ON COMMUNITY MUSIC AND INCLUSIVENESS: ESCHER KLÄNG

Boris Traue
Judith Tröndle

'Escher kläng' is a community music initiative devoted to creating access to music-making with fewer barriers. The initiative is organised by students and educators of the 'Bachelor en sciences sociales et educatives' of the University of Luxembourg as part of their study programme.

While music listening is today a mundane everyday activity widely enjoyed, the making of music is rarefied. Music education programs cater to many young people, but the prevalent norms of musical achievement create barriers to participating in lifelong music making. 'Community music' creates broader access to the practice and experience of making music together. Not tied to any specific musical genre, its sounds can vary widely, and some audiences may find it lacks proper musicality. It is based on principles of inclusion, hospitality, and improvisation in a cultural, social and artistic sense. Among its practitioners are music lovers, activists, virtuosos and beginners, social workers and educators. Community music is known to contribute to self-awareness, openness toward diverse persons, and experiences of togetherness. Reliant on local demand, it is site specific and engages with urban (and also rural) space. Unconcerned with many highbrow expectations, community music can enrich everyday life, animate civil society and amplify public issues that concern everybody.

The initiative 'Escher Kläng' is connected to sociological analyses of music. These show that there are inequalities between potential contributors to music: Only rigorous training allows adults to participate in its most accepted forms, and what is perceived as an acceptable musical performance is defined by institutional gatekeepers and aesthetic arbiters. This view of music as reflecting social divisions, feelings of distinction, and hierarchy is today prevalent in academic studies of music in its social context. However, scholars of music who turn their attention to actual musical practices have discovered that there are universal forms of musical interaction which allow musicians to participate and be included in artistic practice. Also, there is a growing societal interest to increase inclusivity through artistic expression. EU policies support the development of participatory arts in order to "foster the cultural capability of all Europeans by making available a wide range of cultural activities and providing opportunities to participate actively". Nation-states and communities have also committed themselves to broaden access to cultural participation. The record is mixed: Music can change

BORIS TRAUE is sociologist and professor of social work. He is member of the Institute for Social Research and Interventions (ISI) at the Université du Luxembourg, a hub for research, debates and inventions in the areas of equity, social thought, and psycho-socio-cultural interventions. He has published on the making of the modern self, the transformation of social relations through media of communication, and the agency expressed through amateur practices. He is also member of the community music collective and 'activist street band' StreetNoiseOrchestra, based in Innsbruck.

JUDITH TRÖNDLE is postdoctoral researcher at the Institute for Social Research and Interventions (ISI) at the Université du Luxembourg, since 2020. Her work focusses on processes of subjectivation and social inequalities. She develops sociological perspectives on couples, gender, and disability, as well as on musical practices and associated orders of membership, affectivity, and solidarity. In her dissertation at the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, she studied processes of othering and sub-jectivation in regard to couples, parenting a child with disabilities. Additionally, she is a Gestalt-Music-Therapist certified by the Institut für Gestalttherapie und Gestalt-pädagogik Berlin (IGG).

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notions of membership and afford experiences of solidarity, while it also continues to mirror social inequalities, and barriers to inclusiveness and participation are still pervasive. These and other issues are currently explored in academic research on 'Membership and Solidarity in Amateur Musical Practice', conducted by Boris Traue and Judith Tröndle.

Escher Kläng is an open weekly event held from October to December 2023, perhaps to be continued. It is an occasion to come together in Esch, experiment with the kläng that arise from communal music-making, and share a musical experience in the here and now. We invite interested people to drop in.

Registration is not necessary.

ALEXANDRA LINK, KEVIN SIMOES PEREIRA & DIANA STIEGLER, students in the Bachelor en sciences sociales et éducatives (Université du Luxembourg), act as co-facilitators in Escher Kläng. While they each contribute uniquely, they are collectively engaged in creating access to cultural expression and in promoting social equity.

DATES AND HOURS:
Every Monday from October 16th to December 11th at 19:00.



Escher Kläng group at Cultures of Assembly in Esch-sur-Alzette, October 2023.
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