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MUSIC AS A TOOL FOR THE INTEGRATION OF REFUGEES IN GERMANY

AN UNEXPECTED CHALLENGE

The wave of refugees that has flooded much of Europe over the last two years has brought about much controversy and many disagreements concerning ways of solving this problem not only across Europe but the whole world. The unplanned mass “migration of peoples” from countries engulfed in war and terror has motivated much political and social debate in all countries. There has not previously been a situation in which such multitudes of refugees have fled war and persecution in their countries and sought refuge in Europe, including, and in particular, in Germany.

Since the second half of 2015, Germany has become the preferred country of destination for hundreds of thousands of arrivals, mainly from Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan and Iran. The percentage of people applying for asylum in the Federal Republic of Germany has been steadily increasing for several years, peaking in 2015.¹ As it soon turned out, taking on such a large number of arrivals was a considerable social and political challenge. Local governments were faced with increasing difficulties in housing the rapidly increasing numbers of migrants.²

SOCIETAL REACTIONS

The increased flow of refugees to Germany has been met with different reactions from the society. From the very beginning there was much discussion on the topic in Germany but also much was done for the new arrivals. The majority accepted taking on new migrants. The unusual openness that accompanied their arrival

¹ Since January, 2015 the computerised system *EASY* noted 1,265,601 migrants applying for asylum in Germany; of these 173,000 arrived from January to March, 2016. See: https://www.bmi.bund.de/SharedDocs/Downloads/EN/Themen/Sicherheit/crime-in-the-context-of-migrant-influx.pdf?__blob=publicationFile.

² For a broader perspective on the increasing problems and controversies surrounding the current asylum policy of Germany see: M. Engler, *Niemcy a kryzys wywołany naphywem uchodźców – geneza, reakcje i wyzwania*, Biuletyn Instytutu Zachodniego, 12.04.2016, No. 233, p. 10.

was absolutely unique and not found anywhere else. Germans wanted to express their readiness to help and their lack of prejudice toward foreigners. It is possible to point out many examples of just how much effort was taken both to support those migrants wanting asylum and to help them acclimate to the new, completely foreign to them, surroundings so that they could integrate and find a “new homeland” (as was emphasised many times). A relatively united front was displayed by those parties represented in parliament regarding the issue – differences were limited to the details and forms of help.

With the passage of time, however, due to increasing problems and appearance of conflicts under the influence of various events and incidents the societal mood increasingly began to polarise.³ Reality showed that a policy of “open borders” can lead to a dead end if not accompanied by appropriately thought out aid and integration policies. New challenges related to the acceptance of refugees meant that social attitudes became differentiated as witnessed in public opinion polls.⁴ On the one hand, there were still strong signs of support and solidarity shown to the refugees, from heartfelt greetings at train stations through food, clothing and other collections of material support to the spontaneous organization of help, volunteers, language learning etc., in which about 10% of the residents of the FRG participated.⁵ On the other hand, it was noticeable that there was an increase in negative attitudes toward foreigners. The long lasting migration crisis and the lack of any kind of unified position regarding the solution to fundamental questions of how to manage the migration meant that Germans began to lose their initial enthusiasm toward the arrivals as more and more doubts appeared regarding the suitability of some decisions by the government of Chancellor Angela Merkel. At the beginning, the reactions of most people in Germany were marked by a flood of gestures of solidarity and support (especially in larger cities such as Berlin, Munich or Cologne). However, with the passage of time and the arrival of significantly more people than had been forecast and also influenced by some unsettling incidents in which migrants took part, this attitude gradually began to change and greater restraint became apparent.

In the fall of 2015, the first unsettling signs appeared that the situation would be more difficult than originally thought. In October 2015, for the first time, the number of people with concerns about the large number of refugees arriving in Germany increased to over 50%.⁶ Discussions of economic questions also became much more lively, led by fears of job loss or difficulties with finding jobs by the native German

³ For more information see: J. Dobrowolska-Polak, *Ataki na kobiety i rekordowo wysoki napływ imigrantów do RFN – wyzwania dla niemieckiej polityki asymilacji imigrantów*, Biuletyn Instytutu Zachodniego, 8.01.2016, No. 213, p.6.

⁴ For more on the results of public opinion surveys see: A. Bachmann, *Niemieckie społeczeństwo wobec napływu uchodźców*, Biuletyn Instytutu Zachodniego, 16.10.2015, No. 191, p. 8.

⁵ M. Engler, *Niemcy a kryzys...*, p. 7.

⁶ A. Bachmann, *Niemieckie społeczeństwo...*, p. 8.

population, fears of terrorist threats or rising crime rates.⁷ Especially serious concerns were raised by the increasing costs of the inflow of refugees.⁸

Most of all, people began to perceive that the people arriving were from completely different cultural areas and adhered to very different value systems, which could in the future become a source of tension and conflict. A wide spectrum of reactions, from scepticism to rejection⁹ could be found. Protests, mainly initiated by the extreme right, were held against granting asylum to people applying for residence in Germany. Acts of violence even occurred, such as when the shelters housing arrivals were set on fire.¹⁰ There was a clear increase of popularity of both the right wing populist party *Alternative für Deutschland* (AfD – Alternative for Germany), which used anti-migrant slogans, and of the decidedly antagonistic anti-migrant group *PEGIDA*, which used the societal fears of Islamisation and the destruction of western values in a manipulative way.¹¹

Against the background of such divergent attitudes, in the face of unexpected challenges and increasing problems before which all of European society, but especially Germany, has recently stood, the reaction of the arts community, which very quickly joined in various types of activities for refugees is deserving of notice. Their engagement is worthy of investigation in order to show that these are not isolated events. For reasons of space, this article will limit itself to describing activities related to the musical sphere in Germany. The time frame will be the years 2014-2016, due to the clear increase of initiatives in this time, though some earlier and interesting undertakings will also be mentioned.

The goal of this article is above all to draw attention to the question of how far and in what way people from the arts, noting the scale of the problem from the societal point of view, engaged in the process of integrating refugees and at the same time clearly demonstrated their solidarity with them.

The presentation of a broad spectrum of activities (on the basis of selected examples) undertaken in this field by various entities, whether the national govern-

⁷ The Federal Criminal Police Office (*Bundeskriminalamt, BKA*) released information that from January to March 2016, migrants in Germany committed 69,000 crimes (mainly theft, fraud and physical assault). At the same time, the general number of crimes fell 18%. A spokesperson for the German Federal Ministry of the Interior (*Bundesinnenministerium*) in a statement for Deutsche Presse-Agentur (*dpa*) drew attention to the fact that migrants are not more prone to criminality than Germans. The report, in German and English is available at: <https://www.bmi.bund.de/SharedDocs/Kurzmeldungen/DE/2016/06/bka-lagebild-kriminalitaet-zuwandeung.html>.

⁸ For further description see T. Budnikowski, *Republika Federalna Niemiec: rosnące koszty napływu uchodźców*, Biuletyn Instytutu Zachodniego, 21.03.2016, No. 228, p. 4.

⁹ M. Engler, *Niemcy a kryzys wywołany...*, p. 7.

¹⁰ According to data from the German police in 2016 (from January to June) there were about 300 attacks against refugee centers in Germany. A report, in German, on attacks against asylum shelters from 2014-2016 is available at: <https://www.bmi.bund.de/SharedDocs/Downloads/DE/Nachrichten/Kurzmeldungen/2017/pmk-2016-straftaten-gegen-asylunterkuenfte.html>.

¹¹ See: M. Tujdowski, *Ruch PEGIDA a kryzys migracyjny*, Biuletyn Instytutu Zachodniego, 13.11.2015, No. 201, p. 6.

ment, cultural institutions, creative associations, private individuals, professional and (maybe even more often) amateur musicians makes it possible to visualise the role of culture (especially music) in the process of integrating migrants. An attempt is made in the article to answer questions concerning the way music can be a platform for the integration of refugees into German society, how the music community engaged with this problem, who the initiators of particular projects were, what type of projects there have been, what goals they set and what the results were of the extra-verbal activities undertaken to help arrivals in better acclimating themselves to Germany.

These issues have yet to be described in detail in the literature and have not before been the subject of research and probing analysis, which is why in this article current materials available on the internet are utilized. The author would like to draw attention to the practical aspect of the problem, concrete steps and bottom up initiatives undertaken in the sphere of culture (mainly music) in order to integrate new arrivals by state actors and society as a whole.

