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Inclusive music making: is it socially relevant?

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"Every person can learn to make music - if the community of all takes responsibility for it and allows individual paths."¹

Part 1: Looking into the past

If we want to form realistic ideas about how people with and without disabilities can live and learn together as equals in our country, it seems to me unavoidable that we begin by looking back at least on the period that I myself experienced.

I was born in 1944, a time when human lives were classified as worth living or not worth living. As the daughter of a medical doctor, I remember a remark at lunch time: my father commented with regret on the consequences for a nurse, a friend of his, who did not euthanise a so-called 'deformed' baby. He thought that she had done no one any good by doing so, even if she had acted against the medical custom of the time, and humanely, by following her heart. I can still recall my thoughts as a child from that time, my ideas of how this child should have died.

Other important events also took place during this time. In 1948, the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*² was drafted out of shock at the institutionalised atrocities committed in the first half of the twentieth century. It was adopted by the United Nations Assembly with forty-eight votes in favour, eight abstentions and none against. It is valid for all people on earth and has been until today a signpost and point of reference in the struggle for a dignified life and against fear, horror and poverty.

The purpose of this declaration, although not legally binding, is the transferral of its generally recognised principles into the legislation of the individual member states. This has happened and is still happening in terms of specific resolutions regarding children's rights, women's rights, torture, the right to work, housing or racial discrimination and many other matters. It astonishes me retrospectively that throughout my school years, as well as in my training as a teacher, or even in discussions regarding issues critically important to human rights (such as participatory justice), this ground-breaking and far-reaching humanitarian achievement was not brought to general awareness, let alone used as a basis for argumentation. This is often still the case today. Attempts are even made everywhere to shake the foundations of this common and world-unifying ethical basis for our coexistence.

A few key experiences during my training period presented the denigrating, unqualified treatment of children with disabilities in a job shadowing class and in a large home with adults with disabilities as a simply intolerable injustice. In general, my decision to become a special education teacher was seen by those around me as a regrettable waste of better

¹ Wagner, n.s.

² United Nations General Assembly [UN General Assembly] 1948.

study and career opportunities: special education teachers were regarded as mere social idealists who were not to be taken seriously.

In 2007, the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* was clarified with regard to people with disabilities in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities [UN CRPD]³.

The psychologist and long-time president of *Lebenshilfe Austria*, Germain Weber,⁴ describes his thoughts on the UN CRPD in the article *Ob Geschichte geschrieben wird*,⁵ from which I would like to highlight a few ideas. He writes that the model that has been consolidated in disability work for decades in our societies is characterised by a charitable basic attitude, that it is predominantly oriented towards a medical model of disability, and that the action-ethical maxim of the caring environment is that it should benefit the disabled person. In the living environments that were created on this basis, there has been little room for individual autonomy and independence of the persons with disabilities who receive the care. He highlights the fact that people with disabilities were, after the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, not actually considered to be bearers of these rights and freedoms. He points out that these legal provisions have, in fact, subsequently been accompanied by multiple forms of disadvantage and discrimination against the 'protected' persons, and that protection is granted under the term 'lifelong', from kindergarten to school, workshop, residential home to homes for senior citizens.⁶

It is thus evident that in the fifty years following the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, people with disabilities and the accessibility of human rights have received little attention.⁷ This non-realisation of the full intentions of the declaration, coupled with the recognition that more than eighty per cent of people living in poverty worldwide are directly or indirectly affected by disability, gave rise to a number of precursor instruments, but all of them disappointed in terms of their impact on persons with disabilities. In 2001 as an initiative of some states, the development of a separate convention on the rights of persons with disabilities was proposed at the UN.⁸

In 1994 the *Salamanca Declaration*⁹ (an example of a precursor instrument) provided the impetus for equal participation of persons with disabilities in education. It remained de facto ineffective in Austria because, on the one hand, the Eighth School Organisation Act Amendment¹⁰ was formulated on the basis of provisions stated in terms of what is possible and voluntary and, on the other hand, integration was only related to schools, but not to further life environments such as work, apprenticeship, housing or leisure time. Weber wrote in 2012 that the purpose of the Salamanca Declaration, which finally entered into force in 2008, is to effectively promote the implementation of the rights of persons with disabilities as well as the fight against poverty – a UN objective that had been pursued for

³ United Nations [UN] 2007.

⁴ Dr. phil. Germain Weber, 2008-2016 Dean of the Faculty of Psychology at the University of Vienna and Associate University Professor at the Institute of Applied Psychology; since 2004 President of Lebenshilfe Österreich (cf. Lebenshilfe Österreich, n.d.).

⁵ Cf. Weber 2012.

⁶ Ibid, 250f.

⁷ Schulze 2009, 20.

⁸ Ibid, 252, emphasis not in the original.

⁹ United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO] 1994.

¹⁰ 8. Schulorganisationsgesetz-Novelle, Bgbl. No. 271/1985.

many years up to that time. Weber remarks that the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities does not contain any new rights or rights that go beyond those of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* of 1948. Rather, the Convention specifies these rights in relation to persons with disabilities, and guarantees these rights: after ratification by national parliaments, the provisions of the UN Convention are to be transposed into national law in a binding manner – a decisive difference from the 1948 declaration. Each state party agrees to establish a system for national implementation and monitoring. In Austria, this task was assigned by law to the Independent Monitoring Committee (*Unabhängigen Monitoring Ausschuss*), which was constituted on 10 December 2008.¹¹

After adapting the legal measures and until 2010, hardly any noticeable changes in practice followed in Austria. As a result, the *National Action Plan [NAP] Disability 2012-2020*¹² was drawn up. However, this plan did not only ignore essential demands of civil society, such as punishing violations of the law, practice also showed that measures were only partially implemented in the eight years after the NAP came into force. The raising of awareness in the sense envisioned by the UN CRPD, namely realising inclusion as a human right, hardly took place in many institutions, and there was little evidence of comprehensive inclusion, especially in the education system.

Currently, civil society is again doing the groundwork for the follow-up plan *NAP Disability II*, which will come into force in 2021. However, no contact person (someone who would be available for cooperative, transparent work) has yet been nominated in the Ministry of Education.

However, a lot has happened internationally since 1948, and this has over the years encouraged parents also in Austria to demand an end to specialisation, which has the effect of excluding people from social life, and to call for common living and learning environments. For many years the so-called 'wild' integration took place. In the district of Reutte in Tyrol, this even led to a comprehensive abolition of special institutions, which increased the pressure on school authorities nationwide to follow the international trend towards the abolishment of segregating systems. Parents and teachers agreed, with the tacit approval of the local school administration, that children with disabilities, sometimes even children with severe and multiple disabilities, would be educated together with children from their home environment, i.e. that they would be educated in their real social environment.

Unfortunately, this option did not exist for me in 1990. There was no possibility for our son with Down's Syndrome to complete an inclusive, or at least integrative, primary school education in our immediate vicinity. The consequence for me: his deregistration from the regular school system and the resultant home schooling, which led to the founding of the first integrative (*de facto* fully inclusive) *Lernwerkstatt* in Vienna. We as parents in Austria still have the privilege of being able to choose this option, as there is no compulsory schooling in Austria, only compulsory education. In addition to two older sons in grammar school, a full teaching commitment at a school for the physically disabled and a teaching

¹¹ Weber 2012, 252, emphasis not in the original.

¹² Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection [BMASK] 2012.

position at the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna, there was another great challenge: not only managing the financial, organisational and staffing issues for this small school in a participatory way, but above all developing and designing the didactics for the learning situations of twenty-two children in primary and secondary school. This was done according to reform pedagogical principles and in order to create internal structures for an adequately prepared environment. The work of Maria Montessori, Rebeca Wild and Célestin Freinet were the guiding principles. At the end of each school year, all pupils had to take a so-called external examination. Of great help was the observation and analysis procedure that was developed according to the theory of psychic functions by Karl Garnitschnig,¹³ with which we not only achieved a good orientation of and reflection on our work, but also a form of quality assurance. All this was even documented in a research project.¹⁴ Of course, at that time it was also up to us as parents to organise private lessons to support our son's musical ambitions (classical guitar, percussion).

