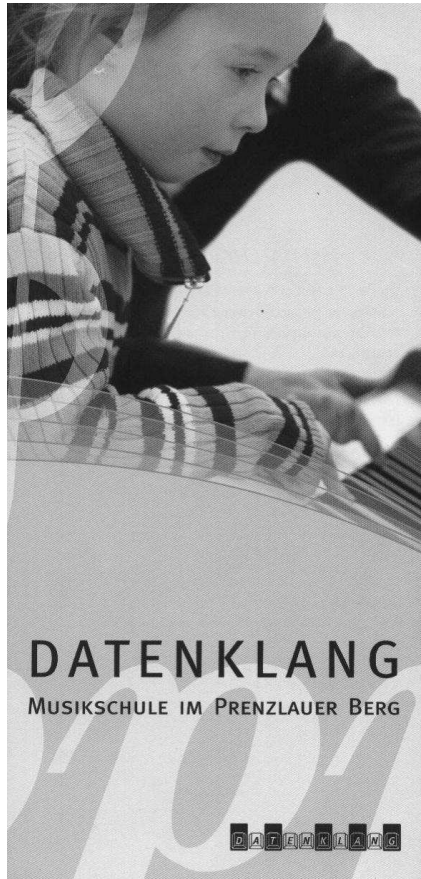


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MODERN
MUSIC SCHOOL 



7. Music Schools in Berlin

“*Ich bin ein Berliner*”¹“

J.F. Kennedy

Germany, the home land of the greatest classical composers², is probably the European nation with the most important tradition in music education. From the regimes of the past to the present times, Governments have always supported and promoted culture and music as a mean of national pride and identity. From the end of the XIX century, the teaching of music education have been introduced in ordinary schools, especially through the use of the Orff instrumentation and approach³. In this country it is possible to assert that everyone can play an instrument and almost any category of workers in each city has its own band.

7.1 Berlin

Berlin, the capital of Germany, is an energetic, vibrant, ever-changing, controversial, contradictory, sharp, nonconformist, tolerant, many-sided city⁴. It is the bridge between the East and the West, and in this city in the heart of continental Europe all music styles find their expression: from the techno of the Love Parade to Jazz in the small clubs of the city centre, from the classical music of the Philharmonie to the punk of the eastern side, etc. In this tumultuous evolution of styles and preferences, and in a context of favourable legislation⁵, many different kinds of schools have been founded and developed.

Music Education in Berlin⁶

Each district of the city has its public Music School. They are organized in the “Association of German Schools of Music”⁷.

At a secondary school level, recognized music education is provided by two music Gymnasiums, while at a university level, the Higher School of Music “Hanns Eislers” and the Universities of Arts⁸ can graduate students in music studies. In 1995 it has been created the Regional Music Academy⁹ for the training of music tutors.

¹ “I am a Berliner”, sentence pronounced at the end of his famous speech in West Berlin in 1963.

² Just mentioning a few names: J. S. Bach, L. Van Beethoven, R. Wagner, R. Strauss, G. Mahler, etc.

³ Orff Schulwerk (1930-35).

⁴ Taken from: *Berlin*, Lonely Planet Publications, 1999, p.1

⁵ In terms of tax deductions and social security to teachers, approved by the public institutions, that permitted the birth and growth also to private Schools for profit such as Datenklang and MMS. (see § 7.3 e 7.4)

⁶ Taken and adapted from: Klaus Siebenhaar, *KulturHandbuch Berlin*, Berlin, Bostelmann & Siebenhaarverlag, 2005, p.381-382

⁷ Verband Deutscher Musikschulen.

⁸ Kunsthochschulen.

⁹ Landesmusikakademie.

Many other civic and public associations provide promotion to music courses, activities and studies. Three main kinds of Music Schools have been found and analysed in the following paragraphs.