INTEGRATION AND INTEGRATION POLICY

The enormous problem of integrating migrants in European Union countries has lately been a subject of much heated debate at the level of the EU. It is also a question that is the subject of lively discussions in the countries that are most affected by this (such as Germany and France). Problems connected with integration are as difficult for states which have long dealt with them as they are for newer member states of the EU which have only recently encountered this problem. The Hague Programme, accepted by the European Council on November 4-5, 2004, brings attention to the necessity for greater coordination of integration policies of particular countries together with EU initiatives in this area. The European Commission released a Communication (2005) with the goal of establishing a unified European framework for integration. It encourages member states to intensify efforts in creating national integration strategies.¹² In her article, A. Kicinger describes in detail the questions of the legal foundations for EU engagement as well as the activities and initiatives undertaken that support the integration of migrants and also the position of the European Commission regarding the integration of foreigners.¹³

In Germany there is no general and legally binding definition of the term “integration”. This is not, however, an exclusively German weak point but rather

¹² The European Commission, *A Common Agenda for Integration. Framework for the Integration of Third Country Nationals in the European Union*, Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. COM (2005) 389 final, 1 September 2005, <http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regdoc/rep/1/2005/EN/1-2005-389-EN-F1-1.Pdf>.

¹³ A. Kicinger, *Unia Europejska wobec zagadnienia integracji imigrantów*, Warsaw, CEFMR Working Paper, 2/2005, pp. 23.

a broader problem which causes public debate on the issue to become complicated and evokes varied reactions.¹⁴ As a result, anyone who makes public points on the topic of integration is, in some sense, right because there is no simple answer to the question of what integration is. The concept of integration is understood and defined in different ways. The surface understanding is that it means “inclusion in a whole, the creation of unity out of particular elements or the ability of a whole to maintain cohesion between elements on the basis of common values or norms”.¹⁵ There is no single idea as to the definition of the concept of “integration” in social sciences, either. It is variously understood as a process, as a function or as a goal.¹⁶

For the purposes of this article, the definition used by A. Kicinger will be employed: “Integration is a two-way process of mutual adaptation between migrants and a society in economic, social, cultural and political terms”¹⁷, but discussion will be limited to the cultural dimension. The author indicates at the same time that this concept describes not only a “change in relations between a migrant and the host society, but also in the state of social relations achieved as a result of the process of integration”. Weighing the fact that this process is dependent on many factors (including appropriate political and economic conditions that support integration and the readiness of the society to accept “foreigners”), it is to be expected that the effects will be visible only after several years (or after a decade or more). In the case of the wave of migration under discussion, it is important to note that practically from the beginning the integration activities have been supported by a great amount of good will and concrete steps taken by politicians and everyday citizens alike.

The main migration trends and the course of the processes of immigration and the integration of foreigners in Germany after WWII, taking into account changes in immigration policy at the end of the 1990s are presented by Michał Kwiecień in the article *Polityka imigracyjna Niemiec* [Germany’s immigration policy].¹⁸ Werner Schiffauer from the Council for Migration has noted that “It took a very long time before Germans admitted that theirs is a destination country; this is finally reflected in policy and legislation”.¹⁹ Similarly, “slow but sure – that is how the course of the integration of foreigners in Germany goes as they are granted more and more rights. But

¹⁴ For more on the idea of integration see: K. Sezer, *Was ist Integration?*, 2010, <http://www.goethe.de/lhr/prj/daz/mag/igd/de6964668.htm>.

¹⁵ *Integration in Deutschland*, <http://www.bundesauslaenderbeauftragte.de/integration.html>.

¹⁶ *Ibidem*.

¹⁷ A. Kicinger, *Unia Europejska...*, p. 3.

¹⁸ M. Kwiecień, *Polityka imigracyjna Niemiec*, *Studia Ekonomiczne. Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersyteku Ekonomicznego w Katowicach*, 2015, No. 211.

¹⁹ M. Matzke, *Raport: Niemcy robią postępy w integracji cudzoziemców*, dw, 12.06.2015, <http://www.dw.com/pl/raport-niemcy-robia-postepy-w-integracji-cudzoziemcow/a-18507227>.

A similar story in English is available at: D. Breitenbach, *Integration report sees progress, deficits in Germany*, dw, 12.06.15, <http://www.dw.com/en/integration-report-sees-progress-deficits-in-germany/a-18513803>.

there is still a long way to go to perfection” is the assessment from a report by MIPEX (*Migrant Integration Policy Index*), an index of EU and three non-EU countries which compares their policies.²⁰

PREPARING THE POLITICAL GROUND

The problem of integration of such a large group of arrivals coming from countries with very different cultural background and other systems of values is unusually complex and is a considerable challenge both for the German government and the public. There is awareness of the fact that it will be a long and difficult process. The goal is, as the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees states, for “all people with permanent legal residence in Germany to join society”.²¹ This means that it is necessary to facilitate broad and equal participation in all spheres of public life. They are, however, obliged to learn the German language and become acquainted with and respect the constitution as well as relevant laws and regulations.

Some refugees will probably remain longer and some perhaps permanently. Therefore, there is a search for solutions that work not only temporarily but also on a long term basis. One of the elements, simply a necessary condition for integration to succeed is, above all (apart from such factors as ensuring housing, jobs, healthcare, access to education and others), mastery of the German language by migrants. That requires, however, the preparation of a suitable educational base, the organisation of courses and language classes and recruiting teaching staff. It requires a good deal of time.

State institutions as well as organisations in the public eye very quickly together with the inflow of a rising tide of migrants began to undertake steps to support them in different ways and comprehensive programmes were started to aid the integration of migrants into the local society.²²

The size of the problem is witnessed by the fact that politicians from the ruling CDU/CSU and SPD parties, being aware of what a burning issue settling questions related to the integration of refugees was, prepared a special emergency bill regarding integration. It was passed on May 25, 2016 during a closed session of the government at Schloss Meseberg.²³ Shortly thereafter, on July 7, 2016, it was passed by the

²⁰ For more on the results of the report see D. Breitenbach, *Integration...*

²¹ *Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge*, http://www.bamf.de/DE/Service/Left/Glossary/_function/glossar.html?nn=1363008&lv2=5831826&lv3=1504494.

²² This was discussed, among other occasions, at the conference “Konsekwencje kryzysu migracyjnego dla Niemiec i Unii Europejskiej” [Consequences of the migration crisis for Germany and the EU], which took place in the Instytut Zachodni [Institute for Western Affairs] in Poznań on April 26, 2016; the work of the team preparing a comprehensive integration programme for refugees in Brandenburg was presented by Frauke Steuber on behalf of the Representative of the Berlin Senate for Integration and Migration.

²³ *Merkel presents new integration law as ‘milestone’*, 25.04.2016, <http://www.dw.com/en/merkel-presents-new-refugee-integration-law-as-milestone/a-19281722>.

Bundestag²⁴ and came into force on August 8, 2016.²⁵ It was first such a bill in German history.²⁶ Chancellor Angela Merkel referred to it as a “milestone” in German immigration policy. The bill grants migrants a broad range of rights, but also imposes many obligations on them; the state declares that it wants to help refugees but simultaneously demands that refugees work with Germany. The bill is designed above all to make it easier to learn German and to find a job.²⁷ It has, however, proven to be very controversial.²⁸

SIGNS OF INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE THROUGH MUSIC

It was not just the German federal government but also citizens who independently undertook projects and initiatives in order to help new arrivals integrate into the civic life of the country. In both smaller and larger cities in the Bundesrepublik, over 700 projects were created with the goal of helping the integration of migrants.²⁹

This challenge was also undertaken almost immediately by those involved in culture and the arts, both professional creative communities and amateur groups. Music, due to its specific ethos and universal nature, opens up a broad range of possibilities for action, most of all in the spiritual sphere. Public institutions, associations, creative organisations, private persons and many of those active in musical life made efforts in order to meet refugees and help them come to terms with what was, for them, a completely new reality. Expressing their engagement in a variety of ways, at the same time, they wanted to get their own initiatives started. An essential element of these projects was also the desire to mediate contact between people taking active parts in different types of programmes for refugees and to make it possible for them to share their experiences, create networks and work together. Different programs and projects had the goal of serving this purpose. They were aimed at creating communication beyond the verbal plane, teaching German through song, making contacts through

²⁴ *Integration act to support and challenge*, 08.07.2016. https://www.bundesregierung.de/Content/EN/Artikel/2016/07_en/2016-05-25-integrationsgesetz-beschlossen_en.html.

²⁵ For more on the establishment of the law see “Integrationsgesetz setzt auf Fördern und Fordern”, 8.08. 2016, <https://www.bundesregierung.de/Content/DE/Artikel/2016/08/2016-08-05-integrationsgesetz.html>.

