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### Switzerland: The Largest Country in the World

Leonard Cecil

*Musik-Akademie der Stadt Basel*

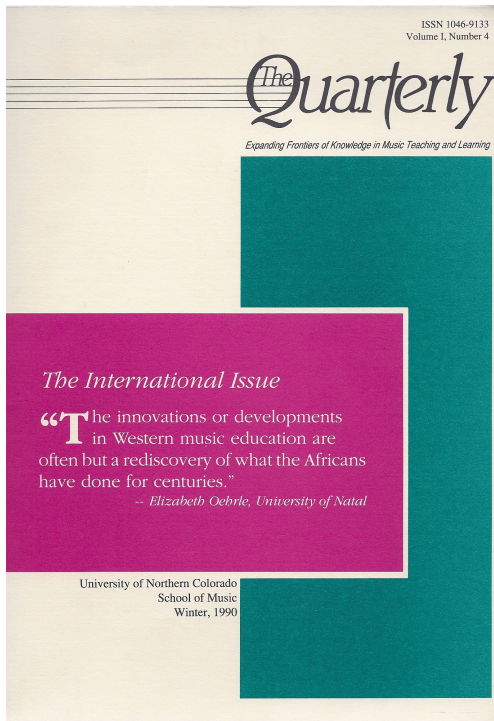
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*It is with pleasure that we inaugurate the reprint of the entire seven volumes of The Quarterly Journal of Music Teaching and Learning. The journal began in 1990 as The Quarterly. In 1992, with volume 3, the name changed to The Quarterly Journal of Music Teaching and Learning and continued until 1997. The journal contained articles on issues that were timely when they appeared and are now important for their historical relevance. For many authors, it was their first major publication. Visions of Research in Music Education will publish facsimiles of each issue as it originally appeared. Each article will be a separate pdf file. Jason D. Vodicka has accepted my invitation to serve as guest editor for the reprint project and will compose a new editorial to introduce each volume. Chad Keilman is the production manager. I express deepest thanks to Richard Colwell for granting VRME permission to re-publish The Quarterly in online format. He has graciously prepared an introduction to the reprint series.*

# Switzerland: *The Largest Country in the World*

By Leonard Cecil

*Musik-Akademie der Stadt Basel*

**Abstract:** Switzerland's widely divergent geography and many cultures allow the music educators of the country to exchange ideas with their neighbors while preserving rich local traditions. In this article, the author interviews the directors of the divisions of the Musik-Akademie der Stadt Basel. The directors, in discussing their education, music, and aspirations, together represent the nationalistic mix as well as the spirit of cooperation that is characteristic of Switzerland.

To quote from George Mike's *Switzerland for Beginners*, there is a saying that any Bishop of Chur should possess three qualifications:

- 1) he must be a Roman Catholic;
- 2) he must be a consecrated priest; and
- 3) he must be a native of Chur or, at least, of the Canton of Graubünden.

But, people like to add, the first two requirements might be ignored. To understand this humor is to appreciate the importance of regionalism in Swiss culture. Switzerland is a small country--from the German border in Basel in the north to the Italian border in the south is a drive of only three hours. Switzerland exists not so much as a country but as a confederation of states or *cantons* (*Kanton* in German). These cantons are roughly divided into four groups based upon the four official languages in Switzerland: German, French, Italian and Romansch (an archaic gypsy-type language with German, Italian, Latin and other influences, spoken mainly in the Canton Graubünden). There are some dual-lingual *cantons* with French-speaking and German-speaking

populations, such as Bern and Freiburg, but most are more or less of one language. The language spoken by the greatest percentage of the population is German, but as in Germany, one doesn't speak the "real" language, but rather a dialect—and there are over 25 different dialects in Switzerland.

My wife, who is from Bern, has trouble understanding most people from Wallis or Bernerobersland. It was common, not too long ago, to hear of disownments within families because the daughter from Basel wanted to marry someone from Zürich—60 miles by car and 212 light years by philosophy away. Because the people of each area take great pains to guard their own culture and traditions, one can get the impression that there is as much difference between the people of Bern and those of Geneva as there is between Russians and Bolivians.

This extreme regionalism and cultural diversity make it difficult to describe the Swiss music education system. On the one hand, each area feels strongly about local pride, culture, and tradition. On the other hand, areas are subject to nationalistic influences from the neighboring countries—France to the west, Germany to the north, Austria to the east, and Italy to the south. Then, although the Swiss are not quite as mobile as Americans, there is a bit of regional mixing: German Swiss going to the Italian-speaking region, Italian Swiss going to the French-speaking region, and so on.

Consequently, in order to present an idea of what a music education facility in Switzerland is like, I selected the Musik-Akademie der Stadt Basel (City Music Academy of Basel) as a good example. This choice was made for the following reasons:

- 1) Basel is bordered by Germany on the

north and by France on the west. One can literally start driving at the French/Swiss border in St. Louis, drive through Basel in 15 minutes, and cross the Swiss-German border at Lörrach, passing through three countries in 15 minutes! Thus Basel is a perfect example of the curious nationalistic mixture, but it also possesses a fierce “Basel-ness.” In short, in many respects the city is typically Swiss.

