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"Music and Interculturality"

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Of Concepts and the Everyday: Multiculturality in Music Education in Germany

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Abstract

Multiculturality is equally an everyday phenomenon in most countries of the world and a theoretical construct that is relevant in many academic disciplines like sociology, cultural studies or pedagogy. In compulsory schools music seems to be a favored subject to learn about other musical cultures, to acquire appropriate attitudes about these cultures and to develop a deep understanding of the relationship between various cultures. However, neither concepts nor their practical implications can be separated from the history of immigration and specific theoretical traditions. Thus, it is useful to take on a specific perspective, in this case a German (or Western European) one. Hence, this paper tries to relate theoretical concepts that have been developed in Germany in the past to the specific phases of migration during the last 75 years. It is argued that therein multiculturalism is not the set relation between cultures that can be discerned from the outside but a process of people defining and redefining their culturality and cultural identity.

Keywords: Multiculturality, immigration, culture, music education

Sobre los conceptos y la vida cotidiana: la multiculturalidad en la educación musical de Alemania

Resumen

La multiculturalidad es tanto un fenómeno cotidiano en la mayoría de los países del mundo como constructo teórico relevante en muchas disciplinas académicas como la sociología, los estudios culturales o la pedagogía. En las escuelas obligatorias, la música parece ser un tema privilegiado para aprender sobre otras culturas musicales, adquirir actitudes apropiadas acerca de



estas culturas y desarrollar una comprensión profunda de la relación entre varias culturas. Sin embargo, ni los conceptos ni sus implicaciones prácticas pueden separarse de la historia de la inmigración y las tradiciones teóricas específicas. Por lo tanto, es útil adoptar una perspectiva específica, en este caso una alemana (o de Europa occidental). De este modo, este artículo trata de relacionar los conceptos teóricos que se han desarrollado en Alemania en el pasado con los movimientos específicos de migración ocurridos durante los últimos 75 años. Se argumenta, en vista de eso, que la multiculturalidad no es la relación establecida entre culturas que se puede discernir desde el exterior, sino un proceso de personas que definen y redefinen su culturalidad y su identidad cultural.

Palabras clave: multiculturalidad, inmigración, cultura, educación musical

De conceitos e do cotidiano: multiculturalidade na educação musical na Alemanha

Resumo

A multiculturalidade é, igualmente, um fenômeno cotidiano na maioria dos países do mundo e um construto teórico relevante em muitas disciplinas acadêmicas, como sociologia, estudos culturais ou pedagogia. Nas escolas obrigatórias, a música parece ser um assunto privilegiado para aprender sobre outras culturas musicais, para adquirir atitudes apropriadas sobre essas culturas e para desenvolver uma compreensão profunda da relação entre várias culturas. No entanto, nem conceitos nem suas implicações práticas podem ser separados da história da imigração e de tradições teóricas específicas. Assim, é útil ter uma perspectiva específica, neste caso a alemã (ou europeia ocidental). Desse modo, este artigo tenta relacionar conceitos teóricos que foram desenvolvidos na Alemanha no passado com os movimentos específicos de migração durante os últimos 75 anos. Argumenta-se que a multiculturalidade não é a relação estabelecida entre culturas que podem ser discernidas a partir de fora, mas um processo de definição e redefinição de sua culturalidade e identidade cultural.

Palavras-chave: multiculturalidade, imigração, cultura, educação musical

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Introduction

To dedicate an issue to multiculturalism in international perspective calls for careful consideration of what it means specifically. What are we referring to when we, as researchers (or as teachers), look at multiculturalism?

This paper takes on a decidedly European perspective. Germany shares communalities with other Western European countries, like Sweden or the Netherlands, in the socio-economic development aspects, but also in the way pedagogy and music education look at culture(s). In this, they are distinct from say Eastern European or African or South East Asian countries. Thus, this paper does not claim to speak in more general terms. Rather, it is assumed that any writing on multiculturalism cannot be “culturally fair” but that all constructs need to take into consideration the specificity of societal phenomena and particularity of regional traditions of thinking and writing. I will start with what seems to be the favorite way to start for German speaking authors, which is to clarify terms and theories. Then I will briefly discuss history of cultures and migration in Germany. Finally, I will turn to music education in schools and to what I consider as necessary next steps.