²⁶ For more on the law see “Integration act to support and challenge”, 08.07.2016. https://www.bundesregierung.de/Content/EN/Artikel/2016/07_en/2016-05-25-integrationsgesetz-beschlossen_en.html.

²⁷ *Niemcy chcą aktywnie integrować imigrantów. Według zasady 'pomagać i wymagać'*, 25.05.2016, <http://www.tvp.info/25507803/niemcy-chca-aktywnie-integrowac-imigrantow-wedlug-zasady-pomagac-i-wymagac>.

²⁸ *Niemiecka prasa: Ustawa integracyjna to iluzja. Najważniejsza jest godna praca*, essay by D. Jakubczak, 26.05.2016, <http://www.dw.com/pl/niemiecka-prasa-ustawa-integracyjna-to-iluzja-najważniejsza-jest-godna-praca/a-19283310>.

²⁹ *Integration von Flüchtlingen – Gute Ideen bundesweit. Kommentierte Linkliste*, www.tagesschau.de/inland/hilfe-fuer-fluechtlinge-101.html ; see also: *Hilfe für Flüchtlinge im Netz*, 25.01.2016, <http://www.tagesschau.de/inland/hilfe-fuer-fluechtlinge-linkliste-101.html>.

making music together and helping to bring German (and European) culture closer to the arrivals from a very divergent cultural background.

The national government and state administration, including departments responsible for culture and the arts reacted quickly to the needs of the moment. As an example it is possible to point to an initiative by the state Ministry for Science, Research and Art of Baden-Württemberg, which in 2014 with innovation funds for the arts (*Innovationsfonds Kunst*) designated € 250,000 for a new cultural project for the integration and participation of refugees (*Kulturprojekte zur Integration und Partizipation von Flüchtlingen*) in support of 19 undertakings.³⁰ A total of 155 applications were evaluated by a six-person jury made up of representatives of the arts department of Mannheim, the LAKS organisation of Baden-Württemberg³¹, the Forum of Cultures (*Forum der Kulturen*) in Stuttgart, the Integration Ministry of Baden-Württemberg, the Council for Refugee Affairs of Baden-Württemberg and an opinion journalist.

The head of the department, Teresia Bauer, expressed satisfaction that in such a short time it had been possible to collect so many valuable projects that would enable participants to develop their creativity. She also stressed that culture and art are especially predisposed to supporting dialogue and building bridges between people, to supporting the process of accepting refugees and their participation in the civic life of Germany. She assured everyone that the government of Baden-Württemberg would make extensive efforts to improve the living conditions of refugees in the state. The *Innovationsfonds Kunst* is a very appropriate medium in order to achieve these goals and support intercultural dialogue.³²

The jury preferred short-term projects, which would make it possible for newcomers without knowledge of German to participate, and those which would help participants kick-start their new lives in Germany. Financial support was received by artistic projects as well as those that included cultural education, since, as the jury explained, they would help refugees in a direct, personal way share their life experiences. It was stressed that participation in the projects would not be merely a chance to engage with culture but also to obtain new qualifications. The projects that were submitted included different areas of culture and art, from theatre and dance through music and the fine arts to film and media. Similarly diverse were the addressees of the projects from children to young people and those of all ages.

A few examples will serve to illustrate what type of initiatives were submitted and recognised by the jury. One was the Aach Singing Circle (*Liederkreis Aach*) from the Freudenstadt district, which would create a mixed choir numbering about 70 people

³⁰ *Land stellt 250.000 Euro für Kulturprojekte zur Integration und Partizipation von Flüchtlingen bereit*, www.baden-wuerttemberg.de.

³¹ *LAKS – Landes Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Kulturinitiativen und Soziokulturellen Zentren in Baden-Württemberg e. V.* – the association was created in 1982 and unites 64 socio-cultural centers in Baden-Württemberg.

³² *Land stellt 250.000 Euro für Kulturprojekte...*

made up of refugees and members of the local choir with children joining later. Support was also received by a project from Rottenberg in which young asylum seekers would create a comic book written in simple language that would be a city guide (*Stadtführer-Comic*). The goal of the project was to get to know the city together, spend time together and work together on the comic book, which would also serve to improve their abilities in reading and writing. Another submission which was recognised by the jury was a musical project in which young refugees in Reutlingen would be invited to participate in public performances in jam sessions, performing their own hip-hop creations.

Appreciating the weight and importance of intercultural dialogue in projects for the integration of migrants, the German Musical Council (*Deutscher Musikrat*) also joined in the integration activities. On October 23-24, 2015, it held a meeting in the parliament building in Berlin during which a resolution was passed: *Willkommen in Deutschland: Musik macht Heimat! Von der Willkommens – zur Integrationskultur* [Welcome to Germany: Music makes the homeland! From a welcoming to an integration culture]. It was accepted unanimously by all members of the Council.³³ Starting from the assumption that music can make a valuable contribution to the successful co-existence between people from different cultures it was resolved that:

People arriving from war torn places and searching for shelter here deserve our care. The sheer dimensions of this tide of people demands an effort from us on a never before encountered scale and presents us with new challenges, also with regard to changes in our society. The arts are a fundamental motor of social development. This makes the question what arts creators can bring to the ongoing societal changes even more important. (...). Providing people with a roof over their heads, food to eat, German language lessons and helping them find work have the same fundamental meaning as meeting people from different cultural worlds. For months, hundreds of people from all over the country have shown, in an extraordinary way, during welcoming concerts (*Willkommenskonzerte*), through musical pedagogical programs and a large variety of musical programs to aid in integration, that music and its power to overcome all types of barriers, will leave a lasting impression on these people.³⁴

In essence, the goal is, as can be read – to accept these people sincerely and actively; make them interested in differences; to demonstrate the joy that comes from exchange and dialogue; to deal with cultural diversity in all its variety, from the cultural musical heritage through contemporary music to the music of other cultures, as an opportunity to create a better life together. The goal is to give the country a new dimension through the revitalization and broadening of existing values, directing them toward dialogue, the public canon of values based on the General Law obligatory for all citizens. This is a very important part of the resolution since it recognises as an essential element the meaning of the engagement of the musical community in the process of integration as well as the interpretation of their purpose which is, among

³³ *Flüchtlinge im Musikland Deutschland – Resolution des Deutschen Musikrates*, 27.10.2015, www.nmz.de/online/fluechtlingen-im-musikland-deutschland-resolution-des-deutschen-musikrates.

³⁴ *Ibidem*.

other goals, the enrichment of German culture with elements of the culture of the arrivals. In the resolution, attention was brought to the fact that a welcoming culture (*Willkommenskultur*) means dialogue.

On this two-way street leading to the understanding of another person, music plays a central role, allowing the visualisation of commonalities and differences. It also makes it possible to communicate in a non-verbal, unique and exceptional way. A particular place is occupied by the support of musical projects with children and young people in order that they, from the very beginning, can travel the road of dialogue.

Answering the needs of the moment, the Council has sent out a survey *Willkommen in Deutschland – Musik macht Hoffnung* to its member organisations and musical institutions, and, as a result, collected many offers and proposals for supporting refugees. Many individual musicians (professionals and amateurs) and also associations, unions and citizen initiatives proposed projects to support migrants during the difficult beginnings in a foreign country so that it would be easier for them to acclimate to Germany.

Initiatives concerning different forms of musical activities in the context of refugees were submitted by the German Music Information Centre (*Deutsches Musikinformationszentrum, MIZ*), an institution of the Musical Council on its webpage www.miz.org, at the same time, presenting an interactive map of Germany indicating places where projects were carried out. The map is continually being broadened and updated.³⁵ The presentation of these activities is intended to be not just a form of self-representation but is also meant to serve better coordination and comprise a foundation for the creation of the necessary political conditions for broad based help to migrants.

A BROAD SPECTRUM OF ACTIVITIES

For a long time on a forum for amateur musical groups, unions and associations discussions have been going on how to include migrants into their activities, how to integrate them musically. The range of ideas and the engagement of different groups in the creation of projects for cooperation and breaking national, cultural and language barriers was exceptionally broad. Smaller and larger initiatives began to spontaneously appear, making use of the specific possibilities and power that music brings to meetings with other people. There were both large scale undertakings as well as smaller ones, often local or even private. Starting with the donation of instruments, offering free music lessons through the creation of joint orchestras (as well as choirs or groups), playing music together, organising musical meetings to benefit concerts and offers of musical therapy.

