

The MusiConduits project

Top Tips for Developing a winning MSCA PF proposal

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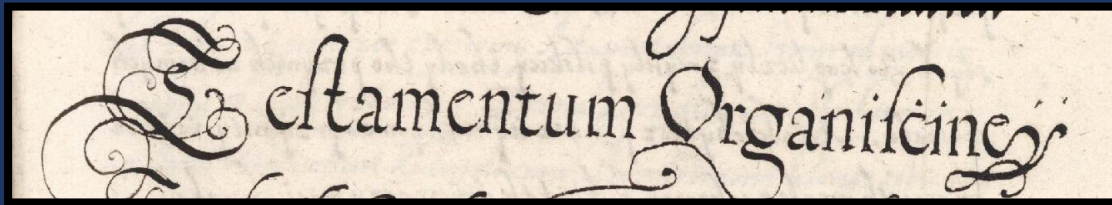


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Musical Materialities and Conduits of Culture: revealing the hidden histories of music during Poland's 'Golden Age' (c. 1475 – 1600) 'MusiConduits'

Exploring musical transfer, influences and culture through the lens of objects:

- ~ archival documents ~ manuscripts or printed music ~ engravings and drawings ~ decorative arts
- ~ furniture ~ the built environment (churches, historic buildings) - architectural decorations



'Honest Anna, wife of the famous and honest Mr Jan Organist'
AGAD, 1/97/0/-/11, fols. 37-37r.



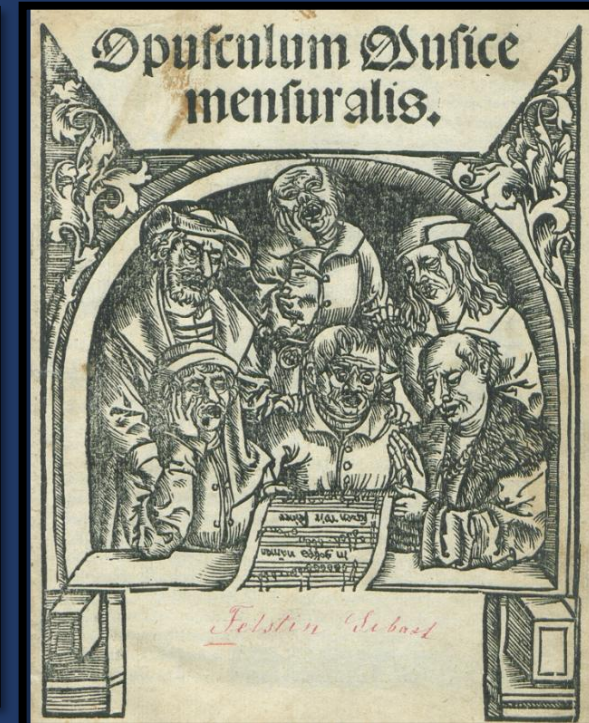
Polychromatic ceiling painting, Boguszyce, church



Fiddle from Płock, 16th century



Stove tile, bagpipe player, 16th century



Sebastian of Felsztyn, *Opusculum Musice mensuralis*. Cracow, 1517.

My experience of the MSCA IF (PF) application process

CAR panel – career restart

- Applied 3 times, third time lucky! But was it luck?
- Each time – score improved by 10+ points

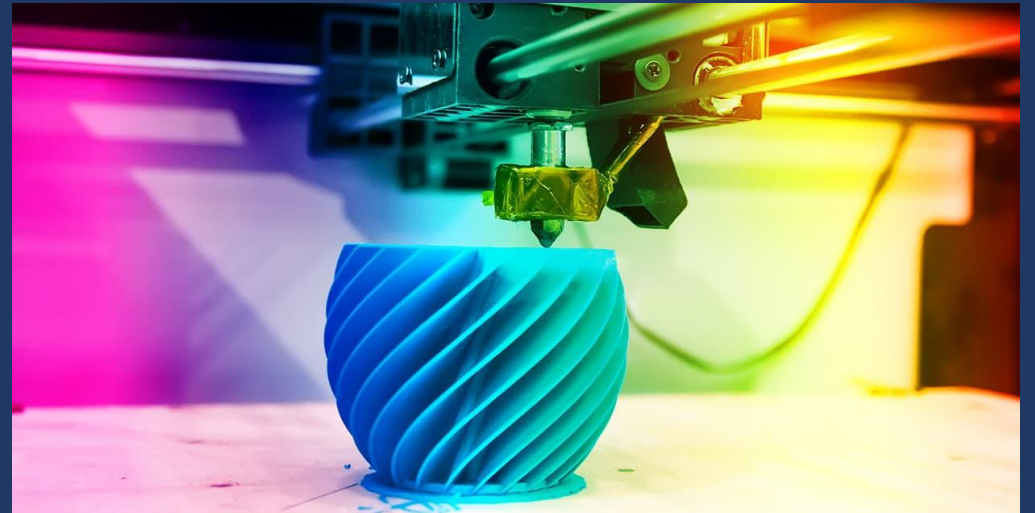
Great result! But how did I get to this point?

