MERITA

Music cultural hERItage TAlent

MANIFESTO

This document is a collective pledge to celebrate and safeguard culture, heritage, and chamber music. It serves as an open call, inviting institutions, citizens, policymakers, and stakeholders across Europe to unite, support, and actively shape its vision. It outlines the shared values, mission, and objectives of MERITA, as carried out by all partners.

It reflects the vision of the MERITA partners, coordinated by Le Dimore del Quartetto, with the compilation led by Europa Nostra and contributions from Traces&Dreams.

Co-funded by the European Union

LE DIMORE DEL QUARTETTO

EUROPA NOSTRA

TRACES&DREAMS

MERITA – where chamber Music, hERitage and TAlent meet is a European Platform that promotes the circulation of emerging musicians by connecting chamber music, cultural heritage, and audiences in innovative ways.

Coordinated by **Le Dimore del Quartetto** and bringing together **17 cultural organisations** from across Europe, MERITA is a project **co-funded by the Creative Europe Programme of the European Union**.

By fostering international mobility, artistic residencies, training, and career development opportunities, **MERITA supports young ensembles** and helps them grow as artists.

At the same time, it **revitalises underused cultural sites**, opening them up to new audiences and reconnecting communities through music and heritage.

The following **manifesto expresses the shared vision and values** that guide all members of the MERITA Platform.



Cuarteto Iberia, Spain

MERITA
Music cultural hERItage TAlent

The MERITA Vision

At MERITA, we imagine a Europe **where music and cultural heritage are preserved, reimagined, and shared, accessible to all**. We believe chamber music can transform lives and communities when deeply rooted in cultural and historical legacy. Our vision is guided by the values of inclusivity, sustainability, collaboration, and creativity, principles that inform every partnership, every project, and every opportunity we offer to artists, institutions, and communities across and beyond Europe.

We are building a platform where **emerging chamber ensembles engage with underused heritage sites and diverse audiences, creating meaningful connections between music, place, and people in Europe**. MERITA rediscovers historic venues and reconnects them with the public through live performances that bridge generations, cultures, and geographies.

Our vision supports the professional growth of young ensembles by providing access to international mobility, residencies, training, and networks. These opportunities equip artists with the tools to develop sustainable, innovative projects that contribute to the evolution of chamber music.

We see transformation as a shared responsibility. MERITA brings together concert organisers, heritage and cultural institutions, policy-makers, and stakeholders to foster dialogue, co-creation, and cross-sector collaboration. We promote new production formats, interdisciplinary partnerships, and the use of digital tools to broaden access and inspire innovation.

MERITA aims to become a reference point for chamber music in Europe: a platform for artistic excellence, exchange of best practice, and the development of sector-wide tools. In doing so, we are helping to shape a sustainable business model for chamber music that is socially inclusive, economically viable, and environmentally responsible. We are committed to equity and representation, ensuring that artists of all backgrounds are included, and that diverse audiences can access and enjoy music rooted in cultural heritage.

The outcomes of MERITA, from revitalised venues to digital innovation, are part of a larger vision: **one that treats music not as a privilege, but as a universal right**.

Though grounded in chamber music, our vision embraces dialogue between musical genres, disciplines, and traditions. MERITA connects music with technology, environmental ethics, education, and the visual arts. Our approach is **cross-disciplinary, transnational, and transgenerational,** bridging memory and innovation to empower new artistic voices.

Through all of this, MERITA advances a wider vision of culture and cultural heritage. It helps shape a cultural ecosystem in which music is not only celebrated but recognised **as a universal cultural right and a public good**.



Viride Quartet, The Netherlands

The MERITA Goal

Standing by emerging musicians in their career development

Today, emerging ensembles face several significant challenges: the lack of fairly paid engagement opportunities makes it difficult to build a stable career. Many struggle to gain visibility and to find ways to grow, particularly beyond their home country.