³⁵ “*Willkommen in Deutschland: Musik macht Heimat*“ – *Engagement für Dialog*, 19.10.2015, www.miz.de/online/willkommen-in-deutschland-macht-heimat-engagement-fuer-dialog.

It is difficult to conduct any kind of comprehensive classification of the initiatives undertaken; they often took on different formats, at times their goals or methods like the projects themselves overlapped and intertwined with each other. In making a selection, an effort was made to point out some of the most characteristic undertakings (projects) that differ from each other in terms of the tasks or goals that they set themselves.

A chance for musicians

Due to a certain “pioneer spirit” of the project as well as the exceptionally strong personal commitment of its founder it is worth looking at an initiative which goes beyond the accepted time frame. The *Liedermacher* (singer songwriter) Heinz Ratz, the vocalist of the group *Strom & Wasser*, was behind this project. Interested in the fate of migrant arrivals, in 2011 he travelled about seven thousand kilometres by bicycle, visiting over 80 residential centres all over Germany, wanting to see the conditions they were living in for himself. Each evening he gave a concert dedicated to “more humanitarian policies toward refugees as well as partnership of different cultures and religions”.³⁶ Seeing how they were vegetating while applying for asylum, deprived of a meaning in their lives, with no prospects, he decided to do something to take them out of their fog and change their lives. He was convinced that for many of them the isolation was hard to bear; they had almost no possibility to do anything that would allow them to regain a positive outlook on life and develop their skills. Over the course of his travels, Ratz had the chance to get to know many outstanding musicians languishing in asylum centres. He came up with the idea of starting a group made up of musicians living in asylum centres. At the beginning of 2012, he initiated an undertaking, which he called *1000 Brücken* [1000 Bridges], with the goal of supporting not only the musically talented but also to generally help refugees better adapt to Germany and bring public attention to them.³⁷ First, however, he had to contend with the entire baggage of “good” advice, doubts, political obstacles and legal restrictions. Despite everything, he decided to go ahead with the project.³⁸ Ratz wanted not only to give others a chance to enjoy making music but he also intended to use music as a type of “political” weapon in order to help bring about a change in societal awareness. The terrible conditions in some asylum centres as well as the fact that the residents could not (or only to a small degree) rely on any help or financial support from the state caused him to make their lot more widely known to the public. He recognised that bringing attention to this important social problem could bring about changes to their situation.³⁹

³⁶ *Tour der 1000 Brücken*, 8. 01. 2011 Freiburger Forum *Aktiv gegen Ausgrenzung*, <http://www.freiburger-forum.net/2011/01/tour-der-1000-brucken/>.

³⁷ *Wenn Flüchtlinge Musik machen dürfen*, 6. 07. 2013, www.zeitonline.de.

³⁸ *Abschiedstournee mit neuer CD*, 2. 08. 2013, www.1000bruecken.de.

³⁹ Speech by H. Ratz during the international conference “Cultural education and the dissemination of culture and art in Poland and Germany”, February 24-25, 2015 in Genshagen.

As mentioned, the beginnings were not at all easy, the project seemed almost impossible to carry off. Wanting to record an album, H. Ratz invited some of the musicians to Hamburg. It turned out that “it was necessary to overcome many difficulties”. At times, it was even difficult to make phone contact since internet access was limited or simply unavailable in many centres. Official difficulties were also encountered since refugees had to have special permission to leave the area in which they live and so every trip required special permission and trips could only take place on an exactly planned route. Checks by police often led to delays and it sometimes happened that an already purchased train ticket went to waste since at the last minute permission to travel was not granted.

Despite the obstacles, the undertaking was a success and it was ultimately possible to create the unique group *The Refugees*, made up of about 30 musician refugees from different countries such as Ghana, Iran, Afghanistan, Kenya, Russia, the Ivory Coast, Somalia, Kosovo and Ethiopia who had applied for asylum in Germany. What is more, *The Refugees* together with the group *Strom & Wasser* recorded an album together. Its “value added” was that it featured diverse musical influences (reggae, hip-hop, jazz and folk). The first joint concert of *The Refugees* took place on April 20, 2012 and since then they have continued performing together in a *Lagertour* [Camp Tour] at times playing for audiences of many thousands (for example, at the *Fusion Festival* in the Mecklenburg Late Plateau or at the *Tanz&Folk Festival* in Rudolstadt, the largest folk festival in Germany attended in 2012 by 90,000 people). By August 2013, *Strom & Wasser* together with *The Refugees* had played over 100 concerts together with 40 more appearances planned.⁴⁰

The message of Ratz’s project was “Music gives hope” (*Musik macht Hoffnung*) and judging by quotes from the members of this unusual group it was very true. Performances by the group *The Refugees* in the media brought an unexpected effect in that refugees stopped being anonymous, they gained “faces” and political meaning.⁴¹ According to Ratz, this was at the same time a form of “defence” of musicians against deportation⁴² as they were then able to officially find work in Germany, which had an important influence on a change in their lives. There were visible positive effects and “invigorating traces” that Ratz’s project made on the members of the group. Many of them who had been fighting against deportation had been living in a state of extreme depression but thanks to their performances, they gained a sense of purpose and it was possible to see them “bloom”. The most difficult moment after performing was always the return to the asylum centres. Each successive concert meant that they once more “revived” they also “lived for just that moment”.⁴³ The success of the project is witnessed by the fact that *The Refugees* are still performing. It should be underlined that their per-

⁴⁰ *Abschiedstournee mit neuer CD*, 2.08.2013...

⁴¹ A. Glodzinski, *Musik macht Hoffnung – Das Projekt Heinz Ratz & The Refugees*, 12.03.2013, <http://www.3sat.de/page/?source=kulturzeit/themen/168405/index.html>.

⁴² However, this was not an entirely effective defence since some of them did not receive asylum and had to leave Germany.

⁴³ A. Glodzinski, *Musik macht Hoffnung*....

performances also had an additional value in that they brought about political debate at the local level. The project also had broader social repercussions. Worthy of mention is the fact that Ratz's efforts were noted by state authorities and in 2012 he received a medal from the federal government for his engagement on behalf of the refugees.

Joint activities in different fields of art

One more initiative from 2012 is worth describing. This was the student project *Labyrinth*, which was born at the State University of Music and Performing Arts Stuttgart (*Staatliche Hochschule für Musik und Darstellende Kunst Stuttgart*)⁴⁴, and brought into existence primarily for younger refugees, in order to help them creatively develop their personalities and join German society.⁴⁵ The goal of the project was the creation of a musical and dance theatre (*Musik-Tanz-Theater*) at a high artistic level which would thematically be devoted to the stories of the project participants themselves. Work was divided into four phases and the project lasted about 10 months. It was continued in 2016 and 17 young refugees (five girls and twelve boys) from Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia, Sudan, Senegal, Guinea, Gambia, Ghana, Cameroon, Syria, Iran, Afghanistan and India who were housed in asylum centres in Stuttgart took part. The project was based on cooperation between different areas of the arts and gave each participant the possibility to create their own performance according to their own ideas and filled with their own content and subject matter under the eyes of professionals.⁴⁶ In addition, participants were able to take part several times a week in lessons devoted to singing, dance, puppetry, declamation, acting and other topics. This was quite a challenge since it required a large team of experienced teachers of artistic subjects who were not only good lecturers but who could also uncover and support the individual talents and abilities of the participants. One of the first effects of their work was the preparation of the show *Labyrinth 3: Kriege – Freude – Eierkuchen* [Labyrinth 3: War – Joy – Egg cake] which was presented in Stuttgart on April 25 and 26 in 2015. The value of this undertaking was that it combined not only different areas of art, which gave participants a large area to work in, but also created the possibility of acquiring an education.

Making music together

In some projects, there was a strongly accented element of concerts not only “for” refugees but also “with” refugees. The goal was to help both sides get to know and understand each other through music by creating joint orchestras, groups and choirs.

⁴⁴ The creator of the project Patrizia Birkenberg, during the presentation, in 2013, of the national awards for pedagogy (*Landeslehrpreis*) received a particular student award for her dedication. The work of the group was also awarded in 2014 by the German Schools of Music in the category of music pedagogy.

⁴⁵ *Labyrinth – Theater- und Musikprojekt für junge Flüchtlinge*, 26.01.2016, www.ott-goebel-jugendstiftung.org/2016/01/labirynt-theater-und-musikprojekt-fuer-junge-fluechtlinge.

⁴⁶ *Ibidem*.

