

## **QuerKlang goes Europe**

A project for five European schools, contemporary music and border-crossing experience

*I became aware that all sounds can make meaningful language. (Karlheinz Stockhausen)*

Europe is a serious Babel. The English language connects those who speak this language most people agreed on as the commoning one. A universal dialogue seems impossible – really? QuerKlang proves the contrary. It enables pupils to compose Contemporary Music – with everything they have and are. A new, individual expression is found that can be (universally) understood apart from language.

Let's talk music!

### **QuerKlang is ...**

QuerKlang is cultural education and education through culture. It proves successful for the last 10 years now being integrated in numerous schools in Berlin, and recently also crossing German borders. Being part of the school's everyday, it teaches pupils unconventionally to compose their own, experimental music. *Experimental* here referring to both the aim and the process. For six months a teacher, a composer and two students (music and education studies) accompany a class, who substantially influence the process. Culminating into a public performance within MaerzMusik – festival for contemporary music berlin, the pupils act as interpreters and creators of their opus at the same time.

### **QuerKlang seeks ...**

QuerKlang is like polyphonic music. It needs all voices to realise the composition. It seeks to give pupils an understanding of contemporary music, being mostly neglected in traditional music lessons. It seeks to enhance music and education studies through its scientific, continuously extending fundamentals. Through the impact of the applied methods it seeks to offer new stimulus for the entire school everyday.

Above all QuerKlang seeks to offer self-consciousness for everyone's own creativity and to improve all kinds of social skills through improvisation and experimental composition: concentration, responsibility, self-control, equality, poise, power of judgement and analysis, being part of a team and listening to each other. Experimental music is new to all participants, regardless cultural background or musical skills. No advantage, nor disadvantage - every one begins on the same page.

### **QuerKlang in Europe**

In celebration of the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of QuerKlang's pilot-project in 2003/2004 it now expands into the world.

Sufficiently approved, well trained and founded it is eager to share wisdom and experiences, not interested to monopolise its knowledge in the future. It is the first time to transfer the Berlin-based project parallel to four other European cities to embrace a common, European space for culture / cultural sphere. Having established a tight and strong network in the course of the (last) years, and having gained experiences that continuously developed its bases, theories and practices further, QuerKlang takes the challenge.

Continuity does not equal stagnation but approved development, thus not contradicting the experiment, which unites the new, unknown, risk. The experiment always means adventure – within QuerKlang it is accompanied by experts, catalysed into innovative knowledge.

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### **QuerKlang for Europe**

Europe's countenance has a distinctive profile: It is shaped by diverse cultural spheres, traditions and people on most confined space. These unique features are the principle and method within QuerKlang and they shall be strengthened through early education. As a space for education outside the established cultural spaces, QuerKlang installs musical and cultural education within the school's everyday, motivating pupils from all social backgrounds for cultural engagement in the future. Encouraging children to get involved in the arts increases the chance to being involved culturally in the future – as audience or as actors. QuerKlang creates early understanding and acceptance for international, transcultural cooperation and defines curiosity, will and ability for transnational mobility and cooperation in the future.

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### **QuerKlang in Europe - goals for the European amplification**

*I am for the birds, not the cages.* (John Cage)

Europe is meant to grow together: the Schengen Convention, the common currency, the „common“ studying system. Children are born into a European self-understanding that grown-ups do not share automatically. But there are children who do not feel "European“ except for the common currency – which at the moment struggles to unite as well. A natural Europeanism and mobility, as its source, are not naturally granted.

Exchange and mobility, open-mindedness and curiosity for the neighbours and "fellow citizens", the differences and new visions born out of disparate experiences are fundamental for a common European cultural sphere. The freedom hereof is given to pupils in Berlin (Germany), Linz (Austria), Leuven (Belgium), Italy and Paarno (Estonia) by QuerKlang.

#### **Mobility**

Let's take Cage's quote and refer it to the birds' movement, elegance, mobility, dynamics and music. The cage's associations – narrowness, closeness, unidimension – block creativity, discoveries and innovation – all being central to Experimental music and QuerKlang. Thus we create space for movement and meeting. Encounters between pupils and teams at the mid-way reflexions, pre and final concerts and the process-accompanying dialogue on the compositions' creations (online forum, visits, virtual meetings etc.) unite all participants, revealing a sense for a united European cultural sphere and its rudiment.

#### **A universal language**

Although science hasn't accepted music as a language yet, as not being translatable in the linguistics sense, it is the audible facial expression. Music can display emotional and social processes that can be understood cross culture, comparable to universally coherent facial expressions such as happiness, grief or anger. Although music doesn't necessarily follow communicative patterns, it still can enable and push an own art of dialogue further.

While most children and young adults across Europe do not share the same language sufficiently to communicate stress-free, through playing music and composing together they can express and debate emotions without reservation or language barrier. As effort and process are similar in all classes taking part in QuerKlang, pupils have direct access and comparison to their own work and those of the others, often being surprised on how different the outcome can be in a similar process, whose outcome is unforeseen. This is how QuerKlang issues the dialogue on the language of Experimental music and orchestrates the disparate approaches together with all participants to one, to their common "European" language.

