

Freedom in Music: Contemporary Challenges

1st International Conference of the European Network for the Philosophy of Music (ENPM)

Porto on April 18–20, 2024

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From 18-20 April 2024, the first international conference of The European Network for the Philosophy of Music (ENPM) took place in Porto, Portugal. The topic of the conference “Freedom in Music: Contemporary Challenges” has focused on thematic issues connecting to creating music, performing music, consuming music, reception of music and its defining. The general aim of the platform ENPM is to promote and enhance the study of the musical phenomenon broadly understood from a philosophical perspective, and hence, the philosophy of music in Europe. The host institution for the conference was the Institute of Philosophy of the University of Porto (Instituto de Filosofia da Universidade do Porto, Faculdade de Letras da Universidade do Porto). The first ENPM conference was held as a kick-off event with the participants from European countries as well as the United Kingdom, Israel and the US. | *Keywords: European Network for the Philosophy of Music, Freedom, Music*

The European Network for the Philosophy of Music (ENPM) was established in spring 2023. It represents a network of scholars interested in the philosophy of music coming from philosophy and related disciplines (such as musicology, aesthetics, history of art, sociology, psychology or computational sciences) as well as professional musicians and practitioners, working primarily, but not exclusively, at academic institutions in Europe. ENPM was established on the initiative of researchers from Spain and Italy, with Nemesio García-Carril Puy (Complutense University of Madrid, Spain) as its main coordinator. The founding members and members of the steering committee are: Lisa Giombini (University of Roma Tre, Italy), Vitor Guerreiro (University of Porto,

Portugal), Dusan Milenkovic (University of Niš, Serbia); Alessandro Arbo (University of Strasbourg, France), Alessandro Bertinetto (University of Torino, Italy), Mario De Caro (University of Roma Tre, Italy), Krzysztof Guzczalski (Jagiellonian University of Krakow, Poland), Eran Guter (Max Stern Yezreel Valley College, Israel), Slavka Kopčáková (University of Presov, Slovakia), Elzé Sigutė Mikalonytė (University of Cambridge, UK), Vitor Moura (University of Minho in Braga, Portugal), Chiara Palazzolo (University of Tulsa, US), and Rūta Stanevičiūtė (Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre in Vinius, Lithuania).

The general aim of the European Network for the Philosophy of Music is to promote and advance the study of the musical phenomenon broadly understood from a philosophical perspective, and hence, the philosophy of music in Europe. Its specific goals encompass: fostering and enhancing connections and partnerships among European-based philosophers of music via conferences, workshops, interchange of visitors, collaborative research projects, formation of research groups; fostering and facilitating the dissemination of information concerning the philosophy of music within the network; supporting and enhancing the visibility, accessibility, and impact of philosophical inquiries into music both within academic circles and the broader community; promoting interdisciplinary research with related disciplines.

From 18-20 April 2024, the first international conference of the ENPM took place in the sunny city of Porto, Portugal. The host institution for the conference was the Institute of Philosophy of the University of Porto (Instituto de Filosofia da Universidade do Porto, Faculdade de Letras da Universidade do Porto). The conference was also the official inaugural meeting for the functioning of the platform, including the official approval of the statute and confirmation of the platform's objectives. The first ENPM conference was held as a kick-off event with the participation of 30 researchers from European countries as well as the United Kingdom, Israel and the US.

The event was devoted to exploring the topic of freedom in music in the face of contemporary challenges. Thematically, the conference was divided into five separate panels, each of which was devoted to one of the following strands: Creating music (authorship, copyright, appropriation, digital music, new composing practices, including AI); Performing music (professional ethics, ethical responsibility in performing music, new performing habits, improvisation); Consuming music (new consumption habits: streaming, web, participation, live music); Receiving music (political & social values of music: manipulation of taste, propaganda, censorship, music as a form of protest and resistance; the emancipatory dimension of music, music education, critical practices, educational implications for the general public); Defining music (the nature and meaning of music: consequences for ontology, epistemology, normative theory: music universals, cross-cultural issues, medium).

The conference session included 30 papers, in which individual speakers brought remarkable and interesting topics, and innovative perspectives to the conceptualization of the studied phenomena in music. Let me mention at least

the contribution of Alessandro Arbo (University of Strasbourg) *Freedom in the musical work, between aesthetics and ontology*, a pioneering philosophical reflection on the set theme of the conference. Ewa Schreiber (University of Poznań) in her presentation *Composers' self-reflection – “amateurish philosophizing”?* brought her own psychologizing scheme of the process of philosophizing about music, which takes place in the musician's psychological setting. A particularly fruitful discussion was provoked by Alessandro Bertinetto (University of Torino) with his paper *Improvising habit(s) of musical freedom*, which brought new perspectives on the ontological issues of improvisation as a mode that has been displaced from European art music during its historical development but is nowadays highly topical. Dušan Milenković (University of Niš) in his paper *Aesthetics and Contemporary Global Music* brought an updated perspective on the operativity and meaningfulness of the concepts of “world music” and “global music”. Israeli philosopher Eran Guter's (Max Stern Yezreel Valley College) presentation *Looping down to patterns of life: The emancipatory dimension of music* explored freedom in music in relation to the mechanisms of the emergence of thinking about music liberated from established schemas and connected to the art of living. Rūta Stanevičiūtė (Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre) in her paper *Ethical Turn in Aesthetics and Reception of Music* and Férdia Stone-Davis (Kunstuniversität Graz | University of Cambridge | Chair of the RMA Music and Philosophy Study Group) in *Epistemic injustice: what is heard and what is not heard* both presented ethical and epistemological theses concerning the reception of music. Two researchers from Slovakia, Markéta Štefková (Academy of Performing Arts in Bratislava), Slávka Kopčáková (University of Prešov) and the Czech philosopher Josef Fulka, presented the state of musicological and philosophical reflection on 20th-century music in the former Czechoslovak context.

The first ENPM conference can be considered an extraordinary success and at the same time the first initiative event of a platform that has set very ambitious goals for its future activities. Among these, the intention to organise a scientific conference at least once every two years resonated in particular. Local seminars and workshops, and outreach initiatives using social media and digital communication channels are also part of the platform's research strategy. Applying for and implementing research projects under European Union programs in line with ENPM's objectives also appears to be key in the near future. In 2025, the Society is planning a scientific conference in Strasbourg (France), where it will expand its network of members by including experts from Europe but also from other parts of the world.

Music's cultural significance lies in the fact that it organizes and cultivates our perception in a very specific way – and yet it is the most abstract of the arts (immaterial, non-verbal). Its semantic possibilities are much smaller than those of the other arts, thanks to which it is able to develop a non-rational side of the human being (in the spirit of the Enlightenment balance of reason and emotion). In the words of Immanuel Kant, music presents aesthetic (as well as philosophical) ideas, although they are different from rational ideas that

can be expressed verbally and conceptually. Music cannot be accused of spreading ideological ideas; this has never been proven. However, it can make us happier and freer: making music can support our health as well as our personal integrity and morality, virtues that are part of *ars vivendi*. These considerations briefly outline the common subject matter that belongs to both music and philosophy, which is regaining its importance in the 21st century. In the past, music has been considered a philosophy, a worldview, even a language or mathematics; in every age, it has carried an ethos. Today, in a world marked by the disintegration of democracies, the rise of populism and the return of certain ideological motives in cultural policies, I consider research in the field of the philosophy of music (or, more broadly, the philosophy of art) to be necessary and socially beneficial. In this sense, I see the goals of ENPM as an important embodiment of these theses.

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DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.12737303