Multiculturalism can be regarded as a trait of the present day world. But the contact between cultures of various origins has a very long history, possibly from the beginning of mankind. It is only the tempo that has increased dramatically ever since the medieval era. Artistic expressions have highlighted this if one considers the operas *Montezuma* by Antonio Vivaldi (1733) or Carl Heinrich Graun (1752) or Debussy’s *Pagode* (1903). During the last 40 years, digital media have played an important and increasing role in this phenomenon. The mere possibility of listening to radio programs from around the world (<http://radio.garden/>) proves the virtual presence of a multitude of cultures. In other words: Multiculturalism is not restricted to the manifested coexistence in the obvious hotspots of cultural encounters.

The latter form in a more restricted sense of the term –the direct encounter of a number of “cultures of immigrants”– seems to be a contemporary phenomenon. An estimated 7.7 million refugees are counted worldwide (UNHCR 2017: 4). And while the photographs of Syrian families fleeing the bloody civil war to Europe or the fate of the Rohingya in Bangladesh attract special attention, it must not be forgotten that countries like Jordan or Lebanon are hosting millions of families from Syria and Palestine. Of the 10 top countries in the world hosting refugees, only one is a major industrialized country (UNHCR 2017: 4). Countless people fleeing from unemployment or mere hunger, people seeking asylum or simply a better life than in their home country have added to the picture. Besides migration as an output of crises, migrating labor movements (oftentimes in favor of the economic power of the hosting countries) lead to the encounter of cultures: Romanian workers in Western European construction sites or Mexican farm hands in the US, Pakistani workers in Middle East road building projects or Indian software engineers. Factors relating to an oftentimes colonial history increase the encounter of people from different countries. Population from the West Indies or India in the London area demonstrates the need to reflect upon the common life of different cultures that mark today’s

society such as the oftentimes colorful presence of different languages, musical practices, religious beliefs and habits, cuisines and values. However, it must not be forgotten that multiculturalism has a longer history: One might think of the large movements from Europe to the US during the 19th and first half of the 20th century and again during fascism that led to creation of areas of non-English speaking people not only in New York City but also elsewhere; workers from Eastern Europe came to the newly industrialized regions in Germany at the end of the 19th century (Crew 1980) with little knowledge of the language (Polish), with a different faith (almost exclusively catholic in a predominantly protestant region), with lower educational background and different cultural practices (there were Polish-only soccer teams). In other words, multiculturalism due to migration (as a phenomenon or a social challenge or theoretical issue) is not really new.

Culture or cultures?

Although the term has Roman roots, its rise in popularity in the German speaking countries began only in the late 18th century. “Culture” was considered as the opposite of “nature”. In Latin the latter referred to something in its original state while the former involved some kind of activity by men (or rarely: women) to convert it to something higher. That activity could consist of mental actions like new concepts or works of art, but it could also imply physical energy like what farmers or settlers would do. The German verb *kultivieren* still means changing wild country into agriculturally (!) useful land.

The German philosopher Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803) was among the first to formulate a philosophical concept of culture that remained influential well into the 20th century. Herder considered cultures as floating balls that were defined by habits, artifacts and, prominently by language (Herder 1891). For those inside the “balls”, culture was the set frame of reference, only inside of them could communication and understanding work well¹. Meeting members of other cultures is possible but they are seen only through the lens of the own “ball”. The reflection on the question of what constitutes “culture” did not come by chance. Rather, various phenomena occurred at the same time. At the end of the 18th century out of a large number of dialects something like a homogenous German language arose; and while Germany as a political entity did not exist until 1871, scholars in philosophy and what today could be called cultural studies reflected on what might be the core of German culture. Challenged by early linguistic studies of Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767-1835) and papers arising from the travels of Alexander von Humboldt (1769-1859), these reflections also covered the questions of what the relations between cultures should be like. In the reverberations of enlightenment, the underlying notion was one of mutual understanding and a spirit of humanity (Bollenbeck 2007). Herder for instance, acknowledges the plurality of people and their special way to live (Fuchs 2012). In a nutshell, two conflicting lines can be discerned: One is a normative understanding of culture as something desirable to be acquired through education in a long process of “Bildung”; in this

¹ There is a reminiscence of Huntington’s “clash of civilizations” (1996) that is conceivable only under the assumption of centers that function like Herder’s cultural spheres. This understanding of Herder has been challenged though as being a misconception (Cvetko 2014).

“culture” is associated with positive values and goals. The other one is a descriptive one that looks at “culture” from a more distanced perspective as it is most clearly documented in ethnography. This very brief and superficial account indicates two problems that accompanied debates for the next 200 years.