With the skills of experimental composing pupils learn comprehensive methods of mediation and negotiation that acknowledge differences and search for innovative, common paths. These are the fundamentals of living together peacefully, across cultures and nations.

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### **From Audience Development to Actors Development**

While every second theatre has its own visitor survey, cultural agencies have their own use- and interest-studies and the management sector makes a lot of money through Audience-Development-recommendation, QuerKlang decides to go beyond. Through leading the children up to Contemporary Music and forms of innovative cultural production and including it to their everyday, QuerKlang creates awareness and reception of this multi-functional cultural form called experimental music. Here the fundament for an open-minded, thoughtful audience is set. But the future of a creative Europe does not limit to an engaged audience. Therefore QuerKlang's hands-on part, the collective composition, defines active and creative cultural actors and early sensitised cultural producer. Together with an engaged audience they will build a sustainable, prosperous creative Europe.

### **Cultural education outside the cultural temples**

Art and culture are exceptionally hard to convey. Depending on social background, cultural origin and personal interest children have very diverse access to aesthetical and cultural experiences. Still they all share a basic open-mindedness for playful and innovative "worlds" or "spheres". It is therefore that QuerKlang is installed within the school everyday to ensure all children are able to enter and explore those new worlds of art and creativity.

### **At the edge/ conflict of didactics and pedagogics: to understand QuerKlang as a means for self-development in schools**

Pupils spend more than 20.000 hours at school. Still school as a system faces the same conflicts everyday: to support the individual inside the collective. Financial scarcity, overloaded classrooms and outdated methods cumber individual support. Positive self-development inside schools needs more than this.

QuerKlang stimulates the personal and social resources. Its collective structure and highly participatory and involving approach create a positive atmosphere – the foundation for an inspiring learning environment.

### **Developing future**

QuerKlang advances future developments on three levels. Independent from school system or cultural sphere it defines several tendencies that should be in focus across Europe.

QuerKlang conceives school as a social learning space. It provides children and young adults through the understanding and work on and with Experimental music next to theoretical knowledge with social skills and agency. Through the independent work pupils learn to take responsibility for themselves and for others, gaining a key competence for their future life. They are the upcoming audience: Access and reflexion are approached through the own artistic production immediately and practically.

With QuerKlang not only the children are learners. It is the teachers and professors, determining and designing education and its systems everyday, who are asked and invited to learn as well.

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Working together with composers who are used to very different forms of teamwork and work in process, the teachers have to explore and adapt new approaches to music, its creation and mediation. Creative design, democratic development of contents, process- versus goal-oriented working are core issues for a collective composition that differ heavily from curriculum guidelines, hierarchies and structures in schools. Those differences can open up new synergies though, establishing sustainable approaches to help pupils develop their personality, social skills, aesthetic understanding and knowledge.

The students of today becoming teachers in the future will significantly shape the schools of tomorrow. QuerKlang offers them innovative teaching methods and the ability to step up to a serious lectureship and to create a fair and profound school everyday.

The composers' work is comparable to consulting and coaching artistically. Through the cooperation the teachers learn to perceive composing contemporary music as a practical working field, the dialogue opens up new awareness and understanding for the possibilities of New Music. The practical-artistical influences of the composers and the educational-mediative influences of the teachers thus fuse to paramount art education. The composers not only use but learn to communicate their expertise and competence to a young, curious audience.

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### A European Network for QuerKlang

Although the actors from the five participating countries will meet in person at the very beginning of the project, the network – as an online platform – will invite them to a deeper virtual get-together right from the beginning onwards. Throughout the installation process of the first year and the evaluation and remixing process of the second and third year it will remain the crucial tie between the participants, their ideas, problems, critique and progress. It means have to grow beyond Facebook and Google docs and provide a project-related, source-oriented multi-user platform.

functions

- professional, personal and content-drawn exchange
- internal and external (for audience and parents?)
- information
- interdisciplinary
- it pictures the ideas, interdependences, co-operations, relations and connections between all actors of QuerKlang – even the former ones

participants/ users

- experts and mediators
- current participants and former participants
- (European) multipliers
- recommenders, advisers

goals

- feedback, support, exchange (experiences/ ideas), help
- implementing and widening competences
- gathering new knowledge and solutions through experiencing different approaches because of the cultural diversity within QuerKlang

### Adding value to Europe

Europe is facing a turning point. A change goes through its countries, its cities, in fact the whole world.

A tipping point where everything could turn right or left. A moment to re-evaluate resources and use them differently.

Culture as a resource has long been discovered, acknowledged and applied. In Tourism, in Politics, in Economics. In education, our basis for a prosperous future, cultural practice and artistic learning is hardly applied, respectively too little integrated. Here artistic learning goes way beyond musical education but refers to all kinds of artistic and cultural forms from fine arts to dance, literature and performing arts.

