

Damien Sagrillo, Esch-Belval, Luxembourg

MUSIC EDUCATION AND MUSICAL DIVERSITY PRESENTED BY THE EXAMPLE OF WIND BANDS IN LUXEMBOURG

Training musical diversity is one of the objectives of music education according to the advice of the European Music Council.¹ But how can music teachers train musical diversity? Or should musical diversity be trained rather informally, *inter alia* by wind bands, rather than in schools?

The Music of the Spheres² is a meta-musical concept - legendary, mystical, magical - and was broadly discussed from antiquity to the Middle Ages.

“Music, the art of the Muses, is a hybrid: half-angel, half-demon. For the ancient Greeks music mirrored an ordered cosmos, in which whirling stars and planets made matchless sounds. But the music of these spheres could be heard only by a gifted few, whose sung or stringèd [sic!] echoes won them their way to heaven.”³

But at the beginning of the electronic area, this idea came back to the world unconsciously in a different sense and was initiated by a universal accessibility of music worldwide. It means that every music that is created, performed or practiced can be made available to every corner of the world. However, this will not happen for the majority of music pieces.

¹ See Simone D u d t and Ruth J a k o b i (Ed.), *Sounds in Europe. Musical Diversity and Intercultural Dialogue*, Bonn, Spring 2006; David L o w e n t h a l, *From Harmony of the Spheres to National Anthem: Reflections on Musical Heritage*, in: *GeoJournal* (2006), vol. 65, p.4.

² See also the article Nicholas B r o w n, *The Music of the Sphere*, in: *Content Providers of the World Unite! The Cultural Politics of Globalization*, edited by Susie O' B r i e n and Imre S z e m a n Hamilton, May 2003, p.23-29, downloaded from the Internet <https://crunch.mcmaster.ca/institute-on-globalization-and-the-human-condition/documents/IGHC-WPS_03-3_ObrienSzeman.pdf#page=27> (access 3/2015).

³ David L o w e n t h a l, *From harmony of the spheres to national anthem: Reflections on musical heritage*, in: *GeoJournal* (2006) vol. 65, p.4.

This article will describe what music of the sphere means in the middle of the 21st century, how, in contrast it compares to musical diversity and how it affects informal musical training in wind bands by the example of Luxembourg, seen from the perspective of interviewed musicians.

Music Education in Luxembourg

Luxembourg is one of the few countries having a law for music education. The advantage is that the legislator invests considerable resources for this purpose. But the consequence is that music pupils have to face an elaborate set of rules to realize the targets of the legislator. In addition to the main course (instrumental or vocal training), children are often required to complete a first year of *solfège* training (or at least a year of initiation to music – *musikalischer Kindergarten*) before beginning an instrumental course. The subsidiary course *solfège* is compulsory for three years and, in addition, it is time-consuming, i.e. from one to two hours per week.

The “Solfège” Problem and the Consequences for Wind Bands

Talented budding young musicians have no problems accomplishing this ambitious curriculum. The less capable and those not willing to invest too much time in music education, just wanting to become a member of a wind band and to play a secondary part, often resign.

In addition to this comes the *solfège* problem. *Solfège* is a pedagogical method based on an approach that Kodaly adopted from predecessor models, perfected and adapted on the basis of folk music and didactically elaborated to the needs of Hungarian music pedagogy. In contrast to this, the Luxembourgian model is based on a method used at conservatories in Paris and Brussels and imported to Luxembourg by well-qualified musicians, yet without any training in music pedagogy. Hence, a method conceived for future professionals does not suit young beginners. On the one hand, quality and performance have dramatically decreased in general schools of Luxembourg during the last decades. Although this just was an impression at the beginning, PISA tests recently have

confirmed problems in languages and mathematics.⁴ The reasons are multilingualism, diversity and multiplication of electronic media facilities.

