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WIND MUSIC HERITAGE. A PROJECT IN PROGRESS

Abstract

The aim of the Heritage Project is to bring overlooked wind band music back to life, e.g. pieces that have either survived only as handwritten manuscripts or being out of print over time. It's a joint initiative: WASBE focuses on the practical side, like preparing performance-ready editions, while IGEB handles the historical and musicological research. Together, both partners are tracking down suitable works in archives and private collections to make sure these valuable pieces aren't lost forever. Once found, the manuscripts will be digitised and carefully edited for performance. There are some significant issues to address – sorting copyright, securing funding and finding the right balance between historical accuracy (like urtext editions) and what today's ensembles actually need in terms of instrumentation and playability. However, the end goal is clear: to make a meaningful contribution to the rediscovery and performance of wind music from the past.

The WASBE-IGEB Heritage Project aims to make older compositions for wind bands/ensembles that currently exist only in manuscript form or as out-of-print editions accessible again. This project has already been approved by the governing boards of the two societies. Suggestions for suitable composers and compositions are to be obtained from the membership of both organisations. In addition, archives are to be searched, including a little-known archive in Münster (Alsace) as well as archives in Greece, Hungary (contacts have already been made in these countries) and other countries. There is also the possibility that unknown manuscripts exist in numerous other archives or in private collections that have so far remained undiscovered. Furthermore, there is a risk that valuable manuscripts in private collections could be lost if they are disposed of during cleaning-up a house or estate settlements. This would be an irreplaceable loss since many of these works exist only in manuscript form and have never been published or possibly even performed. The project has therefore set itself the task of not only searching through known archives, but also specifically approaching private collectors and

estates to ensure that such legacies are not lost. By digitising and processing the manuscripts, they may be permanently secured and made accessible to the public. The WASBE-IGEB Heritage Project thus offers a unique opportunity to save forgotten or endangered compositions for wind band/ensemble and preserve them for future generations.

The manuscripts should be digitised and performance editions prepared. Members of WASBE will be responsible for the practical work for the editions and members of IGEB will be responsible for the musicological part of the editions. It is still unclear in what form the compositions will be published. A publication via a publisher or an electronic publication with sales via the WASBE website and/or IGEB website are under discussion. In addition, the editions must be designed in such a way that they can be performed on contemporary instruments and also meet the requirements for historical performances. Editions for original instruments, contemporary instruments, as well as critical editions have been common for well over a hundred years for many classical compositions. The WASBE-IGEB Heritage Project can benefit from the procedures used in creating these editions. The plan is to include compositions for full wind band, wind ensembles with one player to a part, brass band and fanfare band, as well as chamber music with wind instruments, *Harmoniemusik* and works for voices and wind instruments. It must be further decided whether external music critics and/or musicologist who are not experts in wind music should also be involved.

On the legal side, clarification of ownership is necessary. The question arises as to who is responsible for checking the copyright status of the compositions and who owns the rights to the new editions. In addition, the financing of the project must be regulated, including the costs of obtaining manuscripts, editing and scoring the compositions, creating critical commentary and publication as well as the distribution of royalties between WASBE and IGEB. In view of these requirements, this is an ambitious project, which could make a significant contribution to the revival and dissemination of wind music that is no longer performed or performable.

1 Music Edition for Wind Band/Ensemble Music

Music editions of wind band/ensemble compositions, especially those from the 19th and the first half of the 20th century, present complex and demanding tasks. The special features of these compositions, such as national, regional and local instrumentations, handwritten scores, early printed editions and the need for a critical examination of the material require a specific approach.

In general, musicological editing and textual criticism, which includes the editing of wind band/ensemble music, differs from philology primarily in its broader historical framework and the variety of aspects to be examined. It deals with musical notations from antiquity to the present and also takes linguistic texts, graphic documents and staging sets into account. A key difference lies in the nature of the musical works as many musical traditions are based on oral tradition with notation often only providing a basic framework. This applied, for example, to folk songs which have been passed down orally and were recorded in writing at a certain point in time.¹ Collecting and writing down folk songs show how fundamental the interplay between notation and sound is and for this reason also requires an interpretative approach. Vocal compositions in particular, which combine language and music, present specific challenges to the application of philological methods. Although musicology has adopted many approaches from philology, it has developed its own methods to consider the particularities of its own material. This includes examining the relationship between notation and sound, the specific design of commentaries and text-critical apparatus and the use of adapted terminology, for example the term "critical commentary" instead of "apparatus". The terms and classifications also differ while in musicology the term "autograph" is mostly applied to scores, drafts are referred to as "sketches". In addition, there are various types of editions that pursue different objectives. Editions for wind band/ensemble, however, will be an exception, except for works such as Mozart's *Gran Partita*, Richard Strauss's *Wind Serenade* or comparable compositions by famous

