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**Preserving Traditional Values or Setting New Impulses?  
The Role of Music Mediation in Major Austrian Opera Houses**

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*Für Opa*

## English Abstract

The slogans *Musikland Österreich* (Austria, Land of Music) and *Musikstadt Wien* (Vienna, City of Music) are a current political and marketing narrative that emerged in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and shaped Austria as a territorial, identarian, and cultural concept, particularly after 1945, thus affecting on cultural institutions. This study evaluates how this context impacted music mediation in major Austrian opera houses, analyzing whether music mediation redefines their role in society (transformative approach) or upholds their symbolic value for Western culture and national tradition (affirmative approach). Previous research only partially examined the politically sensitive period between 1918 and 1945 and has not yet focused on a comprehensive diachronic examination of cultural policy and music mediation. Through the sociohistorical illustration of Austria as a concept and the quantitative analysis of 768 music mediation formats by the Vienna State Opera, the Graz Opera, the Musiktheater Linz, and their mediation departments between the 2013/2014 and the 2023/2024 seasons, this study reveals that affirmative formats are the predominant mediation approach and that music mediation in opera houses depends on their relative institutions, Austrian cultural policy, culture, identity, and established working models within mediation departments, resulting in expectations that are only rarely reevaluated. Additionally, a higher sociohistorical significance of the opera house strengthens these constraints. The study concludes that the restructuring of opera houses is required to enable a balance of affirmative and transformative music mediation approaches and engage with 21<sup>st</sup>-century cultural and societal changes.

## German Abstract

Die Slogans *Musikland Österreich* und *Musikstadt Wien* sind ein vorherrschendes politisches und marketingtechnisches Narrativ, das im späten 19. Jahrhundert entstand, Österreich als territoriales, identitäres und kulturelles Konzept vor allem nach 1945 prägte und folglich die kulturellen Institutionen beeinflusste. Diese Studie untersucht, wie sich dieser Kontext auf die Musikvermittlung in großen österreichischen Opernhäusern auswirkte, und analysiert, ob Musikvermittlung deren Rolle in der Gesellschaft neu definiert (transformativer Ansatz) oder ihren symbolischen Wert für westliche Kultur und nationale Tradition aufrechterhält (affirmativer Ansatz). Die bisherige Forschung hat den politisch sensiblen Zeitraum zwischen 1918 und 1945 nur teilweise kritisch beleuchtet und sich noch keiner umfassenden diachronen Betrachtung von Kulturpolitik und Musikvermittlung gewidmet. Anhand der soziohistorischen Darstellung Österreichs als Konzept und der quantitativen Analyse von 768 Musikvermittlungsformaten der Wiener Staatsoper, der Oper Graz, des Musiktheaters Linz und ihrer Vermittlungsabteilungen in den Spielzeiten von 2013/2014 bis 2023/2024 zeigt diese Studie, dass affirmative Formate der vorherrschende Vermittlungsansatz sind und Musikvermittlung in Opernhäusern von den jeweiligen Institutionen, der österreichischen Kulturpolitik, Kultur, Identität und den etablierten Arbeitsmodellen innerhalb der Vermittlungsabteilungen abhängt, was zu Erwartungen führt, die nur selten neu überdacht werden. Zusätzlich werden solche Rahmenbedingungen verstärkt, je höher die soziohistorische Bedeutung des Opernhauses ist. Aus der Studie ergibt sich, dass eine Umstrukturierung der Opernhäuser erforderlich ist, um ein Gleichgewicht zwischen affirmativen und transformativen Musikvermittlungsansätzen zu ermöglichen und den kulturellen und gesellschaftlichen Veränderungen des 21. Jahrhunderts gerecht zu werden.

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# 1 Introduction

When I first heard of *Musikvermittlung*<sup>1</sup>, I was a PhD student and university assistant at the Institute of Ethnomusicology of KUG (University of Music and Performing Arts Graz, Austria). After further research, I learned that

the term [...] refers to the manifold and divergent practices in an artistic-educational field in which actors with heterogeneous formal (academic) qualifications and different professional backgrounds are currently elaborating and implementing specialised artistic-educational concepts (both individual formats and series) for and with various social groups with regard to music (to be more precise: currently with a focus primarily on so-called Western art music respectively classical music), mostly on behalf of public institutions (for example festivals, concert halls, orchestras). Furthermore, in the course of an increasing institutionalisation and professionalisation of its practices, *Musikvermittlung* turns out to be a growing occupational field, as well as a field of research. (Chaker and Petri-Preis 2022b, 11)

Upon recognizing certain parallels between applied ethnomusicology and community music<sup>2</sup>, I established a connection between ethnomusicology and music mediation. Finally, I decided to pursue a master's degree in music mediation at the Anton Bruckner Private University Linz, Austria. In 2009, this university became the first music university in Austria to offer such a program, and later, in 2017, it established the first chair dedicated to this field (Petri-Preis 2023a). During my studies, I quickly noticed how my academic background intersected with music mediation, education, and community music. On the other hand, I also realized that music mediation is very common in Western art music institutions (Chaker and Petri-Preis 2022b, 11). As an ethnomusicologist, I needed to examine these institutions' lasting impact, post-colonial mindsets, hierarchical systems, and my approach to dealing with tradition and safeguarding artistic expressions. To stimulate a discussion about this issue, my colleagues and I were acquainted with the 1977 NASA project of the Voyager Golden Record (NASA 2024). We were asked to reflect on which music we would have chosen and then share it with the group. The selection process was challenging, but predominantly, my colleagues chose examples of Western art music. It seemed understandable since most were trained musicians and teachers in public music schools. They merely considered artworks that influenced their

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<sup>1</sup> In this thesis, the English translation of *music mediation* is used for *Musikvermittlung* and its specific form in opera houses (also called *Musiktheatervermittlung*). In contrast, *Musikvermittlung* occurs to focus on the term or to stress its German-speaking environment. Chapter 2 further discusses the origins and ongoing debates concerning these terms.

<sup>2</sup> For further information about this topic, see Cottrell and Impey (2018).

(Western European) music education and socialization<sup>3</sup>. Thus, they did not understand my reference to this quotation from John Blacking's *How Musical is Man?*:

In this world of cruelty and exploitation in which the tawdry and the mediocre are proliferated endlessly for the sake of financial profit, it is necessary to understand why a madrigal by Gesualdo or a Bach Passion, a *sitar* melody from India or a song from Africa, Berg's *Wozzeck* or Britten's *War Requiem*, a Balinese *gamelan* or a Cantonese opera, or a symphony by Mozart, Beethoven, or Mahler, may be profoundly necessary for human survival, quite apart from any merit they may have examples of creativity and technical progress. It is also necessary to explain why, under certain circumstances a "simple" "folk" song may have more human value than a "complex" symphony. (2000, 116)

At that moment, I understood that, for certain colleagues, a Beethoven symphony's human and artistic value should not be challenged. This made me recognize the need to reflect on my role as a music mediator within an institutionalized Western cultural environment. Ultimately, this led me to the topic of this thesis.

The path of a music mediator in public institutions in Austria, whether concert halls, opera houses, or festivals, is embedded in a sociocultural context historically linked to two slogans: *Musikland Österreich* and *Musikstadt Wien*. Austria and Vienna claim to be the Land and City of music, using the indicated terms as branding. The Official Travel Portal website of the country states: "Music has always been of great importance in Austria. Great composers were born here, and world-renowned works were created here. However, it is not only classical music cultivated in our country"<sup>4</sup> (Das offizielle Tourismusportal, n.d.). While the emphasis is not solely on the First Viennese School (i.e., Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven), the statement highlights the significance of music in Austria, establishing it as *Musikland*. Using national music as branding is not a 20<sup>th</sup>-century tourism marketing strategy to promote the country and its capital (Tammen 2011). Instead, it is a narrative with clear political intent that emerged in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and was reinforced in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. After 1945, there was a deliberate effort to use music to define Austrian national identity. This was done, among others, by highlighting the country's strong musical tradition, particularly the First Viennese School. The goal was to associate Austrian music with a timeless sense of being Austrian, regardless of the era or style of the musical works. However, even after the Monarchy's end in 1918, we can already observe similar tendencies of using music for identity politics. These tendencies range from attributing a *German* musical culture, which peaked

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<sup>3</sup> Hornberger (2020, 47) argues that musicians and music educators, especially, tend to consider the effects of (Western art) music universally beneficial and often promote this perspective without skepticism.

<sup>4</sup> (All translations by the author unless otherwise stated) "Musik hat in Österreich seit jeher einen hohen Stellenwert. Hier wurden große Komponisten geboren und hier entstanden Werke von Weltruf. Doch nicht nur die klassische Musik wird in unserem Land gepflegt" (Das offizielle Tourismusportal, n.d.).

in Austria, to a strictly *Austrian* variant distinct from other musical cultures (Nußbaumer 2001, 20).

Even if its repercussions perhaps are less recognizable after more than 70 years, the way music was used and promoted in Austria during the Second Austrian Republic since 1945 had a lasting impact on how public music institutions and related events (i.e., Vienna State Opera, Vienna Philharmonic, Salzburg Festival) are perceived and publicized (Wagner 2005). I suggest that this influences the functioning of music mediation in Austria's major concert halls, opera houses, festivals, etc., which naturally varies based on the institution's cultural standing and significance.

Using opera houses as an example, I aim to determine the role of music mediation in such institutions. Hence, my research question is: does music mediation in Austrian opera houses preserve specific systems and traditions, reinforcing cultural institutions (affirmative mediation), or can it set new and further impulses, putting cultural institutions at the center of cultural change and participation (transformative mediation)<sup>5</sup>? Considering the first form of mediation as the most common, an analysis from this perspective could offer insights into what would be necessary to establish the latter.

Here, I illustrate the historical, social, and cultural context of music mediation in Austria and conduct an extensive quantitative analysis of the formats offered in the last eleven years by the Vienna State Opera, the Graz Opera, and the Musiktheater Linz and their music mediation departments. So far, a comparative study of mediation programs in Austria has not been conducted. This study does not seek to assess quality but to understand how these programs have evolved and who they address, emphasizing the *what* instead of the *how*. I have organized my thesis into three preliminary chapters and one main section to address this issue, in which I examine and analyze the three institutions individually before comparing them.

Despite the subject's relevance, limited research has been conducted thus far. One reason is the gap until the 1980s in critical scholarship on Austrian (cultural) politics between 1918 and 1945, which has been politically sensitive and avoided for a long time (Knapp 2005; Rathkolb 2021). This adversely affected academic research about Austrian identity within the domains of music and cultural institutions (Gruber 1993) (Lamb-Faffelberger 2003). The other reason is that *Musikvermittlung*, the term and form of music mediation

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<sup>5</sup> The concepts *affirmative* and *transformative* music mediation are further elaborated in Chapter 3.

in German-speaking countries, originated around 2000 (Petri-Preis 2022, 48). Over the past two decades, research has predominantly examined its current situation (Mandel 2005; Egeler-Wittmann 2011; Petri-Preis 2023a), its necessity (Scheytt 2005; Mörsch 2012; Chaker and Petri-Preis 2022b), and its potential and possibilities (Rideout 2005; Clout 2016; Petri-Preis 2022b)<sup>6</sup>.

This indicates that its existence is still too brief to permit a comprehensive diachronic evaluation of the impact of cultural policy on its development to be the main focus of academic interest. Moreover, in its first decade, it was necessary to establish and formalize mediation as a new practice and field of study, specifically focusing on shaping and analyzing its practical application and improvement (Mautner-Obst 2023). The 11-year gap between the establishment of the first two universities in German-speaking countries to offer postgraduate studies for music mediation (1998, Detmold University of Music, Germany; 2009, Anton Bruckner Private University, Austria) highlights the considerable amount of time required to spread the establishing, professionalizing, and advancing research<sup>7</sup>. In 2023, Petri-Preis and Voit published *Handbuch Musikvermittlung*, one of the most recent and comprehensive publications in music mediation in German-speaking countries. In its introduction, the editors state that “such a comprehensive anthology [...] has been lacking until now. [...] we [...] are now attempting to bring together texts on fundamental discourses, historical and current developments, terminological issues, and central areas of tension in music mediation in a digest”<sup>8</sup> (2023a, 15–16). Indeed, the publication includes papers related to the topic of the present thesis concerning expressions of dominance (Gaupp 2023; Stoffers 2023), divergent goals and resulting conflicts (Petri-Preis 2023d; Schippling and Voit 2023; Stange 2023), and the dichotomy of tradition-innovation and affirmation-transformation (Müller-Brozović 2023; Sachsse 2023) in music mediation. Other papers worth mentioning here are Bugiel (2015), and Kertz-Welzel (2020) (2022b). While these studies touch upon or are related to the issues I intend to analyze, none provide a focused, in-

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<sup>5</sup> For an overview of the development of academic research about music mediation in German-speaking countries, see Mautner-Obst (2023).

<sup>7</sup> Further academic programs in Austria were established at the University of Music and Performing Arts of Vienna (mdw) and Graz (KUG) only in 2023. The Mozarteum University Salzburg started a program in opera and musical theater mediation in 2014.

<sup>8</sup> “Eine solch umfassende Anthologie, die den Status Quo der Reflexion über und des Handelns in der Musikvermittlung abbildet, fehlte bis dato. [...] unternehmen wir [...] den Versuch, Texte zu grundlegenden Diskursen, historischen und aktuellen Entwicklungen, terminologischen Fragestellungen sowie zentralen Spannungsfeldern der Musikvermittlung in einem Überblickswerk zu bündeln” (Petri-Preis and Voit 2023a, 15–16).

depth examination of them. Thus, this thesis serves as a starting point toward examining and questioning the role of music mediation in major local music and cultural institutions.

I opted for Vienna, Graz, and Linz opera houses, considering their historical, societal, and cultural relevance in Austria and their geographic location. The aim was to pick institutions from different cities and federal states to have three representative examples not of the same holding, city, or state government (excluding other significant institutions such as the Vienna Volksoper). Furthermore, the decision for a smaller selection was influenced by the need to respect the constraints of a master's thesis.