2) I am employed at the Musik-Akademie and know the music education situation in this area, or at least who to ask about it, a bit better than others.

### **Die Musik-Akademie der Stadt Basel—An Introduction**

The Musik-Akademie der Stadt Basel is a multifunctional institution directed by the noted Swiss composer, conductor, and musicologist, Rudolf Kelterborn. The Musik-Akademie is similar to others in Zürich or Bern, but is conceived as a fairly complete music education complex. The local music schools cater to the music education of children alone; local conservatories cater to other age groups and expectations.

The Konservatorium of the Musik-Akademie, which is headed by Gerhard Hildenbrand, is, as its name implies, concerned with the preparation of students for the music profession. Degrees are offered in a wide range of subjects such as orchestral and keyboard instruments, voice, electronic music, composition, theory, and, of course, education. In Switzerland, the majority of students who enter music teaching do so as private studio teachers because instrumental instruction is not normally offered in the public schools.

There is also a special degree program at the Musik-Akademie for public school music teachers. Most of these teachers teach in programs that are similar to general music or music appreciation, but in many places are still called “singing” classes. Often the courses do consist of singing only.

The Musikschule, another part of the Musik-Akademie and headed by Sylvia Eichenwald, cooperates with local public schools by offering instrumental/vocal music to students after school hours (which are flexible, so that most teachers at the Mu-

sikschule start around 1:00 p.m. and teach until 6:00 or 8:00 p.m.). The Musikschule offers an exciting and unusual exception: Adults can also, in limited numbers, learn an instrument, and take voice lessons, theory, and other classes. Instruction is mainly individual. After students of the Musikschule reach a certain level of proficiency, they may play in one of many ensembles at the Musikschule or in the community.

Grundkurs (introduction to music) is a general music class taught in the Basel public schools but administered through the Musikschule of the Musik-Akademie. This subdivision of the Musikschule, headed by Heinz Füglistaler, is actively involved in training its own teachers at the Konservatorium for work in the public schools. The program is meant to supplant the rather sketchy singing classes of earlier days and also to steer the children toward instrumental and vocal instruction at the Musikschule after school hours.

The Schola Cantorum Basiliensis, headed by Dr. Peter Reidemeister, is one of the few schools in the world focused on the study of early music on original instruments. It offers students at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels specialized studies in areas such as theory, history, instrumentation, ornamentation, and ensembles of all kinds, from the Middle Ages to the Middle Romantic.

Inasmuch as it was impossible to speak with all of the directors at once, all were given more or less the same questions, with some changes for departmental differences, of course. These were then answered in individual interviews. In some cases, questions were expanded and expounded upon, and in other cases skipped over, depending upon the individual interests of those interviewed and the direction of the interview. For organizational purposes, however, this article is presented as a round-table discussion. If it seems that not everyone answered all the questions, this is not necessarily the case; the answer might be found elsewhere. I would like to take this opportunity to once again thank Ms. Eichenwald and Messrs. Kelterborn, Hildenbrand, and Füglistaler and Dr. Reidemeister for their cooperation.

**L. C.:** Would you please explain briefly

your own musical training? What did you find to be generally useful or useless in your training? How has musical training changed since then?

**Kelterborn:** I was always certain that I would be a musician. I could read music before I could write. Of course there were times when I wanted to be a train engineer or a farmer, but mostly a musician. I had recorder lessons here at the Schola Cantorum, and later I had private piano lessons. I grew up musically here at the Musik-Akademie and finished my training as orchestral conductor, composer, and theory teacher here during my time at high school.

**Eichenwald:** As a very small child, I played the recorder—without lessons. Then, when I was about 8 years old, I had piano lessons with my father at home. It was awful. My father is one of the kindest, most indulgent men in the world, but while he cooked in the kitchen and I played, I would hear “f not f-sharp” or “stay in tempo” or “slower.” It was an impossible situation.

When I was 13, I started the flute, which was my dream instrument. Unfortunately, I never practiced. I was also passionately involved in opera. In 1966, after graduating from the Gymnasium (comparable to the American college-preparatory high school), I auditioned to study voice in Vienna and was accepted. After about one semester I realized that my voice was not good enough and that I didn’t have the right kind of personality for the opera stage.

Then I auditioned in Basel to study flute at the Konservatorium and was accepted. I finished this course of study, although I hated to practice. Actually, I’ve always hated to practice—I don’t like the whole motor-training aspect of playing. I’m probably an extreme “anti-instrumentalist” by nature.

Shortly after my studies ended, I was forced to stop playing because of spinal problems, and I became assistant director at the Theatre and Opera in Basel. After four years, I decided to study music theory rather than move with the Theatre and Opera from the old building to the then newly finished Theatre Complex. During this course of study, I taught flute at a local *Jugendmusikschule* (youth music school). It was

during this time that I, for the first time, really learned how to work.