On the other hand, *solfège* still expects a high level of effort and discipline that the majority of the younger generation is no longer willing to deliver. The consequence is that this system produces an elevated drop-out-rate financed by the taxpayer. Table 1 shows how many children abandon the *solfège* courses.⁵ The consequence is that they also are forced to give up their instrumental training. While children attend the musical kindergarten with great enthusiasm and positive expectations, in the first year of *solfège* they discover a very school-like and overly theoretical course. The table shows that the collapse occurs during this first year.

This leads, for better or worse, to a decline of recruitment for wind bands. However, those who leave the music school because of the strict educational program are well prepared for band practice. The decrease of recruitment has a further problem that one can deduce from the conveniences offered by the digitalization of media.

2009/2010	
EM ⁶	18
First year <i>solfège</i>	19
Second year <i>solfège</i>	6
Third year <i>solfège</i>	5
2010/2011	
EM	25

⁴ OECD, *PISA 2012 Results in Focus. What 15-year-olds know and what they can do with what they know*, downloaded from the Internet <<http://www.oecd.org/pisa/keyfindings/pisa-2012-results-overview.pdf>> (access 3/2015), p. 5, 7, 8, 10, 13, 15, 17, 19, 21, 29 ...

⁵ The table represents the data from the music school of the 4000 people commune of Frisange in the south of Luxembourg. No comparable statistics are available at the national level.

⁶ EM means “éveil musical”, i.e. musical kindergarten.

First year <i>solfège</i>	19
Second year <i>solfège</i>	13
Third year <i>solfège</i>	6
2011/2012	
EM	11
First year <i>solfège</i>	19
Second year <i>solfège</i>	10
Third year <i>solfège</i>	10
2012/2013	
EM	17
First year solfège	12
Second year solfège	11
Third year solfège	7
2013/2014	
EM	20
First year solfège	14
Second year solfège	9
Third year solfège	8
2014/2015	
EM	19
First year solfège	22
Second year solfège	10
Third year solfège	7

Table 1: Population of *solfège* courses

Can we generalize the following quote describing young people perceiving music of their native environment and transfer it to their practice in a wind band?

"The members of the communities, ..., due to the lack of knowledge and understanding of local music, think that their music is old-fashioned and not up-to date, and some of them say that their music is not relevant to contemporary life. As a result, they orient themselves on "foreign music", the music that is originated from other countries... [E]verything comes from the West (technology, science, law, economy and political systems, etc.) is thought of as more valuable and has higher status than the similar concepts from their country. As a result they underestimate local products and cultures. With similar rationale they also think that local music is also lower in status.

This issue eventually becomes serious when youth construct ideas emphasizing the 'dichotomy' of West and East, where West is thought of as 'superior' and East is 'inferior'.⁷

We should take this statement seriously. Furthermore, music education should address the problem by providing knowledge about musical diversity, which ought to be a topic in classes in order to avoid a too uncritical emphasis on major music tendencies. In Luxembourg and also in other parts of Europe, most wind bands have switched, consciously or unconsciously, to a more modern repertoire with arrangements on items of Pop, Rock and film music to cover up this supposed inferiority and to attract not only young musicians, but also an audience expecting this kind of music.

Figures 1 and 2 make the change of repertoire visible, also concerning the use of languages: In 1957, the concert program was classic (marches, overture, character pieces, cf. figure 1), and the titles of the compositions were written in the languages of the country, French and German (here French). Fifty years later (in 2007) the pieces are "off the peg" and the titles in English, reproducing globalized music disseminated by today's mass media. (cf. figure 2). According to Stefan Orgass today's media age facilitates the confluence of all existing music styles. But, there exists also the specific risk of a musical standardization.⁸

⁷ See Richard L e t t s (principal Investigator), *The Protection and Promotion of Musical Diversity*, p. 96, downloaded from the Internet <http://www.imc-cim.org/programmes/imc_diversity_report.pdf> (access 7/2014).

⁸ See Stefan O r g a s s, *Musikalische Bildung in europäischer Perspektive. Entwurf einer Kommunikativen Musikdidaktik*, Hildesheim 2007, S.253.

