

## 5th Berlin Appeal

### Making Music – Taking a Stand

### Towards a Democratic, Pluralistic, and Culturally Diverse Society

The German Music Council, the world's largest national umbrella organisation of musical life, representing the interests of approximately 14 million music-making individuals, is committed to a democratic, pluralistic society in which the values and norms rooted in the German Constitution are lived out in daily practice. We see these values and standards being endangered by the hate and violence propagated by both right-wing and left-wing radical groups as well as by the spread of right-wing terrorism and the current coarseness permeating public discourse. There can be no room in our society for anti-Semitism, racism, or homophobia.

The formative power of music, the breadth and depth of which cannot be compared to any other art form, touches all human senses and capabilities. Making music and experiencing music are core elements of a holistic education for all of humanity. Our musical culture is one medium through which we are able to communicate with others, which is why the freedom of the arts and their instruction is protected by Article 5 of the German Constitution. These principles form the basis of our opposition to the misuse of music when it is employed to promote racism or the glorification of violence.

#### The German Music Council appeals

**to all who live in Germany to actively commit themselves to a coexistence founded upon human dignity and tolerance – for the dignity of a human being is unalienable.** Fear-mongering is the means by which demagogues and populists peddle seemingly simple answers to complex issues. If we are to strengthen our social cohesion, one of the core responsibilities that must be undertaken by both government and civil society is to transform fear into curiosity.

#### The German Music Council demands

- **that the freedom of the arts be defended on the basis of the broad definition of culture set forth in the 1982 UNESCO Mexico City Declaration.** The 'results-oriented cultural funding' promoted by right-wing national governments in Europe along with the demand by right-wing groups in Germany for the 'cleansing of the culture industry' are thinly-veiled ideological battles against the freedom of the arts.
- **that parliaments and governments at every federal level consistently implement the UNESCO Universal Declaration for Cultural Diversity.** Cultural diversity is a prerequisite for social cohesion. Participation in cultural activities is a prerequisite for cultural diversity.
- **that Germany's Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs establish the necessary parameters for qualified and on-going musical education.** Music must once again be considered a compulsory component of the educational curriculum – in every type of school and at every grade level. This can only be accomplished when instructors are skilled as both pedagogues and musicians. When staff shortages lead to the hiring of non-specialists and lateral entrants, this not only

threatens to de-professionalise the music education industry and endangers entire music degree programmes at institutions of higher learning, but it also deprives children and youth of a critical component of a holistic education. Reinforcing the cultural education provided by music schools and through amateur music-making is another crucial consideration.

### The German Music Council believes it is essential

- **to view language not merely as a means of communication, but as a cultural asset.** A living language requires both the recollection of its own historical development and an understanding of the beauty and expressiveness of its direct and indirect effects that results in a responsible attitude towards its use. Language, like music, is a key element of how we identify ourselves, whether as individuals or as a society.
- **to promote a culture of social discourse that does not allow complex issues to be left to the simplification of populist activists.** Out of respect for those who hold different beliefs, opposing positions must be carefully discussed on the basis of facts and without treating compromise as if it were a dirty word. In an era where opinion-formation is increasingly driven by algorithms, this must include seeking out areas of interconnectedness and taking a respectful approach to dialogue. Democracy is hard work, but there is no alternative.
- **to increase the esteem in which the people who work for the common good of our country are held, whether as volunteers or professionals.** This includes police officers, firefighters, sanitation workers and health care workers as well as those who are active in civic organisations, local politics, aid associations, or the military, and those involved in the music scene, with its diverse professional and volunteer networks.
- **to consistently ensure the enforcement of all applicable laws for the protection of the people in our country as well as the prompt investigation of violations of laws or regulations.**
- **to foster a greater sense of responsibility for maintaining diversity in both nature and culture.** In the Anthropocene, the human-influenced geological epoch, the preservation of creation is a deeply cultural issue, so one example might be that international trade agreements not further the overexploitation of nature or inhumane working conditions.

We at the German Music Council, individuals from a wide variety of backgrounds and of differing worldviews, stand not only for music for its own sake, but, as citizens, also for the peaceful and respectful coexistence of all in our country.

In the spirit of the 5th Berlin Appeal, we will continue to raise our voices: For democracy and a vibrant, music-filled Germany.

Berlin, 2019