Without proper tools and training, it is challenging for them to innovate, and develop their artistic identity. When access to networking opportunities is limited, breaking into international markets becomes a major obstacle. Additionally, a lack of funding for innovative projects further restricts their creative potential. Tackling these issues is crucial to empower musicians and sustain the future of chamber music worldwide.

This is where MERITA comes into play, with the mission to provide musicians with the tools and opportunities that enable them to emerge, develop their skills, and become capable of creating artistic projects that serve as inspiration for the evolution of chamber music. In particular, MERITA offers to emerging chamber music groups:

- **Advanced training and capacity-building** by ensuring that emerging artists are equipped with the skills, confidence, and resources needed to build sustainable, long-term careers. This is achieved through access to training and artistic residencies, enabling them to develop the expertise necessary to create innovative musical projects.
- **Circulation and mobility**, by providing access to international career opportunities with the chance to perform and present the musical projects they have developed through the training, across Europe and beyond.
- **Networking, collaboration, experimentation, and growth**. MERITA offers rising ensembles the opportunity to connect with top-level musicians, trainers, cultural institutions, and other key players in the sector to develop joint initiatives and potential future projects.

Through all of this, MERITA is shaping the future of chamber music and rising ensembles, as well as empowering the next generations of musicians to come.



String Quartet Meraki, Serbia | Photo credits: Kristina Radojcic

MERITA
Music cultural hERItage TAlent

The MERITA Specific Objectives

1) Inclusivity and accessibility: culture for everyone in Europe

Culture is a universal right and a public good. We are dedicated to creating cultural experiences that reach all audiences, particularly for underrepresented groups, including children, teenagers, and people with disabilities. Music should unite people regardless of background, ability, or location. We envision a cultural landscape where diversity is the rule, and not the exception. Where leadership, representation, and opportunity reflect the richness of our societies. We are already advancing this mission through:

- **Inclusive approach that brings music and heritage to both big cities, urban areas and rural regions, actively engaging those too often left behind, and who have less chance to access chamber music.**
- **Musical projects specifically designed for diverse audiences**, ensuring that children, teenagers, older adults, vulnerable groups, and individuals with disabilities can fully enjoy and access the chamber music experience.
- **Accessible development pathways** for emerging artists, through training, artistic residencies and tailored support. Thanks to MERITA, musicians are developing the awareness and skills necessary to make their concerts more sustainable, and chamber music innovative and accessible to diverse audiences, yet preserving cultural and artistic quality.

By bringing music to new places and new people, we are opening doors for everyone to experience its power.



String Quartet Meraki, Serbia

The MERITA Specific Objectives

2) Sustainability: Culture in harmony with nature

Sustainability is at the heart of our mission. Chamber music, by its very nature, offers a form of performance that is inherently more sustainable: it does not require large-scale travel for performers or audiences, nor does it depend on extensive staging or amplification. Building on this low-impact model, we are committed to practices that further reduce environmental impact while ensuring that cultural heritage and the music industry thrive in harmony with the environment. This commitment is woven into every aspect of our work, from the events we organise to equipping musicians, as well as the concert societies we collaborate with, with the tools to reduce the environmental footprint of chamber music concerts.

We are already taking action through:

- **Sustainability training for artists**, offering young musicians knowledge and insights into sustainable event design and international environmental standards.
- **Sustainable chamber music events**, offering concert societies involved in MERITA access to the **MERITA CO_2 Calculator**, a revolutionary tool enabling event organisers to measure and reduce the environmental impact of chamber music concerts.
- **Sustainable use of historic venues**, preserving them as vibrant cultural spaces that serve their communities. This approach reactivates otherwise underused places by enhancing their value, returning them to the community, and transforming them into sites where people can experience beauty, social interaction, and meaningful gatherings.
- **Environmental audits and support** for cultural sites and historic houses and venues, to help heritage managers implement long-term, eco-conscious practices and reduce the environmental impact of their properties' management.

Together, we are creating a cultural future where music resonates in harmony with nature.