First, Herder and his contemporaries understood culture as something homogenous, identified by material goods and also by non-material elements like language or ideas. Although scholars varied in their understanding of the relationship between these features and the members of a culture, these were seen as existing independently of the individual. Over the times, there were narrow definitions referring primarily to (high) arts or very broad ones. As late as in the 21st century in Germany, an influential commission of the Federal Parliament issued a report on culture in Germany that defined culture as the opposite of nature and is “the totality of human productions and articulations i.e. mankind’s historical, individual and collective, practical, esthetic and theoretical as well as mythological and religious articulations” (Enquete 2007: 472)². Such broad definitions are theoretically sound and open to subsequent considerations of multiculturalism³. They are thus resistant to hegemonic discourses between cultures but they, too, are mainly neglecting the social aspects of culture that is the fact that culture is always unfolding in social practices (and in the communication about these practices as we will see later on).

Second as many discourses on culture deal with questions regarding the “self” and the “other”, that is also about the relations between cultures, the doors are wide open for claims of superiority and power. As mentioned earlier by Herder and many of his contemporaries, the discourse on culture was seen on the backdrop of humanity and understanding. However, very soon in the 19th century in German speaking states, this discourse turned into a nationalistic if not chauvinistic one. “Culture” as an expression of religion, art or philosophy was seen to be superior to “civilization” in the Western European countries. With reference to Bollenbeck (1994) Fuchs states: “Here the fateful development of the 19th century is gaining momentum when the (seemingly superficial) Western civilization is opposed to the German culture (with deep roots)” (Fuchs 2013). In this, the aggressive side of talking about culture comes to light and led to three bloody wars between Germany and France between 1870 and 1945 and that serves as another example that “doing culture” always has to be seen within hegemonic structures⁴.

While culture so far has been discussed in general terms on the backdrop of humanities, the next section will relate the discourse on culture within cultural studies and educational sciences to the more recent history of migration in Germany.

Migration and culture

After World War II, there was a huge need for labor in Germany. About 12 million

² Quotations taken from German publications are translated by the author if not indicated differently.

³ It should be noted though that the broad definitions have their flaws in the context of ongoing discussions about social justice in cultural participation. On their basis, it is not possible not to participate in culture. Cultural deprivations and mechanisms of exploitation cannot be adequately described on their basis.

⁴ The example of 19th century German-French relationship may serve to document that these discourses and structures are rarely unidimensional. The perspective of allegedly superior German culture was contrasting the inferior position of Germany in the imperialistic struggles.

German refugees from territories that are now known as Poland and Russia came to East and West Germany after 1945 (making up between 16% in what came to be West Germany and 25% in later East Germany). Although there are references to cultural differences, for instance in literature (Hansen 2015) that mirror the absence of a common and homogenous culture, there was a rather rapid process of integration as documented by the *Konuptialindex*, i.e. the rate of marriages between refugees and home population (Beer 2016). These refugees within Germany could not supply the work force needed. Therefore, the German government in 1955 signed a treaty with Italy to attract (male) workers to work mainly in the large factories in unskilled jobs. Similar treaties were signed until 1967 with almost all Mediterranean countries. Those who came were termed *Gastarbeiter* (guest worker), as it was understood that they would not stay permanently. Accordingly, they oftentimes lived in barracks and always without their families. This explains why politics (and social sciences including pedagogy) ignored the situation and the tasks related to it. During this phase that lasted until 1973, there were hardly any children in schools with migration background, no higher language proficiency was asked for; very few situations of multicultural encounter occurred: “they” were guests and about to leave sooner or later. It is telling that until today Germany does not have an immigration law that would regulate numbers, premises, and necessary qualifications to bring along or to acquire after arrival. There was no understanding of Germany as a country of immigration. Although phases of economic crisis or expansion changed factual administrative mechanisms moderated by humanitarian actions in favor of for instance family unification, the ideology of a non-immigrant country did not.

This changed from the late 1980’s onwards when large numbers of German speaking Russians came to Germany. The Civil War in Yugoslavia caused many to flee, the situation for Kurds in Turkey grew more difficult, but more importantly family members were now allowed to follow under certain circumstances; close to 1 million arrived between 1991 and 2004 and every year hence on. With women and children, the composition in migrant population changed notably: Now, it was obvious that migration as a phenomenon and people of all ages with a migration background were not temporary events but a multi-faceted fact in political and private life.