- Focus on detail in the application – I knew what skills I had, but did they?
- Effectively communicate all the required information – use tables for detail, exploring different elements or facets of your proposal
- Tell a story that is exciting, intriguing or makes the reviewer want to know more!



What is innovative in the MusiConduits project?

- Interdisciplinary, Cross-sectoral
- Material culture, object-focused approach
 - Objects can tell a different story, hopefully hidden stories
- Social Science and Collections Management software – Aquad, Tropy
- Exhibition(s) – aim of reaching wider public
 - Use of 3D technologies
- *Parallel exploration of modern engagement with historic collections – Digital Humanities*
 - *Changed focus and work package mid-project to reflect current technology and wider research*

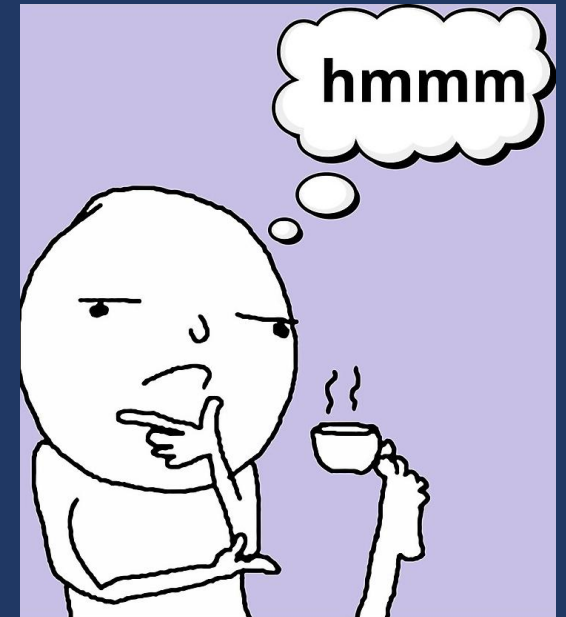


Top tips:

Brainstorming research project ideas...

Ask yourself a few questions:

- What is my passion?
- Where do I see myself in the next 5-10+ years
 - How will this project help me to realise these goals or move closer to them?
- Is there a burning question from your previous research that you didn't have the time or scope to examine at the time?
 - *! Don't just propose to continue your PhD/postdoc research in the next project or publish your thesis as a book !*
- Is there a 'step-change' you would like to take in your career?
 - How has my past experience prepared me for this change?



Consider the wider picture... TOK and innovation

Why you? Why this topic? Why now? Why at the host institution and supervisor?

- How will this project enable you to move above and beyond 'filling gaps in knowledge' to explore/introduce new directions in your field or make new interdisciplinary connections
- Why is the host the best place to conduct the research?
 - Supervisor, research centres, location of resources

What is 'state-of-the art' in your project?

- Easier said than done to identify – especially in humanities
- State-of-the-art can be in many different forms:
 - Methods of analysis or data capture
 - New approaches, interdisciplinary, cross-sectoral
 - Outputs
 - Co-produced



What is that exciting spark that will make application reviewers take notice?

Top tips:

Practical elements and detail - what, when, how, who and why?

Focus on detail and narrative in the application

- Include all information required in detail
- Connect the dots for the evaluator – be specific!
 - You need to be able to answer those why questions (why you, why now, etc)
- Don't just write: 'this research is important'
 - Instead: 'this research is essential because will allow us to better understand x, y, z, which will enable a, b, c...'
- Use tables where you can expand on project details
- Use proactive verbs such as 'will' instead of 'could': 'this project will enable...'



Top tips:

Planning and writing the MSCA PF application

Highlight what is state-of-the-art, what is your unique experience?

- Not just filling a gap in knowledge, the project will go above and beyond, new directions
- Combining my academic research with cultural heritage aspect – unique and winning combination
- It's a training fellowship!
 - Designing the project to prepare for your next career step
 - Consider creating a Work Package just for management and skills development
 - Really think about TOK (transfer of knowledge) – both ways
 - What does your host and supervisor offer that is unique to your development?
 - How can secondments contribute to your development?