Generally speaking, I enjoyed all aspects of my training immensely. I found both courses of study (flute and theory) extremely well balanced and enjoyable. I particularly enjoyed the orchestral playing, chamber music, etc. There was then perhaps more of an emphasis on systematic music theory instead of historical theory, but it was quite a good education.

**Hildenbrand:** It’s a little difficult to compare my training with that of others. Although as a 14-year-old I played a little recorder and piano, I was first and foremost a fanatical music listener. All this changed when I was 18—I had an extraordinary experience when I heard the flute concerto by Gluck in a concert. I was so fascinated by the flute tone that I went out the next day and bought myself a flute. I decided then and there to become a flutist, without ever having had lessons or having played. After one year of extremely hard work, I was accepted for studies at a German conservatory. Aurèle Nicolet and André Jaunet were the most influential teachers in my professional training, because they were able to open the different aspects of music to us.

While I was in the public school, I sang in a very good choir—the Bruckner Choir—in Mannheim, and that was how I came in contact with music in general. I started in this choir because our music teacher was the director. He was actually not a very good teacher, as his music classes were interesting only for those who were already interested in music. But he was, above all, a fascinating musician and personality. His manner of teaching consisted of mostly listening to music and, on a simple level, analyzing the pieces. This, of course, was not for everyone. Those who were not interested in this sort of work were left behind in the dust.

While studying in Berlin at the Musikhochschule (a term interchangeable with *Konservatorium*), I was not happy with the music theory instruction. It was very theoretical theory, with little connection to practical music making. I also found that the entire system of educating future instrumental teachers was woefully underdeveloped.

Advances in education methodology that had been made with regard to general teaching techniques or even with instrumental music were either unknown or ignored.

For this reason, it has been very important to me as director of the Conservatory to see that music theory has a direct connection to performance practices and that we have rethought the entire way of educating future teachers. We also try to concentrate much of our effort in chamber music. We have over 80 chamber music ensembles, starting with duos and going to small ensembles, which receive regular chamber music instruction. Here we integrate this theory with performance practice. We also work quite a bit in the area of improvisation, which is necessary to develop the group dynamic needed in performance of chamber music.

**Reidemeister:** When I was 9 years old, I started playing the flute, after having started earlier to play the recorder, just like every other typical child at that age. I'm more the wind-player personality, or at least that's what my teachers had told me. My first flute teacher, with whom I studied for about six years, was very good. He was the solo flutist in Cologne, Germany. I also started piano with a good teacher who started to teach me theory relatively early.

When I was 16 or 17, I met Aurèle Nicolet. I chased him around while I was still attending high school and had lessons with him once a month. After graduating from high school, I went to the Conservatory in Berlin because Nicolet taught there.

When I was 20, I auditioned with the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra. Nicolet sent me to the audition saying that I wouldn't get the position, but that the audition would be good experience for me. But I won the position. In order to take the job, I had to stop my studies at the conservatory, but took them up again when I was 22, because I did want to get my diploma. At this time there was the German national music competition, which only took place every four years. Nicolet sent me there to compete, and I won the competition for flute.

Then, after having played four and a half years in the orchestra, I asked myself if I wanted to do that until I retired at 65. I left

the Berlin Philharmonic and started playing solo flute with the Deutschen Bach Solisten, learned a whole new repertoire, and played in America, Japan, and South America. I had then done basically all that a flutist could do, so I started studying musicology and finished my doctoral work at 30 years of age.

At that time, I was still very involved with the flute and assisted Nicolet with his teaching in Freiburg in Breisgau (West Germany) at the conservatory. This was very interesting for me because he was away so often, and as his assistant I taught his students.

Then I received a small position for music history here at the Schola Cantorum and commuted every week (about 40 miles one way). After one year, the director of the Schola asked me if I would like to be his assistant. I held this position for five years before becoming director 12 years ago. Now I oversee the different courses of study here at the Schola, the recordings, and research projects—both my own and those of others. This would not be possible if I hadn't been a practicing musician. I don't perform anymore, but I have done so, and that's the important fact.

**L.C.:** And you don't miss it?

**Reidemeister:** Certainly I miss it, but there isn't any point in trying to perform now. I've learned that when one doesn't perform, one is unsatisfied. But one is even more unsatisfied if one performs, and, as a result of other duties, performs poorly, or not up to one's own standards.

It's strange to say, but I miss teaching even more. I enjoyed for many years working with the musical as well as the technical aspects of the instrument. But to teach and no longer to play—that's also not ideal.

**Füglister:** At school from age 6 to 11, I had one hour per week of the normal music instruction, which was made up basically of singing. Then in the middle/high school we had two hours per week—mostly more singing. Music instruction was a little better at the teachers college.

When I was 12 or so, I started trombone in the local boys' band. The conductor of the band was a clarinetist. I first wanted to play the trumpet, but that didn't work; so I went to the flügelhorn, then the baritone, before I

began on trombone. When I began to work with it, instruction from my band director consisted of showing me where I had to pull the slide instead of pushing the valves—that was the extent of it.