Quatuor Akilone, France

The MERITA Specific Objectives

3) Collaboration: strengthening our cultural network for lasting impact across Europe

Transformation starts with connection. We believe that lasting cultural impact can only be achieved through deep collaboration - between artists, institutions, policymakers, and communities. We are building a united cultural network across Europe that shares knowledge, enhances resources, and amplifies our collective voice.

We are already building stronger cultural alliances through:

- **Strategic partnerships** with cultural sites and institutions, historic houses and cultural sites, public stakeholders and artists across Europe, to strengthen the cultural ecosystem.
- **A hybrid launchpad for innovation in chamber music:** MERITA is a dynamic platform providing both online (through the website **www.meritaplatform.eu**) and offline visibility to musicians, historic houses and cultural sites; training resources, career development tools, and residency programmes for emerging ensembles, thus bridging the digital and physical realms of artistic collaboration.
- **Networking and dissemination activities in the chamber music sector:** MERITA offers a wide range of networking opportunities, for all the stakeholders involved and key players in the field (ensembles, cultural sites, historic houses owners, as well as cultural and public entities).

Together, we are forging a European cultural movement that is collaborative and connected.



The MERITA Specific Objectives

4) Creativity and innovation: reimagining music for the future

We embrace both tradition and innovation, exploring new ways to present and experience music while ensuring Europe's rich heritage remains dynamic and relevant for future generations. While the artistic excellence of classical music must be protected, it should never be marginalised. We aim to showcase chamber music as an extraordinary heritage through the prowess of performers and quality of programmes, connecting it with other disciplines and reaching new places and audiences. Our commitment to creativity drives us to redefine what culture can be: blending heritage with new tendencies to create something truly transformative.

We are already contributing to this cultural revival through:

- **Support for emerging musicians** through development paths that foster resilience, experimentation, and encourage their entrepreneurship as artists.
- **Innovative formats for experiencing chamber music,** developing experimental projects that combine chamber music with other art forms, such as poetry, multimedia, theatre, and dance - and with other types of music, to offer audiences new, immersive, and cross-disciplinary experiences.
- **Barrier-breaking outreach,** designing musical and cultural projects that dismantle social, cultural and physical divides, bringing music to new audiences across all corners of Europe and beyond.
- **Blending digital tools with tradition,** using digital contents and innovative elements on the stage, to expand artistic value while reducing environmental impact.

We are bridging the past with the future, not by overturning tradition, but by connecting it with new fields and disciplines, embracing fresh perspectives. This is a cultural initiative where creativity leads, innovation includes everyone, and together we are shaping the future we envision.



Akela Quartet, Denmark

The MERITA Actions

Europe connects through music. We are dedicated to building a sustainable, inclusive, transnational and innovative cultural ecosystem.

By integrating **digital innovation**, **green transformation**, and **social engagement**, we aim to foster collaboration, empower artists, and promote the preservation of Europe's cultural heritage.

We aim to:

- **Empower artists by offering mobility opportunities across Europe and beyond**, ensuring equal pay, access to training, and artistic residencies that integrate sustainability and digital innovation into their creative practices.
- **Develop best practices for the circulation of artists and innovative musical projects**, optimising costs while fostering dialogue among stakeholders. Support institutions with tools like the CO_2 Calculator to measure and reduce the environmental impact of chamber music events.
- **Activate heritage spaces** through cultural and chamber music events that enhance their history while making this heritage accessible to diverse communities.
- **Digitally transform the sector** through an integrated platform and educational resources for emerging ensembles and cultural professionals. Promote sustainability, inclusion, and reduced carbon footprint in music and cultural events.
- **Raise awareness of the need for public policy and investment** that support equitable access to culture and chamber music, especially for underserved communities and underrepresented groups.



Akela Quartet, Denmark

The MERITA Achievements

We are proud of the achievements of **MERITA**:

17 ORGANISATIONS

from 12 countries, diverse in size and focus, active in music and heritage, have formed a vibrant cross-border cultural network, fostering dialogue and opportunity from rural festivals to major concert halls.