One such project was *Bridges – Musik verbindet* [Bridges – Music connects] from Frankfurt am Main on the initiative of a clarinet player and music teacher Julia Huk and Izabella Kohls with the support of the Schiller school (*Schillerschule*) as well as the Frankfurt University of Music and Performing Arts (*Hochschule für Musik und Darstellende Kunst Frankfurt am Main*). “Just as bridges in musical compositions connect two musical parts creating a greater whole, music can overcome the barriers between people from different cultures and allow them to become one group” was the motto of the project’s creators.⁴⁷ The goal of the project was to connect people of different skin colours, cultures and religions through music. The basic idea was to make use of the potential of music to integrate people “who had to flee their homelands and find shelter in Germany, to overcome differences and learn to understand each other” according to J. Huk: “We want to get to know them and have concerts together”,⁴⁸ she said. Music was to become a bridge that would allow for the creative use of cultural differences in making music together. Similarly to Ratz’s project, the organisers brought attention to the fact that many refugees who found themselves in Germany were also talented musicians, who performed the same jobs and led normal lives that were destroyed by war, terror and violence. “It’s just that we were lucky”, said Huk, “that we grew up in stable conditions and were able to develop our talents”.⁴⁹ The idea was to give others the chance to return to active music making, and to fulfil their personal passion and express their emotions.

The first rehearsal was held in the auditorium of the Schiller school in Frankfurt, and 50-60 people took part, about half of whom were refugees, mostly younger people. During the rehearsal, there was a chance to get to know musicians and their stories. A benefit concert was held on April 19, 2015 in the recording studio of Hesse Radio (*Hessischer Rundfunk*). The concert featured compositions written especially for the occasion, arranged with the new cast in mind, the sounds of classical instruments intertwined with exotic rhythms and oriental drums and unique stringed instruments brought by the refugees from their home countries (such as the 6-stringed plucked instrument from Eritrea) or made by the musicians themselves. As the participants observed, for young musicians from Syria, Iran, Pakistan and other countries touched by armed conflict, the possibility of making music together was an overwhelming experience.⁵⁰

In the Heidelberg-based project *Spielraum Musik* [Space for music], local musicians went to refugee centres with their instruments and tried to encourage them (especially children and young people) to play music and sing together. The project *Willkommen mit Musik* [Welcome with music] carried out in Lower Franconia should also be mentioned. It was created in 2015 by the music student Jonas Hermes from

⁴⁷ A. Magel, *Musikprojekt “Bridges” baut Flüchtlingen Brücken*, 13.01.2016, www.hessenschau.de.

⁴⁸ *Bridges – Musik verbindet*, “Kirche in Aktion e.V.”, Frankfurt am Main, 2015, Impressumgenerator des Anwaltes Sören Siebert.

⁴⁹ *Isabella Kohls initiiert*. Flüchtlingsprojekt ‚Bridges‘, 5.02.2016 <http://www.op-online.de/region/rodgau/isabella-kohls-dudenhofen-initiiert-fluechtlingsprojekt-bridges-6096136.html>.

⁵⁰ A. Magel, *Musikprojekt “Bridges”...*

Würzburg. Participants, including asylum seekers and refugees, had the chance to give expression to their experiences through music. A circle of singers in the city of Freudenstadt near Karlsruhe in Baden-Württemberg decided to carry out a project for over 70 refugees and members of the local choir.⁵¹

Projects with children and senior citizens

A number of projects were specifically addressed and prepared with children and young people in mind. One of these was *The Sound of Peace* (in Bremerhaven), a musical and creative welcome project for refugees initiated by the business school Kaufmännische Lehranstalten (KLA) in Bremerhaven with the Office for Social Affairs (*Sozialamt*) and financial support from the Liz Mohn-Stiftung foundation.⁵² The participants were mainly children of refugees and local young people from the local gospel choir *The Soulkeepers*.⁵³ Workshops, in which about 40 people took part, lasted a month and rehearsals took place twice a week. The effect of this cooperative work was the preparation of the program *The Sound of Peace* with a DJ from Cape Town and the group *Breakdance*. Participants were able to relate their stories and express themselves musically through styles such as soul, gospel or hip-hop. One real result of the joint experience was the creation of friendships: “It’s wonderful how children who don’t speak the same language can understand each other”, said the choir director.⁵⁴ The programme was performed twice on stage in Bremen and Bremerhaven. During rehearsals, the group was accompanied by a film crew from the children’s TV network Kika; a video recording was also made.

Another musical project whose guiding principle was joining people of different generations across borders took place in Nuremberg with the participation of refugees and senior citizens. Its creator was *Liedermacher* Jo Jasper. The crowning achievement of the undertaking was the recording of a CD by young refugees from Ghana, Syria and Afghanistan together with senior citizens from Nuremberg.

Language as the key to integration

Starting from the assumption that most children of new arrivals in Germany have either no (or only very basic) knowledge of the German language, which is the foundation of effective integration, the university in Regensburg together with one of the

⁵¹ *Willkommen in Deutschland: – Musik macht Heimat – Engagement für Dialog*, 19.10.2015, http://www.miz.org/fokus_musik_macht_heimat.html

⁵² B. Vogel, ‘*The Sound of Peace*’ – *Musikprojekt von und mit Flüchtlingen*, 23.06.2015, <http://wie-kann-ich-helfen.info/the-sound-of-peace-musikprojekt-von-und-mit-fluechtlingen/1326>

⁵³ The gospel group *The Soulkeepers* was named as an official youth ambassador of UNICEF in 2015, thanks to their song *Du bist was wert* [*You’re worth something*]. The group also regularly collects money during their performances for aid projects.

⁵⁴ *Musik kann integrieren*, 25.05.2016, <http://www.radiobremen.de/kultur/themen/integration-singen100.html>.

local elementary schools created a project in 2014 with the goal of teaching German through music.⁵⁵ Even the preliminary results showed that such learning is extremely effective and brings good results – after a few months some of the children had mastered the language well enough that they could be transferred to regular classrooms. In addition, it was very clear that music can integrate new students into the classroom and give them a feeling of self-confidence.

The students of the Trossingen University of Music (*Staatliche Hochschule für Musik Trossingen*) came up with an unusual idea for language teaching through learning songs. The idea of the project *Backe, backe Kuchen* [Bake, bake cake] was to teach refugees German with the help of music and rhythm and at the same time bring some variety to their daily lives. “Music is an international language which everyone immediately understands”, said Andreas Brand one of the organisers.⁵⁶ The originators of the project started from the premise that even if *flour*, *eggs* and *cakes* are words that refugees in Germany only rarely need in the beginning but they take on meaning when young migrants learn to sing German songs. Teaching began with one of the most popular songs for children, *Backe Backe Kuchen*. About 30 people took part in weekly meetings in a university building. The successful results did not take long to notice, after just an hour young refugees from Syria, Afghanistan and Cameroon were able to sing *Backe, backe Kuchen*. The students taught them simple songs, some of which were written by themselves, or rhythmic recitative based on the premise “it’s easier to remember”. German concepts were mixed with murmurs and images in order that the sounds would be easier to understand and remember. The large contribution by the students themselves should be emphasised. They wrote the language learning materials themselves. “We were curious how refugees would react”, said Brand, but it turned out that they were very engaged from the beginning. For many of them, the project was a stepping stone out of their often boring daily existence.⁵⁷

The city government of Trossingen, which accepted about 175 refugees was very satisfied with the students’ initiative: “language is after all the key for good integration”, said a spokesperson stressing that all initiatives of this kind were needed. It was simultaneously a benefit for the students who received valuable practical and professional experience. In addition, they learned songs from the refugees’ homelands, thanks to which they got to know new cultures, said Brand.⁵⁸

A club in the town of Rheinsberg (Brandenburg) organised active musical games for the children of refugees with the idea that visual impressions would be clarified with the help of sounds and language learning would be made easier.

⁵⁵ L. Weiß, *Musik integriert die Neuankömmlinge*, 23.04.2015, www.deutschlandfunk.de/deutschlernen-musik-integriert-die-neuankoemmlinge.680.de.

⁵⁶ *Musikprojekt: Studenten singen ‘Backe, backe Kuchen’ mit Flüchtlingen*, 2.12.2015, www.new-s4teachers.de/2015/12/mit-musik-und-rhythmus-studenten-bringen-fluechtlingen-deutsch-bei.

⁵⁷ K. Drinkuth, *Studenten bringen Flüchtlingen mit Musik Deutsch bei*, 3. 12. 2015, <http://www.schwarzwaelder-bote.de/inhalt.trossingen-studenten-bringen-fluechtlingen-mit-musik-deutsch-bei.a6dc-04cb-cefa-46c0-bfec-2b4d2fcc3c02.html>.

⁵⁸ *Ibidem*.

