although not part of the charge of this committee, we note that there are no doctoral programs in music education in Israel. It would be beneficial if one of the schools of education that collaborate with music programs for teaching certification would consider creating such a doctoral program that could help spur music education at the pre-college level in the country.

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Re: Diversity

Musicians being educated today will have careers that extend past the middle of the 21st century, in a world that promises to be more interconnected and diverse in numerous ways. To better prepare today’s students for those careers, the committee urges all institutions to consider all aspects of diversity in its programs and faculty, such as the ethnic and gender balance of its faculty and students, as well as opportunities to introduce students to the music of other groups even as the programs focus on preparing students for careers in one or another specific culture.

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Re: Assessment and enhancement of teaching

In all of the programs visited by the committee, too little attention is paid to monitoring and improving teaching.

Classroom observations of teaching seem not to be done at all, and students’ evaluations, as far they refer to teaching practice, seem not to be consulted consistently.

This is somewhat surprising to committee members from other countries (especially the United States), where periodic classroom observations are commonplace until faculty members reach the most senior rank, and student evaluations are regularly scrutinized, especially in the case of faculty members below the highest rank. To the committee, there

is no conflict between academic freedom and working with faculty members to ensure that their teaching is at the highest level.

The committee recommends that the CHE consider drafting national standards for teaching observations and enhancement, and that student evaluations become a regular part of the process for monitoring teaching effectiveness and be one of the factors considered when making promotion decisions.

The offer of regular teaching training is presumably available in some form in most institutions (even though not always mentioned in the self-evaluation reports). At a minimum, the committee recommends that each music program consider the establishment of a system of mentoring whereby incoming junior faculty have access to a senior faculty mentor during their first years.

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Re: Faculty research and creative activity

The faculty members in higher-education programs in music are a combination of researchers and creative artists (composers and performers). In many instances, a single faculty member is active both as a researcher and a creative artist.

Yet, the committee heard from faculty and administrators (in the self-evaluation reports and in conversations during site visits) that creative activity is not always treated as fully analogous to research. For instance, “research” grants are not awarded for creative activity to the same degree as for research. And in terms of promotions, performers’ and composers’ creative activities are not evaluated as highly as more formal research activities.

The committee urges a reconsideration of the equity between formal research and creative activity. Performing concerts, especially as a soloist (solo recitals, concerto performances as soloist with orchestra, conducting an orchestra, performing a role in an opera, etc.), is comparable to publishing research or presenting papers at conferences in terms of the effort involved, the individual and cooperative creativity involved, and the public presentation of the results. The artistic preparation for performance (practicing, considering issues of style and performance practice, etc.) is analogous to conducting research, and the presentation of concerts often requires the same sorts of expenses as presenting research at conferences (costs of travel, hotels, etc.). In many cases, there are additional expenses, such as the requirement of most instrumentalists other than pianists to have a collaborative partner (such as a pianist) who is paid a fee, and whose travel and other expenses must be paid. Composing too is analogous to conducting research. The act of composition requires time; arranging for publication of scores and for performances carries substantial expenses. Presenting a master class likewise requires preparation, and is analogous to the reading of a paper at a scholarly conference.

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Re: The self-evaluation reports

The self-evaluation reports on the five programs visited by the committee were in general quite informative . . . although in most cases, there were important aspects of the program that were not raised by the report and either arose or were given much more prominence only during the on-site visit.

One aspect of the process that could be improved in the future would be to have a formal mechanism for students and/or recent alumni to contribute to the report. On a range of matters, students at most institution visited perceived various matters differently than faculty and/or administrators did.

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Re: The music programs not studied by the committee

In some institutions, the committee surveyed the entire offerings in music. But in other places, there were music programs that were not included in the self-evaluation or surveyed during in the site visit. For instance, at the Jerusalem Academy of Music and Dance, the “interdisciplinary” program (including the Arabic Music Program) was not included, even though its interactions with the Western-based program that the committee did study are already an important element in the distinctiveness of the Academy – indeed, an area in which even more interactions would be beneficial.

Likewise, the committee was not asked to survey programs in music education. Given the issues raised above concerning music programs in pre-college schools in Israel, this was a missed opportunity.

In the future, the CHE might consider appointing the chair of the quality assessment committee a year or more before the committee begins its work, with the chair participating in the decision of which programs to study.

Signed by:



Prof. Joel Lester, Chair

Ellen Koskof

Prof. Ellen Koskoff



Prof. Reinhard Strohm



Prof. Jaakko Erkkila



Prof. Jonathan Berger



Prof. Emanuel Krasovsky



Prof. Michael Klinghofferer

Appendix 1: Letter of Appointment

June 2015

Prof. Joel Lester
City University of New York and City College of New York
New York
USA

Dear Professor,

The Israeli Council for Higher Education (CHE) strives to ensure the continuing excellence and quality of Israeli higher education through a systematic evaluation process. By engaging upon this mission, the CHE seeks: to enhance and ensure the quality of academic studies, to provide the public with information regarding the quality of study programs in institutions of higher education throughout Israel, and to ensure the continued integration of the Israeli system of higher education in the international academic arena.

As part of this important endeavor we reach out to world renowned academicians to help us meet the challenges that confront the Israeli higher education by accepting our invitation to participate in our international evaluation committees. This process establishes a structure for an ongoing consultative process around the globe on common academic dilemmas and prospects.

I therefore deeply appreciate your willingness to join us in this crucial enterprise.

It is with great pleasure that I hereby appoint you to serve as the Chair of the Council for Higher Education's Committee for the Evaluation of the study programs in Music and Musicology. In addition to yourself, the composition of the Committee will be as follows: Prof. Jonathan Berger, Prof. Ellen Koskoff, Prof. Reinhard Strohm (Emeritus), Prof. Jaakko Erkkila, Prof. Emanuel Krasovsky, Prof. Michael Klinghofferer.

Ms. Alex Buslovich-Bilik will be the coordinator of the Committee.

Details regarding the operation of the committee and its mandate are provided in the enclosed appendix.

I wish you much success in your role as the Chair of this most important committee.

Sincerely,

Prof. Hagit Messer-Yaron
Vice Chair,
The Council for Higher Education (CHE)