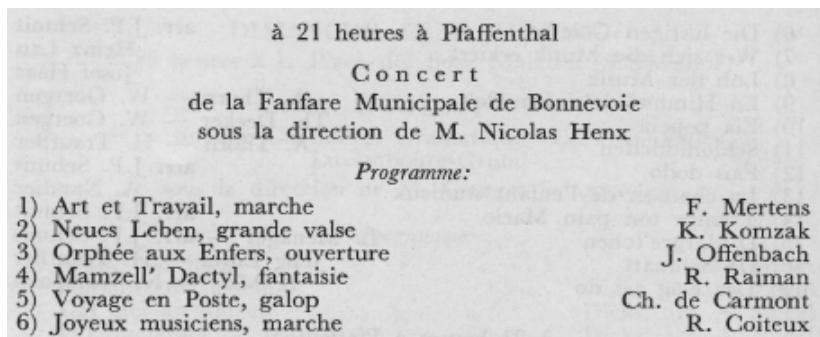


Figure 1: Concert Program of 1957⁹

Première Partie		Deuxième Partie
Marching Time offert par Mme Mad. Mangen	Kees Vlaak	Freckles Rag offert par M. Fernand Brever-Kockelmann
Ceremonial March offert par M. Josy Grommes-Breyer	Jan van der Roost	Duelin 'Xylos offert par M. Simon Schaack-Schmitz
El Camino Real offert par M. René Obry-Dussier	Alfred Reed	Glenn Miller Medley offert par Mme Isabelle Winkin
Bugatti Step offert par M. Jos Heinericy-Bütgenbach	J. Jecék – K. Bélochoubek	Naohiro Iwai
Boy Bands – Then and Now offert par M. Pierre Lentz-Thielen	arr. Rey Philippe	The Typewriter offert par M. René Schickes-Marth
Bugler's Holiday offert par Snack Friture Clervaux	Leroy Anderson	Cartoon Carnival offert par M. Romain Spartz-Leimer
El Volador offert par Snack Friture Clervaux	Jean Leetecq	Concerto for Faculty and Band offert par Kopp Cado Center Clervaux

Figure 2: Concert program of 2007¹⁰

⁹ Chorale Sang a Klang (Ed.), *Livre d'or de la Société chorale royale grand-ducale "Sang & Klang"*, centenary book, Saint-Paul, Luxembourg 1957, p.18.

¹⁰ Harmonie Municipale Clervaux (Ed.), *150 Joer Cliärrwer Musik 1856-2007*, Troisvierges 2007, p.126 and p.153.

Musical Diversity in Luxembourgish Wind Bands

The Questionnaire

In order to find out what band members think about music education and musical diversity in relation to their band practice, I developed a questionnaire in collaboration with a psychologist and a sociologist of my university.¹¹ The survey followed the principles of a semi-structured interview. It is based on a set of questions in relation to topics of wind music, music education and musical diversity and allows the interviewee to bring up his ideas. Closed-ended questions, such as multiple choices and yes / no type answers are avoided.¹² The questionnaire begins with standardized information for the interview partner concerning the aim of the research. Then follows a biographical section where – in contrast to what I mentioned above – short answers are expected. The questions include basic information about musical training. Then follows a section with more general questions, for example “What is the role of music in your life?” In the section about music education the interview partner can specify his impression about music education in general schools and, if applicable¹³, in music schools – public or private. Difference is made between *solfège* and instrumental courses. At the end of this section, the interviewee is asked what kind of improvements he would like to see. The following two sections deal with the musician’s commitment to his band. In the last section the question of musical diversity is raised, what could be understood by this term, how it is / was experienced during music education and within the band. The conclusion deals with the question of how the challenges of music education could meet the needs of today’s musical practice in community groups. At the end of every section the interviewee has the possibility to give further opinions.

¹¹ In this context I want to thank Dr. Anette Schumacher and Prof. Michèle Baumann for their generous support.

¹² Concerning qualitative research methods, please refer to Jan K r u s e, *Qualitative Interviewforschung. Ein integrativer Ansatz*, Weinheim and Basel 2014.