I analyzed the period from 2013/14 to 2023/24 season. It is important to note that the Vienna State Opera established an official, independent mediation department only in the 2020/21 season. However, the availability of mediation formats can be traced back to 2013/14. For this study, I retrieved all booklets from the mediation departments and the seasonal programs of the opera houses from the last eleven seasons. Exclusively relying on a quantitative technique approach can have inherent limits and is insufficient for obtaining a comprehensive understanding of the examined subject without incorporating qualitative analysis. Written announcements in the theater sector may not always align with actual events, especially for smaller formats not held on the main stage. However, this study shows the official offer of mediation programs and how they are publicized and promoted by the relevant organization.

In Chapter 2, the concept of music mediation is discussed. It focuses on its use for translating *Musikvermittlung* (and *Musiktheatervermittlung*) and addresses conceptual, content, and terminological issues. Chapter 3 provides an in-depth examination of the study's conceptual framework, focusing on *affirmative* and *transformative* music mediation. What follows in Chapter 4 is a sociohistorical overview of Austria as territorial, identarian, and cultural concept, to illustrate the context in which music mediation is embedded. Chapter 5 explores the role of music mediation in Austrian opera houses by presenting a quantitative analysis of the music mediation formats of the previously mentioned opera houses. Ultimately, the results are compared to the topics presented in the preceding chapters. All opera houses are analyzed quantitatively as one entity to identify overall developments and trends.

In this document, Italics highlight specific words, foreign language terminology, expressions, and the names of publications. Quotations are enclosed in double quotation

marks unless they are within another quotation (which uses single quotation marks) or presented as a block quotation (displayed in a smaller font). Unless otherwise specified, all quotations translated into English (original quotation as footnote) are by the author.

In the spirit of self-reflexivity, I recognize my standpoint as an ethnomusicologist, a music educator, a music mediator at the Graz Opera, and an individual of Italian descent. While my background influenced the selection of the study topic, I took care to set aside any existing biases or assumptions, and my role at the Graz Opera did not impact the collection, analysis, and findings of this study. On the contrary, it served as a valuable tool that facilitated a deeper understanding of diverse perspectives on music mediation at a major Austrian opera house.

## 2 Music Mediation or Musik(theater)vermittlung?

This chapter discusses the origins and ongoing debates concerning the terms *music mediation*, *Musikvermittlung*, and *Musiktheatervermittlung* (music theater mediation). A historical outline and the exposure of terminological inconsistency, translation problems, and the adopted terminology in German-speaking opera houses provide an overview of these terms' conceptual, content, and terminological issues. The first part focuses on *Musikvermittlung*, while the second section discusses *Musiktheatervermittlung*. It ultimately asserts that *music mediation* is a valid term to translate and incorporate both concepts and denote the activities of mediation departments in the Austrian opera houses investigated in this research.

In the introduction, I propose the definition of *Musikvermittlung* by Chaker and Petri-Preis (2022b, 11) because I find it comprehensive, clear, and brief, and most importantly, it describes what this term (using the translation *music mediation*) means in this thesis. Although this definition tries to include all the different aspects and views of the concept, and several scholars and mediators agree on it<sup>9</sup>, there is no homogeneous agreed-upon definition of the concept of *Musikvermittlung*<sup>10</sup>. The variation is contingent upon linguistic conventions, diverse academic contexts, and theoretical frameworks (Petri-Preis 2022a): for Mall (2016), it is a structural bridge between education and arts; for Petri-Preis, a “social world” (2022b, 48); for Wimmer (2010, 82), it is about the “translation and contextualization”<sup>11</sup> of music. This inconsistency in agreeing on one definition challenges even the music mediators themselves when asked to describe their activities. This results in an inconsistency regarding the use of the term and, consequently, all related translations.

*Musikvermittlung* has been employed to describe this multiple-faceted profession since the late 1990s. A prominent music educator, Ernst Klaus Schneider, primarily introduced and shaped the term. Indeed, Schneider, along with Joachim Harder and Hermann Große-Jäger, established the first academic program in music mediation in a German-speaking country at Detmold University of Music in 1998. The quest for a new term began in the early 1990s when individuals engaged in the field that Schneider established sought to

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<sup>9</sup> The anthology *Handbuch Musikvermittlung*, one of the latest and most extensive works on music mediation in German-speaking countries, employs an analogical definition in its initial chapter (Petri-Preis and Voit 2023b, 25).

<sup>10</sup> For a comprehensive overview of *Musikvermittlung*, see Müller-Brozović (2017).

<sup>11</sup> “Übersetzung und Kontextualisierung” (C. Wimmer 2010, 82).

disassociate themselves from terms such as *Konzertpädagogik* (concert pedagogy) or *Kulturpädagogik* (culture pedagogy) (Petri-Preis 2023b, 31)<sup>12</sup>. To understand its connection to pedagogy, it is necessary to briefly resume the history of what is now known as *Musikvermittlung*.

The birth of music mediation is a complex historical question. Johannes Voit (2023, 67-68) suggests that the bourgeois concert of the early 18<sup>th</sup> century played a pivotal role. The organizers of these concerts faced the challenge of directing the audience's attention to the stage, leading to the introduction of various measures and conventions (e.g., silence, intervals, raised stage, etc.) that are still prevalent in most Western music concerts and settings today. These norms initially aimed to democratize the concept of a concert. However, they also implied an excluding approach, a stereotype that persists (and sometimes corresponds to reality, albeit in a diluted form) (Walter 2016, 383–401). Around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, there was a growing focus on the educational aspect of concerts. This led to the introduction of new concerts specifically targeted at children and teenagers in Germany, following the model of similar events that were popular in the United States nearly a century earlier. These efforts aimed to establish criteria for presenting Western art music in a way that would appeal to younger audiences. However, this type of performance setting was originally on the margins but later became widely popular in the 1950s (Voit 2023b, 68–69). Egon Seefehlner established *Jeunesse Österreich* in 1949, a local subsidiary of *Jeunesses Musicales International* in Austria. The aim was to bring music to children and teenagers adversely affected by World War II. Shortly afterward, institutions such as the *Wiener Konzerthaus*, the *Musikverein Wien*, and the *Vienna Symphony* commenced to offer concerts tailored explicitly for young audiences (Petri-Preis 2023a, 75–76)<sup>13</sup>. A significant milestone in international modern music mediation was the *Young People's Concerts* series presented by the *New York Philharmonic Orchestra* and hosted by the influential *Leonard Bernstein* between 1958 and 1972. These concerts, which were broadcast on television, served as a bridge between an audience of children and teenagers aged 8 to 18 and Western art music<sup>14</sup>. In the 1970s, German-speaking countries adopted a similar approach, introducing new concerts aimed at young people. Throughout the 1980s, *Gillian Moore's Response* project with the

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<sup>12</sup> For other starting points and discourses in the establishment of *Musikvermittlung*, see Voit (2023a).

<sup>13</sup> The focus on Vienna is why several members of *Jeunesse Österreich* became theater managers in the Austrian capital and, consequently, left their marks on the prevailing form of music mediation (Petri-Preis 2023a, 76).

<sup>14</sup> Although 95.5% of the housing units in the United States owned a television in 1970 (United States Census Bureau 2023), the effective share of young viewers is questionable.

London Sinfonietta chamber orchestra laid the groundwork for community initiatives, allowing young individuals to create music inspired by existing compositions and publicly showcase their work. Moore, a recognized pioneer in orchestral education programs, quickly became the subject of imitation by other European music institutions (Voit 2023b, 70). It is important to note that when *Musikvermittlung* was established in the late 1990s, Austria had a distinct scenario from Germany in which concerts for children were conceptualized mainly by individuals with an elemental music education background (Petri-Preis 2023a, 76). This particularity is still partially noticeable in the current concerts for a young audience in Austrian music institutions.

The development of music mediation during the 20<sup>th</sup> century demonstrates the strong connection between the concept and pedagogical approaches, with a particular focus on engaging a young audience (which remains true to a certain degree). The emergence of *Musikvermittlung*, as described by Schneider, began with the Moore community projects and gained significant momentum around 2000. At that time, the expression started to be extensively employed as an umbrella term, including various forms and types of music mediation, even though the term *Vermittlung* (mediation) had already been used earlier (Petri-Preis 2023b, 34). In today's concert halls, orchestras, and opera houses, it is uncommon not to incorporate the concept of music mediation. Many organizations have at least one staff member dedicated to this, while some have entire departments of up to 30 people (i.e., Elbphilharmonie Hamburg). This approach allows institutions to address various age groups, including newborns, children, young people, and seniors (Voit 2023b, 72).

When discussing specific practices in Austria, Germany, and Switzerland, as well as neighboring countries and regions like Luxembourg, Liechtenstein, and South Tyrol, Italy, it is natural to use the German term for *Musikvermittlung*, as it was shaped in German-speaking countries. This also applies to similar practices influenced by approaches used in German-speaking countries. The problem arises with translations, related terms, and inconsistent usage, even in German-speaking countries or within the same institution; for instance, the Wiener Konzerthaus refers to *Vermittlung* on its website but uses the term *education* to label the responsible department (Petri-Preis 2023b, 32). Müller-Brozović (2017) indicates that “music mediation is a multi-dimensional, dynamic term; it acts as a semantic clamp for various basic considerations, concepts, and fields of

work”<sup>15</sup>. In English, different terms, such as *audience development* (Mandel 2013), *outreach* (Scharf and Wunderlich 2014), or *community music* (Banffy-Hall and Hill 2017; Kertz-Welzel 2016), describe both related disciplines and, misleadingly, music mediation (Müller-Brozović 2017). In German, these terms have the same meanings as in English; nonetheless, they may be solely utilized to create an impression of internationality. This becomes apparent when the actual activities of a music mediation department do not align with its label, which, in many instances, should be (*Musik*)*vermittlung*.

When translating *Musikvermittlung* into English, the term *education* is often used, even in German-speaking countries. This choice can be particularly confusing as it evokes a pedagogical connotation, commonly used to denote “the knowledge and development resulting from the process of being educated” (Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary). However, while music mediation can contribute to knowledge and skill development, it does not always have this as its primary goal (Müller-Brozović 2017). The English publications about music mediation in the table of contents of the above-cited anthology *Handbuch Musikvermittlung* (Petri-Preis and Voit 2023a, 445–508) predominantly use the keywords *audience* and *community* in their titles. Only four English publications use *participation*, two *education*, two *mediation*, and only one *Musikvermittlung*. This indicates that (1) the existing English-language literature on music mediation has primarily focused on other forms of mediation (such as community music in the UK) for cultural and historical reasons; (2) there is an ongoing debate about a generally accepted translation of *Musikvermittlung*. In the preface of *Tuning Up! The Innovative Potential of Musikvermittlung* (2022), one of the few publications about *Musikvermittlung* in English by German-speaking scholars C. Wimmer and Voit (8), noted that

the German term *Musikvermittlung* [...] is simply difficult to translate, even if its overlaps with English terms such as ‘music education’ or ‘community music’ are obvious. On the other hand, it refers to the specific character of the field of practice it denotes, which can only be found in the German-speaking countries. However, this should not obscure the fact that *Musikvermittlung* has received many influential impulses from foreign countries (especially Englishspeaking [sic] ones) since the very beginning and that actors in the internationally oriented cultural sector are in constant exchange with colleagues and institutions all over the world.

Until now, the German term has not succeeded in establishing itself internationally, as Chaker and Petri-Preis (2022a, 16) suggested and expected. One year later, Petri-Preis (2023b, 34) observes that both *music communication* (Voit 2019) and *music mediation* (Chaker and Petri-Preis 2019) are being used instead, with the latter gaining prominence

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<sup>15</sup> “Musikvermittlung ist ein mehrdimensionaler, dynamischer Begriff; er fungiert als semantische Klammer für eine Vielzahl von Grundüberlegungen, Konzeptionen und Aufgabenfeldern” (Müller-Brozović 2017).

in academia. The International Journal of Music Mediation (IJMM), established in 2024 and edited by Axel Petri-Preis (mdw - University of Music and Performing Arts, Vienna, Austria), Irina Kirchberg (University of Montreal, Quebec, Canada), and Irena Müller-Brozović (Anton Bruckner Private University, Linz, Austria), along with the conferences *Rencontres internationales sur les médiations de la musique* (University of Montreal, 2022) and *Turning Social! On the Social Transformative Potential of Music* (University of Music and Performing Arts, Vienna, 2023), employ the term *music mediation* and set essential steps in promoting internationalization and further development of this field in academia. Therefore, I am employing *music mediation* instead of *Musikvermittlung* in my thesis.

The situation for music mediation in Austrian opera houses is analogous to the exposed issues concerning the term *Musikvermittlung*. In these institutions, *music mediation* almost seems reductive since opera houses do not exclusively deal with music or only stage opera productions, even if they are labeled as such<sup>16</sup>. Several of them are designed for opera, musicals, dance, and concerts<sup>17</sup>, which is also valid for the institutions analyzed in this thesis: Vienna State Opera, Graz Opera, and Musiktheater Linz. The labeling of *opera* has mere historical reasons (Walter 2016, 200–203) because all three are so-called *Musiktheater* (music theaters)<sup>18</sup>, where stage performance is combined with music. When labeling music mediation in opera houses, there is inconsistency. One reason is that the establishment of mediation departments occurred at different times; if 20 years ago, *Musikvermittlung* was a new term and the connection to pedagogy was not entirely eradicated (Petri-Preis 2023a, 76), in the last five years, institutions have become more aware of other forms and related disciplines and, consequently, of other terms; the music mediation department at the Vienna State Opera was established in 2020 as a department for *Vermittlung & Outreach* (mediation & outreach). The analogous department at the Graz Opera was established in 2009 and labeled *Musiktheaterpädagogik* (literally, music

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<sup>14</sup> The same principle applies to opera houses that are labeled as *theaters* (e.g., Theater an der Wien, Vienna, Austria; Grand Théâtre de Bordeaux, France; Nationaltheater Munich, Germany; Teatro alla Scala, Milan, Italy).

