

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS OF MUSIC

100th Annual Meeting

November 22–26, 2024

Greetings from the Association Européenne des Conservatoires, Académies de Musique et Musikhochschulen (AEC)

President Deborah Kelleher

President Michael Wilder, distinguished guests, dear colleagues and friends,

As the President of the European Association of Conservatoires (AEC) it is a true privilege to address this esteemed general assembly on such a historic occasion—the 100th anniversary of the National Association of Schools of Music.

Standing here, surrounded by the collective wisdom and experience in music education gathered in this room, I am reminded of the transformative power of our shared mission. Together, we nurture not only the musicians and the music educators of tomorrow but also the cultural foundation of our societies.

I come to you fresh from the AEC's recent Congress, held at the Conservatorio di Milano, one of Europe's most storied institutions. This conservatory has fostered some of history's greatest composers, including Giacomo Puccini, Pietro Mascagni, and Luciano Berio—an enduring testament to the power of higher music education to shape artistic legacies.

The Congress centred on a theme that resonates deeply with today's world: Inclusion, Innovation, and Interdisciplinarity—from Education to Employment and Society. These ideas sparked thought-provoking conversations and provided a lens through which we explored the challenges and opportunities facing our field. One of the pivotal outcomes of the Congress was the approval of a new strategy for the AEC. This strategy aspires to position us as a leader in convening collective wisdom, identifying emerging trends, advocating for our sector, and fostering public discourse on the vital role of music and music education as an indispensable part of being human.

The rapid pace of external change compels us to ask urgent questions: If our ultimate goal is to contribute to a better world, how can higher music education create a decisive and meaningful impact? And how should this reshape our mission and values? These questions are not just theoretical—they are calls to action. Finding the answers will require courage and a willingness to embrace bold decisions, all with the aim of equipping our students to lead in an increasingly complex world.

At the same time, the AEC is experiencing significant growth. Our membership is expanding, our events are attracting record attendance, and we have been honoured to receive Creative Europe funding for the years ahead. These milestones are worth celebrating, but they also bring heightened expectations—expectations that we, as an organisation, are determined to meet.

To do so, we have embraced new objectives that prioritise trend scouting, communication for change, and alliance-building. At the heart of these goals lies our commitment to creating an international platform where collaboration thrives—where institutions, educators, and students can learn from one another and grow together.

Throughout its long history, NASM has been a source of inspiration for the AEC. Your steadfast dedication to the next generation of artists has not only enriched American culture but has also served as a beacon for music educators worldwide. Your example reminds us all of the profound responsibility we bear—to guide our students toward not just musical excellence, but also the capacity to lead, to innovate, and to inspire.

As we celebrate this remarkable milestone, I am filled with gratitude for the friendship and collaboration between NASM and AEC. This partnership reflects a shared belief in the transformative power of music education and a commitment to nurturing the artists who will shape a brighter, more harmonious future.

On behalf of the AEC, I offer my heartfelt congratulations on this centennial celebration. May NASM continue to thrive as a leader in our field, inspiring generations to come. Together, we are building a legacy that transcends borders, unites cultures, and underscores the indispensable role of music in the world today and for the coming 100 years.