¹³ One need not necessarily attend a music school to become a band member, especially in the case of older members.

The Questionnaire and Interview Partners at a Glance

- Standardized information for the interviewee
- Biographical questions
- General questions

Example: "What is the role of music in your life?"

- Music education
- Adherence and membership to a wind band
- Musical diversity experienced in wind bands
- Final remarks

A total of 23 interviewees between 17 and 74 years old participated.¹⁴

AGE	TOT 23	♀ 4	♂ 19	Migration background	Professional
10-20	2	1	1	1	0
20-30	2	1	1	2	1
30-40	4	1	3	0	2
40-50	3	0	3	0	2
50-60	4	1	3	3	1
60-70	6	0	6	3	0
70-80	2	0	2	1	0

Findings

In the following I will present and discuss some selected statements, based on interviews with different people¹⁵:

¹⁴ They were questioned by two student assistants. In this context I also want to thank my student assistants Kiko Menichetti and Jeff Hennico for their help.

¹⁵ To ensure the anonymity of the interviewees, the names have been changed.

Concerning wind band and social factor

(Chantal, 36) As social interaction is no longer the same as before, it has become more complicated to motivate young people to become a member of a wind band.

Concerning music education in relation to wind band practice

The question is, how and in what manner music training in public music schools was helpful for later practice in a band and how important ongoing informal music learning was/is perceived.

(Stéphane, 17) sees the technical aspect in *solfège* courses that constitute a solid basis for practicing band music.

(Chantal, 36) The combination of both *solfège* and instrumental courses is important. To the aspect of informal learning in an orchestral environment can be added the social component.

(Luc, 52) In music schools, an instrument is learned technically, and in bands you learn by experience. Both are learning environments, but they require two different approaches in acquiring musical knowledge. The basis provided in a music school is necessary to gain practical experience in conjunction with other band musicians.

(François, 59) Some people argue in a very quantitative manner: music school 60% and band music 40%.

(Julien, 60) Due to the fact that the level in music schools raises, the artistry of wind bands also increases.

(Jean, 61) Acquiring musical skills in an autodidactic approach is only achievable with a lot of talent. Most people should benefit from the facilities offered by music schools.

(Pierre, 62) regrets that he abandoned music school too early, but concedes that music practice took him much further.

(Pascal, 64) The advantage of music schools is individual courses and individual mentoring which is not possible in a wind band.

The conclusions that can be drawn from these statements are that the combination of both parts is seen as being important. In addition, the interview partners often mention the social factor in band practice.

Concerning challenges of music education for the needs of community music

(Michelle, 24) Education in music should make clear that music is far more than only entertainment. The aim should be to form a musically trained audience.

(Henri, 64) Community bands should endeavor a close cooperation with music schools and motivate potential musicians. On the other hand, music schools should focus more on the needs of amateur ensembles.

(Pierre, 62) Music schools should offer a two-prong system for future amateur musicians, i.e. band musicians and, on the other hand, for future professionals.

(François, 59) Music schools should make publicity for bands and also consider the social factor of music.

Regarding this point of view, some interviewees often avoid an answer or give an evasive reply. Is this an indicator of a lack of interest, or could one assume that a broader understanding of the issue is missing? We have to acknowledge that mostly this is the case! On one hand, we have to consider the history of music schools in Luxembourg. They have been founded with the primary goal to provide community ensembles with young, well-trained musicians. On the other hand, we notice the declining recruitment of new young members in bands and especially in amateur (church) choirs. In the background of the interviews, one can merely guess some arguments about a closer collaboration between both institutions often combined with the requirement of a reversion to initial traditions.

Concerning musical diversity in relation to band music

I will present this point after the discussion of musical diversity in the next section.