I played until I finished high school and quit until I was 25, at which time I'd finished the teachers college and auditioned for the conservatory in Luzern. I studied there and finished a teaching diploma for trombone. Although I'd conducted choirs and taught music in the school, I missed very much actively making music and wanted to do so again with the trombone.

In my own training, I wish more subjects had offered practical training for the future profession. An example is the course of study for school music, which should prepare one for working with children in different age groups. This was entirely all too theoretical, and almost no practical experience was offered. There should have been more visits to the schools, hands-on teaching, and specific age-group oriented teacher training, which could have or should have been helped future classroom teachers avoid the trauma of facing a class without any experience whatsoever. This is something we try to remedy here in our teacher-training program. The course of study includes school visits, student teaching, and other practical experience from the beginning of the training. And all the teachers have advisors—not supervisors, but people who are there to advise and suggest.

**L. C.:** How could you compare the Musik-Akademie (Musikschule, Konservatorium, Grundkurs, Schola Cantorum) with similar institutions in Switzerland or other countries?

**Kelterborn:** The noted conductor Paul Sacher led the Musik-Akademie in a pioneer role among the different music institutions in Switzerland. The Musik-Akademie was the first music school to offer its teachers long-term teaching contracts; so they are no longer paid per hour taught, but according to teaching load. Earlier, students had to pay per course taken, and now they pay an all-inclusive tuition. Sacher was also influential in recruiting internationally known musicians as teachers. Similar institutions now follow this example.

The Musik-Akademie is also uncommon in that we have three large schools together under one roof—the Konservatorium, the Schola Cantorum, and the Musikschule. It is also very unusual that our Musikschule offers courses to people of all ages—preschoolers, school-age children, and adults. This is a kind of Musikschule that you can't find anywhere else.

Our conservatory and that in Zürich are stylistically similar to a German *Konservatorium*, whereas Geneva's is more typically French. We have very good contact with the different conservatories in Switzerland and try to ensure that, while each retains its own identity, we also work together for the benefit of all. For example, we have developed a shared orchestral conducting program. Also, we've decided not to train eurhythmic teachers here, because this is being done in Geneva and Zürich.

One of the big differences between the Musik-Akademie and other such institutions abroad is that the Musik-Akademie, although about 90 percent state financed, is set up legally as a foundation and not as a state school. Consequently, decisions can be made much more quickly, and the administration can function much more independently. For example, when we want to offer a new subject or create a new professorship, we don't need the approval of some government ministry or other.

Private funding also allows us to keep our tuition relatively low, as compared to tuition in Japan, for example. Contributors such as the Maja Sacher Foundation allow us to enhance our courses of study in such ways as inviting guests for certain special projects. All divisions receive extra help in this manner. For example, such funds are used to support the many publications and recordings originating in the Schola Cantorum, Musikschule projects, concert trips, and so on. In a state institution, it would be more difficult to find private funding sources.

**Füglister:** Before coming to the Musik-Akademie, I worked at a music school in the province in Kanton Aargau. It was a new school and everything was in the building process. It's very hard to compare the conditions there with those at the Musik-

Akademie. The teachers had small and poorly organized teaching schedules, and both pay and contract stipulations were bad. Much of this was due to poor finances, for the new school was the financial responsibility of the individual town.

Basel, on the other hand, has much more money to play with, the salaries are much better, the pension plan is well established, and even the physical plant is much more conducive to teaching and learning. The cultural scene in Basel is much more extensive. This makes everything much easier. One disadvantage here is the sheer size of the Musik-Akademie. Because it is so large, it's difficult to get to know all one's fellow teachers, and there is more competition among the teachers.

Yet, because of the size and reputation of this school, we can afford to hold auditions and demand test lessons from candidates for teaching positions. In a smaller school in the provinces, one is happy to even get an applicant for a position; the smaller the village, the harder it is to get a suitable teacher. You can imagine how many people would answer an ad for a violin teacher for two hours per week in a village that is difficult to reach with public transportation. And of course there is a larger attrition rate in the teaching staff, for teachers move on when they find something better. Sometimes several villages combine to finance an area music school, and this can make the situation more workable and attractive to teachers.

It's also interesting to note how many people have been teaching at the Musik-Akademie for 10, 15, 20 years or more, or who stay until retirement (retirement at the Musik-Akademie is not after 20 teaching years, but at age 65 for men and 60 for women). So the Musik-Akademie is rather atypical for Switzerland.

Another aspect of my own education is the village band, which I mentioned before. In many cases, these bands run their own music schools, and they are usually politically rather powerful, for in Switzerland they originate in political parties. In some cases the local bands resist the establishment of a music school. The bands feel that there may not be a direct and planned return for the

investment in such schools, for the students are learning music but not being specifically trained for the village band. And of course there is the old story of skepticism about new ideas, and fear that someone will take something away from somebody—that perhaps the band member who has been giving lessons for 20 years may not be able to teach anymore, and so on.