The only thing that has changed about the situation until now is that many more parents and teachers who are aware of reform pedagogy are creating inclusive learning situations in our country. Systemically and in terms of the official educational concept (see Agenda 20-30), the pedagogical and thus socially relevant achievements of reform pedagogy in Austria are still 'reform' pedagogy. Its principles are not implemented in general pedagogical practice and everyday school life. However, these principles are indispensable for inclusive education and also for music education.

As a result of the above-mentioned *Salamanca Declaration*, the integration of children with disabilities became possible in the Austrian school system for the first time, initially in the lower school and subsequently until the age of fourteen. This integrative approach, however, did not prove to be effective for empowering pupils, nor for enabling them to create an equal place for themselves in society: because the subsequent educational opportunities available to young people without disabilities were not inclusive, the life paths of young people with disabilities mostly ended up in special educational institutions again. Unfortunately, parents in many places in Austria still find themselves to be supplicants in various situations: they are told in undignified 'counselling interviews' (that are focused on supposed deficits) that their child, even after a successful communal period in kindergarten and primary school, cannot remain in mainstream education and thus also cannot attend secondary school in the lived social environment. Attitudes are at work here that also lead to developments opposite to the current trajectory of those responsible for education. On the one hand, there are legal obligations to create an inclusive education system in Austria, on the other hand, investments continue to be made in a separated school system. With Umberto Eco, one could say that regarding this phenomenon (which is incomprehensible in itself) progress and regression coincide.

Why have I presented Germain Weber's chronology in such detail?

¹³ Univ. Prof. Dr. Karl Garnitschnig, educational scientist (retired), University of Vienna; lecturer and course director at the Danube University Krems and the private university UMIT for health sciences, medical informatics and technology; psychotherapist, supervisor, scientific director of the *Institute for Educational Management* (cf. Institute for Educational Management / Association for Family Support, s.a.).

¹⁴ cf. Garnitschnig / Neira Zugasty 2008.

One reason is that I want to show that although nationally and internationally a transparent participation of civil society in the implementation of the UNCRPD is envisaged and is also successful in many places, this is not yet systematically practised in our country. The other reason is that when listening closely to various messages from politicians, or from the people who set the political course and can make decisions, yesterday's sediments are still clearly audible and very much noticeable in the handling of possibilities for implementation. This circumstance is frightening, as shown, for example, by the existence of § 97 in the Austrian Penal Code,¹⁵ which permits the killing of a foetus up to one day before birth if it has a severe disability. The renewed increase of special schools in Austria should also be mentioned: even if they are called differently, for example as school centres in the Department for Inclusion, Diversity & Special Education, this does not change the fact that they are segregating institutions. Another example is the persistent refusal to allow a common school for six to fifteen year olds, which is practised satisfactorily in many countries, a common school that could take the place of the segregating system that uses screenings to bring forward the separation of learning worlds to the third grade of primary school. There are also other examples.

All those who read carefully the articles of the UNCRPD, especially the impressive points of the preamble –and this should be compulsory reading for all teachers and students– and then examine their own field of activity with an open mind, will sharpen their view of structures, procedures and habits, come to critical questions and certainly also receive impulses for creating an enabling culture in schools. The focus can be on people and not on systems, their constraints and practices, which in many places seem to be unalterable due to various vested interests.

Years ago, the *Salamanca Declaration* sought a change from a segregating to an inclusive approach to people with disabilities, specifically in the field of education. The discussion in this country twenty-five years later still does not revolve around how resources can be distributed in such a way that joint learning is possible at least until the end of compulsory education, but still around whether this would be good and necessary at all. At the moment, changing the differentiated school system seems to be completely out of the question for those responsible for education in the ministry, although it should be noted that each individual teacher is actually the main person responsible for pupils or students on site and the system with which they must deal. Teachers should use this leeway, in order to do justice to each of the students entrusted to them, because using the freedom of teaching and methods is not only a right, but also a duty.

Nevertheless, it can be said that progress has been made in many areas of life for people with disabilities to promote their quality of life. I can mention here the generally higher acceptance in social contexts, the efforts towards barrier-free access (even though this is mostly reduced to structural accessibility), security and access to resources for making a living, and more openness (presented for example as excellently designed inclusive subscriptions in some concert halls, and inclusive teaching events and ensembles for teaching practice at the mdw). For those affected, things are still progressing too slowly, too little is done, and individual fates are often not sufficiently understood. However, many

¹⁵ § Section 97: Impunity of abortion (Straflosigkeit des Schwangerschaftsabbruchs). In Bgbl. No. 60/1974 last amended by Bgbl. I No. 112/2015.

things would have been unthinkable at the beginning of my teaching career. This is thanks to many individuals, civil organisations and also civil servants in administrative positions who have managed the paradigm shift from seeing disability as a medical problem focused on deficits and 'care' towards an understanding that disability must be understood within the social context. For them the question is: What prevents a person from developing their individual abilities, from participating in social life in the way that is best for them?

Inclusion is not first and foremost a matter of people with disabilities, because the particular existence of a human being – every human being, whether with or without a disability – with their individual ways of expression and abilities cannot be negotiated, measured or assessed, nor can the equal position of each person be negotiated. Inclusion means the equal (not similar) participation of all in the diverse processes of society, and also in the processes of lifelong learning.

Furthermore, the history of this seventy-year period clearly shows how laborious and protracted the process of inclusion *per se* is. The fact that in the developments regarding 'being disabled' in our country, too few people have been able to gain a public and effective social relevance as inspiring role models has also had an impact. After all, what would a society need more than people like Franz-Joseph Huainigg¹⁶ or Helene Jarmer,¹⁷ for example, who are politically, socially, and creatively active as authors, multipliers and disseminators in an unsurpassable brilliance despite the most severe disability, in order to convince it that inclusion can only bring mutual gain for all? And how can such an insight be ignored and glossed over by dull ignorance? If one experiences such convincing pioneers – and there are several of them in our country – how can the full meaning of the UN CRPD, which is actually quite simple to understand, not be understood and actively implemented? Why is so little done to counter the half-heartedness of those who carry responsibility? It is solely thanks to the indomitability, and sustained and efficient work of committed individuals, who often join forces in advocacy groups, and who often also become effective in existing institutions, those who are as 'salt of the earth', that inclusion is negotiable as a legitimate issue at all in our country.

When individuals in key positions implement their attitude towards inclusion in their environment, this has a signal effect for other areas. This happened, for example, through the director of the Vienna Music School, Swea Hieltcher, who spontaneously opened up (after the first request in 2004) the possibility for all music schools in Vienna to use ten percent of their teaching time for students with disabilities, and who also appointed a coordinator and a specialist advisor in the person of Michael Weber. This is an example that shows that with the right openness, many things are possible.

¹⁶ Dr. Franz-Joseph Huainigg, born 1966: 2002-2008 and 2010-2017 Member of the National Council of the Austrian People's Party (ÖVP) in the function of spokesperson for the disabled and spokesperson for development cooperation of the ÖVP, author of children's books, media educator (cf. Republic of Austria. Parliamentary Administration, 2017a).

¹⁷ Helene Jarmer, born 1971: 2009-2017 Member of the National Council of the Greens (cf. Republic of Austria. Parliamentary Administration, 2017b).

Insights

Let us imagine that we look at the Golden Hall of the Vienna Musikverein from different angles: it always remains the same hall, the same music sounds throughout the room, but the people who enter it have very different approaches. The musicians are thrilled by the acoustics, the conductors in turn are thrilled by the musicians, the concert managers are pleased with the good work that is produced by all, the sound technicians see the technical possibilities for the recordings, and the house staff the many organisational details from cleaning to ticket sales and control. In the end, the audience experiences the entirety of this unbelievably complex collaboration as an artistic treat in a harmonious, wonderful ambience.