Musical Diversity

The motto of the EU is “Unity in Diversity”. But what is the meaning of this over-used term diversity? Is any definition possible? Schiller paraphrases diversity as something equal what different individuals perceive as being diverse.¹⁶

I will explain what is meant by cultural diversity, before defining this term, as proposed in official documents of the UNESCO. First of all, cultural diversity means the common heritage of humanity. Turned into the active form: Cultural diversity that enables cultural pluralism is a factor of development. Human rights should guarantee cultural diversity, and this leads to cultural rights, the accessibility of cultural diversity and to culture as a wellspring of creativity.¹⁷

Cultural diversity includes musical diversity, and musical diversity, as cultural diversity, exists if freedom of expression is assured and a pluralism of musical structures offered.

Aspects that are associated with musical diversity involve, along with human rights, peace and identity. But musical diversity can also be exposed to some risks such as globalization, i.e. the domination of western music as a superstructure that is stifling national and regional identities.¹⁸ The former president of the EU commission mentioned that the “true cultural identity of Europe” would be its diversity. “It would be made of its different heritages, of its multiplicity of histories and of languages, of its diverse literary, artistic and popular traditions.”¹⁹

¹⁶ Eduard Boas (Ed.), *Nachträge zu Schillers sämmtlichen Werken*, Bd. 1, Stuttgart 1839, p.94. In Schiller's language (German), this apparent contradiction sounds as follows: “Wahrheit. Eine nur ist sie für Alle, doch stehet sie Ieder verschieden; Daß es Eines doch bleibt, macht das Verschiedene wahr.“

¹⁷ See UNESCO, *Records of the General Conference, 31st session, Paris, 15 October to 3 November 2001*, p.61-63, downloaded from the Internet <<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0012/001246/124687e.pdf>> (access 7/2014).

¹⁸ See Letts 2014, p.8.

¹⁹ Simone Dutt, *Turning Points: Music – Youth – Diversity ...*, in: Dutt und Jakobi 2006, p.6.

Concerning diversity of music education, the variety of musical traditions and practices may lead to varieties in music education, but the result will be uniform: the musically educated person in his multiform European shaping.

One could associate the deconstruction of the term “diversity” in relation to wind band music at first glance with two theoretical models, the first by Walter Benjamin and the second by Kurt Blaukopf.

In 1936 Walter Benjamin published his article *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*²⁰, where he coined the term of “aura” in connection with a piece of art that is genuine, unique and linked to a tradition. Due to its reproducibility, it loses this aura. Although Benjamin meant visual arts, we can apply his idea also to music.

In 1989, Kurt Blaukopf published his book with the revealing title about Beethoven and the mediamorphosis in relation to the up-coming electronic media.²¹ In addition to Benjamin’s idea of a loss of authenticity, Blaukopf extends this idea by introducing the term of “Mediamorphose”. Mediamorphosis is a phenomenon that describes the mutation, i.e. the metamorphosis, of music by the influence of electronic media on the musical and technical production- and distribution-process. Some, but not all criteria are also significant for band music and in connection with it, with informal music education.

1. The financial support of live music – and band music is in the majority of cases live music – diminishes.
2. While live music still has the character of auratic uniqueness, the added value - concerning not only band music, but also music practice in general - moves from active practicing to passive listening or only hearing. This may

²⁰ See Walter Benjamin, *L’Œuvre d’art à l’époque de sa reproductibilité*, in: *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*, Jahrg. 5, 1936, pp.40-68.

²¹ See Kurt Blaukopf, *Beethovens Erben in der Mediamorphose. Kultur- und Medienpolitik für die elektronische Ära*, Zürich 1989; see also: Kurt Blaukopf, *Was ist Musiksoziologie? Ausgewählte Texte*, ed. by Michael Parzer, Frankfurt / Main 2010, pp.155-194.

be considered as a banalization of music, but may bear its fruits for educational purposes.

3. An audio recording of a piece of band music may be an appropriate tool for documentation and (informal) learning out of the context of practice, but it is a false representation of musical reality. The main purpose of recordings remains an economic one.
4. Mediamorphosis is also influencing musical creativity. Some composers surely could not meet the challenge of creating pieces for band if an appropriate composing software would not support them in hearing what they are doing. The technology becomes an instrument of creation. But quite often the result is sobering and different from musical diversity leading to a band composition “off the peg” (see above). But again, music software can be a powerful tool for learning.