**Eichenwald:** Mostly I know of other situations through the directors, whom I've met. What I have noticed in conversations with other directors, for example with those in Zürich and Bern, is that we have more freedom and a better physical plant, which allow us to be more flexible with our larger projects and special programs such as adult education, evening ensembles, and weekend courses. The other directors have asked me how we manage to find room, time, and money for all these programs. We also have fewer committees looking over our shoulders, checking how this and that is done.

**Hildenbrand:** That is very difficult for me to answer, because I don't know to what extent other Swiss institutions have restructured their programs as we have here. We do have good contact with other conservatories in terms of sharing programs. For example, we are sharing our orchestral conducting program with the conservatory in Zürich, and with the conservatory in Biel we are running an opera studio.

**L. C.:** What role does the Musik-Akademie (Musikschule, Grundkurs, Konservatorium, Schola Cantorum Basiliensis) play in the music education system?

**Füglister:** The Grundkurs, at least in Basel, is designed to prepare students to study at the Musikschule. In other areas, however, the Grundkurs is a prerequisite to being able to learn an instrument at a music school. The Grundkurs in Basel is given in the public school, though administered through the Musik-Akademie, and children grades 1 to 4 attend.

Here in Basel, we give a process-oriented course of general music in which we try to awaken in children their abilities in making and understanding music. These consist of hearing and listening, language abilities, singing, bodily movements to music, playing

elementary instruments, and a knowledge of being, which encompasses experiencing and letting others experience both music and nonmusical things. But we've avoided laying out a detailed plan as to what each child should be able to do at any given time during this four-year period.

Our Grundkurs is different from others, of course. In Baselland, for example, the course is laid out for a two-year period with the specific goal of preparing the children for instrumental instruction at a local music school. It is much more structured and goal-oriented. There, it's specifically expected that the students be able to read music and meet other requirements, and that they have had ear training. The instrumental teacher in the music school can expect students to have covered certain areas in the Grundkurs.

**Eichenwald:** The Musikschule has basically two goals: 1) to make music making/learning available to the general population, and 2) to develop and encourage extraordinarily talented young people who might be suitable for the music profession.

Goal 1—offering music to all interested—is much more multifaceted and to a certain extent the more interesting, although some question its relevance. We feel that everyone should have a chance to explore the many musical possibilities.

The question remains as to what to do with those who are really not cut out for instrumental music-making. In this respect the Americans are perhaps a bit more advanced with the music appreciation courses. Perhaps one possibility would be to offer group lessons at the beginning of one's instruction, instead of involving students in groups only after they are fairly comfortable with their instruments. This would allow students to assess themselves and determine if this is what they really want to do. Now, students all begin with individual instruction, believing that they get more for their money in this way, whereas this may not really be the case at all. If students started with group instruction, they would also become familiar with the other instruments before they definitely decide which instrument they would like to play.

Goal 2 is, in terms of structure or in terms

of the goal itself, less of a problem than Goal 1; of course the talent of young musicians should be developed. The problem with preparing talented youngsters for further professional studies, for example at the Conservatory level, is the idiotic Swiss public school schedule. (In many cases, students go to school from 7:30 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. and then from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 or 6:00 p.m.) These afternoon school hours deny the students practice time. This is for now an insurmountable problem.

Addressing the question of how these students should be prepared is relatively easy because of the generally good communication between the Konservatorium and the Musikschule. We have a special program for highly talented school-age students, designed to help them prepare for studies at the Konservatorium. This is necessary because the Swiss school system makes it difficult for the students to study music seriously during their school years, and they usually find themselves far behind their foreign peers at entrance-exam time.

In spite of all this, one of the things I'm very proud of here at the Musikschule is the amount of personal freedom the teachers, and through them the students, enjoy. There is no general teaching plan with specific goals to be reached within a certain time. This allows for many different teaching styles, suitable for the many different types of students we face. And all this is going on in a very large school of over 3,000 students!

**Hildenbrand:** Here in Basel, unlike most other similar institutions, we have an "orchestra school" with an apprenticeship program in the two Basel orchestras, the Basler Sinfonie Orchester and the Radio Sinfonie Orchester Basel. Training to become an orchestral musician actually begins after the completion of a basic course of study lasting three years. For the apprenticeship, the students must pass an exam and then audition in front of members of the orchestra. If accepted, the student plays with the orchestra for one year without salary and accumulates playing and repertoire experience. This arrangement is very valuable to students who wish to play professionally in an orchestra, for our conservatory has only

about 400 students and is not large enough to support a full-time house orchestra. We do have, however, an ad hoc orchestra.

Students' career goals, however are quite different now than in the past, because most young people don't want to be tied down to playing in an orchestra. One reason for this is the ready availability of teaching jobs at local music schools, which pay relatively well. There haven't been any studies in Switzerland as to the projected job market for musicians, so we can only guess as to how many or what kind of musicians will be needed in the next 10 to 25 years. I think, therefore, that a musician who is capable of teaching, perhaps half-time, and also is able to perform in an ensemble for twentieth century music has good a chance to "make it." In earlier days, a student might have aimed at one particular professional goal, perhaps to become an orchestral musician, and that would have sufficed. Now, however, one must have the imagination and the training to perform various different musical styles. To prepare students for this reality is our educational goal at the Konservatorium.