<sup>17</sup> In German-speaking countries, the term *Mehrspartenhaus* (multi-genre house) refers to multidisciplinary theaters that include various genres in their repertoire.

<sup>18</sup> “*Music theater* is essentially a coinage taken from the Germanic form *Musiktheater* [...]. In the English-speaking world, it was first applied to small-scale sung theater in the Brecht or Brecht/Weill tradition but has been widely appropriated for almost any kind of serious musical theater. Hardly anyone on Broadway or in London’s West End uses the term *musical comedy* anymore, and ambitious modern musicals with a pretense to do more than merely entertain are likely to be designated ‘music theater’ as anything else” (Salzman and Dézsy 2008, 4–5). Confusingly, *music theater* also defines a specific performance genre that emerged in the 1960s and 1970s (Salzman and Dézsy 2008). In this thesis, however, the term refers to *Musiktheater*.

theater pedagogy). The latter concept is another important factor for the addressed terminological irregularity.

*Musiktheaterpädagogik* is related to *Theaterpädagogik* (theater education) in terms of historical development and content, a practice that emerged in Germany during the 1960s and 1970s to promote acting in schools and amateur theater. As music mediation today, *Theaterpädagogik* now encompasses various methods, subjects, and aims, crossing alleged boundaries to related disciplines (Gesch 2023). The concept of *Musiktheaterpädagogik* is thus no more than an extension of *Theaterpädagogik*. However, it can nevertheless be regarded as a related area of music mediation, as it relates to theatre performances in which music plays an essential role (i.e., all music theater genres). For this reason, Petri-Preis (2023c, 311) puts *Musiktheaterpädagogik* in the list of familiar branches of music mediation that include, among others, all forms of music education in schools, elemental music education, community music, and music therapy. Regarding this specific case, he further argues that the hierarchical relationship between different areas of music mediation practice, such as (community music and) *Musiktheaterpädagogik*, being considered part of music mediation, is deliberately left undefined. This decision enhances the ability to adapt to these fields' dynamic and evolving nature (Petri-Preis 2023c, 312–13).

*Musiktheaterpädagogik*, as the term suggests, historically relies on pedagogy, from which *Musikvermittlung*, since its emergence, has sought to separate itself (Petri-Preis 2023b, 31). The concept is defined as “opera teaching developed in school music education, whose goals range from knowledge transfer via hermeneutic methods to experiential meaning construction” (Brinkmann 2023, 349). However, starting in the 1990s in Berlin and Stuttgart, Germany, a development in methods aiming at “scenic interpretation of music theater”<sup>19</sup> became common in opera houses in German-speaking countries (Brinkmann 2023, 350). This new approach emphasized mediation and moved away from traditional educational methods. The emphasis shifted from analyzing and *understanding* repertoire to focusing on individual interpretations and critical perspectives, thereby allowing for its potential for emancipation (Brinkmann 2023, 350). The term evolved into *Musiktheatervermittlung* (music theater mediation) (Brinkmann 2023; Petri-Preis 2023c), at least what concerns its practice. Regarding university programs and trademarks, *Musiktheaterpädagogik* remains a separate subject. Nevertheless, it is used

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<sup>19</sup> “Szenische Interpretation von Musiktheater” (Brinkmann 2023, 350).

interchangeably with *Musiktheatervermittlung* in practical contexts (Brinkmann 2023), challenging terminological development.

In conclusion, this chapter proposed four main reasons for the inconsistent and consequently misleading usage of different terms related to music mediation in German-speaking countries and opera houses: (1) different and partly irreconcilable perspectives and definitions; (2) inconsistent employment; (3) inconsistent translations; (4) unawareness of developments in the field. In this thesis, I use *music mediation* to encompass both *Musikvermittlung* and *Musiktheatervermittlung*, as mentioned in the first footnote, to avoid confusion caused by using multiple terms for related practices with permeable boundaries and intersections. While music may not always be the primary focus, it is undeniably ubiquitous in the present study of opera houses.

### 3 Affirmative and Transformative Functions of Music Mediation

In the research question of this thesis, I juxtapose two types of music mediation: one that aims to preserve specific systems, values, and traditions and another that seeks innovation by placing cultural institutions at the center of cultural change and participation. These two approaches are referred to as *affirmative mediation* and *transformative mediation*, respectively. In this chapter, I provide a detailed explanation of these fundamental concepts. I also delve into the potential benefits, significant concerns, and challenges that may arise. Additionally, I examine how these two approaches interact with related fields, such as audience development and community engagement. My objective is to broaden the current understanding of affirmation and transformation, as suggested by Mörsch (2012), and to apply it specifically to music mediation, in alignment with Müller-Brozović's work (2023). Ultimately, I demonstrate that despite having different goals and approaches, they rely on each other.

Mörsch (2012, 113–18) presents five distinct functions of culture mediation (*Kulturvermittlung*)<sup>20</sup>, which are neither arranged in a hierarchy nor mutually exclusive;

- *affirmative mediation*: strengthens the principles and values of cultural institutions, favoring exclusivity, hegemony, and the practice of othering;
- *reproductive mediation*: democratizes a normative and unidirectional concept of culture by *persuading* children and teenagers to be future audiences;
- *deconstructive mediation*: involves critical questions of institutions, often without taking the necessary measures towards active change;
- *reformative mediation*: seeks to enhance institutional structures by promoting the establishment of permeable structures between mediators and administrative staff (a relatively uncommon practice);
- *transformative mediation*: expands the conventional role of institutions, enabling them to define their purpose collaboratively with different audiences and ensuring long-term relevance and preservation. However, there is a potential risk of stakeholders manipulating the process and hierarchical structures influencing decision-making.

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<sup>20</sup> A broader term that refers to art mediation. While *Kulturvermittlung* is predominantly used in Germany and Switzerland, in Austria, the term *Kulturelle Bildung* (cultural education) is used as an equivalent, emphasizing the educational component. The term encompasses a wide range of mediation subjects, including, among others, music, museums, literature, dance, and theater (Mörsch 2012, 15–16) The word *Kulturvermittlung* emerged in the 1990s as a replacement for *Museumspädagogik* (museum education), starting in Austria. In Germany, both terms are used interchangeably, with a specific emphasis on the curation and management of museums in postgraduate programs (Doppelbauer 2019, 32–34).

In this research, I focus on Mörsch's first and last function of mediation, referring to Müller-Brozović's (2023) application to music mediation. She indicates that music often undergoes mediation with affirming intentions. This implies that mediation, in addition to being object-oriented regarding music, aims to affirm the content and values of the respective institution. However, music mediators also strive to introduce innovative ideas and are responsible for critically evaluating their relationship with the institution they represent and the institution itself (2023, 260) – also because they are uniquely positioned to do so. She also suggests that, to a certain extent, affirmative intentions encompass reproductive goals, just as transformative intentions imply deconstructive and reformative ones (2023, 261). Thus, institutionalized music mediation balances divergent intentions, which challenge the mediators and the institutions. Mainly because the prevalence of one concept never implies the complete absence of its opposite. The issue of whether music mediation remains a balancing act or develops in one specific direction, such as the less common transformative function, requires a closer look at music mediation with affirmative and transformative approaches. Institutions must change as society changes in the long term, making the shift toward transformative mediation forms inevitable (Krönig 2020; Mertens 2021; Bishop 2022).

In cultural institutions, affirmative music mediation occurs in the form of introductory talks or workshops, booklets, school education material, podcasts, concerts with hosts, and other similar activities (Müller-Brozović 2023, 262). Institutions expect that “a closeness is built between the music played and the audience [...], their traditions are nurtured and passed on [...] [and thus] a legitimacy of their work and, if necessary, their financial support [succeeds]”<sup>21</sup> (Müller-Brozović 2023, 261). Music mediation has its roots in concert pedagogy, which historically focused on engaging young audiences (Voit 2023b). As a result, cultural institutions still assign music mediation departments the task of working with children's formats, while other artistic departments, such as dramaturgy, typically manage adult formats. The downside of this separation of competencies is that it disconnects music mediation from programmatic and budgetary decision-making (Müller-Brozović 2023, 262). Conversely, institutions' affirmative orientation facilitates collaboration with other institutions, such as schools and hospitals. These are the settings in which music mediators can operate outside their institutions and engage with an

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<sup>21</sup> “Eine Nähe zwischen der gespielten Musik und dem Publikum aufgebaut wird [...], die eigenen Traditionen gepflegt und weitergegeben werden [...] [und somit] eine Legitimierung ihrer Arbeit und ggf. ihrer finanziellen Förderung [erfolgt]” (Müller-Brozović 2023, 261).

audience that deviates from the conventional opera or concert attendee. Upon initial observation, projects or workshops carried out in schools and hospitals may seem to implement a transformative approach – and certainly have the potential to emancipate as such. However, these endeavors typically only occur within the confines of those specific environments and take the form of short-term activities (e.g., workshops offered by Austrian opera houses usually last for one or two hours). The primary objective of such initiatives is to reinforce and democratize the values and purpose of cultural institutions (i.e., reproductive mediation). On the other hand, music mediation productions within institutions (e.g., concerts for children) can achieve significance as an alternative program and detach from affirmative intentions (Müller-Brozović 2023, 263). Critically considered, such music mediation activities harbor the potential to conceal affirmative intents through social washing (Haak-Schulenburg 2020), so music mediators (and the audience or participants) are hindered from engaging in critical self-reflection (Müller-Brozović 2024, 32).

As key figures in a broad network, cultural institutions, besides acting more evidently in an affirmative (and reproductive) way, subliminally reinforce a hegemonic concept of Western culture. In such settings, music mediators often unwarily act in contexts where music, particularly in performative settings, mainly embodies a specific set of principles and represents a particular canon or is connected to it (Müller-Brozović 2024, 33). Some music mediators, besides being partially shaped by their socialization and cultural formation (with the influence of culture politics as superstructure) as one of many factors (Borwick 2012, 36), often the institutions themselves use (reproductive) narratives about *the power of music* or *music as a universal language* to induce social change, as the Barenboim-Said Foundation and the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra (Haak-Schulenburg 2020, 148)<sup>22</sup>. Nevertheless, “the idealistic narrative of art as a means and way of moral and ethical strengthening is [...] implicitly associated to the genre of Western classical [art] music. [...] If [...], instead of music in general, we were referring specifically to Western classical [art] music, the argument that music is a universal language would not hold up”<sup>23</sup> (Haak-Schulenburg 2020, 148–49). Hence, the term *music* consistently stays synonymous with Western cultural institutions, further emphasizing the perception of

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<sup>22</sup> Analogous examples are the documentary film *Rhythm is it!* (Grube and Sánchez Lansch 2004) and José Antonio Abreu’s *El Sistema* program in Venezuela.

<sup>23</sup> “Das idealistische Narrativ von Kunst als Mittel und Weg zu moralischer und ethischer Stärkung wird [...] implizit an das Genre der westlichen klassischen [Kunst-] Musik geknüpft. [...] Wäre [...] anstelle von Musik im Allgemeinen konkret von westlicher klassischer [Kunst-] Musik die Rede, wäre die Behauptung, dass Musik eine universelle Sprache sei, nicht haltbar” (Haak-Schulenburg 2020, 148–49).

Western art music being the standard. While opera houses have traditionally served as venues for Western art for centuries, this terminological equation can easily lead to othering (Haak-Schulenburg 2020, 148) or tokenism (Gaupp 2023, 188) whenever these institutions seek to explore different directions. It is essential to underline that not every music mediation program reproduces its institutions' affirmative (and reproductive) intentions (Gaupp 2023, 190–91).

Transformative music mediation, on the other hand, acts in social contexts, cooperating with various communities, addressing current issues and challenges, aiming for cultural democracy, and effecting long-term change in internal and external institutional structures<sup>24</sup>. This approach, as in reformative mediation, requires flat hierarchies and a deliberate, trusting environment that acknowledges and values the expertise of all involved actors as legitimate and constructive. Unfortunately, this potential is frequently overlooked (Müller-Brozović 2023, 263–65). Transformative processes have inherent risks and several challenges that must be adequately evaluated. Effective managerial tactics and transparent communication are essential, and the outcome is often unpredictable and difficult to anticipate. Even on a trim level, transformative music mediation can still impact artistic choices.

Furthermore, when used in an affirmative or reproductive context, transformative music mediation can contribute to the development of musical literacy (Müller-Brozović 2017). “Only when the directors are open to change, music mediation can question, irritate and eventually transform structures,”<sup>25</sup> says Müller-Brozović (2017), monitoring at the same time that “music mediation can also become obsolete if it is thought of and implemented as an integral attitude from the outset”<sup>26</sup> (2017). There are currently very few accounts of transformative music mediation initiatives that have successfully and profoundly transformed institutions, such as the Beethoven Festival in Bonn (no distinction between a main music program and a supplementary music mediation program), the cultural forum Kulturforum Witten (open structures and co-production with different local cultural institutions and communities to redefine the relevance of arts, prioritizing social participation over economic considerations) or the Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie

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<sup>24</sup> A similar approach is utilized in applied ethnomusicology when engaging with music and dance communities (Harrison, Mackinlay, and Pettan 2010).

<sup>25</sup> “Nur wenn die Leitenden offen für Veränderungen sind, kann Musikvermittlung Strukturen hinterfragen, irritieren und allenfalls transformieren” (Müller-Brozović 2017).

<sup>26</sup> “Auch kann Musikvermittlung selbst obsolet werden, wenn sie als integrale Haltung von Anfang an mitgedacht und umgesetzt wird” (Müller-Brozović 2017).

Bremen (located its rehearsal spaces in a school, actively involving teachers and kids, and initiating award-winning music mediation initiatives altogether), all located in Germany (Müller-Brozović 2023, 265–66).

### 3.1 Affirmative Music Mediation and Audience Development

Music mediation’s affirmative (and reproductive) goal in cultural institutions is establishing and sustaining connections with new audiences. This can be accomplished by combining music mediation with audience development. In this thesis, I consider audience development a related discipline intersecting with music mediation (Müller-Brozović 2017). However, it is worth noting that “whether audience development is a field of music mediation, or music mediation can be part of a broader audience development strategy is quite controversial”<sup>27</sup> (Petri-Preis 2023d, 251).