There is a risk that, as mentioned above, increasing uniformity through constant westernization of culture counteracts the conservation of national and regional cultural independence. Uniformity occurs through copying, uploading to the Internet (*YouTube*), or, at best, by arranging a piece for wind band. In doing so, it wins back a partial unique aura. Let us mention two examples:

The first one:

A difference exists in repertoire between many so-called “globalized” bands and typical bands, as they still “survive” e.g. in Bohemian, Alpine regions and maybe further European regions.²² Those genuine ensembles and also the pieces they perform undoubtedly remain in an “auratic” tradition. The interview partners consider this situation as a sign of diversity, a diversity that, on a time axis of almost a century, has existed, i.e. does no longer exist here and now. If at all, and in an ideal case, it involves a uniform repertoire in combination with the traditions of regional - in my case Luxembourgish wind music - as it was the practice decades ago. Let us illustrate what *aura* means through the example of the wind band *Harmonie Municipale Luxembourg-Limpertsberg* in April 2014 (Figure 3).

²² ... that, in most cases, can also consist of a uniform “Alpine” repertoire, as expected by the touristic audience.

1. The first part of this concert was performed by the youth band. It consisted of a selection of commercial pieces without any claim of authenticity.
2. *Escapade* being archived in the collection of the band and probably nowhere else – as it was composed by a former conductor for “his” band, each performance is surrounded by an aura of authenticity, because it never was published. Benjamin’s theory of course has no impact on the quality of the piece. Beethoven’s 9th is not an auratic composition.
3. The second part of the concert (Figure 3) was devoted to Luxembourgish music for wind band. The less these pieces are performed, the more “auratic” they are, and the more they are examples of a musical diversity that still exists in a subconscious survival as old autographs or prints in dusted band archives.

The second one:

“Globalized” bands substitute instruments like French horns for alto horns, euphoniums for tenor and bass saxhorns thereby automatically impoverishing the tone color and globalizing the sound, while ensembles retaining regional identities leave a typical and often richer sound impression. Finally the question to raise is, if musical diversity – in wind bands – should be preserved at all and if musical diversity (also in relation to wind music) should be a topic for music education, or if globalization is wanted and should be admitted. If yes, it could be seen as an opportunity for traditions in the “periphery” to be generally propagated, such as tango, reggae, salsa or even gamelan²³ and such as compositions or arrangements for wind band in Celtic music style during the last decade for example.

²³ See Lucie Green, *Musical Identities, Learning and Education*, in: Tan Hawkins (Ed.), *Critical Musicological Reflections: Essays in Honour of Derek B. Scott*, Surrey 2012, p.42.