**L. C.:** Would you please briefly describe the teacher training programs offered at the Konservatorium?

**Hildenbrand:** As I mentioned earlier, everyone starts with a basic three-year course of study. We think that most students don't really know, at least at the beginning of their studies, exactly what they want to do in their careers. We want all the students to be able to start their time here without having to commit themselves to one professional direction or another. Also, most young people at this age don't realize their full capabilities or talents, either. We want the students, through this first three-year period, to be able to sample all the different types of musical activities we have to offer. Then they can be advised, especially through a special course called "Professional Opportunities," as to what may be open to them.

We offer different types of teaching diplomas: instrumental/vocal teaching diplomas, or a special teaching diploma for introduction to music/music for young children (these being courses offered to the public at the public school, but through the

Musik-Akademie) or general music in the public school system. We would also like to start a teaching diploma program for working with the handicapped.

**L. C.:** What other diploma programs do you offer at the Konservatorium?

**Hildenbrand:** One very important program is our *Konzertreifediplom*, which is a continuation of the teaching diploma with a concentration on chamber-music performance and teaching. We assume that a graduate of the Konservatorium who has received a teaching diploma and gets a job in a medium-sized city or town will want to become involved in the local cultural and musical scene—this generally occurs through chamber-music settings. When one compares the teaching/chamber music diploma to the soloist diploma or orchestral diploma, one can say that they have a similar value in terms of practicality and in terms of time required for completion.

**L. C.:** What role does the public school system play in the music education program in Switzerland and in Basel specifically?

**Füglister:** There are very good reasons to have the Grundkurs, as run by the Musik-Akademie, in the public schools. There are no music specialists in the public schools as such—the exception being our Grundkurs teachers. That means that earlier, the classroom teacher was responsible for teaching music, or more likely, leading the class in some songs. Twenty years ago it was found that only 10 or 15 percent of the elementary school teachers were actually giving music instruction. Singing was built into the teaching plan, but this was not seen as being very important.

Then the director of the Musikschule at that time, Thüning Bräm (now director of the conservatory in Luzern) proposed the idea of teaching music through teachers from the Musik-Akademie. And despite the initial skepticism at the beginning—you know, everything that's new is suspect—he was able to get the program going. There were people who were afraid that something would be taken away from them because they'd always done a lot of music with their classes, and others who were afraid that someone would see what they couldn't do.

But others also realized that qualified music teachers could relieve them of the burden of a subject they didn't master. And of course there were those who were against the new program even though they personally hadn't done any music with their classes. But in the meantime a new generation of teachers has come, and these battles are old history.

**Eichenwald:** Because of the large foreign population in Basel, with the many different national and cultural influences, our Grundkurs is very important at the elementary school level because all children have the opportunity to come in contact with music. This may seem to be a bit too much for some and much too little for others—and this may be the price one pays for such a program—but it is acceptable for our purposes. In the public schools, there is no music offered in the kindergarten. At the middle school level, the music instruction that is offered is often worse than nothing.

**L. C.:** Is music instruction in the middle school not taken seriously, or is there no structured teaching plan?

**Eichenwald:** It starts in the teacher training. School music teachers have a bad image. Earlier, those who were not good enough or qualified enough to teach privately were trained as school music teachers. This has changed in recent years, but the image of poorly qualified teachers and poor teaching materials has remained.

Because of this, the school principals don't expect or encourage a different type of teaching; in many cases, music instruction in the public school is called *Singen* and not general music or such, thus further limiting instruction. Knowing this, many potentially good teachers are discouraged from starting teaching careers.

I find especially tragic how the younger children, say ages 6 to 10, are being treated in the schools. At an age when they are so awake and alive to learning, they have little to no access to music or foreign languages!

**Reidemeister:** There are some high schools that offer concentrated musical programs, the so-called "M" schools. These students are less well prepared for the university than students from some other schools, but those I've observed have been

well prepared for studying here. I was once the guest expert at the final exams of such a school in Oberwil (a suburb of Basel), and the quality of teaching and teachers there seemed to be very good.

**L. C.:** What would you change in the music education system? What do you see in the students studying here that disturbs or exhilarates you in their musical development, as compared to your own?

**Kelterborn:** When I think of what theory or composition students at the Konservatorium must learn and what courses are offered, I see that the choice and range of courses and teachers is much greater than when I studied theory and composition here. One is much more aware of the music-historical aspects of theory and composition.

Another change in the structure of this institution is that professors were once invited to join the faculty by the director. For example, before I left to work in Germany, the director asked me if I would like to be a teacher here. Today, the hiring procedure is quite a bit different in that the job is advertised and candidates must audition and present trial lessons. The school faculty or representatives of the teachers are involved in the process. We can still invite someone to join the staff, but this happens only very rarely.