Although Italy has a rich cultural heritage, music and fine arts are only taught in primary school. Sometimes chosen Secondary schools offer a wider choice of cultural/ artistic courses, too. In Flemish Belgium Music is compulsory only up to grade 8 without a fixed amount of lessons. They can differ immensely from schools to cities and communities.

Many projects and studies prove how learning and experiences from cultural practice prepare us for our complex private and professional everyday. In 2009 the European Union pointed out and underlined the gainful effect of cultural education and life.

Although 2009 has been the European year of Creativity and the European Parliament appealed to grow together in musical education, very little interdisciplinary, border-crossing projects have

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been realised. The EURYDICE survey (2009) illustrates that music and fine arts are primarily taught in Primary, partially in Secondary school and that professional artist and experts are scarcely integrated in the lessons.

It is time to overcome these differences and to work on a merging Europe through QuerKlang, with one project, in different countries, at the same time. To enable exchange of expertise and experiences transcultural.

### **Equality of opportunities through equal education**

Today and in the future professional life will leave behind all borders of countries and language. Mobility, multilingualism, adaptability are essential in most disciplines and professions. If we educate our children differently good, balanced, open minded, sophisticated, we are weakening their equality of opportunities on the labour market. Thus combining Good Practice Models and matching approaches to education throughout Europe should be the focus of culture and education in all Europe.

### **Overcoming integration fatigue**

The current economic situation in Europe and in the member states of the European Union unsettles many Europeans. Solemn inflection and a certain integration fatigue benumb the exchange and cooperation in economics. In the cultural and education sectors however the nations are growing together more and more. Here interdisciplinary and intercultural cooperation are widely appreciated as the driving force and sustainer. It is not competition but lop-sidedness they fear. A coalescent Europe starts through exchange. Social cohesion, shared knowledge, joint innovation derive from cultural practice. They are to be taught early and to be installed on an on going basis within education co-operations.

### **Living the European dimension**

We are living in a Union that non of us can hardly know entirely. A highly complex system of nations, cities, streets, coasts, beaches, legislations, languages and cultures. Do German pupils know that in Estonia dance and singing is integrated in all education from kindergarten onwards? Do Italian students think it strange that in Germany Performing Arts can be a common course just like mathematics or physics?

Children – and adults – deal with foreign culture, languages, customs everyday through media but it cannot replace at all the personal contact or exchange with the unknown, foreign. New aromas, foreign food, unknown landscapes, different bodylanguage have to be lived to see, to accept and to reflect. To be at home in Europe we have to travel. Thus mobility is the highest priority in QuerKlang Europe. Visiting the participating countries, travelling together to the concerts, living in the families of the involved pupils enable deep insights in the school's and private everyday in foreign countries.

If we in Europe want to grow together, we have to conceive each other. Without knowing each other, approaching each other culturally, stopping to compete through education and training, it will be a long and winding road.

### **Benefits for Europe**

Europe does not need another project that can be everywhere but is only home at one spot, the place where it was born. QuerKlang is attracted to five cities – for the start – where it wants to be and will be at home, too. It is a project that seems to be similar everywhere but is always localized.

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Priorities can change, approaches can turn up side down, details are remixed. The framework, polished in Germany, is extended by culture-specific approaches and traditions. The newly gained Italian, Austrian, Belgium and Estonian insights will be collected, presented, evaluated and remixed into an extended, European QuerKlang framework that can be realised in any other European country in the future, developing its structure and learning furthermore.

The local organizations and actors conceive the broader European context they are cultural actors of together enhancing and shaping the future of the children, their and our future all the same. Their capacity to work internationally and in a broader context is encouraged at the same time.

- transferability can be focused, reflected, enriched
- developing commons over differences

## **Challenges**

- Different schooling systems in all countries
- differing esteem of musical education in all countries
- multilingualism – common language English?
- local or regional innovations – be flexible about them and find the right way to include them
- the added value must be adjusted to the processes and developments at all time (if the project is running for several years)
- further development of the framework in a European (transferable) concept



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### NOTIZEN

incorporates unorthodox, new, distinctly unique ingredients

"an experimental action is one the outcome of which is not foreseen - wir wissen nicht, was aus diesem Transfer wird, aber wir glauben Gutes, dass es sich lohnt, dass das Risiko die Stagnation/ Traditionsverbissenheit überlebt

The projects make intensive contributions to the **research, innovation and standardisation of Future Internet infrastructure**, through both **evolutionary** and totally novel approaches. In addition to the **technical aspects**, the **economic** and **social implications** of the current and future **networking architectures** and **efficient use of radio spectrum** are also important. Furthermore, the Future network infrastructures should provide seamlessly end to end connectivity and access and therefore will have to support the **convergence** and **interoperability** of **heterogeneous mobile/satellite and broadband network technologies**.

QuerKlang seeks European consensus (- for the use and importance of Contemporary Music in schools Europe wide). It's not a project to tour, having guest performances everywhere with contents, approaches and prospect formed in a certain country, within a certain music tradition for a certain audience known by the actors.