Against xenophobia (Fremdenhaß)

Musicians showed their support for refugees in different ways. As a sign that they reject extremist groups that march in the streets under anti-foreigner slogans, in Cologne an alliance was formed *Köln stellt sich quer* [Cologne turns around] with about 50 different musical groups.⁵⁹ Among them were members of the rock group *Kölner Initiative "Arsch huh"*,⁶⁰ which travel to different refugee centres to play music with them.

The members of the hip-hop group *Die Fantastischen Vier* have long been involved in activities against extreme right wing politics and racism. They support the activities of the initiative *Laut gegen Rechts* [Loud against the right], in which many other well-known musicians, as well as prominent figures and entrepreneurs in the music and media industries take part. As an expression against xenophobia, *Die Fantastische Vier* as well as the Hamburg arts agency *FKP Scorpio* invited the residents of a local centre for refugees and asylum seekers to one of their concerts in August of 2015, offering them free tickets.⁶¹ At another time, they invited refugees to a concert with the German rock legend Udo Lindenberg, who performed his new song *Wir werden jetzt Freunde* [We'll be friends now].⁶²

The meaning of these groups' actions in terms of their relatively narrow reach should not be overestimated but nonetheless the fact that musicians are also taking part in these activities and initiatives is noteworthy.

Contacts with classical music – concerts for refugees

The fate of migrants, their living conditions and lack of prospects have also moved professional classical musicians. Many interesting proposals were prepared in order to improve their state of mind, and at the same time integrate them into German society. Theatres and orchestras all over Germany organised welcome concerts (*Willkommenskonzerte*) and other musical events to which migrants were invited. A few illustrative examples will be mentioned here. The Munich Radio Orchestra (*Münchner Rundfunkorchester*) prepared a family concert for the children of refugees engaging interpreters of different languages for the occasion. The

⁵⁹ J. Wördenweber, *Arsch huh – wat nu? Kölner-Initiative stellt sich auf den Prüfstand*, 29.10.2015, <http://www.express.de/koeln/arsch-huh--wat-nu--kuenstler-initiative-stellt-sich-auf-den-pruefstand-23121666>.

⁶⁰ The rock group *Arsch Huh e. V.* since 1992 when the first fires were set at asylum centers in Germany, have engaged in activities for tolerance and against racism and neo-Nazism. For more information see: S. Menkens, *Der Eiertanz der Kölner Arsch-Huh-Aktivisten*, 8.01.2016, <https://beta.welt.de/politik/deutschland/article150758999/Der-Eiertanz-der-Koelner-Arsch-Huh-Aktivisten.html?wtrid=crossdevice.welt.desktop.vwo.google-referrer.home-spliturl&betaredirect=true>.

⁶¹ 288 *Flüchtlinge zu einem Fanta Vier-Konzert eingeladen*, 20.08.2015, <http://www.welt.de/regional/hamburg/article145423674/288-Fluechtlinge-zu-Fanta-Vier-Konzert-eingeladen.html>.

⁶² *Willkommen in Deutschland: Musik macht Heimat...*

Saxony based philharmonic (*Erzgebirgische Philharmonie Aue*) played a concert in an asylum seeker centre. The European Centre for the Arts Dresden (*Europäisches Zentrum der Künste Dresden*) offered refugees and asylum seekers free access to events taking place in the Hellerau Festival Theatre. The centre also offered temporary housing for refugees from Syria. The Syrian-born contrabassist Raed Jazbeh founded the Syria Expat Philharmonic Orchestra in Bremen, which in the future should be comprised of 50 Syrian musicians. The first concert of the orchestra was met with great media interest.⁶³ In a number of different cities (including Hamburg and Bremen) refugees were invited to concerts with the organisers assuring them free tickets. The Berlin Oratory Choir (*Berliner Oratorienchor*) organised sponsors to give concerts with refugees in order to share experiences and to signal that Germany is a society that is “open with a human face” and treats immigration as enrichment.⁶⁴ The chamber orchestra *Ensamble Ruhr* from Essen gave concerts in refugee processing centres informing residents both about the group and about the music they were performing as part of the project *Heimat* [Home], which began in December 2015 and which encouraged joint music making and presentation of their cultures.⁶⁵

Due to its rank, reputation and prestige, it is also worth devoting a little more attention to the special concert, which took place in the Berlin Philharmonic on March 1, 2016. The three largest orchestras in Berlin, the Berlin Philharmonic (*Berliner Philharmoniker*), the Berlin State Opera Orchestra (*Staatskapelle Berlin*) and the Konzerthaus Orchestra (*Konzerthausorchester Berlin*) came together as a show of solidarity in order to play together for the new arrivals. In the judgment of attendees, the idea of *Willkommenskultur* obtained a new dimension.⁶⁶ The orchestras were led by three conductors of world renown – Simon Rattle, Daniel Barenboim and Iván Fischer. The concert took place under the patronage of Chancellor Angela Merkel. The concert also received appropriate media coverage. It was broadcast live by Berlin Brandenburg Radio (*rbb*), *ARD*, *BR-Klassik* and *NDR-Kultur* as well as on the web page of the Berlin Philharmonic. Entry was free and tickets were given after previous registration. Interest in the concert surpassed the boldest expectations with over 6,000 people wanting tickets, although only 2,200 (from 20 different countries) could attend as that is the Philharmonic’s capacity.

Iván Fischer sent a clear signal of openness toward refugees and solidarity with them when he greeted the audience saying: “Do we really want to return to the old Europe where nations fought nations and religions fought religions?” He argued “A new Europe is being born, in which people open their doors and their hearts and we want to show that to the world. And what we want to say to refugees is

⁶³ *Ibidem*.

⁶⁴ *Ibidem*.

⁶⁵ See *Musikprojekt mit Flüchtlingen. Integration mit der Universalsprache Musik*, *WDR1*, 15.12.2015, www.wdr.de/kultur/musik/heimat-musikprojekt-mit-fluechtlingen-100.html.

⁶⁶ W. Prosinger, *Das kurioseste Konzert, das Berlin je erlebt hat*, www.tagesspiegel.de/kultur/fluechtlinge-in.../13044114.html.

welcome, make yourself at home”.⁶⁷ Daniel Barenboim, continuing this chain of thought added that he would like for the event to be more than just a welcome. In his opinion, it is important that refugees receive quality care but just as important is to demonstrate to them that they have arrived in a country where culture is highly appreciated. “This evening’s message is that music and culture don’t come last, but are instead part of the mix from the very beginning”. This was a valuable comment confirming the idea that the artistic community very early joined in the process of integrating migrants. Simon Rattle drew attention to the fact that this was an unusual opportunity for Germany and Europe to extend a sincere welcome “We play to show our support and our love. We are thrilled to communicate with these new Europeans.” All three maestros admitted that they, as musicians, feel welcome all over the world. Their dream then is for those who, have had to leave their homelands because of circumstances beyond their control, such as war, famine and persecution to feel similarly welcome.

The concert programme was chosen with care: it included Mozart’s Piano Concerto No. 20 (KV 466) performed by the *Staatskapelle Berlin* under the direction of Daniel Barenboim, who also performed as the pianist. It also included the “Classical” Symphony No. 1 by Prokofiev conducted by Iván Fischer. The Finale was the Symphony No. 7 by Beethoven, performed by the Berlin Philharmonic under the “fiery” conducting of Simon Rattle. For some audience members, it was their first encounter with western “high culture”. After every section there was spontaneous applause. The concert brought one unexpected effect; the standing ovation at the end... was not the end.

Wolfgang Prosinger in a review of the concert for “Der Tagesspiegel” wrote: “The fact is that reality is more beautiful than the wildest dreams, it’s a miracle of the kind that only happens in fairytales”.⁶⁸ In his opinion, that evening in the Berlin Philharmonic was a fairytale come true. Commenting on the impressions made on the public he observed that after the concert a certain young Afghan stood on the stairs with tears streaming down his face: “I never cry” he said. It took a long time for him and other young people to absorb what had happened and keep repeating the same thing: “This evening was a real miracle”.⁶⁹ Prosinger also emphasised that a similar event took place only twice in the past. The first was in November of 1989, when the largest orchestras of Berlin organised joint “welcome concerts” for residents of the former German Democratic Republic and the second was after the 9/11 terror attacks in September 2001. Those were exceptional moments in reflecting turbulent history. It is worth mentioning that members of the Berlin Philharmonic also engaged in material help for the children of refugees organising charitable collections through an SMS campaign.