One of the things that must change, however, is that the really talented students need to be supported. In Hungary and Rumania, and America, too, I believe, there are special music high schools where the students receive concentrated music instruction during the school day. There should be more free time during the school day for music, or sports, or whatever interests the student.

There are two schools, in Lausanne and in Zürich, where this is being tried. There the schools started a specialized school for sports, and the music teachers joined along with this method. I could imagine that something similar could also come to Basel.

**Eichenwald:** I find it absolutely indefensible that so many students come here once a week, have their lessons, go home, practice, and that's it. This kind of music learning should be a thing of the past. Everyone

should also play in an ensemble or sing in a choir or take ear-training. This is, however, very difficult to organize with the present school system..

It's also very difficult to change a tradition that is already over 100 years old and say, "From this day on, everyone studying here will, besides taking individual instruction, also take part in an ensemble." We've started this to a certain extent with the strings students here: All the little children starting string instruments should also be in an ensemble so that they expect to play in a group. But one must be careful to do this in little steps—of course this will be much more difficult to change to any large extent with the piano or wind-instrument students.

**Hildenbrand:** One of the things we need is a good, purposeful program for especially talented pre-Conservatory students. The main problem lies with the Swiss school schedule, whereby the students have school in the afternoon (as opposed to Germany, where they have school only to 1:00 p.m.) and thereby not enough time to develop themselves musically. We notice this mainly during the auditions here. Foreign students who wish to study here are generally better prepared than Swiss students. It's illogical to assume that the Swiss are generally less talented than their German or Austrian colleagues; rather, they have not had the opportunity to prepare themselves adequately. Perhaps a more flexible public school system would help, in which especially talented students are given this chance. The music schools (for pre-Conservatory students—Musikschule) are doing a very good job in general, but once again, students' school schedules hinder them in their work. Yet we find that those who are especially interested in making music do find a way to receive instruction at these music schools. Perhaps teachers in these schools can teach even more efficiently than those in the public schools.

Another problem that I have seen, not only here but generally, is that there has been too much emphasis upon the repertoire aspect of teaching, especially in the teacher-training programs, to the extent that the whole idea of trying to produce independent, musical

thinking individuals is short-circuited. Is it so important to teach so-and-so many works from specific eras, or would it be better to teach a basic technical vocabulary with which the pupils can, for themselves, explore the different styles? Of course one still would use examples of how certain techniques are applied, but when the pupil has received the tools of the trade, his or her whole life lies ahead to explore the wide repertoire of music.

It's more important for the teacher to learn how to teach than to learn what literature one should teach. It should not be so important that one has learned many different pieces from a certain era, but rather that one knows how to communicate the basic musical and technical ideas of this era.

One step we are taking in this direction is to find pupils with whom our student-teachers can work. These pupils receive instruction from the student-teachers for one year, under supervision, of course. We can then see how the student-teacher has learned to judge what the pupil needs—musically, technically, and personally. At the end, we hold a theoretical audition for a job, in which the student-teacher has the opportunity to practice for the real situation.

**Reidemeister:** I would like to see more of the students at the conservatory invest one or two years in becoming acquainted with the early music. If they already can play their instruments, they could learn the stylistic aspects of early music quickly. I would also like to have more funding in the area of Schola ensembles.

I would like to build up a good orchestra, and that is not cheap. To attract really good people, we must be able to pay them, even if they are honorary members or extras who come in to help out for concerts, covering instruments that are not here at the Schola.

And this, along with a good Baroque ensemble, a good Renaissance group, and a good Medieval ensemble, would be wonderful. There has been just one concert group that did all these styles, but we must become even more specialized. And coupled with these orchestras, I'd like to establish separate courses of studies with diplomas for Baroque, Renaissance, and so on. I know this

is a school concerned primarily with education, but I'd like to see the Schola become even more a center of early music, with research and publications. I'd also like to offer more courses with period instruments. Today we expect a violinist to play Schubert, Mozart, and Fontana with the same instrument, which is just not specialized enough. But for all that, we need money.

**L. C.:** What kind of communication with and support from the general population does the Musik-Akademie enjoy?

**Kelterborn:** Through cooperative work with other institutions, Musik-Akademie has very good contact with the general public. For example, the Friends of Early Music (a concert series specializing in early music, performed on original instruments), for example, could not exist without the Schola Cantorum. The International Society for New Music, in its present structure and form, wouldn't be able to exist without the active participation of our students and teachers. Three years ago, Heinz Holliger, Jürg Wyttenbach, and I founded the Basler Music Forum, where we present short concerts at 6:15 p.m. as complements to the main concerts at 8:15 p.m. This is also dependent upon our students' and teachers' participation.

But our own ensembles also participate in the cultural scene. For example, this Friday Frans Brüggen will conduct the orchestra from the Schola Cantorum in a concert of classical works. This is of course open to the public. Hans Werner Henze was here for the Musikschule's production of children's opera "Policcino," and we have also produced Britten's "Noah's Ark."