The concepts of audience development that emerged in the 1990s were driven by two distinct motivations: a marketing tool to increase audience attendance (USA) and a cultural policy agenda to engage with new audience communities (UK). In German-speaking countries, the term *audience development* is not consistently defined in its usage (see Chapter 2). Initially, institutions in German-speaking countries hesitated to cater to the audience’s interest, unlike the USA and UK, due to their concern that it could harm the arts. The artistic program of cultural institutions should not be subject to the influence or challenge of the audience. Furthermore, as a consequence, there was never any introduction of a German term for *audience development* (Mandel 2013). Currently, audience development is partly connected to music mediation in German-speaking countries (Petri-Preis 2023d).

Audience development entails developing music mediation formats designed to attract (new) audiences in response to the *crisis of Western art music* due to decreasing audience attendance (Bugiel 2015; Voit 2023a, 39–40). This is a significant factor in the emphasis on formats for younger demographics, at least in the first decade of music mediation – now, this is changing (Voit 2023b, 70). As an inherent consequence, the crisis narrative has led to a strict guideline for music mediation, focusing almost exclusively on Western

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<sup>27</sup> “Ob Audience Development ein Arbeitsfeld der Musikvermittlung ist, oder ob Musikvermittlung ein Teil einer größeren Audience Development Strategie sein kann, ist durchaus umstritten” (Petri-Preis 2023d, 251).

art music (Haak-Schulenburg 2020, 148). This ultimately promotes a hegemonic view of Western culture as the crisis and is only seen as affecting Western art music (Petri-Preis 2023d, 251–52).

### **3.2 Transformative Music Mediation and Community Engagement**

Transformative and affirmative mediation are two opposite ends of mediation activities. Similarly, community engagement can be seen as a counterpart to audience development. In light of the crisis mentioned above in Western art music, music mediation cannot halt the decline in audience attendance. However, music mediation does possess the transformative (and reformatory) potential to democratize arts and culture by providing possibilities for a wide range of individuals (Petri-Preis 2023d, 253–54). This occurs at the point where music mediation and community involvement intersect.

Music mediation within community engagement promotes social and artistic interactions among diverse individuals and communities rather than merely expanding and diversifying audiences. Ideally, this will result in a profound societal shift, improving the overall environment for all participants. Striving for a democratic culture can enhance and cultivate the authentic essence of culture, leading to the juxtaposition of Western and non-Western art music, as well as popular and traditional music (Petri-Preis 2023d, 254–55). As previously cautioned in this chapter, any well-meaning endeavor in music mediation and related fields can potentially harbor critical issues. Community engagement typically arises due to its association with marginalized communities. The delicate balance between addressing special needs and promoting empowerment without engaging in othering is highly demanding and significant.

### **3.3 Challenges and Solutions Oscillating between Affirmation and Transformation**

In this chapter, I discussed the benefits and challenges of affirmative and transformative mediation and its application in conjunction with related disciplines like audience development and community engagement. Affirmative music mediation and audience development allow mediators to engage with diverse audiences and groups beyond their

institutions. This enables them to adopt a transformative strategy, even if it is done in a restricted way (e.g., the cultivation of musical literacy). Affirmative (and reproductive) oriented institutions also see the possibilities of music mediation production (e.g., concerts for children). They increasingly rely on music mediation, giving them more opportunities to be independent and pursue transformative approaches. However, affirmative music mediation and audience development act within a Western network that purposefully and subconsciously strengthens its dominance by democratizing Western culture. This fosters a sense of elitism and dominance while excluding and treating others as different (othering) or using them to superficially create diversity (tokenism), which restricts meaningful efforts for change and hinders self-reflection.

Transformative music mediation and community engagement strive to achieve well-intended and idealistic goals, such as promoting cultural democracy, fostering social engagement, encouraging cooperation and co-production, and benefiting all parties involved. However, they face difficulties due to conflicts of interest that arise from the involvement of numerous parties with different perspectives, as well as the presence of gatekeepers and hierarchical systems among cultural institutions and stakeholders. Additionally, there is a lack of trust, communication, financial resources, and decision-making possibilities, save for smaller establishments that operate independently.

Gaupp (2023, 188) acknowledges that there has been an increase in awareness regarding the role of music in facilitating participation, referencing everyday life and the world we inhabit, and promoting more diversity. However, an individual's ability to bring about lasting changes is insufficient in a society based on social determinism. Still, Gaupp considers the establishment of music mediation within institutions as a crucial initial measure in decolonizing Western cultural institutions (2023, 190–91). To progress, institutions must reevaluate their understanding of arts and culture. They should detach from a qualitative, product-oriented notion of art and instead actively allow co-production in the sense of producing *with* communities and not *for* them (as outreach implies), even if this approach may have artistic consequences for their programs (Borwick 2012, 38–40). A sustained, profound, and enduring change would encompass a whole network that, according to Borwick (2012, 36), starts with artistic and music education:

Artists [...] are trained in their craft, a craft rooted in the arts of Europe, and are not encouraged to think about the relationship of the artistic enterprise with those who are not predisposed to be interested in the art in which they are trained [...]. As a result, many of them cannot be leading forces for change because they are unaware of the need for change, of example of what that change might look like, or of the processes by which to make such change occur.

However, often, this is a balancing act between adhering to tradition and embracing innovation, which can be demanding to overcome (Sachsse 2023). This is further complicated because, besides cultural considerations, personal interests and growth also significantly influence music education (Ardila-Mantilla 2020, 76). If, according to Kertz-Welzel (2022a, 68), “we should not forget that music education is also about music and people, not only about social change”, on one side, “we certainly need to become utopian thinkers in a more conscious and deliberate, but also a critical way” (2022a, 67) on the other. The concept of utopian thinking, accompanied by increasing action, can be found in forms of music mediation that “oscillate between affirmation and transformation”<sup>28</sup> (Müller-Brozović 2023, 267). A processual shift can occur in these forms, moving on the edge of affirmative and reproductive contexts and occasionally beyond. As a result, boundaries can be expanded without severing them, as the realization of transformative initiatives often relies on economic entities within an affirmative environment (Adam 2022, 214). One prominent example is the Theater Basel with its Foyer Public, a public urban space that is accessible to all and offers interactive performances that actively involve both the audience and society, and productions co-created with younger audiences or a group of 70 individuals of different ages and backgrounds together with directors, choreographers and backstage operators, as in the three-year music mediation project *Exklusiv für alle* (Müller-Brozović 2023, 267).

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<sup>28</sup> “Zwischen Affirmation und Transformation oszillieren” (Müller-Brozović 2023, 267).

## 4 Behind Music Mediation: The Historical, Social, and Cultural Context of Austria

This chapter serves as a digression on Austria's identity and cultural policy. Its purpose is to provide a sociohistorical context for the sociocultural environment in which the opera houses investigated in this thesis are embedded. According to Lamb-Faffelberger (2003, 289–90), the modern (Second) Republic of Austria was established on three main principles: (1) the victim theory, which asserted that Austria was an unwilling target of Nazi Germany and bore no responsibility for its crimes; (2) the emphasis on Austria's long history and rich culture dating back to the first recording of the designation *Ostarrichi* in 996; and (3) Austria's neutrality and inviolability during the Cold War. These principles played a significant role in shaping a distinct Austrian identity as a democratic nation while tabooing all former German points of contact and transitioning from a process of de-Austrification after World War I to de-Germanization after World War II (Hanisch 2009, 295). The resulting context and concept of *cultural superpower* or *cultural nation* are employed to denote a rhetorical motif of supremacy used by modern Austria, with historical origins dating back to the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century (Knapp 2005, 77). I commence with a brief outline of this narrative. Then, in three subchapters, I address the meaning of *Austria* throughout history since 996, how its national identity, *Austrianess*, was shaped since the end of World War I, and finally, how its cultural policy, *Austrian culture*, has evolved since 1945<sup>29</sup>.

The narrative of a country that alleges a lengthy and prosperous cultural heritage highlights remarkable achievements and symbols of *Austrianess*, with music holding a significant position. The brands *Musikland Österreich* (Austria, Land of Music) and *Musikstadt Wien* (Vienna, City of Music) are internationally popularized topoi and are considered essential aspects of Austrian culture (Baranyi 2020). The issue arises when Austria is characterized as a superior *cultural nation* (*Kulturnation*), a *cultural superpower* (*Kulturgroßmacht*), or a *land of culture* (*Kulturland*) based on its artistic achievements (Knapp 2005, 26). The current government program states that “for the worldwide significance of Austria, art and culture are essential factors. Whether it is art and cultural heritage or contemporary art, folk culture, architectural culture or performing

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<sup>29</sup> Proclamation of the Second Austrian Republic, present-day a.k.a. modern Austria.

arts – Austria is among the best in all artistic and cultural areas”<sup>30</sup> (Bundeskanzleramt 2020, 8). Especially after 1945, this representation contributed to developing a national identity that had not previously existed, exerting a significant and enduring impact on Austrian cultural policy (Knapp 2005, 51).

The establishment of institutions dedicated to promoting arts and culture in Austria commenced in 1850, with the appointment of an art representative by the Habsburgs inside the Ministry of Education. An artistic commission was established in 1863, and an arts council was subsequently constituted in 1890. The purpose was to depict and strengthen the authority of the Habsburgs following the nationalist uprisings in 1848. By the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, several artistic organizations, associations, and unions supported by the middle class emerged as significant players alongside the state. However, following World War I, the middle class experienced a significant decline in economic influence, resulting in the government once again assuming the role of the primary supporter of arts and culture. The circumstances were similar in 1945, supporting the state’s significant involvement in cultural affairs. Democratic foundations, promotion institutions, and cultural industries ultimately determine the relationship between culture and the state. Therefore, a *cultural nation*, in this context, raises questions about the independence of art, the integration of arts and culture into politics, and the associated financial support policies (Knapp 2005, 77–82).

#### 4.1 Austria since 1996

When discussing the Republic of Austria, it is essential to consider that nationalistic sentiments did not drive its formation among its German-speaking people. Instead, Austria’s emergence resulted from a challenging situation characterized by military defeats and internal uprisings, ultimately leading to the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. In 1918 (analogous to 1945), the German-speaking community, the largest within the new national borders, experienced a sudden loss of identity. Everything that was *German* came to symbolize the past. Faced with a deep financial crisis, the most logical path to regain significant political influence was to pursue the Pan-

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<sup>30</sup> “Für die weltweite Bedeutung Österreichs sind Kunst und Kultur ein wesentlicher Faktor. Ob es Kunst- und Kulturerbe oder zeitgenössische Kunst ist, ob es Volkskultur, Baukultur oder darstellende Kunst ist – Österreich zählt in allen künstlerischen und kulturellen Bereichen zu den Besten” (Bundeskanzleramt 2020, 35).

Germanist objective of unifying Austria with the German Reich. This perspective was shared by the republican Social Democratic Worker's Party of Austria (SDAPÖ)<sup>31</sup> on the one side and German nationalist parties, all soon uniformly represented by the Christian Social Party (CSP)<sup>32</sup> on the other. After the establishment of the First Austrian Republic in 1919, following the Treaty of Saint-Germain, which prohibited any attempts to unify with the German Reich or other German-speaking territories, there was a concerted effort to cultivate a distinct national Austrian identity. This effort ultimately legitimized claims of superiority, particularly concerning *German* culture (Knapp 2005, 46–48). The challenge was to define what *Austrian* means in opposition to *German*. A terminological clarification of *Austria* throughout history is necessary to define its meaning in this context.

The term *Austria* is informally used to refer to the modern Republic of Austria. When discussing Austrian history, *Austria* includes various designations, such as the Archduchy of Austria, the Austrian Empire, or the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. While historically accurate, this usage can be misleading as it implies that *Austria* has always comprised territories that more or less correspond with its current borders, which is not the case (Winkelbauer 2018b, 21).

Austria's first dominion is linked to the origin of its native name, *Österreich*, in the late 10<sup>th</sup> century when the Duchy of Bavaria designated its eastern border region as *Marcha orientalis* (Eastern March), corresponding to the westernmost area of present-day Lower Austria. The Magyars attacked the area, but East Frankish King Otto I The Great (later Holy Roman Emperor) reclaimed some territories east of the Enns River in the Battle of Lechfeld in 955. The Margrave Burkhard and later the noble house of Babenberg established the Bavarian *Mark an der Donau* (March on the Danube) between the cities of Enns and Tulln. They expanded the region to the east, north, and south. On November 1<sup>st</sup>, 996, Holy Roman Emperor Otto III officially recognized the Abbey of Freising as the recipient of donated possessions in Neuhofen at the Ybbs. He specifically mentioned that the settlement was located in a region called *Ostarrichi* (Eastern realm). The document was derived from a template established by Emperor Otto II in 973 for the same abbey. This template certified properties in Carniola (in present-day Slovenia). Upon the abbey's

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<sup>31</sup> *Sozialdemokratische Arbeiterpartei Österreichs*, renamed *Sozialistische Partei Österreichs*, SPÖ (Socialist Party of Austria) in 1945, and *Sozialdemokratische Partei Österreichs*, SPÖ (Social Democratic Party of Austria) in 1991 (Pelinka 2022).

<sup>32</sup> *Christlichsoziale Partei*; renamed *Österreichische Volkspartei*, ÖVP (Austrian People's Party) in 1945 (Plasser 2022).

request for an imperial certificate for the newly acquired property, a writer substituted *Carniola* with *Ostarrichi*, resulting in the vernacular name of the Bavarian March on the Danube. In 1156, Emperor Frederick Barbarossa officially detached Ostarrichi from the Duchy of Bavaria and designated it as a distinct and independent duchy. The earliest definitive source certifying the Latin name *Austria* is a royal decree King Conrad III of Germany issued in 1147. This decree acknowledges possession of the Klosterneuburg Monastery by the *Austrie marchionibus* (Margrave of Austria). By the 12<sup>th</sup> century, *Austria* established itself as the Latin name for the country. The red-white-red coat of arms has symbolized Austria since at least 1230 (Winkelbauer 2018b, 15–16).