7.2 Public Music Schools: the Musikschule Neukölln¹⁰

The School of Music Neukölln, established in Berlin in 1927, is one of the 3 oldest public Music Schools in Germany. With an exemplary and, at that time, largely anticipating methodology, it has obtained a very fast fame and reputation, and its foundation is considered as a starting point for the modern music education in Germany.

At Musikschule Neukölln, 150 teachers provide 60 different instrumental and vocal lessons to a total of 3100 students per year. Lessons are mostly individual, but also in groups and ensembles. The offer is addressed to pupils from the age of 2 up to youngsters, adults and seniors. All teachers have an high qualification in music education and many of them are at the same time active musicians and tutors at Higher School of Music and in the Academies of Music.

Main fields of activities are: basic music education, music activities in ordinary schools, instrumental carousel for parents with children, music of other cultures (jazz, rock, pop), school choirs, preparation for the entrance examination to the Higher School of Music, musicals, music for theatre, world music, music with new media and the organization of a total of 170 concerts and musical events visited every year by about 18.000 people.

The School cooperates with ordinary schools of the district, the Higher School of Music of Berlin, the Regional Academy of Music and with many other associations in the music field.

7.3 Private Franchising of Music Schools for Profit: MMS Berlin¹¹

The Modern Music School Berlin is private limited company located in Berlin Steglitz, part of a German franchising network that counts about 60 Schools in and outside Germany.¹²

MMS, the first American styled Music School in Germany, established 18 years ago, is specialized in rock and pop music, but has a growing department of DJ courses. Lessons are weekly and in major instruments. There is no age limit (from children to adults) and the flexible teaching program can be adapted to both amateurs and professionals (until Bachelor degree). Teachers are all graduated, specialists in their field and active musicians.

Every year the centralized organization organises national contests, especially for DJs and drummers. Modern Music School has relations with the Musicians Institute of Los Angeles and with many sponsors in the music industry similar to those of ACM¹³. (see chapter 4)

¹⁰ Information taken from the School's website. (see "References")

¹¹ Information gathered from the School's website (see "References") and from a visit in August 2004.

¹² Some are in Greece, Turkey, Costa Rica, etc.

¹³ Until a few years ago they had relations with ACM and LAMA.

7.4 Independent Music Schools for Profit: Datenklang Berlin¹⁴

Datenklang, one of the biggest private Music Schools in Berlin, was founded in 2001 as a private School of Music and Computer education in Prenzlauer Berg. In 2004 the two main fields of activities became independent divisions and centres of profit, and then, at the end of 2005, two separated enterprises¹⁵. Adrian Kroß¹⁶, one of the two founders and owners, took the responsibility of the Music School and is now its owner and Managing Director.

During the first five years of activity the School passed from 50 to 350 pupils, offering¹⁷ courses for pre-school children, vocal and instrumental lessons, band coaching, studies for professional preparation and sale of teaching programs and systems to other music teachers.

The commitment of the new School of Music is oriented to comply with the standards of the Association of German Schools of Music.

Surrounding Area

In the Prenzlauer Berg district live about 135.000 inhabitants¹⁸, and it can therefore be compared to a rather big city in a relative small territory (10,95 km²). In Prenzlauer Berg live many young people (26,2% of the population is between 15 and 30 years old¹⁹) and also the birth rate (2,1 children per woman) is much higher than the German average. Furthermore, there are 16 primary schools with about 4500 pupils, 3 secondary schools with approximately 850 pupils, 5 gymnasiums with an average of 3500 students and 2 schools for superior education with a total of 1200 students.

The district has always been distinguished for the high educational level (46% of the inhabitants have an high school graduation) and the historical inclination to creativity.

Competitors

In the same area operate one private and one public Music School, as well as many private teachers of single instruments.

Private teachers have usually only a little number of pupils and cover mainly one instrument. Their customers have therefore no chance of choice among different types of instruments and number of teachers.

The public Music School is financed by the State and can offer lessons in all instruments, but a two years waiting list to enter it is the norm and, due to its bureaucratic structure, there is an insufficient attention to the needs of individual customers.