A coherent, enjoyable ambience for inclusive music-making can only be created when many factors are coordinated as smoothly as possible and when all those involved have an understanding of this complexity.

The access of those involved is very different in each case and requires not only an examination of one's own field of action, but above all an insight into the other areas involved. Let us therefore take the trouble to consider who can be involved in successful music-making in mixed ability groups.¹⁸

- the members of the population who are not considered disabled
- the parents, the caregivers
- the instructors, the administrative bodies
- the students
- the musicians with disabilities

The members of the population who are not considered disabled

Non-disabled participants are of primary importance. Without them, there would be no inclusive artistic or artistic-pedagogical work. They are the main opinion leaders and opinion makers in the public discourse about inclusive ways of life and thus also about making music together in heterogeneous groups. I often experience that children with disabilities sing for themselves, that they produce sounds on an instrument spontaneously and with pleasure and that they feel like musicians, who enjoy music and are happy about it. However, as soon as non-disabled partners join in the music-making, the sound structure becomes skewed, because making music together is based on few, but indispensable, rules, especially when inclusive ensembles present themselves in a public setting. König (2019, p. 4) writes that music making is not inclusive *per se*. As soon as an aesthetic dimension comes into play (as soon as the musicians are no longer indifferent what is sounded and how it is sounded) and the perception of what is sounded becomes grounded by a normative system of values, a traditional concept of beauty or a collective demand for quality, making music usually becomes a highly exclusive affair.¹⁹

¹⁸ For me, making music is closely related to the art of performing and dancing, so these forms of expression are repeatedly included in the following sections.

¹⁹ King 2019, 4.

Those who want to achieve a shared enjoyment of music-making that draws from the shared potential of people with very different vocal, cognitive or motoric expressive possibilities in ability-mixed groups must above all bring one thing with them: the fundamental attitude that everyone who wants to make music should also be able to make music, as Robert Wagner puts it: not everyone has to make music themselves. But everyone should be given the opportunity to play with music and find out for themselves whether they enjoy playing. Whether the fun emerges or is there from the beginning depends on many things.²⁰

It requires the willingness to be flexible and to engage with people who want to make music, perhaps also dance and act, with the different potentials of their ability. It is a basic prerequisite that the serious desire to participate in the joint creative process is valued, that we enjoy together the pleasure of doing and succeeding, of exploring and experimenting. Much of what is addressed in the following paragraphs is simply to be understood as a right of all. With all its differentiation, music can also be understood as a cultural asset that can be shaped together and accepting this must be a prior achievement of the non-disabled society. El-Mafaalani wrote that education has a cooperative character, because we cannot do it without others; that education is certainly a form of self-empowerment, but that it is not exhausted in self-sufficiency.²¹

Institutions for people without disabilities, schools, associations, and sponsors must open their doors, both figuratively and literally. There is a need to open up traditional aesthetic ideas to new ways of social participation in music making, in performing, in art in general, to ways that then also become aesthetically relevant. New things can only emerge if there is a willingness to reallocate resources and to further develop familiar structures. Inclusive (learning) processes cannot be forced into the narrow corset of the usual ideas of education or the traditional understanding of art. Nor is the simple strategy of simply adding a reduced offer to mainstream education effective. This misses the point of inclusive music-making: that the musicians with their different abilities participate as equal members in the common activity.²² As mentioned above, we have been experiencing such attempts at *integration* for decades. It has the consequence that in the non-disabled society, neither teachers nor most of the students, nor the responsible administrative staff at all levels, nor finally a large part of the public have been able to experience inclusion in their own school days or in their own living environment. The idea that different people with very different abilities live and learn together in everyday life is only beginning to develop in our country. The majority of people have their own internalised ideas, and so prejudices and restrictive ideas are often passed on, such as how learning in general should be organised as a beneficial process for the future and how making music should correspond to cultural understanding. It does not seem to be a cardinal demand of the education system that education should aim at the comprehensive development of the physical, mental, spiritual and thus also artistic-creative potential of the learners. In the goals of the Agenda of the Austrian Federal Government of 1/1/2016, the following is demanded with regard to education in Part 4, 1 paragraph 1. It states that by 2030, it must be ensured that all girls and boys complete free and high-quality primary and

²⁰ Wagner, 2011, 102.

²¹ El- Mafaalani 2020, 39.

²² Feuser 2019, 135.

secondary education on an equal basis, leading to useful and effective learning outcomes.²³ At the same time, however, *de facto* segregation of learning communities through the identification of special educational needs remains common practice. Wagner points out that it is not the heterogeneity of the children that is the problem in our general education schools, but the homogeneity of the requirements and performance assessment imposed on them. These impose a deficit-oriented, selective view on teachers.²⁴ So, this agenda already raises the question: useful learning outcomes for whom? And it would be impressive if 'efficient' was meant in such a way that we provide young people with the means to live their own lives and at the same time bring them into harmony with the lives of their fellow human beings; that the pupil should be able to give the maximum of his powers without resistance and without contradiction (i.e. should also be allowed to make music).²⁵ As a rhythmist I refer here to the words of E. J.-Dalcroze.

Due to its history, our society lacks persuasive multipliers in all areas of life. It lacks people who can create a participatory culture – and in particular an educational practice understood in this way – in the sense of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Disability is not understood as a self-evident part of general learning, and still has negatively connotations, for example, A or B suffers from Down syndrome! It is considered to be an exceptional phenomenon that is basically even avoidable according to law (see § 96 StGB²⁶), and it is presented as a social burden and passed on as a matter to be dealt with by selected specialists, as their task. It is up to the non-disabled majority of the population to create awareness for participation and co-determination in everyday life – and this also includes making music – and to make these values liveable and assertable as human rights.

One can make another interesting observation. The audience, especially at larger inclusive events, is not only made up of the understanding relatives and friends of the musicians, dancers and actors with disabilities. Through the public setting, people without experience of disability also experience these performances and are surprised to discover that the distinction between disabled and non-disabled actors becomes irrelevant to them. In this way, the experience takes on a new dimension for them. Observing the power of shared potential changes the view of one's own traditional ideas of how music, dance and drama should meet aesthetic standards.

The parents, the caregivers

Inclusive music making, especially during childhood and adolescence, depends very much on the attitude towards music making of the parents or caregivers of people with disabilities. A distinction between music education and music therapy is slowly crystallising, not only in the consciousness of the general population, but above all in the consciousness of professionals. This concerns more specifically the distinction on the one hand between instruction in

²³ Federal Chancellery Austria 2019.

²⁴ Wagner 2011, 102.

²⁵ Jaques-Dalcroze 1977.

²⁶ §Section 96 of the Criminal Code, Abortion. In Bgbl. No. 60/1974 last amended by Bgbl. I No. 112/2015.

making music or making music at all in the sense of an active, creative confrontation with one's own possibilities of musical expression and on the other hand therapeutic work with the means of music. The notion that 'music and disability' is automatically connoted with the need for therapy, should not live on in our general understanding. The need for therapy is, of course, a given. But for making music in a context of mixed abilities, equal access to regular music lessons is necessary. This includes, also for non-disabled pupils, making music in individual lessons as well as in heterogeneous music groups, and in addition, opportunities for these groups to perform in the regular public cultural scene.

As always, a constant drop of waters erodes the stone: since there are more and more inclusive music programmes, more and more parents are realising that their children can take advantage of these programmes. The actualisation of the fears of opponents of inclusion, fears that children with disabilities might be devalued in inclusive groups and that they might be put under performance stress, is prevented through inclusive didactics. Robert Wagner²⁷ writes that the goal is not to 'pick up students where they are', but to help students formulate their own goals and provide them with opportunities to realise these goals in a self-determined and responsible manner. He identifies this as ultimately also a question of human dignity.