During the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries, Babenberg's rule extended over a significantly expanded region through Ottokar II of Bohemia. The territory included the Kingdom of Bohemia, the Duchies of Austria, Styria and Carinthia, the Margraviates of Carniola, Friuli, Moravia, the Windic March, and the Duchy of Austria. The latter encompassed areas ranging from Vienna to parts of present-day federal states Lower Austria and Upper Austria. Following Ottokar's death in the Battle on the Marchfeld in 1278, the Babenberg dynasty lost control of their domains to the Habsburg dynasty, who would govern the *Austrian* territories for the subsequent 640 years. By 1300, while the Duchy of Austria was clearly defined in terms of territory, the specific meaning of the term *Austria* remained ambiguous. It could refer to the Habsburgs, their possessions, or their authority to rule. Ultimately, the Habsburgs referred to themselves and were referred to as *Domus Austria* (House of Austria). This univocal meaning, however, was challenged due to the constantly changing territorial and administrative delineations of *Austria*, or *Österreich*. Over the next two centuries, the term *Niedere Lande* (Lower lands) evolved into *Niederösterreichische Lande* (Lower Austrian Lands) to denote the regions divided by the Enns River. These areas were referred to as *Land/Österreich ob der Enns* (Land/Austria above the Enns) with Linz as its capital, and *Land/Österreich unter der Enns* (Land/Austria below the Enns) with Vienna as its capital<sup>33</sup>. However, the term *Lower Austrian Lands* also encompassed other regions such as Styria, Carinthia, Carniola, Gorizia, and domains along the Adria coast, all of which had Vienna as their sole capital (Winkelbauer 2018b, 16–18).

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<sup>33</sup> The territories correspond to the present-day regions of *Niederösterreich* (Lower Austria) and *Oberösterreich* (Upper Austria) (Winkelbauer 2018b, 18).

In 1500, the Holy Roman Empire (800-1806), under Habsburg rule since 1438 (and under Habsburg-Lorraine since 1745), was organized into administrative divisions known as Imperial Circles. The Habsburg territories were part of the *Österreichische Reichskreis* (Austrian Circle), which roughly corresponded to the borders of present-day Austria (including territories in present-day Slovenia, Northern Italy, and Southwestern Germany), except the modern regions of Burgenland and Salzburg, which were not included for nearly two centuries (Winkelbauer 2018b, 19). After its reformation in 1512, the Holy Roman Empire was referred to in historical records as the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation. The reason for this name extension remains unclear; by the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the polity lost its territories in Italy and France and was composed mainly of German-speaking Imperial Estates. In addition, the political reform of 1512 emphasized their political power (Schulze 1998, 52–55). Although the Empire never formally changed its name, the extension *of the German Nation* was inaccurately adopted as an official designation during the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries (Weisert 1994, 513). However, the term *German* had been used previously to designate German-speaking communities within the Empire, dating back to the 13<sup>th</sup> century (Weisert 1994, 463). Even when the Empire was replaced by the German Confederation (1815-1866), the Austrian and Bohemian areas under Habsburg rule were designated as *Deutsche Erblande* (German hereditary lands) due to their inclusion in the old Holy Roman Empire *of the German Nation* (Winkelbauer 2018b, 19).

The concept of Austria as a territorial entity, rather than solely a dynastic one, emerged when Francis II became the last Holy Roman Emperor and the first Emperor of Austria in 1804. However, the interpretation of this concept was a subject of historical debate during the union between the Austrian Empire and the Kingdom of Hungary (1867-1918). In the western regions, *Austria* referred to a single, multi-national state governed by the Habsburgs. Conversely, in the eastern regions (Hungary), it was seen as the union of two distinct nations that retained their independence, with a single monarch ruling over both. Despite these nuances, the term *Austria* was used to designate *Österreich* in three different ways: (1) as the lands above and below the Enns River (referring to the Duchy of Austria); (2) as the lands to the east of Vienna (specifically on the eastern side of the Leitha River, i.e., *Cisleithania*); and, (3) informally, as the entire Austro-Hungarian Monarchy (Winkelbauer 2018b, 19–21).

The following section provides a list of Austria's designations through history based on Winkelbauer (2018a):

~970-1156: Margraviate of Austria (Ostarrichi, Marcha Orientalis)  
 1156-1453: Duchy of Austria  
 1453-1804: Archduchy of Austria  
 1804-1867: Austrian Empire  
 1867-1918: Austro-Hungarian Monarchy  
 1918-1919: Republic of German-Austria  
 1919-1934: Republic of Austria (First Republic)  
 1934-1938: Federal State of Austria (*Ständestaat*; one-party state)  
 1938-1940: State of Austria (Austria within Nazi Germany)  
 1940-1942: Reichsgaue of the Ostmark (Austria within Nazi Germany)  
 1942-1945: Alpine and Danube Reichsgaue (Austria within Nazi Germany)  
 1945-1955: Republic of Austria (Allied-occupied Austria)  
 1955- : Republic of Austria (Second Republic)

Table 1 below shows Habsburg’s lands corresponding to present-day Austria into macro-regions and states (along with their respective capitals) over time.

Macro-region	State	Capital	Period
Archduchy of Austria	Austria below the Enns	Vienna	1278-1918
	Austria above the Enns	Linz	
Inner Austria	Duchy of Styria	Graz	1278-1918
	Duchy of Carinthia	Klagenfurt	1335-1918
	Duchy of Carniola	Ljubljana	1335-1918
	Imperial Free City of Trieste	Trieste	1382-1918
	County of Gorizia	Gorizia	1500-1918
	Margrave of Istria	Pazin	1815-1918
Anterior Austria	County of Tyrol	Merano/Innsbruck (>1420)	1363-1918
	Anterior Austria	Ensisheim/Freiburg im Breisgau (>1648)	1278-1805
Duchy of Salzburg		Salzburg	1816-1918

TABLE 1 Subdivision of Habsburg’s territories corresponding to present-day Austria over time (table by the author). Source: Winkelbauer (2018a)

## 4.2 Austrian Identity since 1918

Austrian identity is a concept connected to Austrian culture and, in turn, connected to Austrian political history (Lamb-Faffelberger 2003, 289). The previous subchapter exposes the meaning of *Austria*, showing that the term was not precise throughout history until, at least theoretically, the end of World War I and the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. In the context of this thesis, I am referring to the Austrian culture and identity that evolved as Austria became a Republic (1918/1919) but relied on the political history of a country that, terminologically, was established around 970.

The (First) Republic of Austria was established on October 21<sup>st</sup>, 1919, ending the reconstruction process that had been going on for less than one year, on November 12<sup>th</sup>, 1918, during the phase when Austria, claiming to be a state with *German* identity, thus part of a larger German *Kulturnation* (cultural nation) (see Chapter 4.1), wanted to unify with the German Reich and call itself *Republic of German-Austria*, prohibited by the Treaty of Saint-Germain. However, the new-born state struggled for a constitution, federal states had to democratize their own, and the southern border to (modern) Italy and Slovenia and the western border to (modern) Hungary were still not defined. Hence, a lack of Austrian identity was an additional major problem (Konrad 2018). Due to the historical ties between the Republic of Austria and the German Reich, shaping a distinct Austrian culture and identity was complex. During the interwar years, the self-identification with *Austrianess* was superficial and unclear. In this context, the *Anschluss* (annexation) to Nazi Germany, almost twenty years later, was a viable option for a part of the Austrian people (Lamb-Faffelberger 2003, 292). One additional factor challenging the First Republic was a heavy financial crisis. In 1921, the inflation caused by government debt and compensation payments resulted in a 124% increase in food costs. Additionally, the value of the krone exceeded its 1914 value by 14,000 times. The crisis was ultimately solved through the acquisition of loans from other nations (Konrad 2018).

In terms of politics, in 1919, the Social Democrats won the first election for the Constituent National Assembly, securing over 40% of the total votes. They were closely followed by the Christian Socialist Party, which gained 36% of the votes. The German nationalist parties obtained just under 21%. The new Constitution in 1920 was ratified by both the Social Democrats and the Christian Socialists. It balanced the former's centralistic ideals and the latter's federalist values, ensuring a proportional presentation in the electoral system<sup>34</sup>. However, the power balance shifted, allowing the Christian Socialists to leave the coalition and ally with the German nationalists. Throughout the rest of the First Republic, the Social Democrats would be excluded from assuming any federal political responsibilities. As nationalist factions merged with war veterans who were willing to use violence and still retained their weapons, the first paramilitary groups, the *Heimwehren* (Home Guards), were formed. They were politically nationalist and Christian Socialist oriented, inspired by the Italian *Fasci italiani di combattimento* (Italian

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<sup>34</sup> In 1929, an amendment established a more centralist federal state and significantly strengthened the initial weak position of the federal president. Following the end of the Nazi regime in 1945, the constitution was reinstated, laying the groundwork for the establishment of the Second Republic (Konrad, 2018).

Fighting Leagues) founded by Benito Mussolini, which later became the National Fascist Party. In response, the Social Democrats established their *Republikanische Schutzbund* (Republican Protection League) in 1923, primarily focused on safeguarding democracy and promoting its progression towards socialism. By 1928, the *Heimwehr* had 100,000 members, while the *Schutzbund* had 80,000. The Federal Army was limited to 10,000 soldiers. The overarching goal was to control public spaces and impose authority, often using violence. This ultimately led to the Austrian Civil War (February Fights) in 1934, between the forces of the authoritarian government of Engelbert Dollfuss and the *Schutzbund*. After the latter's defeat, the Social Democrats were banned. Austria transitioned into a single-party system under the leadership of Dollfuss and later Schuschnigg, inadvertently paving the way for the rise of the Nazis (Konrad 2018).

In contradiction to the asserted Austrian German identity, Adolf Hitler's political pressure on Schuschnigg led to an increased emphasis on shaping the identity "of Austria as 'second German state' and the Austrians as 'the better Germans' in order to anchor the Feder State of Austria in a Christian and German basis in the population and to immunize them against National Socialism"<sup>35</sup> (Gehler 2007). This ideology, however, was destined to fail as it depended on being realized only in conjunction with the German Reich, and the attempts by the Communists or the group *Österreichische Aktion*<sup>36</sup> (Austrian Action) to establish a national consciousness were suppressed (Staudinger 2014, 49). Nonetheless, Schuschnigg persisted in fostering confidence in the young and politically vulnerable rump state, emphasizing the distinctiveness of its culture and thereby establishing Austria as a unique *Kulturnation* (cultural nation) (Schuberth 2023, 48). Austria's strategy of pitting itself against Berlin evolved into an internal German rivalry (a legacy of the Austro-Prussian rivalry of the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century), instrumentalizing cultural institutions such as the Vienna Philharmonic (in competition with the Berlin Philharmonic) (Trümpi 2017, 71).

After the annexation by Nazi Germany in 1938, efforts to establish an Austrian identity came to an abrupt halt. Austrian and German identities and their respective arts and cultures became intertwined. The departure or suppression of Austrian intellectuals and

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<sup>35</sup> "Er propagierte die Idee von Österreich als ‚zweitem dt. Staat‘ und den Österreichern als ‚die besseren Deutschen‘, um den ‚Ständestaat auf christl. und dt. Grundlage‘ in der Bevölkerung zu verankern und diese gegen den Nationalsozialismus zu immunisieren" (Gehler 2007).

<sup>36</sup> During the interwar period, the *Österreichische Aktion* sought to establish an Austrian identity rooted in Catholic-conservative values, opposing Prussian influence, and promoting social reforms to empower the working class (Diem 2017).

artists of Jewish heritage, as well as those who were not of Jewish descent, played a significant role in this. The Nazis appropriated every aspect of Austrian tradition, dating back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, in tribute to the German identity, disregarding any distinction between *German* and *German-speaking* individuals, the autonomy of Austrian territories as the legacy of Habsburg's domain, and the political aspirations of German-Austria. The newly established authorities had the power to exert ideological influence over citizens residing within Austrian territory, although not all aspects were entirely controlled by the Nazis, allowing regional variations. For instance, Tyrol implemented a more lenient cultural policy than Styria or Vienna. The Nazi period from 1938 to 1945 had undeniable repercussions on Austria's identity, history, and culture, which remained visible long after the end of World War II. (Wagner 2005, 58–60).

Austria's post-1945 identity was influenced by a cultural policy centered on promoting *Austrianess* and Austrian heritage, with little regard for contemporary arts or addressing the integration of former Nazis into society (Wagner 2005, 63). In 1946, Austria immediately took the opportunity to celebrate its 950<sup>th</sup> birthday, highlighting its rich history<sup>37</sup>. Instead of embracing a new, unwritten chapter, the country upheld its regressive cultural and social conservatism, evoking the Habsburg Myth from the Austro-fascist era and showcasing its cultural heritage as part of its identity. This political myth, born after the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, found expression in the works of intellectuals, artists, and writers, particularly Stefan Zweig and Joseph Roth, who romanticized and idealized the Habsburg era (Lamb-Faffelberger 2003, 293), the nostalgic image of late 19<sup>th</sup>-century Austria (as a German-speaking territory) and Vienna, with their blooming culture, ruled by Franz Joseph I and his wife Elisabeth, a.k.a. Sisi, remains a major tourist attraction (Graml 2020, 55–56), neglecting the country's cultural diversity throughout history and shared history with territories of modern Germany. This “hindered rather than fostered the formation of a strong cultural and national identity for all Austrians, including those from the far western provinces, also Jewish Austrians, and the Croat, Slovenian, and ‘Roma-Sinti’ minorities” (Lamb-Faffelberger 2003, 293). Ambiguously, asserting that Austria has been a transnational country since the 19<sup>th</sup> century served to claim any aspect of the *German* cultural identity of Austria (Hanisch 2009, 294). Furthermore, the ambivalent relationship with history is exemplified by the dual celebration of the country's liberation: in 1945, when the Allies liberated the country

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<sup>37</sup> The celebrations were revived in 1996 to mark the millennial anniversary of Austria (Lamb-Faffelberger 2003, 293).

from the Nazis, and in 1955, when the Allies left the country, and Austria declared its neutrality, which lasted to this day (Lamb-Faffelberger 2003, 293).

