



Musical Education in Germany

Musikerziehung in Deutschland – Educazione musicale
in Germania – Musikutbildning i Tyskland

by Angelika Maier

This article gives a short overview of most kinds of musical education in Germany. It includes the musical education of children at pre-school age, in general public schools and institutions that train professional and non-professional musicians of all ages.

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1. Introduction

One of the purposes in the CADENCE project was to understand and compare the musical education in the three schools that participated. Doing this, obviously questions about the schools' background and the musical education in the respective states arose. This article tries to answer some of these questions for Germany.



When talking about education in Germany, there is something important you should always keep in mind: Germany is a federation of 16 states. Education is part of the field “culture”, and the federal constitution says that each of the 16 states is sovereign in that domain. That means for example that Germany has 16 different educational systems! But it’s not as bad and confusing as it sounds in theory. In reality many things are organised quite similarly within the different states. I will restrict most of this article to a description of the musical education in my state, Baden-Württemberg, Germany’s most south-western state with 11 million inhabitants.

Links to all 16 ministries responsible for culture and education in the German states can be found under the following:

<http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kultusministerium>

It’s not always possible to translate names of school types and institutions into a foreign language because the institutions themselves don’t always have exact equivalents in other countries. Therefore you will find some names in this article in German.

2. Musical education in the family

Of course the differences between families can be tremendous. If you ask someone on which occasions his family would sing or play music, the most common answer will be: “At Christmas.” But the rest of the year?

Since the sixties there has been a decline in singing within the family. The lullaby went completely out of fashion and was replaced by the sandman on TV. For many years, music teachers in schools say that less and less children are able to sing. Yet, I don’t know if any research has been carried out to verify this.



3. Musical education in pre-school institutions

The most important pre-school institutes are the Kindergartens for children aged 3-6 years. It is optional for parents to send their children there. Kindergartens are run by communes, churches, private enterprises, and organisations. In Baden-Württemberg there was no curriculum for them in the past, but since 2009 there are mandatory guidelines (Orientierungssplan). Yet they are very general and thus leave a lot of freedom to the Kindergartens.

In the Kindergarten all kind of abilities of the child should be developed. One of these is to express oneself in different ways. To sing, move, dance, paint, and speak are ways to do this and all these activities should be encouraged and practised in the Kindergarten. The guidelines underline that there should be musical education in the Kindergarten. They ask that the educators should sing a lot with the children and they talk about the hope that this might inspire families to do the same.

In many Kindergartens the educators sing with the children daily (sometimes this is connected with dancing). But, depending on the staff, there are also Kindergartens where this happens only rarely.

Music lessons are a part of the professional training of educators at the Fachschulen für Sozialpädagogik. But it’s left to the educators’ will, taste, and abilities as to how much they do in the field of music in their work.

4. Musical education in schools for general education

It is compulsory for everybody to attend these schools for 9 years (some states: 10 years) from the age of 6.

According to their performance at primary school and to the forecast of their performance the students continue at one type of secondary school.



Hauptschule is the least demanding, Gymnasium the most demanding school type for students.

This is an overview of the German schools of general education:

	Primarstufe (primary school)	Sekundarstufe 1 (secondary school)	Sekundarstufe 2 (grammar school, high school)
Name of school type	Grundschule	Hauptschule Realschule Gymnasium	Gymnasium
General age of students that attend it (years)	From 6 to 10 (From 6 to 12)	From 10 to 16	16 to 18 (19)
Years of attendance	4 (6)	6 Hauptschule 9-10	2 (or 3)
possible final qualification		Hauptschulabschluss Realschulabschluss (also called „Mittlere Reife“)	Abitur

4.1. Musical education in primary school

Music is a part of the “subject pool” “Mensch, Natur und Kultur” (in Baden-Württemberg). The curriculum states that the pupils should learn to express themselves, to experience how they act on others. They should become self confident and get a positive idea of their abilities. To achieve these aims, artistic activities, for example music and dance, should be used. The curriculum names a list of songs and a list of song types that each pupil should be taught at primary school.



Most (all?) primary schools have a set of musical instruments, mostly the Orff instruments, and one room equipped with a piano. In some primary schools the pupils can opt for additional music activities, for example a school choir.