¹⁴ When not specified from other source, all information have been gathered from the interview (6/1/2006) to Adrian Kroß, owner and Managing Director of the School, and Marcus Wisweh, Managing Director Assistant, from Datenklang's business plan, publications and website. (see "References")

¹⁵ Datenklang is now an individual enterprise.

¹⁶ He studied pedagogy at the Humboldt University of Berlin and obtained the music Diploma at the Higher School of Music of Berlin. He is now professor for concert guitar at the Regional Music Academy of Berlin.

¹⁷ Or planning to offer.

¹⁸ 2003 figure.

¹⁹ While the average in Germany is 18,3 %.

The private Music School has only 3 classrooms and it is basically organized as a cooperative of musicians, who make separate agreements.

Shared Values

Datenklang is a network of musicians that has been committed to make possible a creative approach to music for children, youngsters and elderly people. Music improves the learning ability and requires equilibrium, competence and creativity. Music, as no other media, can affect human senses, body, feelings, intelligence and fantasy.

Target Market

The School focuses on 5 main target groups: pre-school children, children in primary schools, young people, adults, schools and nursery schools. The most part of pupils attending Datenklang are aged between 6 and 14.

4 P of the School:

Product

Datenklang offers courses in all major instruments and styles. Lessons are mostly individual, to encourage personal expression.²⁰ Complementary courses and ensemble lessons are offered free of charge. The study program and the enrolments are on a yearly base²¹, but the School gives the possibility to leave the course during the first three months with a two weeks' notice. Pupils are free to change instrument, teacher and type of lesson during the year.²²

The School puts special effort to support parents and children to choose the right instrument and the most suitable course. For this purpose, special courses that allow the testing and experience with different instruments are proposed.²³ A first lesson free of charge is also offered to children.

The School can provide instruments²⁴ for a small rental and grants scholarship and reductions to unemployed and people in strained circumstances.

Place

The School has seven equipped classrooms for a total of 300 square metres over two premises in Berlin Prenzlauer Berg. All premises have optimal transport connections.

²⁰ While instead lessons in public schools in Berlin are mostly in groups.

²¹ Fees are divided into 12 monthly instalments. Lessons take place 11 months per year: all months except August.

²² While it is very hard in public Schools, because of bureaucratic procedures.

²³ Such as the "Klangwiese" (meadows of music, 1-3 years old), the "Musikalische Früherziehung" (basic music education, from 4 years old) and the "Instrumentenkarussell" (instrumental carousel, 5-10 years old).

²⁴ About 20 guitars, 10 keyboards, 1 sax, etc.

Promotion

The distinctive marks of the Music School are its high quality, the proximity to the customers and the special service orientation. These characteristics can also be found in the advertising strategy.

In the opinion of the Management of the School the best advertising is quality: 70% of current students came to the School by word of mouth and suggestions. Previous experiences have shown that newspapers or magazine advertisements did not give the required effect. Starting from this assumption, the advertising strategy of Datenklang is based on the following channels:

- Website: updated and visible²⁵;
- Leaflets: distributed during concerts of School's students;
- Concerts: two big public concerts per year as well as regular class auditions;
- Relations with nursery and ordinary schools: two visits per year to first and second classes of primary schools for an introduction to instruments.

Price

Lessons for children in small groups cost 30 euros per month, while individual lessons for grown up cost between 60 and 110 euros per month, depending on the length of the lesson.

Structure

Datenklang employs 25 part-time teachers, one Team Assistant and one Technical Coordinator. All teachers have regularly attended the Higher School of Music and have good experience in teaching and as professional musicians. The School makes also use of external advisors for management, administration and tax consultancy.

Economic Valuations

Total revenues of Datenklang in 2005 were about 175.000 euros, all coming from School's fees. Teaching salaries accounted for 60% of total costs.

²⁵ See "References".