The myth of *Austria as the first victim of the Nazi regime* “was vital to the creation of a national identity” (Lamb-Faffelberger 2003, 289). The rejection of Nazism, while initially strong, waned within a few years. In the 1950s, there was a noticeable trend of protecting and reintegrating former Nazis into society, which hindered any collective reflection on a crucial chapter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and also facilitated the establishment of the Federation of Independents Party (*Verband der Unabhängigen*), later reorganized as the Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ)<sup>38</sup> in 1956 (Lamb-Faffelberger 2003, 291). Additionally, national stereotypes were actively promoted to reinforce *Austrianess*. The country depicted itself internationally as a small, harmless (since neutral) nation deeply invested in culture and tradition until the 1960s. This ideal was associated with *classical* music, instrumental play, choir singing, writers like Adalbert Stifter and Hugo von Hofmannstahl, the Catholic youth organization (*Katholische Jungschar*), Schönbrunn Castle, the Burgtheater, the ball season, Sisi, hiking, and skiing. The 1959 musical (and the 1965 film) *The Sound of Music* confirmed this image and popularized it further (Lamb-Faffelberger 2003, 294).

The voices of opposition from the post-war generation primarily came from writers<sup>39</sup> such as Paul Celan, Ingeborg Bachmann, and Hans Weigel in the backdrop of the counterculture movement of the late 1960s. However, the protest against the shortcomings of the Second Republic did not permit social discourse. The media largely disregarded it until the international affair in 1986, which confronted former Secretary-General of the United Nations and then President of Austria, Kurt Waldheim, with his Nazi past as a Wehrmacht officer (Lamb-Faffelberger 2003, 294–95). Then, playwrights such as Elfriede Jelinek and Thomas Bernhard compelled the staging of works addressing Austria’s history. Bernhard’s play *Heldenplatz* (1988) for the centenary of the Burgtheater in Vienna (recurring on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the *Anschluss*) focused on Austrian anti-Semitism and the denial of Nazi involvement, provoking vehement protests, public demonstrations involving politicians and the media, anonymous threatening

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<sup>38</sup> *Freiheitliche Partei Österreich* (Weblexikon über die Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs n.d.).

<sup>39</sup> The rock band *Schmetterlinge* is one of the few examples of protest music from the counterculture movement (Westphal 2019). In the realm of Western art music, the significant contemporary works price was named after former Nazi member Emil Berlanda until 2014 (Mittelstaedt 2014). This reflects the lack of a critical historical review from major cultural institutions.

letters, and death threats (Lamb-Faffelberger 2003, 296)<sup>40</sup>. In one aspect, this event marked a significant moment in Austria's reconciliation with its history and national identity. However, it bolstered the national-conservative faction, such as the FPÖ party. During the 1990s, they opposed Austria's entry into the European Union, advocating, once again, for a distinct Austrian identity rooted in an idealized (and nationalistic) concept of *Heimat*<sup>41</sup> (home, homeland), while dismissing critical perspectives, particularly within the realms of art and culture (Lamb-Faffelberger 2003, 297–98). Indeed, it is questionable, as sociohistoric studies show (Rathkolb 2005, 28), if, by the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Austria could generate a national consciousness (whether as a nation or cultural nation) in less than fifty years.

By the end of the 1990s, Thomas Klestil, the last president of Austria in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the successor to Kurt Waldheim, publicly condemned Austria's role in World War II and apologized to Israel for the crimes committed against the Jewish population (Wodak, Reisigl, and Cillia 2009, 93). He confirmed the idea of a *cultural nation* within the country, promoting patriotism and Austrian consciousness. However, his vision of an inclusive Austrian patriotism reflects the ambivalence that characterized the country throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Wodak, Reisigl, and Cillia 2009, 76–77). Klestil also emphasized regionalism to foster a sense of national unity, although this had opposite consequences. Austria's millennium commemoration (Ostarrichi 996-1996) did not receive the expected response from the government, and in the last twenty-five years, regional political influence has diminished. Consequently, today's Austrian identity is balanced between populist trends, lacking European consciousness, and the rise of post-nationalism (Rathkolb 2021, 28).

### 4.3 Austria's Cultural Policy since 1945

Following World War II, modern Austria's cultural policy was greatly influenced by a solid anti-German sentiment (stemming from Austria's separation from Nazi Germany) and the need to reconstruct both a nation and an identity as it stood in 1918. This fostered the rise of Austrian nationalism and the adoption of the *cultural nation* concept by the

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<sup>40</sup> By 2010, *Heldenplatz* has been staged more than 120 times (*Die Presse*, September 09, 2010).

<sup>41</sup> The term *Heimat* has no direct English equivalent, and it is often misappropriated by right-wing populist parties in German-speaking countries (Futh 2024).

newly established Austrian People's Party (ÖVP), which enjoyed the government majority until 1970 (Hanisch 2009, 293). This trend can be traced back to the First Republic (see previous chapter), where the heritage of the Habsburg Monarchy bolstered Austria's cultural supremacy with notable figures such as noble prize winners from the universities of Vienna and Graz, renowned writers like Stefan Zweig and Franz Kafka, the founding of the Salzburg Festival by Max Reinhardt, Hugo von Hofmannsthal, and Richard Strauss, and the influence of Gustav Klimt and Egon Schiele (Konrad 2018). The Austro-Fascist government emphasized Austrian music and its history, capitalizing on the global renown of composers like Haydn, Mozart, Schubert, and Bruckner, who were anachronistically depicted as exemplary *Austrians*. Furthermore, cultural festivals revived traditions established by the Habsburg of the Catholic Church. At the same time, institutions like the Vienna Boys' Choir (*Wiener Sängerknaben*) and the Vienna Philharmonic, among others, contributed to the propagation of the asserted cultural superiority (Schuberth 2023, 127–28). The orchestra became a symbol of prestige for *German* Western art music. Amid Hitler's rule, this resulted in a competition with the Berliner Philharmonic. Baldur von Schirach, the *Gauleiter* (district leader) and *Reichstatthalter* (Reich governor) of Vienna, and his cultural advisor Walter Thomas worked to elevate the Vienna Philharmonic's international standing despite the opposition of Hitler and Goebbels. They positioned the orchestra as the representative of *Vienna, City of Music*, a move that continued to influence the orchestra and its city even after the war (e.g., the Vienna New Year's Concert, first performed in 1939) (Trümpi 2017, 237–39).

During the Allied occupation of Austria (1945-1955), Ernst Fischer, Austria's first Secretary for Education (and Culture) and a key figure in the Communist Party (KPÖ), aligned with the ideology of the Soviet Union. The Soviets had liberated Vienna, pushed towards proclaiming the Republic<sup>42</sup>, and ordered the reopening of cultural institutions to help stabilize the country (Baranyi 2020). Until 1970, the ruling ÖVP (in coalition with the SPÖ) sought to revive traditional practices, including cultural and aesthetic measures from the Nazi era. This involved, among others, promoting the Mozart style of performance, which was encouraged to be preserved by the Vienna Philharmonic (with several former members of the Nazi Party). Additionally, the Vienna Burgtheater

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<sup>42</sup> Initially, the Western Allies did not agree to the provisional government because they had reservations about Karl Renner, who supported the *Anschluss*, as head of the state and two Communist Party members, Franz Honner and Ernst Fischer, as secretaries of Interior and Education. (ORF 2015).

continued to present classic works by notable playwrights such as Franz Grillparzer and Johann Nestroy (Rathkolb 2021, 210). Between 1945 and 1946, there were sporadic efforts to promote contemporary arts and culture despite the lack of significant support for them. This was mainly due to the poorly established ministerial apparatus for education and culture at that time. Emphasizing tradition was considered a more effective means of fostering a strong national identity, a viewpoint shared by the new government and the Soviets. The French, deployed in the Western districts of the country (Tyrol and Vorarlberg), also turned to traditional values in response to the prevailing anti-Semitism and general xenophobia observed among the population. Catholic and Baroque ideals of the Habsburg era were considered effective remedies (overlooking the advancements in Austrian modern art during the 1920s and early 1930s), further strengthening the ÖVP (Rathkolb 2005, 302–11). The United States, which controlled the federal states of Upper Austria and Salzburg, implemented a *reeducation* program aimed at eradicating Nazi culture and promoting democratic values, once again using so-called high culture as a means of conveying this message. However, the situation shifted during the McCarthy era and the onset of the Cold War, leading former Nazis to be appointed to prestigious positions. Despite the Soviets' opposition to Nazi ideology, the strength of the US anti-Communism overshadowed it, resulting in the quick reintegration of former Nazis into society (Baranyi 2020).

Vienna and Salzburg stood as the primary hubs of the state's cultural scene, with the Salzburg Festival and the Philharmonic Orchestra boasting the highest available financial resources<sup>43</sup>, followed by the Burgtheater and the State Opera<sup>44</sup>. Despite the opposition from the Communists, the Social Democrats refrained from intervening (Knapp 2005, 97). In 1954, one year before the Burgtheater and the State Opera reopened, the parliament deliberated on their artistic program. They aimed to avoid excessive liberalism, modernity, female representation, jazz<sup>45</sup>, and Catholic parodies. The Burgtheater director, Alfred Rott, aimed to stage Goethe's *Egmont*, a *German* piece, while the ÖVP favored a work by the *Austrian* Grillparzer. As for the State Opera, the

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<sup>43</sup> Austria does not have a specific budget allocated for cultural purposes. Due to the fragmented cultural agenda and various structural changes within the Ministry for Culture, cultural expenditures have been spread across multiple ministries (see Table 2) (Knapp 2005, 87).

<sup>44</sup> Even as the number of cinema-goers declined in the 1950s, the government did not provide financial assistance to the cinema industry. Instead, it introduced the *Kultur Groschen* (culture penny), a tax on cinema tickets to finance theaters (Knapp 2005, 109–10).

<sup>45</sup> Until the mid-1960s, the ÖVP government felt threatened by US mass culture, leading Austria to prioritize Austrian culture (Knapp 2005, 109).

government opted for Beethoven's *Fidelio*. This underscores the role of theaters as political and educational institutions rather than mere entertainment venues (Knapp 2005, 99). The elitist attitudes towards arts and culture from that period partly continue to impact the perception of these institutions today. Critically, Wagner (2005, 67) argues that "since the school as educational authority fails to address art and integrate it into primary, vocational, or university education as a life-constitutive element of learning, art exposure, and knowledge is often coincidental, dependent on socialization and specific to certain social strata"<sup>46</sup>. This is a challenge that the field of music mediation must address today. Moreover, in the mid-1960s, the SPÖ and the ÖVP debated for the first time since 1945 concerning the status and societal relevance of education and cultural institutions, driven by socio-economic, technological, and cultural advancements that demanded political change. The rise of a consumer society, secularization, and the growth of counterculture movements signaled the need for a shift in cultural policy. Although the ÖVP pursued modernizing its political stance, it did not extend this effort to cultural affairs. Ultimately, the Social Democrats secured the majority in the 1970 elections and governed independently for thirteen years (Knapp 2005, 115–17).

The Social Democrats, unlike their predecessors, pursued a broader and more democratic concept of culture, emphasizing its societal impact. They shifted from cultural to social policy, aiming to advance the concept of *Kultur für alle* (culture for everybody) by promoting participation. In the context of cultural institutions, this meant embracing contemporary arts and actively engaging with younger audiences (Knapp 2005, 123–25). However, not all members of the SPÖ-government were aligned with this idealistic approach, mainly due to its deviation from the socialist perspective on cultural policy, which emphasized the link between culture and economy. Major cultural institutions such as the Vienna State Opera strongly opposed this new strategy introduced by Fred Sinowatz, Secretary for Education and Arts from 1971 to 1983, who shaped an era (M. Wimmer 2011, 221). This form of cultural policy did not encourage new forms of cultural expression but rather paternalistically aimed to make Western art (music) more accessible to a broader audience (Knapp 2005, 128), raising all the inherent issues of affirmative music mediation addressed in Chapter 3. This was evident with the allocation of financial resources, with substantial funding predominantly directed towards major

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<sup>46</sup> "Da die Schule als Aufklärungsinstanz in der Frage Kunst versagt und weder im Primärschulalter noch im Berufsschulwesen noch an der Universität als lebenskonstruktives Lernelement eingesetzt ist, resultieren Kunst-Bekanntschaften und Kunst-Wissen aus Zufälligkeiten, sind sozialisationsbedingt und schichtenspezifisch" (Wagner 2005, 67).

cultural institutions to represent Austria within and outside its borders, although contemporary art was welcomed (Knapp 2005, 132). Despite assuming the role of Chancellor in 1983, Sinowatz struggled to effectively tackle the challenges of the subsequent decade, which included financial crisis, high unemployment rates, general discontent, and the emergence (and underestimation) of new social groupings (cultural change initiatives, independent artists associations, etc.), ultimately resulting in a regressive and traditionalist form of cultural policy. As a result, the Social Democrats formed a government coalition with the national-conservative FPÖ (M. Wimmer 2011, 223).