Parents' concerns in this regard thus prove to be unfounded. What is more, parents experience that it is not a matter of their child possessing a certain ability that would allow them to participate, but they see that care is taken to ensure that making music is a joy, that it enables community, and that creatively structured leisure time can be shaped without pressure to perform. Musical events are either adapted to the wishes of participants or, conversely, their wishes are adapted to the possibilities. Why should a ten-year-old girl with trisomy 21 not play the trumpet? Because of her weak muscles? According to the experiences in the band *All Stars inclusive*, this is obviously not a problem. Why shouldn't a young man with increased muscle tension and, little depth sensitivity, play the drums? As his awareness of his role in the band grew, so did his sensitivity to the dynamics in the musical process. He was able to discover that he can use his motor skills in an increasingly differentiated way. He now experiences himself as a creator and not only as someone who acts out.

When parents approach group leaders with expectations and fears, it is an opportunity to create awareness of a possibility: making music together is a source of joy, a wonderfully fulfilling leisure activity, an experience of equality in the social context of the group. It can bring about an increase in self-confidence, especially when it comes to performances, CD recordings or videos. Unfortunately, many parents have lost (through their exhausting efforts to provide the best possible support) their ability to open up to these possibilities, because the stress is often very high when it comes to managing efficient therapies. Often there is simply not enough time and energy left for leisure activities. Sometimes parents have not necessarily had positive experiences with music-making or singing in their own childhood. However, it is my experience that well-run groups become a 'relaxation factor' for parents when it is simply about making music or dancing and no ill-guided ambition interferes. However, it is primarily about the attitude and the will of all participants to

²⁷ Wagner 2011, 129.

exchange their ideas. It is about dealing with each other as equals, and also about giving each other time, because making music is in its totality a complex process in which many factors have to be coordinated and this cannot always be done perfectly straight away.

Another circumstance regarding the requirements for the accompanying persons should be mentioned, something which sometimes makes it difficult for adults with disabilities to participate in music groups, and also to attend regular individual music lessons. Depending on their specific restrictions, young and adult musicians are dependent on support in public transport, or on the organisation of a transport service, or on being accompanied by someone in the group. Depending on time tables and staffing of the support institutions, this dependency often creates problems in planning, as well as frustration for those involved when appointments cannot be kept. Especially for events that do not take place during the regular rehearsal time, a willingness to make a special commitment is needed from all those involved. Creating a constant framework is often an additional challenge, independent of making music. Working inclusively means really including everything.

Educators, administrators and governing bodies - with an excursion on the basic criteria and characteristics of inclusive music practice

A group of people in which only a minority has to deal with inclusion in most educational institutions are the teachers, the trainers and the administrative staff. Two factors (among several) already mentioned are decisive for their work.

Most trainers have no experience of their own with inclusive learning situations, or indeed with people with disabilities. They are more or less uninformed and unrelated to the subject. The absence of this part of the general educational mandate, something which is based on the UN CRPD, is often not noticed. One usually encounters the opinion that someone in the institution will be responsible for the children, young people and adults with disabilities and that this person will also have the necessary competences. Consequently, it becomes possible to delegate responsibility, because the corresponding resources are 'obviously' also available for this other person. But neither in terms of competences nor in terms of resources does the reality correspond to what is required.

The second factor has already been mentioned: we live in a country in which it is possible to, unchallenged, simply not implement or only rudimentarily implement statutory requirements. For twelve years now, those responsible for education have 'managed' to reduce the fulfilment of a legal mandate to only three model regions, although the National Action Plan on Disability 2012-2020 (NAP I) in the field of education should have ensured the comprehensive implementation of an inclusive Austrian education system. Fortunately, music schools do not always conform to the ideas of the public school system in their understanding of the educational mandate, and in some cases they even have exemplary regulations (such as those of the Vienna Music Schools mentioned above). Even more disturbing is the fact that the majority of those who are supposed to teach on the basis of these recommendations, objectives and obligatory measures are not even aware that the implementation of NAP I demanded their own active participation, because they themselves are the ones who are supposed to give the coming generations the tools for a socially just coexistence.

Currently, civil organisations (under the umbrella of the Austrian Council for People with Disabilities) are preparing the National Action Plan 2021-2030. Right now, they are concerning themselves with the improvement and the continuation of specific guidelines according to which teachers will have to work in the following nine years. Only a very small proportion of the training staff across all institutions is proactively assuming their creative responsibility here. When I ask my colleagues and students about this, it is usually necessary to first explain what the National Action Plan on Disability is all about, followed by the realisation (ranging from surprise to concern) that really every teacher should feel addressed here. Inclusion, as already emphasised at the beginning of this article, is a joint process for everyone. It is misunderstood and inefficient from the outset if it is treated as the sole concern of people with disabilities and a few who advocate for the process.

In such conversations – and I have many of them – the interlocutors, colleagues or students inevitably come to the fundamental question of how far the understanding of social equality and the observance of the rights of people with disabilities has developed, or even has any relevance at all. This refers to society in general, but also to each individual, and thus also to my interlocutors, and especially to those entrusted with educational tasks. And then it is always possible to initiate a process of reflection and to discover the treasure chest of one's own resources. Together, small strategies are developed from which really new inclusive ideas emerge, which are often only realised after several attempts, provided that there is mutual support.

There are now 'branches' of inclusive education at Austrian music universities and colleges (Vienna, Linz, Innsbruck, Salzburg, Graz) and in particular at the Institute for Music and Movement Education/Rhythmics and Music Physiology at the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna, which offers courses in various settings for inclusive and curative education: didactics, teaching practice, lesson analysis, participation in inclusive ensembles, electives, further education, networking with inclusive courses in general education sciences, offers for career changers, experience and research fields for inclusive music education. The subject 'Didactic anchoring of inclusion in music education/instrumental pedagogy' at the Institute for Music Education Research, Music Didactics and Elementary Music Making (IMP) is also appreciated by the students as an enrichment for their education.

Slowly, the 'tree' is growing and an understanding that heterogeneous learning situations broaden perspectives and create a critical approach to familiar pedagogical procedures is developing. The work of advocating for the implementation of inclusion as a cross-cutting issue at all educational institutions will certainly have to be done for some time to come. For it is undoubtedly necessary that traditional patterns are thought of differently and made more accessible. It is also necessary that the understanding of excellence must deepen beyond the purely musical performative aspect into the central importance of the experience of music-making, which is actually important for all people. It is the task of music education to change the conventional idea of music education from something that is construed in the form of a pyramid towards a model of juxtaposed and equal pillars. Peter Rübke, for example, states (in his discussion of the three fields of work of the music school) that we have to clearly commit ourselves to musical participatory justice, and that, one way or another, the music school's first field of work is about building and developing communities of musical learning and living, communities in which people of different

instrumental levels (or even ages) make music together seriously, artistically satisfyingly and continuously, in whatever style or style of music-making.²⁸

Music education does not only serve the purpose of selection, so that at the top the prize-worthy talents prove the efficiency of the system. This leads to a constant neglect and thinning out of the base and the middle layers. The fundamental goal should rather be an increasingly growing young generation, happily making music, for whom there are open educational opportunities that correspond to their abilities and needs, and from which the top talents will then emerge as if by themselves. They will then also receive the support they deserve in terms of equality.

If the learning offerings in music pedagogical practice (already in the training centres, but especially in the compulsory schools, AHS and music schools) are to create the paradigm shift from selective music making according to predefined performance criteria towards inclusive music making, then this requires above all the commitment of the teachers to participation. It requires their willingness to question their own customary teaching concepts and didactic procedures, to open up to new strategies and cooperations, and to see the music-making process as a lively, collaborative and meaningful activity in which much more happens than just bringing a piece of music to sound.