⁶⁷ *Konzert für Flüchtlinge in Berlin: “Willkommenskultur in unserer Mitte”*, www.dw.com/de/konzert-fuer-fluechtlinge-in-berlin...in/a-19086172.

⁶⁸ W. Prosinger, *Das kurioseste Konzert...*

⁶⁹ *Ibidem*.

Music of different cultures

Somewhat different in nature was the concert “*Liebe verbindet*” [Love unites], organised on May 14, 2016 by the Cologne Philharmonic under the patronage of the Mayor of Cologne, Henriette Reker. The motivation of the concert was the expression of “tolerance, trust and positive co-existence” in German society.⁷⁰ The program was designed to cross borders with music and performers coming from different culture areas.⁷¹ The artists presented music that connects cultures and peoples. One of the members of the group *NDR Bigband*, from the area where Syria, Turkey and Iraq meet, sang in Arabic and Kurdish about love, joy and sadness accompanying himself on traditional instruments. The Hamburg trio *Django Delux* performed Sinti-Swing with guitars. Their music, which draws on Sinti roots, is simultaneously modern and traditional. The popular pop vocalist Neele Ternes was also present and appealed for people to be more open with their feelings. A soul music composition about freedom was performed by Stefan Gwildis from Hamburg.

Cultural diversity was also at the centre of attention for the rest of the programme, which featured the Iranian musician Shahin Najafi, who lives in Cologne. He sang about freedom of thought, revolution and professing one’s values.⁷² The group *Tabadoul Orchestra*, which was founded in 2010 by musicians from Cologne, Egypt and Turkey appeared with the charismatic Egyptian vocalist Dina Gouda, performing songs by one of the most well-known contemporary composers of the Arab world, Mohammad Abel Wahaba (1907-1991). Artists living in Germany but hailing from other cultural areas also appeared. The short film *Hinter uns mein Land* [Behind us my country], in which Babak Ghassim (who founded the multi-cultural comedy group *RebellComedy* in 2008) and Usama Elyas (a comic born in Aachen of Saudi Arabian parents, co-founder of *RebellComedy*) undertook the difficult (and not comic at all) topics of homeland, escape, doubt and pride.⁷³

The culmination of the evening was the performance of a choir made up of young refugees and members of the Cologne Youth Choir St. Stephan (*Kölner Jugendchor Sankt Stephan*) under the direction of the choirmaster and music teacher Michael Kokott. The vocalist Hennig Krautmahcer, leader of the group Höhner, also performed. The master of ceremonies for the evening was the Cologne-born German-Turk theatrical and film actor, comic and cabaret performer Fatim Çevikkollu, who was assisted by a sign language interpreter.

⁷⁰ *Ein Konzert für Kölner & Flüchtlinge*, www.2016.sommerblut.de/ein-konzert-fuer-koelner-fluechtlinge.

⁷¹ Compare: *Liebe verbindet – Ein Konzert für Kölner und Flüchtlinge*, 14.05.2016, http://www.jungestadt.koeln/kalender/kultur/liebe-verbundet-ein-konzert-fuer-koelner-und-fluechtlinge/d_2016-05-14_20-00.html.

⁷² *Ein Konzert für Kölner & Flüchtlinge...*

⁷³ *Ususmango und Babak Ghasim – Hinter uns mein Land*, 20. 03. 2016, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Yk_JxynbPo.

There was also an element of public manifestation of solidarity with the refugees; After the concert the performers and audience went from the philharmonic building to the Cologne cathedral carrying an almost 200 metre long knitted *Weltschal* [world shawl] as a symbol of freedom, solidarity and democracy. On the steps in front of the cathedral the choir and performers sang the song *Unser Stammbaum* [Our family tree] together, in seven different languages.⁷⁴

It is worth mentioning that both individual artists, such as the world famous violinist Arabella Steinbacher or the organ virtuoso Cameron Carpenter also gave concerts and recitals for the benefit of refugees.⁷⁵ The harp player Suzanne Heutling, who has performed for years with her violinist husband, a member of the Berlin Philharmonic, organised a performance in a refugee centre in Dahlem, Berlin in 2015.⁷⁶ Seeing the interest among audience members, especially children who gathered around the harp wanting to be photographed with it, they had the idea of organising workshops for children and a total of three took place. During one of them, they had seven harps available, on loan from the Philharmonic, on which children could attempt to play. Among the effects of these workshops were friendships. Heutling said that she met then a trumpet player from Syria whose family she became friends with. The rock vocalists Rudolf Kunz organised the action *Musik hilft* [Music helps], collecting instruments for refugees who could express themselves and pursue their musical interests.

Engagement by art schools

Two concerts in December of 2015 at the Berlin University of the Arts (*Universität der Künste, UdK*) were a symbol of engagement on behalf of cultural diversity. The first was a jazz concert “We insist”, in which jazz musicians in Berlin and students performed utilising the social nature and power of jazz. The benefit concert took place on December 3, 2015 and was a co-undertaking of *UdK* and the Hanns Eisler School of Music (*Hochschule für Musik Hanns Eisler*) in Berlin.⁷⁷ The second concert entitled “Together for each other – Music knows no borders” (*Zusammen füreinander – Musik kennt keine Grenzen*) took place on December 5, 2015 in the Joseph-Joachim Concert Hall (*Joseph-Joachim Konzertsaal*) at *UdK*. The stars were students from the university, who under the direction of Markus Brück, a soloist from the *Deutsche Oper Berlin* and lecturer from *UdK*, performed vocal and instrumental compositions by Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky, Wolfgang Ama-

⁷⁴ *Ein Konzert für Kölner & Flüchtlinge ...*

⁷⁵ *Willkommen in Deutschland: Musik macht Heimat...*

⁷⁶ *Musik für Flüchtlinge*, 17.09.2015, <https://www.tagesspiegel.de/berlin/helles-deutschland-musik-fuer-fluechtlinge/12332360.html>.

⁷⁷ *Konzerte für die Flüchtlingshilfe an der UdK Berlin*, <https://www.udk-berlin.de/universitaet/engagement-fuer-gefluechtete/#c20245>.

deus Mozart, George Gershwin and Andrew Lloyd Webber.⁷⁸ After each concert there was a monetary collection for refugees.

Another manifestation of support for the new arrivals was an initiative by the Music Conservatory of Hamburg (*Hamburger Konservatorium*), which offered free music lessons for about 3,000 residents of a refugee centre. The idea was born of children of the refugees and children of the school orchestra of the conservatory playing music together. The originators were convinced that the experience born from growing up in different conditions combined with the joy of making music together would be invaluable for participants.⁷⁹

The evaluation of projects in the eyes of decision makers

On April 8, 2016, Monika Grütters, the Representative of the Federal Government for Culture, announced a list of projects nominated for special awards for cultural initiatives aimed at helping refugees join in the cultural life of the country (*Sonderpreis für Projekte zur kulturellen Teilhabe geflüchteter Menschen*). From over 150 announced propositions, the jury chose 10 ideas carried out by artists from all over Germany. With impressed recognition, Grütters noted that in many cities and communities artists together with engaged people were trying, through culture, to improve the co-existence between local people and refugees. She appreciated the creativity behind the projects sent to the contest from different fields, such as theatre, music, education and the visual arts. She also expressed the desire that the new arrivals would be perceived in Germany as a source of cultural enrichment and a chance for the future of Europe. In her opinion, fear and reservation could only be overcome by people working together.⁸⁰ Each nominated project received an award of 2,500 euro while the three first prizes were to receive 10,000 euro each.⁸¹

The award presentation ceremony took place on May 21, 2016 in the German Historical Museum (*Deutsches Historisches Museum*) in Berlin. The winners were 1. The Dresden group Brass-Band *Banda Internationale*, made up of musicians from Germany and migrants from all over the world; 2. The Munich initiative *Kino Asyl* [Asylum Cinema], in which young refugees were involved as curators of a film festival; 3. The project *Multaka*, in which refugees from Syria and Iraq were engaged as guides in museums in Berlin.⁸² Expressing her appreciation for all the nominated

⁷⁸ *Ibidem*.

⁷⁹ *Willkommen in Deutschland: Musik macht Heimat...*

⁸⁰ *Kulturstaatsministerin Grütters: Sonderpreis für kulturelle Projekte mit Flüchtlingen – Nominierte stehen fest*, Presse- und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung, Pressemitteilung, 8.04.2016, No. 99.