Over the next thirty-one years, the government was formed by ÖVP and SPÖ coalitions, alternating the secretaries for cultural affairs. These governments aimed to modernize the country by promoting de-nationalization, privatization, and improving international competitiveness. The Social Democrats persisted in their notions of expanded cultural practices, as they did in the 1970s. However, they only advocated for promoting independent contemporary arts that matched high-quality criteria and failed to effectively outline their approach to preserving a balance between tradition and innovation. In contrast, the ÖVP (backed by the FPÖ) prioritized the traditional Austrian identity and its reputation as a country renowned for its culture and music (which became even more significant following Austria's entrance into the European Union in 1995). An important step was the Art Promotion Act (*Kunstförderungsgesetz*) of 1988, advocated by the SPÖ, which officially mandated the state's financial assistance for cultural affairs (including its mediation) (Knapp 2005, 154–67). With this act, the SPÖ aimed to counter the private sponsoring favored by the ÖVP, which principally supported major cultural institutions instead of innovative or controversial arts, fueling the ongoing debate between tradition and innovation (Knapp 2005, 217). These differences led to further disputes when Claus Peymann and Gérard Mortier were appointed as the new directors of the Vienna Burgtheater (1986-1999) and the Salzburg Festival (1991-2001), respectively. Their goal was to change the prevailing perception of (high) culture despite traditionalist criticism. Renowned theater director Peymann, known for his work in German-speaking countries, focused on contemporary Austrian authors (e.g., Thomas Bernhard, Elfriede Jelinek, and Peter Turrini), aiming to attract new audiences, particularly the younger generation. His combination of contemporary and socially critical pieces sparked strong objections, notably with Bernhard's *Heldenplatz* (see subchapter 4.2.). Even his contract extension faced criticism in the national parliament, not due to any deficiency in the theater's quality

or ticket sales but rather for deviating from traditional norms. In 1999, when Peymann declined to extend his contract and chose to leave for the Berliner Ensemble in Germany, the ÖVP explicitly expressed their intent to appoint a promoter of *Austrian* culture (i.e., Nikolaus Bachler). In Salzburg, Mortier faced similar challenges from various critical figures, including government officials, provincial authorities, city officials, and the tourism industry, all of whom were part of the Festival's board of trustees. Succeeding Herbert von Karajan, Mortier sought to diminish the excessive influence of the recording industry and the upper class, aiming to modernize the repertoire and attract a younger audience (Knapp 2005, 178–96). This period of discussion and innovation “was not only a debate about the definition of high culture but also about a definition of ‘Austrianess’”<sup>47</sup> (Knapp 2005, 268).

A clear cultural policy agenda was absent during the ÖVP-FPÖ coalition from 1999 to 2005, with no mention of arts, culture, or contemporary arts (Knapp 2005, 274). This period, though brief, played a significant role in shaping cultural policy, promoting the notion that “art should [...] primarily please and entertain, but not galvanize, disturb, irritate and provoke”<sup>48</sup> (Knapp 2005, 311). The directive emphasized Austria's cultural heritage, reducing state financial support for cultural programs and striving for stronger commercialization (Knapp 2005, 277). The origins of music mediation in Austria (German-speaking countries) can be traced back to this historical setting, as it was introduced in institutions that bridged the gap between cultural policy agenda and society.

Over the last two decades, Austrian cultural policy has experienced minimal change. The trend of decreasing government attention, limited budget, and the ongoing challenge of balancing innovation and tradition has remained consistent. International market politics, the economic focus on arts and culture, and simple power-political strategies are increasingly influential (M. Wimmer 2011, 233; M. Wimmer 2022). A significant historical factor shaping Austrian cultural policy is the absence of a dedicated Ministry for Art and Culture in modern Austria. Responsibility for cultural affairs has primarily resided within the Ministry of Education. Table 2 below outlines this development's progression and the names of the responsible secretaries in their respective governments.

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<sup>47</sup> “Steckte nicht nur eine Auseinandersetzung um die Definition der Hochkultur, sondern auch eine um die Definition des ‚Österreichischen‘” (Knapp 2005, 268).

<sup>48</sup> “Kunst soll [...] primär gefallen und unterhalten, aber nicht aufrütteln, verstören, irritieren und provozieren” (Knapp 2005, 311).

### Austria's ruling or coalition partner parties since 1945:

- BZÖ (Bündnis Zukunft Österreich): Alliance for the Future of Austria, national-conservative, right-wing to far-right;
- FPÖ (Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs): Freedom Party of Austria, national-conservative, populist, right-wing to far-right;
- GRÜNE (Die Grünen – Die Grüne Alternative): The Greens – The Green Alternative, green political party, center-left to left-wing
- KPÖ (Kommunistische Partei Österreichs): Communist Party of Austria, far-left;
- ÖVP (Österreichische Volkspartei): Austrian People's Party; Christian-democratic, liberal-conservative, populist, center-right to right-wing;
- SPÖ (Sozialdemokratische Partei Österreichs): Social Democratic Party of Austria, center-left.

#	Culture Secretary	Political Party	Term of Office	Ministry of	Chancellor (Term of Office)	Coalition
1	Ernst Fischer	KPÖ	1945	Education (1945-1970)	Karl Renner (1945)	ÖVP/SPÖ-KPÖ
2	Felix Hurdes	ÖVP	1945-1952		Leopold Figl (1945-1953)	
3	Ernst Kolb	ÖVP	1952-1954		Julius Raab (1953-1961)	
4	Heinrich Drimmel	ÖVP	1954-1964		Alfons Gorbach (1961-1964)	
5	Theodor Pifffl-Perčević	ÖVP	1964-1969		Josef Klaus (1964-1970)	
6	Alois Mock	ÖVP	1969-1970			
7	Leopold Gratz	SPÖ	1970-1971	Education and Arts (1970-1984)	Bruno Kreisky (1970-1983)	SPÖ
8	Fred Sinowatz	SPÖ	1971-1983		Fred Sinowatz (1983-1986)	SPÖ/FPÖ
9	Helmut Zilk	SPÖ	1983-1984			
10	Herbert Moritz	SPÖ	1984-1987	Education, Arts, Sports (1985-1991)	Franz Vranitzky (1986-1997)	SPÖ/ÖVP
11	Hilde Hawlicek	SPÖ	1987-1990			
12	Rudolf Scholten	SPÖ	1990-1994	Education and Arts (1991-1994)		
13	Erhard Busek	ÖVP	1994-1995	Education and Cultural Affairs (1994-2000)	Viktor Klima (1997-2000)	
14	Elisabeth Gehrler	ÖVP	1995-2007	Education, Science, and Culture (2000-2007)	Wolfgang Schüssel (2000-2007)	ÖVP/FPÖ-BZÖ
15	Claudia Schmied	SPÖ	2007-2013	Education, Arts, and Culture (2007-2014)	Alfred Gusenbauer (2007-2008)	SPÖ/ÖVP
16	Gabriele Heinisch-Hosek	SPÖ	2013-2014		Werner Faymann (2008-2016)	
17	Josef Ostermayer	SPÖ	2014-2016	Arts, Culture, Constitution, and Public Service (2014-2016)	Christian Kern (2016-2017)	
18	Heinz Faßmann	Ind. (ÖVP)	2017-2019	Education (2016-2018)	Sebastian Kurz (2017-2019)	ÖVP/FPÖ
19	Iris Rauskala	Ind.	2019-2020	Education, Science, and Research (2018-)	Brigitte Bierlein (2019-2020)	none
20	Werner Kogler	GRÜNE	2020-	Arts, Culture, Public Service, and Sports (2020-)	Sebastian Kurz (2020-2021)	ÖVP/GRÜNE
					Alexander Schallenberg (2021)	
					Karl Nehammer (2021-)	

TABLE 2 Modern Austria's culture secretaries (political party, term of office) in relation to their ministry and respective government (chancellor, term of office, and coalition) since 1945 (table by the author). Source: M. Wimmer (2011, 218–33; 2020), Kwasi (2019), and Bundeskanzleramt (2024)

The numbering of secretaries in Table 2 offers a quick reference for the following concise overview of the most essential cultural policy measures based on M. Wimmer (2011, 218–33; 2020), Kwasi (2019), and Bundeskanzleramt (2024).

1. Ernst Fischer (KPÖ): traditionalist; anti-Germanist; promoter of *Austrianess*;
2. Felix Hurdes (ÖVP): traditionalist; promoter of Austria as a cultural nation;
3. Ernst Kolb (ÖVP): traditionalist; reopened the Vienna State Opera;
4. Heinrich Dimmel (ÖVP): traditionalist; promoter of Austro-Fascist *Austrianess*; increased state funding in cultural institutions and universities;
5. Theodor Piffel-Perčević (ÖVP): (nothing relevant);
6. Alois Mock (ÖVP): (nothing relevant);
7. Leopold Gratz (SPÖ): (nothing relevant); end of ÖVP's culture-political restoration phase;
8. Fred Sinowatz (SPÖ): humanist; failed progressist; shift from cultural policy to social policy; democratization of culture and non-traditional art forms; initiator of the Freedom of the Arts Act (Art. 17a a StGG, 1982); criticized by the SPÖ and major cultural institutions;
9. Helmut Zilk (SPÖ): traditionalist; privatization of culture; market influenced cultural policy; promoter of contemporary arts and culture; engagement with younger audience; criticized for designating modernizer Claus Peymann as Vienna Burgtheater director;
10. Herbert Moritz (SPÖ): (nothing relevant);
11. Hilde Hawlicek (SPÖ): continuator of Sinowatz's cultural policy; state funding of young artists; promoter of contemporary arts and culture; engagement with younger audience; designated modernizer Gerard Mortier as Salzburg Festival director;
12. Rudolf Scholten (SPÖ): traditionalist; more substantial financial support and expanded budget for cultural affairs; against Claus Peymann's modernization of the Vienna Burgtheater but allowed his contract extension; designated traditionalist Ioan Holender as Vienna State Opera and Vienna Volksoper director; promoter of controversial artists; criticized by the FPÖ;
13. Erhard Busek (ÖVP): liberal (nothing relevant);
14. Elisabeth Gehrler (ÖVP): traditionalist; renovated and promoted Viennese museums; stronger economization of arts and culture; merged the non-profit organization *Österreichisches Kulturservice*, ÖKS (Austrian Cultural Service), established in 1977, and the *Büro für Kulturvermittlung*, BKV (Office for Culture Mediation),

established in 1993, into the more finance-oriented but less financially aided association *KulturKontakt Austria*, KKA, in 2004<sup>49</sup>. The ÖKS promoted cultural programs, such as competitions, EU projects, workshops for young audiences, and educational and cultural institutions (Rausch 2003).

15. Claudia Schmied (SPÖ): continuator of Sinowatz's cultural policy; data-based cultural policy and decision-making; promoter of young artists, their mobility, internationalization, cultural participation, and social welfare; challenged by financial cuts and tradition-innovation debates;
16. Gabriele Heinisch-Hosek (SPÖ): (nothing relevant);
17. Josef Ostermayer (SPÖ): economization of culture, broadening cultural activity for better market anchoring;
18. Heinz Faßmann (Ind., ÖVP): no concrete measures concerning cultural policy, education, and participation; ethnically and religiously conceived policy strategy;
19. Iris Rauskala (Ind.): (nothing relevant);
20. Werner Kogler (GRÜNE): small focus on cultural policy.

In conclusion, the cultural policy of modern Austria is marked by inconsistent agendas encompassing interests beyond cultural or artistic aspects. Due to the limited timeframe, it is only partially possible to provide a comprehensive and evaluative overview of the past decade. The direction of Austria's cultural policy will become more apparent after the National Council elections in September 2024. As for the current ÖVP-GRÜNE government, only the Ministry of Arts, Culture, Public Service, and Sports aims can be mentioned here. These objectives include promoting regular collaboration among artists and cultural figures, establishing strategic partnerships, advocating for sustainable cultural engagement and societal awareness with a targeted approach, and developing a cultural policy guideline (Bundesministerium Kunst, Kultur, öffentlicher Dienst und Sport 2021).

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<sup>49</sup> In 2020 *KulturKontakt Austria* was absorbed by the *OeAD - Agentur für Bildung und Internationalisierung* (Austria's Agency for Education and Internationalisation) (OeAD 2020).

## **5 The Role of Music Mediation in Major Austrian Opera Houses**

In this chapter, I analyze the role of music mediation in major Austrian opera houses, using the Vienna State Opera, the Graz Opera, and the Musiktheater Linz as specific examples. After outlining the study methodology, the subsequent subchapters will focus on presenting each institution individually, providing a brief introduction and a quantitative analysis of its music mediation formats between the seasons 2013/2014 and 2023/2024. Subchapter 5.4 will center on conducting a comparative analysis of all opera houses and presenting the findings to outline the role of music mediation in these institutions. As mentioned in the introduction, the data under examination is retrieved from the seasonal programs, annual reports, and past iterations of the institutions' websites. The aim is to assess the development of mediation formats over time, identifying the type of content and the specific target or dialogue groups. Ultimately, the results will showcase opera houses' various strategies to engage with audiences or communities through music mediation departments, their inclination towards audience development or community engagement, and tendencies towards affirmative or transformative music mediation.

According to Ostrop (2023, 127), music mediation in opera houses serves two primary purposes: (1) to enable people of all ages and backgrounds to engage with the art of music theater in various ways, and (2) to promote participation and collaboration with society, reflecting affirmative and transformative goals. These approaches are neither mutually exclusive (see Chapter 3) nor unidirectional. Usually, they co-occur (Müller-Brozović 2023), and ideally, they are bidirectional to facilitate and utilize the interaction with communities both within and outside the building (Ostrop 2023, 127). Music mediation formats can be organized and executed by a dedicated department (as in most cases) or by different departments (mostly dramaturgy). The formats are based on the content and the target group, and they include digital formats, further education and training, guided tours, introductions and talkbacks, music theater clubs, participatory and community projects, performances for specific groups (e.g., concerts, operas, musicals), talent support, and workshops (Ostrop 2023, 128).

Other formats depend on the strategic approach of the opera house and the subsequent division among various artistic departments. The study comprises 768 single mediation formats categorized into sixteen different types of formats resulting from the available data:

1. Ballet for young audience
2. Concert for young audience
3. Educational material
4. Guided tour
5. Introduction
6. Opera/musical for young audience
7. Participatory performance
8. Participatory project
9. Podcast
10. Preparatory Workshop
11. Public rehearsal
12. Streaming
13. Symposium
14. Talk
15. Training
16. Workshop

The categorization of performances for young audiences in ballet, concert, and operas/musicals should illustrate their distinction. Other individual formats have been classified as *participatory projects*, encompassing community projects, school projects, and music theater clubs. The same classification applies to participatory performances, including concerts, operas, etc., and talks, such as talkbacks, lectures, matinees, or artist talks, provided they enable a dialogue with the audience (if not, they are categorized as *introduction*). It is essential to clarify that this categorization is based on the analyzed data and does not represent the entirety of the music mediation services offered by all Austrian opera houses. The selection criteria included events considered music mediation formats according to the relevant literature (Petri-Preis and Voit 2023a) and aligned with the purposes outlined by Ostrop (2023, 127). Consequently, the data also includes formats historically associated with other artistic departments, such as introductions provided by dramaturgs. A precise categorization in affirmative or transformative music mediation is challenging as the intention of each format depends on various factors that would require a qualitative analysis. However, due to their inherent functioning, categories such as *participatory performance*, *participatory project*, *podcast*, and *talk* are more likely to facilitate transformative approaches and achieve the transformative mediation goal of enhancing the societal function of a cultural institution, as suggested by Mörsch (2012, 206-207).