Pedagogy and multiculturalism

With non-German children arriving in schools, the question arose of whether new aims for schooling and education needed to be formulated –or whether simply hurdles for the “foreigners” needed to be attacked. Knigge argues that to a large degree, the former built the basis for all theoretical and practical approaches as the aim was “integration of foreign children and youths into the existing German school system, minimization of conflicts between Germans and foreigners and strengthening cultural identities of individual foreign pupils” (Knigge 2012: 28). It is noteworthy that this is primarily a conservative approach as it lays the burden of integration almost entirely on the newly arrived persons. Also, it raises the question about how one can keep a “cultural identity” and at the same time “integrate”. There were classes in schools in native languages –but it was never quite clear whether they would really keep the connection to the

roots and their families' home cultural background open or simply serve the purpose of keeping the option of returning open.

Music as a school subject seemed back then especially suitable for any action to foster understanding. A number of arguments have been exchanged: Language barriers seemed less important along with the assumption of music being a universal language (Kopiez 2004), measurable achievement would not be a key as in the core subjects. While curricula were left almost untouched, some teachers tried to explore the possibilities of an "intercultural music education". Indeed, older concepts concentrated on alleged deficits of the children with migration background; in the early 1980's new concepts arose. "Orientation regarding deficits is followed by an orientation about cultural background differences [of the children with migration biographies] as no longer faulty but rather as just 'different' (and maybe enriching)" (Knigge 2012: 29). No longer was the objective to merely introduce all children to Western music but rather, to get mutually and musically acquainted. Irmgart Merkt, who very early saw the flaws of the schools, criticized schools and academia: "Cultural resources [of foreign children] lie idle. Also the ability of German children to get acquainted with something new in a neighborly manner is not developed. Chances of integration in the sense of mutual fostering and enrichment are left unused" (Merkt 1993: 4).

A text book published in the late 1980's documented a changed attitude: *Rüzgargülu – Windrose* (Adamek 1989) is a German-Turkish song book for use in school that consequently displays songs and games from both countries alike and bilingually. It offers a broad spectrum of insights, musical material and possible actions for students. It is a step forward. However, two points of critique need to be voiced. First, the book assumed only two distinct cultures in the classroom to learn from each other. But there was no distinct "Turkish" culture: Kurds who were not allowed to have schools in their language in South East Turkey might not have appreciated Turkish songs as an opportunity but rather as a symbol of a hegemonic culture in civil war with the fighters for the independence of the PKK; children that may have grown up in European oriented and industrialized Istanbul would not identify with central Anatolian peasant music. Let alone pupils from Italy or Greece or Croatia in the classroom who could not identify with any Turkish music. Hence, they would show little interest in learning about "Turkish" music although they were actors in a space of multiculturalism as well. Second, the very term "intercultural music education" showed that Herder's idea of cultures as floating balls was still alive and well. Any culture in this concept is seen as something clearly distinct from others. Culture then is an "ethnic-holistic term" (Barth 2000, 2008). It only appears in a limited number of forms and as an object, to some degree, independent from the actors in the field. In the example of the German-Turkish songbook, children who came from one county only defined by geography but from two cultures defined by language, history, and identity were regarded as one group. Here, the historically developed interplay of ethnography and cultural studies becomes visible. This understanding of culture still has its roots in the idealistic philosophy of the 19th century and is untouched by more recent findings in social sciences. I will return to this later.

Aside from the more scholarly discourse on cultures that defended recent positions in social studies and sociology, it turned out that the pedagogical approach failed. Schools were not

able to open equal opportunities: PISA, the most prominent large scale assessment with a big impact on German political debates, had shown that at no time until today all students had equal access to (higher or better qualified) education (OECD 2018). Though the reasons for this are complex such as effects of social surrounding, milieu, language and education mix, it became clear that school itself should change and work on different premises.

In consequence, various scholars inside and outside of education developed further the philosophical and sociological foundations of (music) education in an era of migration. A radical change took place in the understanding of culture. Relying on approaches especially from structuralism, sociology of subgroups in society and linguistics, culture was no longer understood as an object, but rather as a symbolic order (Reckwitz 2000). Questions about how this order is enacted replaced the ones about their logic or the quality or their material structure (Barth 2008: 147). This opened eyes to the diverse and manifold forms of culture in present day society: youth cultures resp. subcultures (Baacke 1987, Ferchhoff 2005, Zentrum für Kulturforschung 2006), various milieus within the section of population with migration background (Barz et al. 2015), but also the various expressions of culture related to class for which Bourdieu (1987, 1994, and 1996) is still the lighthouse for direction, especially with regard to music (Burnard, Hofvander Trulsson & Söderman 2015). However, this brought along an enormous complexity as no longer one category (like ethnicity, gender, class or age) defines cultures but an interplay of factors⁵. Most clearly, this is documented in a representation of various milieus among people with migration background that have become well known among German social scientists as the “potato chart” (figure 1). It shows that there are discernable groups that vary in their religious orientation, in their relation to tradition, to consumer behavior and other values but that can also be positioned socially.