⁸¹ Among the nominated projects were: “Banda Internationale” (Dresden), “Boat People Projekt” (Göttingen), “Do it! Klang Spiel Raum” (Hamburg), “Flucht 2.0 – An Odyssey to Peace” (Ingelheim), “Kino Asyl” (Munich), “Kultur entdecken – Brücken schlagen” (Bischofswerda), “Multaka” (Berlin), “Refugee Club Impulse” (Berlin), “Refugees’ Kitchen” (Oberhausen), “Zukunfts-Künste” (Hamburg).

⁸² M. Grütters met on April 28, 2016 with influential cultural figures of the Arab world in the Museum of Islamic Art (*Museum für Islamische Kunst*) in Berlin, where she was given detailed information on the

initiatives, Grütters emphasised that this engagement clearly demonstrated that art can be a common language where different ideas bring about silence or lead to misunderstandings and can be the source of common experiences where different backgrounds divide or exclude people.⁸³ Turning to the creators of the projects, Grütters stressed that through their ideas and engagement they showed the strength of culture that can overcome borders and bring about development, and that art can bring about changes of perspective and make people look at the world with new eyes. As a side note, it should be mentioned that musical initiatives on the behalf of refugees also took place in other German speaking countries, that is in Switzerland and Austria.⁸⁴

The awarding of federal prizes for outstanding projects preceded the action entitled *Kultur öffnet Welten* [Culture opens up worlds], which Grütters initiated and led together with *Länder*, municipalities and civic organisations. The goal was to make participation in culture possible for the largest possible number of migrants. Over 400 cultural institutions all over Germany for one week (May 21 to 29, 2016) opened their doors and presented projects encouraging migrants to participate in order to show what an important motor of integration culture can be and just what it can accomplish. It was an intensive time of making music together, theatrical performances, cooking and celebration in different age groups that took place above cultural borders.⁸⁵

CONCLUSION

The presentation of diverse manifestations of the music community's engagement, especially organisations and amateur associations as well as individual initiatives clearly demonstrates that from the beginning they have actively participated in activities designed to help new arrivals acclimate themselves to Germany. This is confirmed by the words of the leader of the German Music Council, Martin Maria Krüger, who expressed admiration for the contribution by those in the sphere of music in working on behalf of refugees. In his opinion, the presentation of selected initiatives and musical projects by MIZ is the best proof of the readiness of people

project *Multaka* (in Arabic - meeting place). During the visit, she announced that the project would receive a donation of 85 thousand euro, thanks to which it was guaranteed financing through 2016 and could possibly be extended. For more see *Kulturstaatsministerin Grütters fördert "Multaka" – ein kulturelles Integrationsprojekt mit Modellcharakter*, Presse- und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung, Pressemitteilung, 28.04.2016. No. 134.

⁸³ *Kulturstaatsministerin Grütters verleiht Sonderpreis für kulturelle Projekte mit Flüchtlingen*, Presse- und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung, Pressemitteilung, 21.05.2016, No. 164.

⁸⁴ See: Th. Beyer, *Musikprojekte mit Flüchtlingen: Was bringen sie wirklich?*, *Schweizer Radio und Fernsehen (SRF)*, 13. 04. 2016, www.srf.ch/kultur/musik/musikprojekte-mit-fluechtlingen-was-bringen-sie-wirklich; also see: A. Seierl, *Refugees Welcome – Musik für Flüchtlinge*, 3.05.2016, <http://www.musicaustria.at/refugees-welcome-musik-fuer-fluechtlinge/>.

⁸⁵ *Grütters: Kultur ist ein wichtiger Integrationsmotor*, 25.05.2016, www.bundesregierung.de.

from the world of music to get involved. Music plays then a central role in non-verbal communication; it can also express the joy that comes from intercultural dialogue.⁸⁶

It is worth emphasising, once more, that different entities got involved and helped refugees by utilising music. These included institutions involved in culture (such as philharmonics, theatres, orchestras and art centres) and education (including *UdK* in Berlin, music schools and conservatories in different cities of Germany and schools of various kinds) through musical organisations of different types (for example the German Music Council, the German Music Information Centre, singing circles and others), musical groups (such as *Die Fantastischen Vier*), individual artists and animators of musical life. Worthy of note is the fact that most of these initiatives are carried out by young people (such as students, young musicians, conductors and music teachers).

It would seem (despite a lack of solid numbers) that taken together the types of activities in this field were very numerous, although it is hard to give concrete numbers of programmes and initiatives and projects carried out since there is no registry or other research on the topic.

What is also striking is the variety of forms of engagement by different entities and animators of musical life which should be recognised as an expression of solidarity with the refugees. They take the form of concerts of classical and popular music, performances by groups (whether rock or hip-hop or other), joint music making, giving free music lessons, collecting instruments for refugees who are musicians, monetary collections and others. Also typical is the fact that the bulk of these activities were prepared primarily for migrant children and young people and they were aimed at them first and foremost.

The goals that were established were most of all concerts not just “for” refugees but also “with” them. Of paramount importance was cooperation and joining willing people together for joint music making with established orchestras, choruses, big bands and others, invitations for joint appearances (jazz, hip-hop or other); getting to know each other (and learning the stories of refugees) through direct contact during rehearsals; exchanging musical experiences; getting to know foreign cultures and incorporating elements of them into jointly created compositions; help in learning the German language through learning popular songs and musical games; creating opportunities for migrant musicians to make music by offering them instruments; enriching the spiritual experiences of migrants through the opportunity of taking part in concerts (thanks to free invitations); familiarising them with western culture and the works of composers of different nationalities.

The answer to the question of what effect these activities have had and how successfully their goals have been realised is not easy and would require more in-depth research. Certain results are, however, clearly visible and bear witness to the fact that the intentions of the initiators and organisers were in large measure fulfilled. It is certain that contact with music, whether passively (attending concerts) or actively

⁸⁶ *Flüchtlinge im Musikland Deutschland – Resolution des Deutschen Musikrates*, 27.10.2015, www.nmz.de/online/fluechtlingen-im-musikland-deutschland-resolution-des-deutschen-musikrates.

(playing music together) was successful in making music a source of new, unexpected experiences for migrants. This allowed them, at least for a short time, to break from their monotonous daily existence. The possibility of creating and performing together was without a doubt a big influence on the personal development of refugees, especially younger ones. The experiences were a type of “validation”, thanks to which new horizons and possibilities were opened for the realization of their goals. An additional effect, a certain “added value” were friendships, that were created during joint rehearsals and time spent together. An essential result of the realization of joint projects was also an element of interaction (*Wechselwirkung*), which was not only of cognitive value for both sides but also resulted in the addition of elements of music from other nationalities into the co-created compositions and stage productions. Directly meeting other cultures was valuable for both sides. In addition worthy of note were the results in learning German through music and song.

The fact that the group *The Refugees*, is still playing concerts is a success in and of itself since it means that there is interest in their performances. The fact is also that their performances in the mass media served to draw the attention of the general public to the problems of refugees. In addition, their concerts also have societal reverberations – they stimulate discussions on socio-political topics in the local community.

The question of whether art can induce an exchange of perspectives and ways of looking at the world through different eyes remains to be answered. For the time, being it is difficult to evaluate the real world effects of the projects described.

The high level of activity by the artistic community both from amateurs and professionals alike shows that despite problems that have resulted from the many unsolved questions concerning, for example, the legal status of refugees, housing issues and others related to extended stays in Germany, there exists in German society a not inconsiderable number of people striving as best they can to bring western culture closer to the new arrivals and through practical actions to include them in the social and cultural life of Germany. It is true that the community of artists and cultural figures is but a small percentage of German society but theirs is a strong, positive signal for others.

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Keywords: Germany, refugees, immigrants, music projects, integration

ABSTRACT

The recent influx of refugees to Europe on an unprecedented scale especially in the second half of 2015 has been met with varied, generally very skeptical responses in the host countries or countries of their potential relocation. For Germany, which is the destination of the largest number of refugees (mainly from Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan and Iran) who have fled from persecution and terror, the situation poses a great challenge. German society responded with considerable openness to the needs of the migrants and initiatives for the benefit of refugees were also joined by cultural and artistic circles. Surprisingly, many projects and grass roots initiatives have been undertaken with the

aim of assisting the new arrivals to get accustomed to the new environment and integrate through music. The impulse came both from professionals and amateurs, young people (mostly music school students) as well as renowned public figures. The article presents a broad spectrum of different types of activities and joint initiatives. They were undertaken by individual people and organised groups (choirs, bands, societies, associations and others) for the benefit of refugees and together with them in order to enable them to participate actively in performing music, to help them master the German language (through learning songs and musical games), to give them an opportunity to relax from their day to day existence by inviting them to get involved in concerts organised especially for them and above all to facilitate their integration with the German society.