¹ In Central Europe beginning at the end of the 19th Century or even later, cf for example: Béla Bartók & Zoltán Kodály (Ed.), *Corpus Musicae Popularis Hungaricae*, Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, starting in 1951.

composers. Interpretation editions adapt works to aesthetic or technical requirements and urtext editions present the original text with marked additions or noted corrections. The development of music editions reflects the history of music itself. It has shown a trend towards greater objectivity and transparency since the Second World War.²

2 Templates for the Edition of Wind Band/Ensemble Works

The editing of handwritten scores of early period wind band/ensemble compositions presents the musicologists and editors with several complex challenges. These historical documents are often characterised by incompleteness, numerous corrections and the existence of multiple versions, which makes interpreting them and working on them considerably difficult. In addition, the instrumentation of the wind bands of the times were extremely variable, shaped by national, regional and local traditions as well as the availability of specific instruments, which ran counter to a standardised instrumentation. One of the primary difficulties in the editorial work lies in deciphering the manuscripts. The writing styles used, be they in ink or pencil, can often be difficult to read for the modern reader. This requires not only palaeographic expertise, but also a good understanding of the notation practices of the respective era, which goes beyond the expertise of a wind music expert. The authentic reconstruction of the original instrumentation is another challenge. In many cases, precise information on instrumentation is missing, which forces the editor to use his knowledge to reconcile contemporary performance practices with the original national, regional and local traditions. This requires a careful balance between historical fidelity and practical accessibility for modern ensembles. The evaluation and classification of different variants and corrections within a manuscript is another critical aspect. The editor must decide which version is to be regarded as the "correct" or the one intended by the composer, or whether a final version should be synthesised from different versions. The process requires not only musicological expertise but also a strong understanding of the compositional process and the development of musical ideas. An adequate

² Cristina Urchueguía, "Apparat, Musikwissenschaftliche Editorik, Notation", in: *Kompendium der Editionswissenschaft*, <https://www.edkomp.uni-muenchen.de/CD1/frame_edkomp.html> [23/01/2025].

edition also requires a profound understanding of the musical language of the 19th and early 20th centuries, which differs in many ways from today's and in turn can go beyond the expertise of a wind music specialist. National, regional, local and time-bound styles must be considered to adequately capture the composer's intention and the historical context of the work and to reflect this in the edition. The editorial work on early wind band compositions therefore requires a multidisciplinary approach that combines musicological research, historical knowledge and music practice expertise. Only by carefully considering all these factors can an edition be created that meets both, the demands of historical authenticity and which is also practical for modern performances. This work makes a significant contribution to the preservation and revival of the music heritage and enables contemporary musicians and listeners to rediscover the rich tradition of wind band/ensemble music in all its historical depth.

3 Urtext – Yes or No?

An urtext is an edition closest to the composer's intention. The main source is the autograph, in cases of doubt, the first edition, if it exists. Can it be determined if the first edition was authorised by the composer? The composition may be hardly playable by today's wind bands/ensembles.

The question of whether a new edition complies with the requirement of an urtext edition is not only relevant for wind band/ensemble compositions, but for all musical and literary works. The aim of such an edition is to capture the composer's intention as authentically and completely as possible and to present it in a scholarly based edition. The autograph is usually used as the main source. In cases where the autograph is incomplete, the first edition is used. It is an advantage if it can be proven that this edition was authorised by the composer. Particular challenges arise with wind band/ensemble compositions, as these are often found in fragmentary form such as individual parts or as short scores. An urtext edition is also made more difficult by the fact that historical instrumentations often do not correspond with those of today's modern wind orchestras. Many compositions in their original form were tailored to the specific sound and instrumental possibilities of the time and some instruments are no longer in use or even exist. This makes a performance

with modern instruments difficult or even impossible. The editorial decisions when adding missing voices or passages also raise the question of whether an edition can still be considered an urtext if these additions are necessary to present the work in a performable form. Such additions must be clearly marked and documented in detail in the Critical Commentary to maintain scholarly transparency. Ultimately, with wind band/ensemble compositions, it is often a balancing act between historical authenticity and practical feasibility. A strict urtext edition can offer valuable insights into a composer's original intention and performance practices, but it is often difficult for contemporary ensembles to use. Therefore, when editing wind band/ensemble compositions, a hybrid approach should be chosen that is based on the idea of the original text, while at the same time taking pragmatic adaptations for practical use into account. These circumstances reflect a central conflict in producing new editions of historical wind band/ensemble compositions: the balance between scholarly accuracy and practical usability.