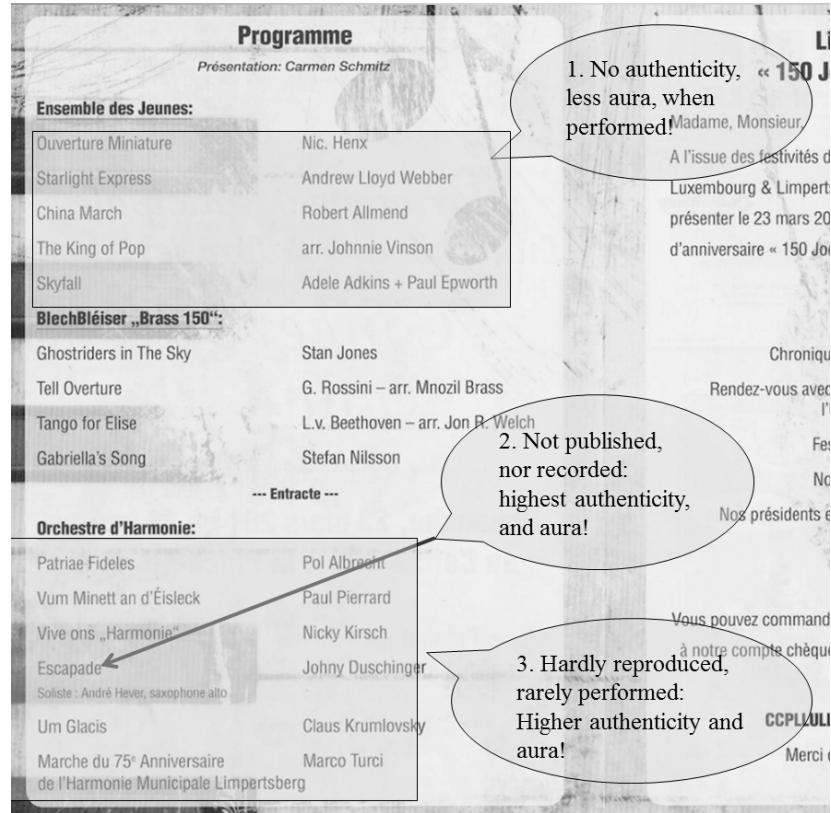


Figure 3: “Auratic” and “Non-Auratic” Music for Band

Concerning Musical Diversity in relation to band music

(Stéphane, 17) In contrast to music schools, bands assure musical diversity because they cover a broad repertoire range from classical to modern. He also appreciates arrangements of pop music.

Note: In the light of the above, arrangements of pop music should be considered more as a sign of musical globalization than of musical diversity.

(Manon, 24) A band has to adapt its repertoire to the expectation of the audience.

(Luka, 33) Musical diversity is equal to different musical genres, and it depends on the instrument that one plays. For instance practicing horn is linked to a more traditional style.

(Michel, 44) Musical diversity is today more essential than in the past.

(Mathis, 44) Musical diversity means playing band music from all over the world. YouTube is a useful informational platform and should be a source of inspiration by band conductors. The Internet facilitates accessibility to publishers for wind ensembles worldwide.

(Léo, 52) Musical diversity is a warranty for an attractive repertoire.

(Danielle, 54) Musical diversity belongs to the very essence of music.

(Julien, 60) Musical diversity is defined as diversity in the choice of repertoire. While former concert programs were limited to classical pieces, modern performances provide a multitude of genres.

(Jean, 61) Musical diversity is to conceive a concert program that achieves an increasing effect up to a kind of dramatic peak.

(Jéronimo, 77) Bands should dare to try out something new. Musical diversity is giving each annual gala concert a new motto (also Josy, 61).

In summary, answers often are unexpected, and the understanding of diversity in the context of band music is manifold and ... diverse. Musical diversity is mainly linked to repertoire, its adoption to the expectation of a more demanding audience, but also to an enlarged choice of pieces.

Outlook

Consider the following for further research: On the basis of the qualitative interviews one could establish a quantitative questionnaire with closed and structured questions in form of multiple choice or 'yes'/no' answers with the

aim to obtain results of a more statistical value. But, prior to quantitative methods, further regions could be envisaged.

Musical diversity can be trained. But it covers risks related to an oversupply of topics – and this seems to be a contradiction - that demand too little effort from the pupils, at least concerning music education in general schools.²⁴ To avoid this impasse, wind bands should take over the task to train, knowingly or unknowingly, musical diversity informally, more than formal and specialized school institutions can provide. Due to a globalized instrumentation – and this may be a positive effect of musical globalization – the choice of band literature all over the world has become available in abundance. The Internet allows an unlimited access to publishers and composers of wind music. And the Internet also allows access to concert performances all over the world. In this sense we can see musical globalization also as a chance for musical diversity. Auratic pieces in the meaning of Walter Benjamin could blaze the trail from their regional isolation to the world.

²⁴ See Werner Jank and Wolfgang Martin Stroh, *Aufbauender Musikunterricht – Königsweg oder Sackgasse*, at the Internet page <http://www.musik-for.uni-oldenburg.de/vortraege/afs2005_jankstrohtext.pdf> (access 7/2014).