Teachers at primary school have studied at the Pädagogische Hochschule. There they can choose music as one of their subjects.

A new trend at some primary schools is “Jeki” = jedem Kind ein Instrument (an instrument for each child). The idea started some years ago in Nordrhein-Westfalen. Since 2007 in the Jeki schools all children have the possibility to learn an instrument. They can get music lessons at a quite cheap price and the instruments are provided by the schools. They are taught in groups of approximately 5 pupils. In addition to that they play together in the classes and in school orchestras.

Other German states have picked up this idea and have started with Jeki.

www.jedemkind.de/programm/home.php

www.tagesspiegel.de/meinung/kommentare/jedem-kind-ein-instrument/1719628.html

Some Jeki schools stopped this project after some time because it became too expensive or the sponsoring for it was limited in time.

4.2. Musical education in secondary schools (Baden-Württemberg)

4.2.1. Gymnasium:

At the Gymnasium the timetable includes 8-9 weekly music lessons in the first 6 years. This is an average of 1,5 music lessons a week. (1 lesson = 45 min.) The curriculum distinguishes three approaches to music: to create music, to listen to music and to understand it, and, the last one, to reflect on music. According to the curriculum, music lessons should include a lot of



music making, theory should always start with practical doing. The curriculum includes music theory, such as the system of the notes, aural training, the basics of harmonics, knowledge of musical forms and music history.

Each Gymnasium has at least one music room which is equipped with a (grand) piano and various other instruments, sheet music for choir singing, and, of course, audio equipment like cd players, cds, and computer.

Usually the students can benefit from optional activities like choirs, classical orchestras, big bands, and other music ensembles.

At some Gymnasiums students can choose music as a main subject (Musikprofil). In all Gymnasiums music can be a main subject in Sekundarstufe 2, which means that it is taught 4 lessons a week. Some Gymnasiums have "Bläserklassen" (wood wind instrument player classes), "Streicherklassen" (bowed string instrument classes), "Gesangsklassen" (singing classes) during the first and second and sometimes third year. In these classes the students get also instrument lessons at school.

The Gymnasium teachers have been trained at a Musikhochschule (see 5.)

4.2.2. Realschule

In the first four years all students have two music lessons a week. In the final two years the students opt either for music or for art (painting etc.) The programme for the Realschule includes singing and playing music, also in several voices, accompanying and arranging tunes, learning about music notation, rhythm, modes, dynamics, musical forms, musical instruments, eras and styles of music history.

Most Realschulen organise a choir and/or an orchestra for interested students. Some of them also offer Bläserklassen (wind instrument classes), Streicherklassen (string instrument classes), etc.



4.2.3. Hauptschule

At the Hauptschule music is a part of the "subject pool" "Musik – Sport – Gestalten" (music – sport – creation). Again the approach to arts is: to perceive, to reflect, to create.

With the help of some musical instruments the pupils learn some music theory. They play simple accompaniments to short tunes and get to know some eras, artists, and composers in music history.

5. Musical education in Hochschulen (colleges)

The Musikhochschulen offer training for future professional musicians. There you can get the highest level of musical education in public institutions.

The Musikhochschulen teach mainly classical European music, most of them also teach jazz music, some of them pop music, and one (?) of them includes traditional music in its fields of study, the Hochschule für Musik und Theater, München.

http://website.musikhochschule-muenchen.de/de/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=749&Itemid=761

6. Musical education in Konservatorien (conservatoires)

Some conservatoires offer training for professional musicians, some offer musical education for everybody (and in this case they are the same as a music school in spite of their different name), some do both.

7. Musical education in Musikschulen (music schools)

Music schools offer musical education for everybody. They are either run by a commune or by an organisation. If an organisation runs it, one or several communes can be associated in it (like the organisation of "BURG FÜRSTENECK"). They all vary in size and in what they offer.



Usually the music schools are subsidised by the communes. This aid varies a lot according to the commune. The students pay most of the costs for their lessons. An average fee for a weekly individual lesson of 30 minutes is about 60 €/month at the moment.

Most of the music schools are members of an umbrella organisation called Verband deutscher Musikschulen (VDM) www.musikschulen.de, which assembles 909 music schools, teaching in 4000 places, more than 1 million students, by 35 000 teachers. The music schools are an important agent in musical education in Germany.