Pay close attention to guidance

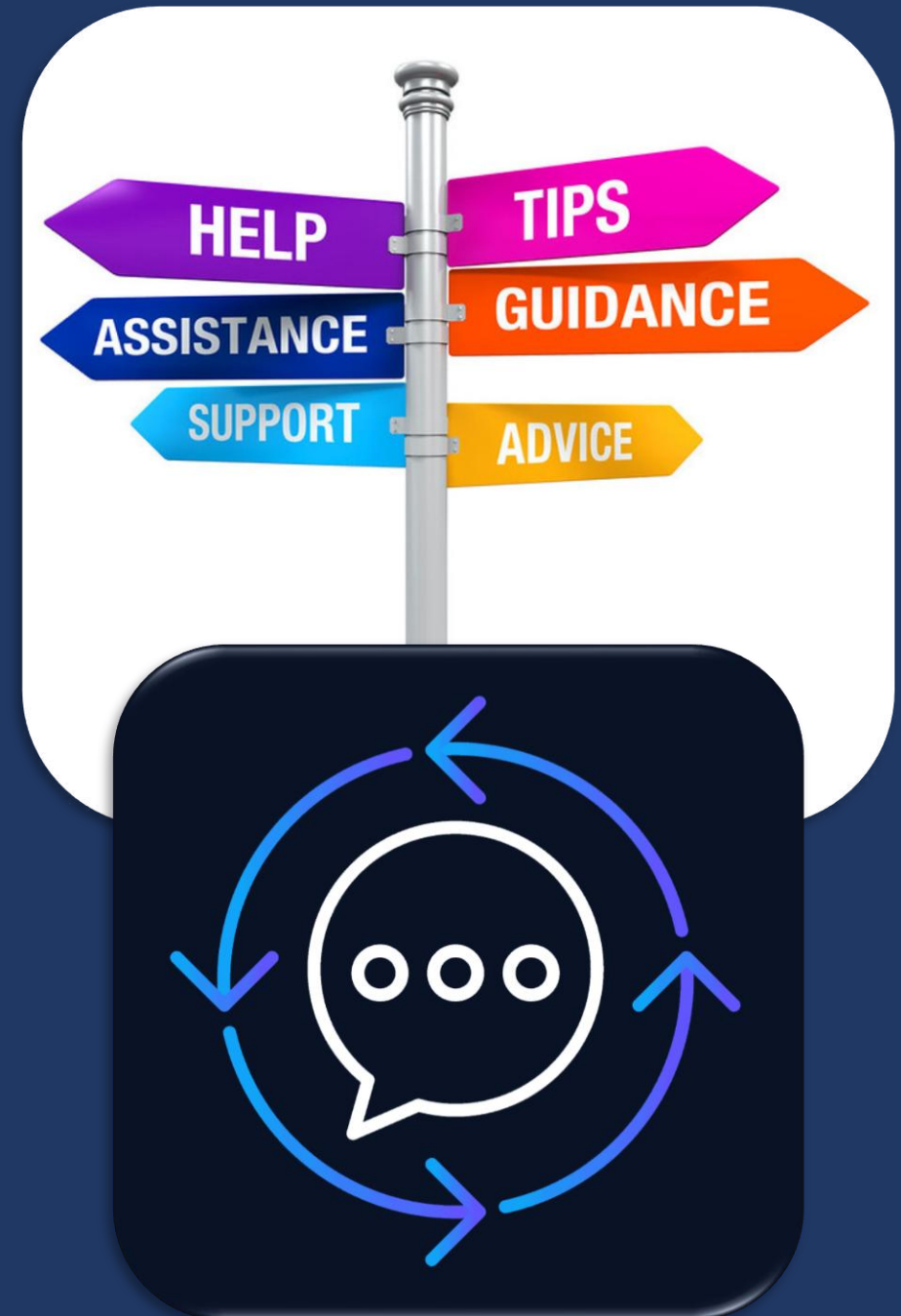
- Understand the aims and objectives of the MSCA postdoctoral fellowship programme and wider European Commission
- Read guidance for evaluators
 - Remember they may not be specialists in your field
 - Use engaging but accessible language, spell out acronyms

Make use of the support around you

- Supervisor, Net4Mobility resources, research officers at host university/centre, NCP, colleagues with grant experience
 - **But give them enough time to read and comment!**

Pay attention to feedback for resubmission

- Address all issues in detail
- If not successful, consider if lower scores were down to project design, project plan or communication in the application



Questions?

Thank you and good luck!

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