- This gives the imagination new wings, especially when it comes to the didactic repertoire and its flexible use. *Creativity* grows from often quite hidden sources, for example, when a student discovers on her violin that she can spontaneously improvise a second voice without a score, and then the violist next to her, stimulated by this, improvises a duet with her for eight bars as an interlude, with new variations of the verse form arising quite naturally each time. The musical content is only the means, it is not an end in itself. No one is concerned with playing in the foreground, because everyone finds inwardly the best possibility for expressing themselves. I have mostly experienced this intrinsic value of music-making (in the inclusive ensembles) arising among participants with disabilities from the outset, and then observed it gradually germinating among the students.
- The capacity for abstraction finds wide application in the necessarily very different ways of documenting the music-making material. Matters can be made comprehensible on paper in an incredible number of variations of colours, letters, pictorial symbols, spatial arrangements and other possibilities, and thus become accessible to people who have difficulty with written instructions. At the heart of a strong learning process for most teachers and students is *the cardinal pedagogical skill of reduction* in terms of the language of instruction, piece design, rehearsal management and performance planning. This learning process succeeds best with empathy and (self-)reflection and leads to a general gain in competence.
- The *self-confidence* of all participants depends not only on the success of a performance that is as perfect as possible, but also on the intensity of the participation and the contribution of the best skills accepted by all. Wagner writes that music is an opportunity for many people to shape their lives in a meaningful way or to communicate with other people and with themselves, and that this is precisely the

²⁸ Röbbke 2015, XXX

reason for music lessons, while perfection consequently often succeeds as a side effect.²⁹

- There is *a change of perspective in being together*: the most technically skilled musicians are not always the ones who manage to shape the music-making process with cheerfulness, humour and mutual understanding. Often it is the members with disabilities who point out weak points in the setting quite precisely through their behaviour. As a result, new perspectives must be sought if making music together is to continue successfully and with enjoyment. It is then also the personal attention, the joy of the musicians with disabilities, their self-evident expectation of the usual rituals and rehearsal processes that carry them through unsatisfactory situations. In this way, the perspectives change and give weight to a social component that goes beyond just efficient music-making.
- Looking ahead to where the common musical activity should lead does not end with passing exams, and with successful or less successful audition situations. Looking ahead rather unfolds the *dynamics of a socio-cultural significance in everyday life* through the cohesion that goes beyond the music lessons. Thus, it has a potential for much broader activities: performances serve not only one's own workshop at a summer festival, and the class evening at the music school is not enough. No, the music-making community pushes itself into the social environment, it wants and receives recognition and feedback, it attracts new resources.
- One quality that is particularly important in the current, difficult Corona Period is *frustration tolerance*. Making music in heterogeneous, mixed-ability groups requires the kind of attentiveness to one another that results in the patience to repeat something more than some in the group would like, or to change a way of playing that had already been agreed upon. Change can be made for various reasons: because a great new idea has come up, or because a difficulty is not manageable for one of the players, or because one or the other of the players finds it difficult to calm down and has to go around the room again and again (but doesn't get in the way if no one makes a problem out of it). A long list of situations could be created to show the strengthening of this competence and its effectiveness in everyday life.
- *Cooperation* shapes a music-making community in which the individual members rely on each other. Over time, they get to know their own abilities well, but they also know what the other participants need and can make allowance for these needs. It strengthens the team spirit when one can contribute one's own abilities on an equal footing and at the same time is prepared to recognise the abilities of others and when a way is found for specific forms of expression. Abilities can be incorporated as strengths, and as special solutions. This does not succeed right from the start, but develops when the group leadership gives this co-creativity the value that it has for all participants in everyday life. This is an experience that comes to light during conversations before or after the music-making event with the people with disabilities themselves or with their accompanying persons, usually in passing. It is not always directly named.

²⁹ Wagner 2011, 59.

- In such musical communities, a high level of *solidarity* develops: people want to be there for each other, rituals develop, and rules are established, because people want to have, enjoy and shape the shared musical experience again and again. The same applies to presenting theatre pieces or choreographies. If the main focus is on the creative processes as well as on the learning processes themselves, then openness for co-determination is also possible in the rehearsal work, a factor that in turn strengthens mutual respect and cohesion.

These criteria and characteristics of an inclusive music-making practice, inspired by André Frank Zimpel³⁰, a psychologist and researcher in cognitive cybernetics at the University of Hamburg, are actually related to the metacompetences that form the basis of every developmentally beneficial teaching and learning process and that give meaning to the examination of concrete subject content. Considering these metacompetences as the primary targets for learning would already be very fruitful for learning situations with non-disabled pupils, but is indispensable for educators in inclusive learning situations. If teachers and trainers open up these sources of pedagogical richness to their students and exemplify them themselves in a credible and convincing way, then the question of meaning, which arises again and again in a completely unexpected way throughout our profession, will find an answer that is positive, socio-politically open and community-oriented. What is inclusive and participative (and not exclusive and competitive) is, after all, the actual personality-developing source of strength for satisfying lifelong learning. It leaves no losers behind, but creates synergies.

Finding a participatory approach to inclusive music-making in educational institutions clearly means that the appropriate framework conditions for inclusive teaching, research and practice must also be created in the allocation of resources. However, those who commit themselves to diversity-friendly action at the management level (this commitment is laid down in mission statements) must know and take into account the fact that observation of teaching and practice opportunities require additional budgets and working hours. Only then will inclusive didactics be possible at all. This applies to physical resources as well as personnel resources for teamwork: they cannot simply be planted in existing concepts, but must be included as a cross-cutting issue throughout.

Thus, it is necessary to create the tools for future professional practice in schools, music schools and recreational facilities, where music, dance and performance take place in mixed ability groups, by means of a newly conceived and therefore challenging pedagogical work. As we can see, it is not just about the teachers: it is also about the attitude of the entire hierarchy of an institution, because the implementation of inclusive education opportunities is also a new challenge for the administration.

Students

For me, the students are the group in which I place the most hope for successful joint music-making, indeed for the path to a common learning and living environment. Many of them consciously experience the quality of their education, and they appreciate the diversity that

³⁰ cf. Zimpel 2011, 41.

the pedagogically oriented institutes at the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna offer. At the same time, they are critical with regard to the topic of diversity. They reflect on the implementation in the social context and are open to equality and fair coexistence. They can participate in the inclusive ensembles that are already active (*All Stars inclusive Band*, the other bands *Young All Stars*, and *Ensemble Ohrenklang*, and the inclusive classical ensemble *ClassicALL*), and often also complete internships in other contexts, for example in the cultural and educational association *Ich bin O.K.*, in schools, in kindergartens, in the general hospital, and in nursing homes. This also generally builds a broader awareness of the value of this work in relation to their future fields of work. In these settings, they experience what inclusive teaching is all about, namely a participatory process that takes place among all those involved.

Marlene Lacherstorfer, who was the first band leader, presented her experiences from the first six years of building up the *All Stars inclusive Band* in her Master's thesis³¹. Among other things, it contains well-founded didactic-methodical tips as an introductory aid for students, for example, the ten building blocks for rehearsing a musical passage³² or the specification of practical and didactic course contents³³. However, no didactic programme, no matter how well developed, makes sense if it is not accepted by the target group, when, for example, interpersonal reasons come into play. And it is not always the teachers who have the best ideas. It is only when everyone works together that music-making and performance can be satisfying for all.

But what does such a process look like? How do you really live it? In principle, there are three essential parameters.

Empathy, is the quality of relationship to which not only the pupils are entitled, but also the students and we ourselves as university teachers. Empathy, however, is not learned as a subject. It is actually acquired and gained through role models as a gift, even as a gift of life, and then after deepening and maturing through reflection on one's own experiences, passed on. It is the ability to grasp, at least intuitively, what is moving the brain and the heart of my counterpart at the moment, what another body is expressing, what these signs are doing to me and how I react to them honestly and yet constructively. Through this subtle empathy, insight into the connections, possible causes, misunderstandings and blockages often grows. But it can also open up a new approach to understanding behaviour. We learn to enter into this interplay through people who live these qualities with us. The inner image of the other determines the possibilities of one's own. And it can only be a mutual approach. Even if there is an almost tangible understanding, a residue of incomprehensible distance still remains. For no one can really grasp the previous experiences that each person has acquired and that contribute to steering their thoughts and actions. Honestly recognising and respecting this and admitting it to the other person leaves room for manoeuvre and protects against entrenched attributions and wrong paths.