4 The Critical Commentary (*Kritischer Bericht*)

The creation of a Critical Commentary is an essential part of a scholarly edition of a composition for wind band/ensemble. It serves as a comprehensive documentation of the entire editing process and forms a solid basis for further musicological research. In its conception, the Critical Commentary includes several central elements which, as a whole, provide a detailed picture of the edited composition and the editorial decisions. The approach differs in the creation of a Critical Commentary for literary works, classical music and wind band/ensemble compositions due to the differences in the material. The priority is the description of the source. The origin, condition and special features of the score are explained in detail. This information clarifies the historical and material context of the work and thus enables conclusion to be drawn about its creation and its transmission history. Another essential aspect is the list of the instrumentation. If the editor intends to produce an authentic edition, the focus is on reproducing the historical instrumentation as faithfully as possible with deviations for modern instrumentation being carefully selected to preserve the tonal and stylistic characteristics of the time when the composition was created. However, this could mean that the work can no longer be easily performed by today's wind orchestras. Another important aspect is the presentation of the editorial principles.

Here the fundamental decisions made during the editorial process are explained and justified. This concerns, for example, aspects of musical notation, articulation and dynamics. Disclosing these principles is essential and enables other research to understand the editorial steps, evaluate them critically and, if necessary, use them for their own work. A third step in the Critical Commentary is the index of alternative readings. This meticulously documents all deviations of the edition from the source. These include corrections, additions and interpretations of unclear passages. The list of alternative readings is of central importance for scholarly transparency, as it enables other researchers to understand the editorial decisions and, if necessary, to question them. The creation of a Critical Commentary requires not only a high level of musicological expertise, but also a thorough and systematic approach. The Critical Commentary ensures that the edition not only serves as practical performance material but is also of lasting value as a scholarly document. It thus makes a significant contribution to the development and preservation of the musical heritage and at the same time promotes scholarly discourse in wind band/ensemble research.³

The edition in conjunction with the Critical Commentary opens new perspectives for both, scholarly research and musical practice. A central aspect of the further examination of the edited composition is musical analysis. This includes a detailed examination of the harmony, melody, form and style of the composition. The purpose of the analysis is not only to gain a deeper understanding of the composition but also to classify the work in its music-historical context and to identify characteristic features of the composer and/or the respective aera. The latter in particular has so far been given insufficient consideration in wind band/ensemble research.

5 Creating a Standardised /Transcription Edition

A standardised /transcription edition is intended for modern performance practice and aims to make historical compositions accessible

³ Daniela Philippi, "Kritischer Apparat", in: *Musikphilologie. Grundlagen – Methoden – Praxis*, ed. by Bernhard Appel / Reinmar Emans (=Kompendien Musik 3), Laaber: Laaber-Verlag 2024, pp. 237–246.

and practical for today's wind orchestras. The instrumentation is adapted to the standards of the modern wind orchestra. Parts for historical instruments that are no longer in use are rewritten or replaced so that a complete and balanced sound may be achieved. At the same time, attention is paid to clear and concise notation. The use of modern notation software creates a uniform and easy-to-read score in which dynamics and articulations are clearly specified and, if necessary, standardised. Additional notes on historical playing techniques, tempos or stylistic features can be integrated to provide musicians with guidance. However, creating a standardised /transcription edition also comes with significant disadvantages. The loss of specific timbres that were characterised by historical instruments is often unavoidable. Certain sound characteristics that came with the original instrumentation cannot be retained when creating a standardised sound concept. Furthermore, through standardised transcription, national, regional or local traditions, which are reflected in the historical instrumentation and sound ideals, are abandoned in favour of universal performances. The standardised transcription edition is therefore caught between practicability and the desire to preserve historical authenticity and tonal diversity. Nevertheless, it is an important way of making these compositions accessible to a broad audience and integrating them into the repertoire.

Examples should be chosen in such a way that a logical approach for future editorial work becomes apparent.

Existing examples can be used as templates.

(1) Florent Schmitt – *Dionysiaques*

From the autograph to the urtext edition to the transcriptions (for example Felix Hauswirth)

(2) Gustav Holst – *First Suite in Eb*

Development from the urtext to present-day editions

(3) Camille Saint-Saëns – *Vers la victoire*, op. 152

March originally composed for piano becomes a wind band/ensemble composition

Possible examples of Luxembourg include:

- Laurent Menager: *Kantate zur Enthüllung des Denkmals I.K.H.*

*der Prinzessin Heinrich der Niederlande*⁴

This composition was written by the Luxembourg composer Laurent Menager (1835–1902) for a four-part male choir and wind band. It is based on a German-language text by the Luxembourg poet Michel Rodange (1827–1876)⁵ and scored for brass instruments only. The instrumentation designated is typical for Luxembourg ensembles of the time and was partly retained until the middle of the 20th century. It consists of an E-flat flugelhorn (Bugle Es),⁶ 1st and 2nd B-flat cornets (Piston I B / Piston II B) notated on two staves, two E-flat horns (Corni Es) notated on one staff, two trombones (Tromboni) also notated on one staff and basses (Bassi), both notated in C.⁷ Menager originally only used brass instruments for this composition because it was intended for an outdoor performance. In 1884, however, woodwind instruments were added by a third party. The question arises as to whether these additions were authorised by Menager himself. A further question arises whether a new edition of this work would actually make sense since it was composed for a specific historical occasion. The close connection to the situation at the time could limit its relevance for contemporary performances, especially since the

⁴ Cantata for the Unveiling of the Monument for Princess Amalia of the Netherlands.

⁵ Damien Sagrillo / Alain Nitschké, *Laurent Menager (1835–1902). Systematisches und kommentiertes Werkverzeichnis*, Weikersheim: Margraf 2011, p. 118. The composition was created on the occasion of the dedication of a statue in Luxembourg in honour of Princess Amalia, the wife of Governor Heinrich, the youngest son of King Willem II of The Netherlands. Four years after her death in 1872, a monument was erected to the princess, who was highly esteemed in Luxembourg. Cf. [n. a.], "Prinz Heinrich der Niederlande. Statthalter des Großherzogtums Luxemburg vom 5. Februar 1850 bis 13. Januar 1879 (Zu seinem 50. Todestage)", in: *L'ILLUSTRÉ LUXEMBOURGEOIS = Luxemburger Illustrierte*, 6, Nr. 1 (10/01/1929), p. 2.

⁶ The names of the instruments in French and their tunings in German can be traced back to the multilingual nature of Luxembourg.

⁷ It can be assumed that the bass part was intended to be played on E-flat and B-flat double bass saxhorns.

likelihood of a new performance seems rather low. There is also the question of whether the composition has a musical or cultural significance beyond its original context that would justify a new publication. Since the composer is a lesser known one, the new edition could indeed find little appeal. Conversely, a historically informed edition utilising original instruments could renew interest in the composition among those engaged with the musical and cultural history of the Grand Duchy.



Figure 1

1st Page of the Score to *Kantate zur Enthüllung des Denkmals I.K.H. der Prinzessin Heinrich der Niederlande*

In the case of a well-known composer such as Bach, Mozart, or Verdi, however, a new edition might be of more interest, as compositions by these composers are still being reinterpreted and performed in different contexts and formats today. A composer's fame and historical significance could therefore provide greater motivation to make a composition accessible to a broader public. In this sense, before making a new

edition, one should consider whether the artistic and historical relevance of the work as well as the potential demand for a performance justify a new adaptation and publication.

(1) Helen Buchholtz – *Bilder aus Wiesbaden*⁸

A new edition of a more extensive composition that could be performed as a concert piece would be more promising. In this context, the composition *Bilder aus Wiesbaden* by Helen Buchholtz (1877–1954) would seem to be more suitable than a "simple" march. This work, described as a waltz suite, consists of three movements – Andantino, Waltz and March. Buchholtz lived in Wiesbaden for seven years between 1914 and 1921. It can therefore be assumed that the composition was written in the 1920s. The instrumentation, listed in French, is surprisingly extensive for the time. This suggests that the composer was already concerned at that time with a certain degree of (international) standardisation, at least according to the French tradition, a fact that would at least not make it difficult to perform the work today.⁹

Final remarks

The planned collaborative project between WASBE and IGEB aims to identify, digitise and republish older, less accessible wind band and ensemble compositions. The next important steps for the realisation of this idea include contacting colleagues of several wind music traditions, a call possible for submissions, archive searches and debates on publication formats, edition types and copyright. A panel of experts will convene to jointly develop solutions on the complexities of editing historical wind music, the importance of Critical Commentaries and offer examples of

⁸ Pictures from Wiesbaden

⁹ Damien Sagrillo / Alain Nitschké, "Von der 'luxemburgischen' zur globalen Besetzung des Blasorchesters in Luxemburg. Die Blasmusikwerke von Helen Buchholtz, Lou Koster und Fernand Mertens", in: *Kongressbericht Echternach, Luxembourg 2008*, ed. by Bernhard Habla / Damien Sagrillo (= Alta Musica, volume 28), Tutzing: Hans Schneider, pp. 359–392, here: pp. 370–881.

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potential works for the project, highlighting challenges in balancing historical accuracy with modern performance needs.