Through the Grundkurs in the public schools, practically every family in Basel comes in contact with the Musik-Akademie. For this reason, the Musik-Akademie enjoys a great deal of support from the general public. If it were only a conservatory, by definition smaller and more elite, it would be politically more difficult to achieve the same support. Because of the direct electoral system in Switzerland, the public votes on all issues, especially financial ones, which directly affect it.

**Füglister:** In conjunction with the starting of the Grundkurs in the schools in

1976, there was a large publicity campaign to inform the public, teachers, students, and politicians about the Grundkurs. Today, the parents of all children entering the first grade receive a short brochure in which the Grundkurs is described.

**Eichenwald:** When you know how shy I am, for example that I'm not particularly fond of luncheons with the city council members and such, my relationship with the community is surprisingly good. What I don't like to do through political contact I try to accomplish with musical projects. For example, the children's opera we produced last year received excellent feedback from the general public. Today almost everyone can say they have a child in their family studying at the Musikschule. Thus, it has a more positive image than in earlier times.

**Hildenbrand:** Through our internationally known teachers, concerts, and recitals, the Konservatorium has a very good reputation with the general population and contributes greatly to the total cultural scene. Of course the Musikschule, with its many different musical activities throughout the year, is more in the public's eye. And conservatories are still seen as being rather elite; this is evident when one realizes that the tuition here is twice as high as that of some other professional training programs—the university's, for example. Students from Basel or the county of Baselland pay 900 Swiss francs (about \$600) per year; others pay 1,500 Swiss francs (about \$1,000) per year.

**L. C.:** What do the students do after finishing here at the Musik-Akademie?

**Eichenwald:** I have no statistics concerning this, but it would be interesting to know what they all do. I think, however, that students now finish their studies at the Musikschule with a good feeling toward music and the Musik-Akademie, and for that reason the chances that they will occasionally unpack their instruments after finishing here are somewhat higher. In the past, it was not uncommon that young people were forced to learn an instrument. We have many adults who have experienced this trauma and who would now like to find their way back to music, but because of these earlier

experiences, can't. This is unfortunate.

I feel that those who study at the present Musikschule have a better chance of someday returning to music or continuing to study, if even in another form. It's our goal to give the students the necessary tools with which they can make music so they can continue for themselves, without us.

**Reidemeister:** I have tried to keep track of our graduates and the graduates of the conservatory. I would say that now their chances of developing careers in music are about the same for the two groups, because it's no longer certain that graduates of the conservatory will find orchestral or teaching positions. At the Schola, while we have more students than before at the professional level (100 full-time and 100 part-time), they tend to continue their contact with the school after they leave. That means that they write or drop by when they are in the area.

The possibilities for playing early music have grown enormously in the last 15 years or so, and the good students can really develop careers. There are many more concerts and concert series, a much larger audience for this form, and many more music schools offering positions or special courses in early music. There are many conservatories, especially in Germany, that have asked us how to start up early music programs. Right here in Basel we have over 600 subscription ticket holders for the "Friends of Early Music" concert series. Anyone who is more or less competent in the early music field has plenty to do, simply because we are experiencing a boom.

### **Conclusion: Typically Swiss?**

As Kelterborn pointed out, the Musik-Akademie is rather atypical in its all-encompassing structure. It contains elements which are found in other institutions around Switzerland and even shares programs with some of them, but is different in that it presents a concept of total music education for people of all ages. While the idea of the Grundkurs is not new, it is not very wide-

spread in Switzerland. The Musikschule is one of dozens in the area but differs in admitting adults; the others are only for young people. The Konservatorium is one of several in Switzerland, all of which offer quality professional training. The Schola Cantorum, while unique in offering study in early music for students from elementary school age to the postgraduate level, is now joined by other institutions offering study in that area of music.

So while the Basel Musik-Akademie shares attributes with other Swiss institutions, it also possesses unique qualities. And it is unwise, if not arrogant, to suggest that what goes on in Basel is typically Swiss, just as it would be to expect an alpine community in Kanton Uri to follow Basel's example of the Musik-Akademie. It is more appropriate to note the sharing of ideas that has allowed Switzerland, with its widely varying geography and many cultures, to fulfill its music education needs locally while music educators exchange ideas with their neighbors.

Perhaps this kind of collaboration will become more common throughout Europe. As our national boundaries become more open and the walls separating the people continue to fall—now the East European ones, and in 1992 the Central and West European ones—there will be more open-mindedness and exchanges of ideas. Some of this is happening now: At a recent congress of European conservatory directors in Basel, the director of the Paris Conservatory explained the changes taking place in instruction there. Listeners were amazed to hear how these resembled the changes now underway at the Konservatorium at the Musik-Akademie.

Perhaps, in light of opening borders and opening minds, it is time to forget about typical Americanness, typical Swissness, American composers, Swiss music, and American or Swiss musicians. It is now time to concentrate on good music and good musicians, regardless of nationality. 