³¹ Lacherstorfer 2016.

³² Ibid, 143-161.

³³ Ibid, 162-164.

Empathy is the ability that gives rise to patience, understanding, long-suffering, perseverance –simply put, all those resources for action that are necessary for a sustainable life together and for overcoming challenges. In the ensembles already mentioned, which serve teaching practice, there is no external pressure to succeed: the students know that they can gain experience without pressure of judgment, contribute their preferences and strengths (after a few units they do so more and more actively), and test their limits. They are taken seriously in their personal way. There is also time in these settings for exchange, follow-up and reflection. The students are not left alone with their emotional experiences. They find a protected, accompanied space of experience here.

The second parameter concerns the art of didactics. Of course, there are basic didactic rules for lesson structure and more. However, in their application, flexibility and imagination are crucial for success. In principle, this should be emphasised: in order to be able to spontaneously adapt the content in a concrete situation, it is necessary to clarify each part of the lesson content in advance in such a way that the simple basic building blocks become recognisable in the reduction and can then be continued and understood interdependently (i.e. logically in terms of coherence) in the increasingly complex demands of the situation. This is a matter of practice and becomes routine over time. Of course, this requires mastery of the technical craft and knowledge of what is on offer. Then internal differentiation is possible. Georg Feuser³⁴ describes this internal differentiation in terms of inclusion which happens when all children and pupils (without excluding disabled children and young people because of the type and/or severity of a disability) play, learn and work in cooperation with each other, at their respective developmental level, according to their current perceptual, thinking and action competences, on and with a 'common object' (project/project/content/topic). He sees this as a cooperative, interactive, communicative activity in a collective.

These principles are *per se* a didactic concept. They were essentially already laid down in the reform pedagogical ideas at the beginning of the last century and are not a unique selling point for inclusive (music) teaching. They have by now been tested in pedagogical concepts worldwide in mainstream education. However, this pedagogical approach has not yet been able to establish itself in the mainstream school system since 1938. It has only been able to develop further in institutions that are particularly committed to it. Rinser wrote in 2008 that the German school [and this also applies to the Austrian school] has still not recovered from the deep blow dealt to it by Nazi fascism. After a brief upswing, everything remained the same as before, with the school of learning (Lernschule), with an aim towards achievements, and with competitive thinking.³⁵

The paradigm shift in attitude must consequently be reflected in didactic procedures, away from the exclusively content-based, measurable, evaluative performance thinking towards the ability-oriented development of personality. The subject content is the means for working on this development. Then performance, the willingness to perform, and the joy of performance can result as if by themselves from intrinsic motivation. The desires of the student must become part of a teaching and learning contract between student and

³⁴ Feuser 2001.

³⁵ Rinser 2008, 249.

teacher.³⁶ When students experience this approach, this openness, because it is exemplified to them in practice, then they experience something essential: their personal creativity, their commitment, and their energy is in demand during the process of shaping their learning; and their own responsibility grows out of the teaching sequences which is often short. This is where the courage of personal responsibility is rooted, the freedom to meet one's students in ways they need to be met. From critical questioning and sustained engagement with challenging constellations grows the enthusiasm to draw on the shared potential.

The third parameter: the developmental steps with which a human being builds up his or her psychological functions from the beginning in a logical way and in interaction with his or her environment as an access to the world should actually be basic pedagogical knowledge. Observation and analysis of the steps with which a pupil deals with the learning offerings in specific situations are the key to the teacher's ability to determine whether the demands of the contents and the design of the learning situations are suitable for the pupils or whether they are over- or under-challenging. It is then necessary to find out in terms of which of the eight functional areas (moving, sensing/perceiving, thinking, speaking/communicating, feeling/social-emotional acting, intending, intuiting/creative actions, remembering/memorising) the learning offering and the learning situation might not be coherent. More specifically, what action steps of the learning offering need to be matched to the pupil in order for the pupil to activate his or her abilities? The application of this kind of observation of developmental dynamics and analysis of learning processes was presented in theory and practice in a research project³⁷. No one works with their deficits (with what they cannot do), but someone develops only by releasing and developing their abilities. And for that, you need an alert eye and the knowledge to understand what you see.

The overview of the action steps and mental functions that show a developmentally logical structure is particularly helpful when it becomes clear that solutions to difficulties cannot be found. Often the apparent blockages are not the real causes of obstacles to learning, because children occasionally develop rather ingenious tactics to cope with difficulties by switching to other behaviours. The shifts in maturation levels that come to light in the process are then not to be understood as weaknesses or even deficits. They are to be recognised as the currently available potential of the pupil. Furthermore, often obstacles and other ways of learning can be fruitful and insightful for the whole group. For example, they lead to a slower tempo, demand simpler language, or make repetition and clarification necessary. All of this can also be helpful for other group members. This is not specific to special needs education, but counts as child-appropriate, developmentally appropriate pedagogical action that is good and appropriate for all pupils.

It never ceases to amaze me that the knowledge of how a person acquires skills pertaining to the individual functional areas from birth to formal maturity and thus builds up his or her world is just as unimportant in teacher training as the practice of analysing and documenting developmental steps. This would be the basis for observing and analysing the learning behaviour of the pupils and thus for adapting the content offered to the abilities of the pupils that can currently be activated!

³⁶ Wagner 2011, 59.

³⁷ Garnitschnig / Neira Zugasty 2008.

With these three prerequisites (parameters), it is possible to turn learning into a constantly co-creative and solution-oriented exchange between all participants. In the learning offerings for inclusive teaching at the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna, the aim is to provide the initial spark of these three parameters, to give students the opportunity to question their own attitudes, and to provide direct access to this way of teaching and making music, all of which is often new to them. It is intended to awaken the motivation to set out on their own personal learning path into the world of inclusive teaching. They do not develop recipes. These do not exist. Rather, ways are tried out to find bridges between different learning worlds, musical experiences, common performance possibilities and valid artistic statements.

I would like to use the *ensemble Ohrenklang* as an example to illustrate the realisation of this claim. It is one of the possibilities for teaching practice in inclusive education of the Institute for Music and Movement Education/Rhythmics and Music Physiology and is open to all students. A group consisting of three young people with different disabilities (the trumpet player plays with her father), special learning styles and talents and three to four students work together with their teacher, Christoph Falschlunger, on one composition per semester. The Ensemble *Ohrenklang* is connected to the organisation *Ohrenschmaus*, which has been promoting literature by people with learning disabilities in the form of competitions for the last ten years. The Ensemble *Ohrenklang* jointly selects from the prize-winning texts the one that most inspires the group and sets it to music. The students and the musicians with disabilities get fully involved with each other emotionally, and they try to get to know each other's imaginary worlds and ways of thinking, their language and their learning behaviour. The students develop a basic concept that takes into account the different developmental maturity and musical-technical possibilities of the other players. This requires experimentation, discussion, sounding out difficulties, clearly structuring the form for memorisation, reducing some things, trying out rhythmic and melodic structures during the rehearsals until each ensemble member can identify with his or her part and feels comfortable. The structure of such a rehearsal unit must be clearly structured and didactically planned in advance so that members are not over- or under-challenged. In addition, the members with disabilities have mastered a repertoire over the years, and this means that they are the experts who can give pointers to the new students. But since the instrumental line-up also changes because the students change each semester, it is an additional challenge to rewrite or adapt the composition for the new instrumentation and to bring it into line with the expectations of the experienced musicians with disabilities. This calls for good compositional skills. In this group, the aesthetic demand meets the social demand of participation in public cultural life in a rather ideal way, because this ensemble not only rehearses for itself, but is invited several times a year by event organisers and also performs within the university.