⁵ It is more than a footnote of irony that at the same time when this complexity came into the focus of a larger share of people, a debate started about “Leitkultur” (i. e. a “leading culture”) that normatively should be shared by all people living in Germany. Though it is useful to discuss values and right as documented in the Constitution (“Grundgesetz”) of Germany, fuzzy ideas about this culture gave rise to populist parties and positions. The latter ones found their expression on the hanging of crucifix’ in public buildings in June 2018 or a debate on whether or not Islam is “part of Germany” – a strange debate regarding the fact that about 10% of all newborns in Germany have a Muslim mother.

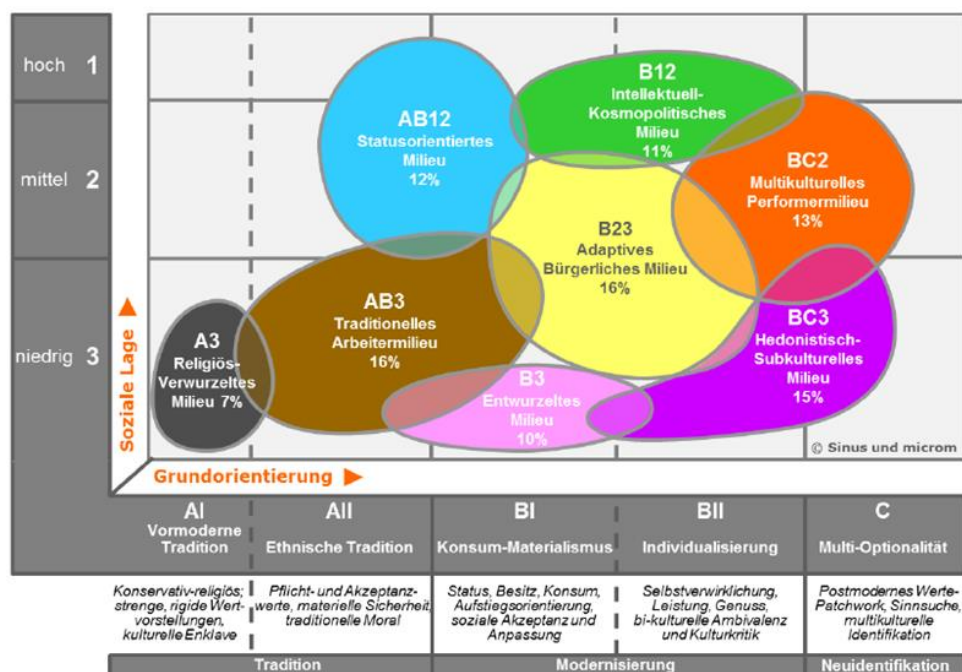


Figure 1. Milieus of people with migration background in Germany with respect to basic cultural orientations and social position (1=high, 2=middle, 3=low). Though the terms of the basic orientations (*Grundorientierung* on the x-axis) are not translated basic dimensions and distributions are obvious (© Sinus Sociovision).

Though the SINUS study avoided correlations between milieus and specific ethnic groups that would not mirror the author's methodic approach, evaluations of large scale assessments like PISA have shown that like in other countries, there are differences between ethnic groups (Ramirez-Rodriguez & Dohmen 2010; Beck, Jäpel & Becker 2010; Kemper 2015). A brief look at the countries of origin of foreigners in Germany shows that the state of development of the countries, their regional representation and all related factors relevant for cultural orientation vary considerably (table 1).

Country of origin	Number in 2016	Number in 2017
Turkey	1.492.580	1.483.515
Poland	782.085	866.855
Syria	637.845	698.950
Italy	611.450	643.065
Rumania	533.660	622.780
Croatia	332.605	367.900
Greece	348.475	362.245
Bulgaria	263.320	310.415
Afghanistan	253.485	251.640

Table 1. Non-German citizens living in Germany in 2016/17. Figures include only those persons without German citizenship; they do not reflect second- or third-generation immigrants; note the heterogeneity of countries and the reasons for migration to be assumed. Source: Statistisches Bundesamt.