Here you find the statistics of members in the umbrella organisation VDM since 1952, which certainly reflects the development of music schools in Germany in general:

www.musikschulen.de/musikschulen/fakten/vdm-musikschulen

This is a link to a diagram, that shows the proportions of the different age groups of the students at music schools

www.musikschulen.de/musikschulen/fakten/schuelerzahlaltersverteilung

... and it informs about their favourite instruments over the last 34 years.

www.musikschulen.de/musikschulen/fakten/die-beliebtesten-instrumente

The VDM has developed curricula and standards for music teaching, but they are mere recommendations and mostly the music school teachers are free to teach what they think is appropriate to their students.

Most music schools provide lessons for very young children up to 4 years (called for ex. "Zwergenmusik", "Musikgarten") and for pre-school children (called musikalische Grundausbildung and Rhythmik). For children and adults of any age they offer lessons for a variety of instruments. Teaching is mostly structured



as weekly lessons of 30-60 minutes. The pupils are taught individually or in small groups. They also have the possibility to play in ensembles organised by the music school.

To get an idea what is taught in the music schools I will use the one in my home town as an example. At the moment it is structured in the following sections: wind instruments, bowed string instruments, plucked string instruments, pop and jazz music, piano, voice, recorder. They also offer Zwergenmusik, Rhythmik and musikalische Grundausbildung.

Besides the so called public music schools there are countless private music schools of many sorts.

8. Musical education in music organisations, orchestras, music academies

Many orchestras organise music lessons for their members, especially for young people, to train them for their ensembles. You find lots of different types of orchestras for non-professional musicians: brass bands, big bands, classical orchestras www.bdlo.de, string orchestras, zither orchestras, mandolin orchestras, accordion clubs, choirs, fife and drum bands,...

These orchestras are allied to umbrella organisations that often run music schools (often called academies) to train their conductors, group leaders, and teachers. Some of those umbrella organisations have set up a system of qualifications for the musicians in their member orchestras. The musicians receive training in instrument playing and music theory in preparation for those exams.

There are also academies that are not tied to one umbrella organisation. They offer for example further musical education for school teachers, and orchestras and choirs can book their houses (often former castles or monasteries) for weekend rehearsals etc. Examples in Baden-Württemberg:

www.kultusportal-bw.de/servlet/PB/menu/1188514/index.html?ROOT=1146607



Summary

To describe musical education in Germany can be a never-ending task. I could continue by mentioning the many private music teachers and the many individuals, folk clubs, Volkshochschulen, Familienbildungsstätten, etc. that organise workshops and courses regularly or every now and then. But too much information and details don't make things clearer.

I hope you were able to get an impression of musical education in Germany and also some ideas, catch words, and links to find out more about it yourself if you wish.



Photo: Heidrun Fischer

Angelika Maier (Germany)

Angelika Maier comes from Southern Germany. She started playing music as a child. Her first instrument was the recorder. Later she had guitar and flute lessons and taught herself to play the mandolin and hammered dulcimer.

She has always loved folk music and has always had a soft spot for instruments which produce lots of harmonics. Therefore, it was probably inevitable that some day she would be charmed by the nyckelharpa and tempted to play it. Although she was slightly hesitant to learn a new instrument at the age of fifty, she decided to give it a try. That was six years ago and she has never regretted this decision.

Besides being a nyckelharpa player she teaches flute and recorder.

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More sources and further information:

The Kindergarten guidelines:
Ministerium für Kultus, Jugend und Sport Baden-Württemberg
Orientierungsplan für Bildung und Erziehung für die baden-württembergischen Kindergärten, Beltz Verlag, Weinheim und Basel, 2006
or

www.kultusportal-bw.de/servlet/PB/show/1215793/oplan_bw.pdf

Curricula for all schools for general education in Baden-Württemberg

www.bildung-staerkt-menschen.de/service/downloads/Bildungsplaene

Curricula for all schools for general education in Germany

www.bildungserver.de/zeigen.html?seite=400

Lists of Musikhochschulen in Germany:

www.studentenpilot.de/studium/hochschulen/musikhochschulen.htm

http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liste_der_Musikhochschulen_und_Konservatorien_in_Deutschland

www.die-deutschen-musikhochschulen.de/ueber-uns