The musicians with disabilities

Why am I writing about people with disabilities at the end of the *Insights* section? The aim of this article is to show the complexity of the environment in which we as educators move in general, and with people with disabilities in particular, when we enter their world. Normally, in teaching and accompanying work, we can only gradually get a picture of which dispositions are effective in the areas that I have already written about. Our actions are

based upon our own previous experiences and what we have already been able to learn from them. If we are honest with ourselves, we discover that each child, each pupil has his or her own unique history and moves in his or her own unique constellation, which results in ever new ways that draw from all the fields of action described above. If one succeeds in developing a better feeling for these interrelationships, this will above all help one to make judgements less quickly, and to make observations more prudently and draw conclusions more cautiously. Too little insight into this complex interplay is often due to ignorance, but sometimes it also arises from professional arrogance and narrow-mindedness, and in the worst case from indifference.

And as is so often the case, there is a paradox here: no matter how many insights and no matter how much knowledge and research there is, it is of no use if the spark of concern, of being touched, is not ignited during a personal encounter. These encounters can even be a shock, as I experienced myself and described at the beginning, or they can take place in a surprising and delightful encounter, as happened to our son's boss during a 'pumpkin workshop' at the children's university. An eight-year-old girl with Down's syndrome simply ignored the man's fears of physical contact, grabbed him by the hand, looked at him radiantly and said with total conviction: "You - help me". (She meant that he was to help her turn the little calabash into a shaker.) He of all people had been chosen, and he was led out of his insecurity so naturally, that he could feel in the here and now that he was exactly the right person for the child: this was a key experience and the discovery that he can be a suitable contact person even for children with learning disabilities and can convey joy and devotion in the process.

Essentially, there are two crucial moments that render music making and also moving and dancing a gratifying, desired experience of self in the heterogeneous community for people with disabilities. From the very beginning, from the first encounter, acceptance must be felt as a genuine attitude. People with disabilities have very finely developed antennae for feigned friendliness from an early age. They encounter their environment with a high degree of intuition, gather very different experiences and thus form a view of the world that corresponds to their possibilities. Christian Wetschka, pastoral assistant of the Caritas parish in Vienna, expresses his deeply felt relationship experiences drawn from many encounters with people with disabilities³⁸ in the following way:

You are us. We are reflected in you, you are our language... in order to reach you we want to continue our little self and root ourselves in your warmth. You are the ones who understand or misunderstand us, our listeners, our viewers... With you we are on a path that has never been ours alone, but always ours together. For you, we learn to understand your signs, to read your traces, so that we can find each other again when we lose our way. From our encounters with you, we know how redemptive it is to be accommodating.

Without this attitude of devotion, one cannot register the decisive and sensitive empathic moments in which real acceptance of one's being actually happens, those moments during which the quality of the relationship becomes true. If this attitude is authentically given, then the path to a conducive togetherness is also free, and the necessary sensitivity for

³⁸ Wetschka, 2020, 3.

these highly individual moments can be developed. It also becomes very clear that boundaries and rules have to be negotiated at eye level, because it is about successful relationships, which are usually strived for by both sides. These relationships sometimes do not succeed right away, but gradually they almost always do and often end in long-lasting loyalty. After a dance performance, a boy answered the question of what had been the most important thing for him by pointing out that on that day he was not a pupil, but a dancer on stage. Equality as a self-evident attitude is what is meant when the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities talks about *full participation*. If this position is not allowed, a piece of dignity breaks off.

In every pedagogical process, all participants are equal partners, even if they have different responsibilities and different competences. The positive orientation towards each other is as decisive as the right soil in the flower pot is for the plant. Only on this basis can beauty, ethics, let's say truthfulness, succeed and grow. It rarely happens that the other person is initially sceptical in his or her particular constellation. If a sceptic attitude is present, it usually stems from previous experiences, but it will pass with time. In general, the students express their surprise in the reflection discussions at how uncomplicated, unbiased and positive the contact with the musicians with disabilities was from the onset.

The second decisive moment is the recognition of the musical or dance performance, in rehearsals and especially in performances. Again, it depends on the sensitive consideration of the individual during the rehearsals, whether participants can release and contribute their possibilities as they are available at the moment. As already mentioned, it is a matter of pedagogical skill to give these possibilities a meaning. It is important to enable forms of participation that are functionally coherent and at the same time correspond to the limited or very different possibilities of the musicians. I cannot forget the example of a girl with autism who was enabled by Robert Wagner to participate in an ensemble by indicating the beginning and the end of the piece with a gong. Full concentration during the whole play, full attention of everyone else to her beats, full involvement in the process, although the girl were not active in the play.

However, it is also important to distinguish between secondary processes and music-making. Secondary processes signal other needs with the help of music-making and definitely influence the music-making process. It is then necessary to look for strategies so that making music can still be successful for everyone. Ivana knows well that her clear voice, her ability to remember song texts well or her pure singing are appreciated in the group. So, she often uses her verbal superiority to gain more contact, more attention in conversation, to feel that she is an important centre in the music-making group. Directly stopping this behaviour immediately generates feelings of being slighted, with the consequence that this behaviour becomes even stronger. So, the group leader appoints her as an assistant for his lead sheets and for another band member who is struggling to find her way around the song folder. Ivana experiences more direct proximity, receives brief praise each time and is satisfied with this small special role that does not burden her. There are no recipes for the often spontaneous interventions in the face of very individual needs. One needs imagination, empathy, quick reactions, quick analysis of the situation, assessing the consequences of the reaction, and often simply bridging the gap with humour and composure.

Experience shows that the individual participants usually surpass themselves during performances and convince the audience (however large or small it may be) with their joy, their authentic presentation of what is 'going on' inside them, of what they want to express and present in terms of skills. Here again, the question of how quality can be made possible is crucial. What are the general conditions under which they work? How much additional energy does it cost the teachers and group leaders who procure the necessary resources? What opportunities for further qualification, exchange of experience, experimentation and research are available or do they have to be established first? How relevant is the quality of inclusive music-making, inclusive education and thus the status of people with disabilities in the cultural scene for those responsible in culture and education?

It is a matter of creating opportunities, and there are so many ways to do that. People with and without disabilities will seize those opportunities. But creating opportunities is not about creating equal opportunities. Those do not exist. The members of a heterogeneous society must have the chance to realise their abilities in the best possible way.

Part 2: Looking ahead

If at this time, i.e. in the spring of 2020, we start to think about how inclusive music-making, performing, and dancing as a cultural asset of social diversity can be shaped in the future, then the contours of the scope for inclusion become clear. A virus challenges humanity globally and existentially. It forces humanity to reveal its basic values. The resilience of individual states also becomes visible. Are they able to actualise the human rights presented in the first part of this article even through structures that may have to be newly established?

And again, it becomes clear: none of us can exclude ourselves from the implementation of basic values in everyday life – we all constitute society, we all have spheres of activity and possibilities for shaping aspects of our personal environment and thus a potential for decision-making. The oath of revelation that the Corona crisis demands of us clearly shows which parts of the right to participate in the life of our society, also in cultural life, in music life, and in education, are not (yet) realised for the groups threatened by exclusion.

It is especially important now not to lose sight of the opportunities that have already been prepared, and to continue with the same intensity, attitude, assertiveness and perseverance along the paths that have already been successfully taken. Impressive is the letter of the Federal President of the Association of German Music Schools of 17 April 2020, which pleads for special attentiveness with regard to the central music school values and thus also for inclusion.³⁹ If we look ahead and want inclusive education and inclusive music making, dancing, acting to become a matter of course for the following generations in five, ten or twenty years, then this means gaining clarity about the prerequisites that still need to be developed and about the structures that are not yet sufficient.

³⁹ VdM 2020.