In Germany therefore, multiculturalism cannot be perceived as aligned along one dimension but as a multifaceted phenomenon. This is intensified by a lack of timely continuity in cultural identity. As people enact the symbolic order of cultures, they also develop cultural identities, which include ethnicity (Werbner & Tariq 2000). Who I am and how I define myself culturally may change depending on who I am with, where I am; it may situationally change over a life span (Foroutan 2010). What is coined as hybrid cultural identity may be a painful quest for where I belong (Badawia 2002). It is telling that so far, there are no studies that have systematically explored the musical aspects of these cultural conflicts. Although there is for instance, a host of studies on musical preferences (Busch & Lehmann-Wermser 2017) and although Barth pointed to the link between preferences and cultural practices as establishing meaning (Barth 2008: 182f.), we know practically nothing about how youths with or without migration background position themselves via musical practices and preferences. Besides the missing evidence, it is probably necessary to develop a new, more specific framework.

In any case, the discourse (and the empirical findings that might fire the discourse) will differ from the ones found in other countries that are marked by dichotomies. “Black studies”, “critical whiteness studies” (Applebaum 2016), post-colonial discourses (Castro Varela & Dhawan 2005) usually take their starting point using an opposition. To transpose these positions into the field of music education (Bradley 2016) has given valuable insights and has helped to uncover racism in attitudes and actions –may they be intentional or not. Multiculturalism then appears to be a complex mixture of attitudes and actions, of perceptions and beliefs that call for more complex models that structures of dichotomy. Under the specific conditions in present day Germany, any model has to be more complex taken into consideration the higher complexity of a multicultural society and the differing role of actors within these structures. Barth (2016) has given examples of working with refugee children and the role that (changing) dichotomies play in this work.

Teaching music multiculturally?

The important transition from looking at cultures in a multicultural society as an object of study or to convey to students in favor of understanding the order of cultures and the role of every individual within it found its way into music education. Wolfgang Martin Stroh (1996, 2000) developed a unique didactical approach that respected an individual’s contribution to culture in “doing culture”. He combined his aims in multiculturalism with his experience with what he calls “scenic interpretation” where intentions and expressions were analyzed by playing music in a collaborative and very much diversified way. “Methods of ‘scenic interpretation’ make the link between experience and understanding in a holistic game. They guarantee that music making is not an aim in itself. They put music in its cultural context and organize the learning of music as it is done in real life” (Stroh 2005: 191). Stroh proposes a 6-step-model that starts with an analysis of musical material and goes on with musical exercises and interpretations that lead to a multicultural experience. In being exposed to new music and finding unusual expressions of interpretation (a freeze image, a role model, a transposition of first or deeply founded impressions into other media) Stroh also provokes an examination of personal musical

dispositions, prejudices, stereotypes and so on. Knigge comments on the role of active music making: “It is less about ‘the music’ but much more about people being musically active, it is about the context of music” (Knigge 2012: 37f.). By concentrating on that context and on culturally specific forms, pupils can develop an understanding of their own and “the other’s” musical culture and thereby develop a positive attitude towards multiculturalism as key feature of contemporary societies. Other German scholars have elaborated on this (Ott 2012, Clausen 2009), but it is questionable whether music teachers have really changed content and attitudes, as Schütz (1996) already supposed 20 years ago.

By now, music from other cultures is unquestioned content in school books and in the curricula. Teacher training offers courses in African drumming, Latin American popular songs or Gamelan. It seems that teachers are willing to engage in non-Western music (Schütz 1996). But exploratory field of studies in Hannover have shown that music teachers remain within the older “ethnic-holistic” understanding of foreign cultures while oftentimes falling short of teaching multiculturalism in the more advanced way sketched above. If the rise of right wing populist parties and growing phenomena of multiculturalism are linked, teaching music multiculturalism becomes more important. A much deeper understanding of multiculturalism and the nature of culture has to be developed if school in general and music classes especially can contribute to the high goals.

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Biography / Biografía / Biografia

Andreas Lehmann-Wermser received a teaching certificate in music in the early 1980's. After working as secondary school teacher for 20 years he returned to University and earned his PhD at the Hannover University of Music Drama and Media in 2002. In 2004 he was appointed associate professor at Bremen University where he built up a research group in empirical music education conducting several large third party funded studies. In 2015 he returned to Hannover as Director of the Institute for Music Education Research. He is also chair of the ISME SIG on Assessment Measurement and Evaluation.

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