38 QUARTETS

(152 musicians) have brought innovation and artistry to the heart of Europe's musical future.

7 ON-DEMAND TRAINING MODULES

support ensembles in their artistic and professional growth.

40 RESIDENCIES

have offered immersive experiences in mentorship, creativity, and heritage-rich settings.

36 HISTORIC SITES

have been activated as living cultural spaces where music revives history.

38 ENSEMBLE-LED PROJECTS

have pushed creative boundaries and deepened audience connection.

198 CONCERTS

exceeding the original 156, have brought chamber music across Europe, thanks to Platform Members and partners.

140+ PROFESSIONALS

have been mapped, building a strong ecosystem of collaboration and expertise.

A CO2 CALCULATOR

helps measure and reduce the environmental impact of events, now accessible to Platform Members.

EDUCATIONAL TOOLS AND RESOURCES

include sustainability training, the MERITA Business Model, a CO_2 Calculator guide, and insights on managing historic houses.

The Future: MERITAcubed

We celebrate what MERITA has achieved, supporting young artists, activating heritage sites, and building connections across Europe. But progress must not stand still. **MERITAcubed is the next step:** an evolution that broadens our reach, deepens our impact, and accelerates our mission.

With **MERITAcubed, we move from continuation to expansion,** positioning MERITA as a central platform for chamber music in Europe.

Our next steps are:

- **Enhancing opportunities for young musicians** through greater access to mobility, training, and residencies, equipping them to create innovative, sustainable projects, secure fair-paid engagements, and build strong networks across the chamber music sector. Under MERITAcubed, opportunities now extend to piano trios, reaching 56 ensembles (12 existing, 22 new string quartets, and 22 new piano trios), with 6 new online trainings, 44 artistic residencies, and new ensemble-led projects.

- **Expanding our cultural network** by strengthening partnerships with institutions, policy-makers, and musicians across Europe. MERITAcubed brings together 22 organisations from 16 countries, coordinated by Le Dimore del Quartetto, with many more partners involved through new collaborations.

- **Advancing sustainability via an improved CO_2 Calculator with an enhanced Sustainability Matrix** that integrates environmental, social, and economic indicators. New tools, including a Geolocation system, will support greener mobility, optimise touring, and help musicians increase efficiency and earnings.

- **Engaging wider audiences** by increasing access to chamber music and European cultural heritage, promoting underrepresented artists, such as women composers, and fostering cultural inclusion in diverse local contexts.



Quatuor Wassily, France

The MERITA Call to Action

We invite all artists, institutions, policymakers, cultural leaders, and citizens to join us in realising our vision. Together, we can ensure that chamber music and cultural heritage continue to play a vital role in our societies, empowering emerging artists, revitalising historic sites, and fostering a more inclusive, sustainable, and innovative cultural environment across Europe.

In this regard, **culture and cultural heritage must be fully recognised for their transversal and transformative role,** not only as forms of artistic expression, but as key drivers of social cohesion, creativity, innovation, and democratic participation. This recognition must be embedded within EU policies, including the forthcoming **Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), through dedicated programmes and increased resources** that reflect the true value of culture and cultural heritage to Europe and beyond.

As the European Commission develops the **Culture Compass**, it is vital that this work is informed by coordinated advocacy from the cultural and heritage sectors. **Active participation in EU-level dialogues with cultural stakeholders is essential**. Building strong and lasting networks between cultural operators and policymakers is key to shaping future-fit, inclusive policy and funding instruments at the European level.

Join us in building a future where culture transcends borders, heritage is celebrated and rediscovered, and music connects us all. Together, we can create a truly inclusive and sustainable cultural ecosystem, one that amplifies diverse voices and ensures equitable access to Europe's cultural riches for everyone, everywhere.



Modulor Quartet, Switzerland

MERITA
Music cultural hERItage TAlent

MERITA

Music cultural hERItage TAlent

www.meritaplatform.eu
info@meritaplatform.eu

Co-funded by
the European Union