Here are some thoughts from the field:

- Inclusive music-making can only succeed as a participatory process. This means that diversity must not only be asserted as a rhetorical commitment in the theoretical discourse of educational institutions, but must also be proactively implemented in the reallocation of resources. The turbulence in the system caused by Corona could even be an opportunity for increased community spirit and cooperation.
- All institutions with pedagogically oriented teaching offerings can only be meaningfully inclusive for students if sufficient practical offerings are also provided, and if these offerings are appropriately well prepared, didactically accompanied and followed up. We must work to ensure that this becomes a natural and obligatory part of teaching practice over time. Furthermore, one of the important tasks of the future will be to ensure that inclusive music-making opportunities are grown into the whole the music scene.
- One structural element that is not given enough attention in almost all training is this: sufficient, scheduled time for teamwork, which is necessary so that energies can be focused. It is also indispensable in order to find a consensus for decisions among all people involved in the respective process. Innovative ideas need to be prepared in joint discussions between all levels involved so that they can be successfully realised. In laboriously coordinated meetings, only the most necessary things can be discussed and projects cannot mature to the point of clarity in which tensions and difficulties first come to light and can then be dealt with and overcome. Such a process will subsequently open up new paths for everyone.
- One of the goals is that, over time, students will independently demand inclusive settings and organise opportunities for themselves, because they have understood that these are a part of their field of work that can no longer be negated. More than ten percent of the total population is affected by disability. To date, this large percentage of the population has been completely underrepresented in the art scene. It is important to find and use possible 'spaces'.
- The University of Music and Performing Arts is setting a good example in this regard, as more and more of its institutes are gradually setting up their inclusive practice ensemble. The goal should be for every institute that offers pedagogical courses also to have an inclusive ensemble. Increasingly, these music groups are being integrated into the regular canon of events (institute days, celebrations, further training, external representation) and they vividly demonstrate that participation can be realised in the best sense of the word. Through this approach, graduates gradually succeed in becoming active as multipliers in their spheres of influence and contribute to breaking down preconceived opinions, fears of thresholds, bureaucratic hurdles and much more. Graduates gradually succeed in bringing to life a more realistic image of the regularly cited words *enrichment through diversity*.

Christian Gottlob Neefe, Beethoven's teacher, wrote in his invitation to a concert by the young composer that a stranger who loves music should never leave Bonn without musical

nourishment.⁴⁰ Musical nourishment! That which touches all people in their souls, drives them, brings them together and makes them happy. That of which we must not deprive anyone. Musical nourishment that can connect very different worlds through making music together. Musical nourishment through which different aesthetic and social demands can be brought to successful, convincing forms.

This is achieved, for example, through the Sound Festivals, which are organised in a three-year sequence by the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna and the Vienna School of Music. In addition to the specialist conferences on inclusive music-making organised by the same institutions, an theme day on inclusion is also needed once a year within the university, where the forms of cooperation practised, didactic elements and challenges, performance practices, public relations management, cooperation and other questions can be dealt with. This would create an inward-looking development process that creates empowerment.

In terms of framework conditions and infrastructure, this means that inclusion is to be understood as a broad cross-cutting issue. For attentive observers, some constellations repeat themselves. If it was said at the beginning of the historical overview that the need to publish a convention specifically designed for the rights of persons with disabilities existed because the implementation of the general human rights of 1948 had not found its way into the living environment of persons with disabilities. The same set of circumstances is repeated in our days with regard to the implementation of the requirements of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Article 24, Education, paragraph 2b clarifies that persons with disabilities should have access to inclusive, quality and free education in primary and secondary schools on an equal basis with others in the community in which they live, and this includes music education. Article 30, paragraph 2 states that States Parties shall take appropriate measures to enable persons with disabilities to develop and use their creative, artistic and intellectual potential, not only for themselves but also for the enrichment of society.

So, if we look at developments that took place since the ratification of the UN CRPD in 2008 and the implementation twelve years later to see how far this has succeeded, then we will see that it is probably a matter of urgency to create more social relevance. Efforts are needed on the part of education to create new fields of action for inclusion. We can make a variation of the very wise sentence by Paul Celan in a letter to Ingeborg Bachmann: The chance of my verses is their existence, by stating: "The chance of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is its existence". We, as a human community, have already initiated this convention, a wonderful set of rules has already been in place for more than a decade, and each of us has the opportunity to make it a little more alive.

I have tried to present some concrete, practice-based suggestions. With their realisation, for which we need the common will of many, the path towards systemically anchoring inclusive education in training programmes can be taken further. In 2008, a window for a paradigm shift was opened with the ratification of the Participatory Justice Agreement. At present, the musical or artistic initiatives, ensembles, courses, further education, festivals act like pieces

⁴⁰ Quoted from Leibnitz, 2019

of a mosaic scattered across our country. In the public perception, they are still exceptional phenomena, worthy initiatives of particularly committed individuals, but at the same time a negligible quantity when it comes to funding, equal participation or political will.

For every art there are two: one who makes it and one who needs it. This idea is attributed to the sculptor Ernst Barlach. But, do we, does society need the artistic-creative activity of people with disabilities, their creation, this special way of practising art? Do we need a legendary production of *Medea* by the *Rambazamba* Theatre? Do we need the dance theatre *Flötenzauber* by the studio groups of the cultural and educational association *Ich bin O.k?* Do we need sound festivals created by a number of inclusive bands? Do we need a film project like *Accompagnato, the art of accompaniment* with the *Württemberg Philharmonic Orchestra*? The list of impressive public performances that bring people with disabilities to the podium and stage year after year is already long and very diverse. With deep conviction and from all my experience I say: Yes, we need this art!

Through this art, each of us is touched existentially in our own way and brought back to ourselves. The ambivalence of one's own possibilities of success is bathed in a new light, one's own being loses its self-evidence. Alternative forms of joyful music-making, dancing and performing open up new perspectives. These perspectives must not be lost or withheld from a mature society if it is to truly develop in the sense of participatory justice and dignity for all members.

Once again, the ideas of the great researcher on inclusion, Georg Feuser, is relevant. He writes in an abbreviated presentation of his model of structure-building processes that every living system has its internal organisation in which it links its internally running processes in its own time, and that every living system is also in relation to other systems with which it enters into exchange and must synchronise itself with them. He states that the attractors are decisive for the direction of development, since they determine the direction and speed with which these exchange processes drift, and move into new ramifications. The potentials released in the process bring about transformation processes. The exchange processes change the structures, and something new emerges. These four structural elements of an organism work together integratively.⁴¹

If I were to venture an outlook for inclusive music-making, dancing, acting in the large organism that is our society, and in doing so base my ideas on Feuser's model of structure-forming processes, then I would say that we are currently in the phase of *exchange in inclusive* music education or in inclusive pedagogical activity in general. That is also the purpose of this book. In the near future, the *attractor* will be crucial: Under which guiding star do we place participatory justice in our pedagogical work? Is it human rights, is it really *full participation*? Is it utilitarian ideas of usefulness? Will it be about populism or other 'isms'? Whatever the case may be, it would be good and helpful for all those who work in music education and have a decisive influence on the institutions to draw up a declaration with a clear commitment to inclusion. It would be a binding commitment, but one that is urgently needed as a reference statement for the young generation of educators. A model for this would be the Potsdam Declaration of the Association of German Music Schools of 16

⁴¹ Feuser 1995, 102.

May 2014.⁴² Even if it is not a perfect representation of desirable music pedagogical action in future, it is a clear commitment to participatory justice.

Let us succeed in this socially very relevant step, this common commitment to inclusive musical education in our country! Then the outlook beyond the horizon will widen for a transformation process in our society. The paradigm shift intended in the UN CRPD has become common knowledge by now. Through its gradual realisation in many areas of life – also in the field of art, music, dance and theatre – in the direction of *full participation*, it can be modified according to the circumstances. Its implementation can be accelerated, and, in the case of errors, also be taken back a little, and then further developed with new insights. In this process, participatory music-making, dancing and acting will gain relevance for future generations and for all members of our society.

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