In addition to the format type, the analyzed mediation formats are associated with the following:

- dialogue/target group: *individual* or *educational group*. Formats designed for both are categorized as *individual*;
- age group: *0-5, 6-12, 13-19, 20-29, 30-39, 40-59, 60-99, 0-99*. Performances for young audiences are categorized into one age group, although they can include other groups in the case of family-oriented performances;
- organizer: *mediation department* or *other*;
- Season: *2013/2014* until *2023/2024*.

The diverging numbers of mediation formats at the analyzed opera houses (205 Vienna State Opera, 343 Graz Opera, 220 Musiktheater Linz) indicate the number of offered formats, but only as different named formats and not as the actual number of formats that took place (this is only possible with an overall statistic of every single event). Introductions, talks, preparatory workshops, and every other format comprising a series of events are only counted as one occurrence, even though they may take place multiple times for various performances throughout the season (e.g., in Linz, the talk series *Sonntagsfoyer* includes matinees, talkbacks, or lectures).

## 5.1 Vienna State Opera

The Vienna State Opera, the largest and most prestigious opera house in Austria and one of the most renowned in the world was inaugurated in 1869 with Mozart's *Don Giovanni*. Since then, it has become a symbol of Western cultural excellence and Austrian heritage. Its repertoire is dedicated to upholding this reputation and is historically rooted in the country's history and cultural policy (see Chapter 4). In the 2020/2021 season, the current director, Bogdan Roščić, established the *Jung!* (young) mediation and outreach department, aiming to involve children, teenagers, and individuals under 27 years and "open the house to all [...] regardless of their socio-economic and cultural background"<sup>50</sup> (Wiener Staatsoper 2022, 88). Besides participatory projects facilitating transformative mediation approaches, the primary emphasis remains on (affirmative) mediation of the institution's repertoire, predominantly focused on classical works from the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

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<sup>50</sup> "Das Haus für alle zu öffnen [...] unabhängig ihres sozio-ökonomischen und kulturellen Hintergrundes" (Wiener Staatsoper 2022, 88).

The opera house has long been defined by its cultural-political choice in repertoire selection. Initially, it promoted the Habsburgs' power and values; the transition from Court Opera to State Opera further solidified its status as a symbol of Austria's First Republic (Glanz 2016). However, financial constraints during the 1920s led to a focus on renowned classical works instead of contemporary pieces to maintain the establishment's operations. This approach, particularly during Richard Strauss' tenure as director (1919-1924), sparked debate regarding preserving a music culture that still endorsed the former Monarchy and its elite (Aigner 2016). The Nazi era further underscored the symbolic importance of the opera house and its orchestra, emphasizing tradition and cultural legacy. The Vienna Philharmonics played a significant role in shaping Austrian cultural aesthetics pre- and post-war. After 1945, they received preferential treatment, which included exemptions from the denazification policies. Overcoming the Nazis with the victim narrative was exemplified by actions such as inviting the German-Jewish conductor Bruno Walter on the orchestra's first international tour. Conversely, former Nazi members, including conductor Wilhelm Furtwängler and the orchestra's managing director Helmut Wobisch, were allowed to continue working with the Philharmonics without any remarks or objections<sup>51</sup> (Rathkolb 2005, 316–19). The 1955 reopening of the opera house celebrated individuals such as Rudolf Eisenmenger as designer of the safety curtain and several tapestries, Heinz Tietjen as director, and Karl Böhm as conductor, despite controversies about their Nazi past (Wagner 2005, 62). Undeniably, the Vienna Philharmonics served as a symbol of refuge and incentive for national rebuilding post-World War II. Its enduring symbolic value remains fundamental to Austria's cultural industry and tourism marketing, as is the Vienna State Opera (Rathkolb 2021, 223).

While the mediation department *Jung!* is a recent addition, the Vienna State Opera has offered music mediation formats, at least for young audiences, since 1992<sup>52</sup> (Popp 1999). The 2015/2016 annual report highlighted the inclusion of operas for children, guided tours, talks, lectures with the director or dramaturgs, and collaborative projects (Wiener Staatsoper 2017). However, the specific individuals responsible at that time and the details of these projects are not available in written or digital sources. Until the 2020/2021 season, only one person was responsible for organizing formats for children as part of the annual opera performances, without specifying if other formats were part of the task. The

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<sup>51</sup> It was only in the early 1990s that formerly persecuted Jewish orchestra members were remembered (Rathkolb 2005, 318).

<sup>52</sup> Between 1999 and 2015, the Vienna State Opera installed a tent on the building's roof as a venue for performances for young audiences (Wien ORF 2015).

analysis of the past eleven seasons reveals a clear development in the mediation and outreach department. However, the Vienna State Opera and its *Jung!* department are positioned as proponents of affirmative and reproductive mediation approaches based on the status of the institutions, the mediation department’s labeling, and the music mediation program offered to democratize Western art and culture.

As shown in Table 3, the Vienna State Opera has maintained a consistent number of music mediation formats from 2013/2014 to 2023/2024, with no significant fluctuations. Out of 205 formats, 162 (79%) are tailored for individuals as dialogue or target groups, while only 43 (21%) are aimed at educational institutions. It is important to note that in the first four seasons, the overall count steadily increased each year due to the growing relevance of these formats but then plateaued for the following four seasons until experiencing a resurgence after the establishment of the mediation department in 2020/2021, at least for formats for individuals. Despite consistently presenting operas for young audiences for over three decades, formats for educational institutions have declined in the last five seasons. These diverging dialogue or target groups emphasize the institution’s focus on individuals.

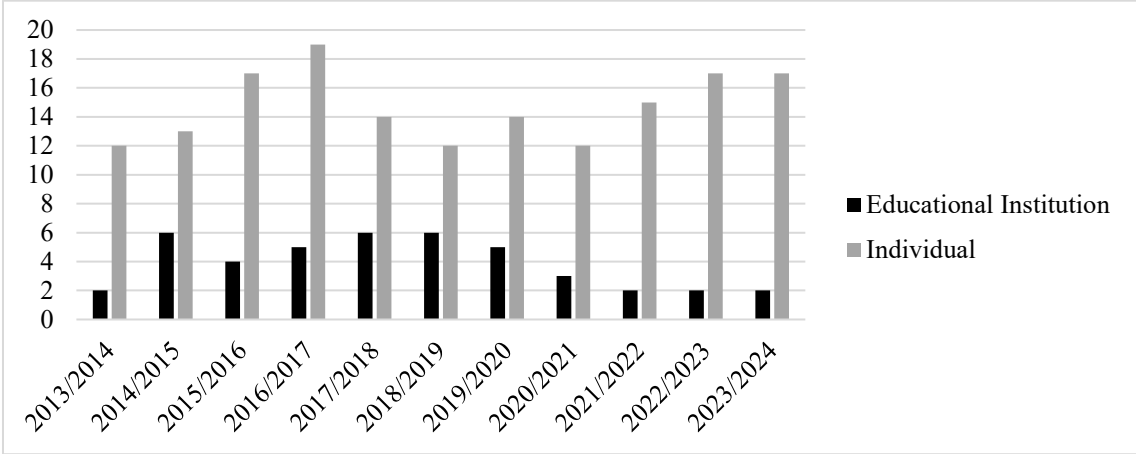


TABLE 3 Number of music mediation formats by the Vienna State Opera per dialogue/target group over time (table by the author)

One significant factor contributing to this trend is the prolonged absence of a dedicated mediation department since educational institutions, especially schools, represent an essential dialogue or target group for comparable Austrian opera houses. Nonetheless, Vienna State Opera’s mediation department has maintained the former target strategy, increasing the responsibility for mediation formats since its establishment (see Table 4).

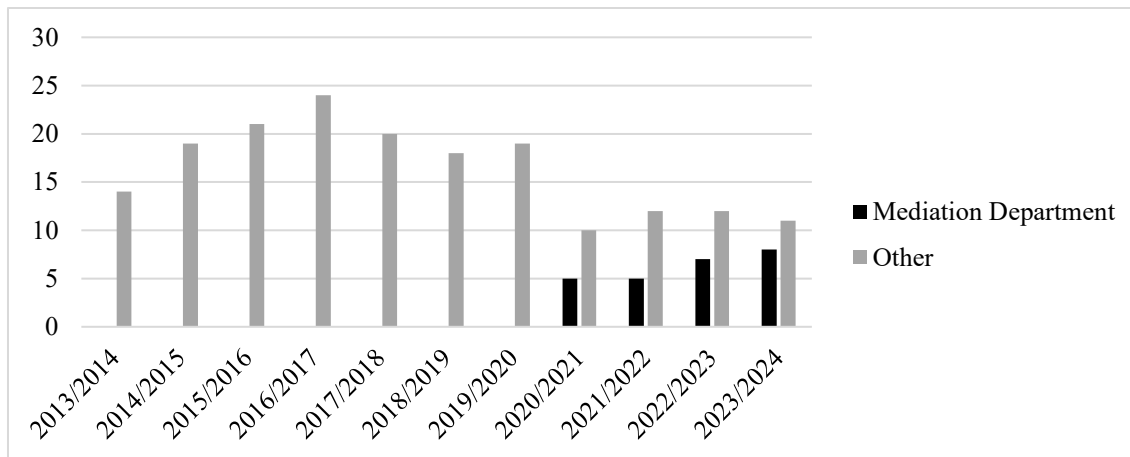


TABLE 4 Number of music mediation formats by the Vienna State Opera per organizing department over time (table by the author)

The *Jung!* department organized 25 formats during the analyzed period, with only 8 addressing educational institutions and without increasing the total number of formats. Other departments were responsible for 35 formats targeting these institutions (145 formats addressing individuals); participatory projects, podcasts, and preparatory workshops were only offered by the *Jung!* department. Ballets, concerts, operas/musicals for young audiences, guided tours, participatory performances, streaming, symposia, talks, and workshops were only offered by other departments. This data suggests that the *Jung!* department was not the primary organizer for school events; such formats were predominantly shaped by other departments, potentially by individuals with a background in elemental music education, as indicated by Petri-Preis (2023a, 76).

Table 5 compares and visualizes the primary age groups: 89 mediation formats address the age group 0-99, followed by 68 for the 6-12 group and 30 for the 6-12 and 13-19 groups combined. The logarithmic trendlines reveal a slight decrease in the 0-99 age group and a corresponding increase in the 6-12 group, encompassing children in primary and middle schools. This shift in audience demographics is a significant trend to consider, as it will influence the design of future music mediation formats.

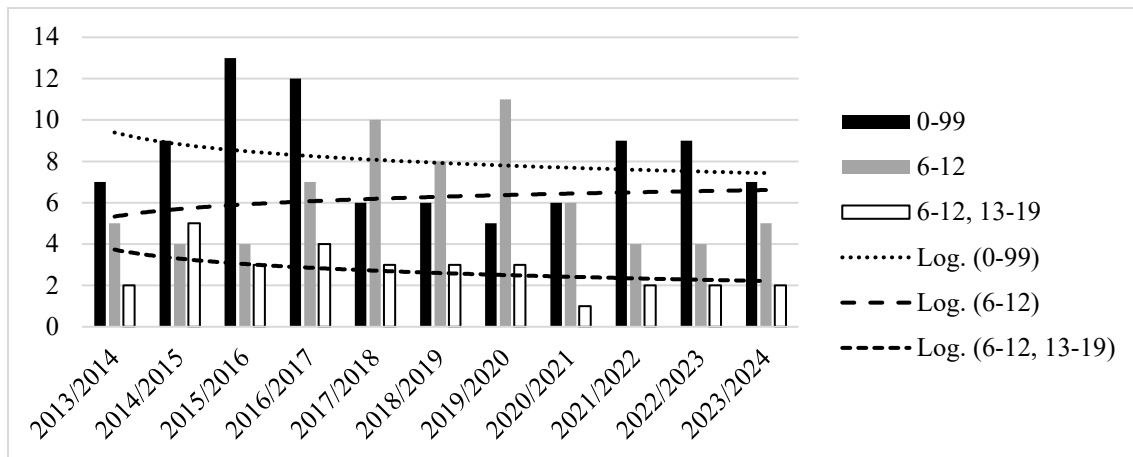


TABLE 5 Number of music mediation formats by the Vienna State Opera per most frequently addressed age groups (0-99, 6-12, 6-19) over time, with logarithmic trendlines (table by the author)

Different formats cater to educational institutions, including public rehearsals (13), workshops (13, with three being preparatory), and guided tours (8), among others. These formats present structured settings without direct dialogue with the audience, intended to exchange ideas. For individuals, format types include operas/musicals for young audiences (37), introductory talks (34), workshops (35), and talks about specific topics (25), among others. At the very least, talks offer a more relaxed environment for dialogue. However, other than two operas for young audiences, the formats mentioned above (along with ten workshops, nine public rehearsals, eight guided tours, and streaming for educational institutions) were managed by departments other than the mediation department. In contrast, the latter was responsible for 11 participatory projects (including six for the mixed age group 13-29), among others, which provide a platform for dialogue and co-creation with the audience in the context of transformative music mediation.

The Vienna State Opera is committed to engaging with younger audiences, targeting individuals aged 0-19 and extending the scope to include those aged 0-29, including young adults and students (12 organized by the mediation department and 53 by others). This dedication is evident in the diverse format types, including ballet, concert, opera, and musicals specifically designed for young audiences. The emphasis on participatory projects is also noteworthy, constituting more than 32% of the total formats. An analysis in Table 6 highlights the consistent focus on presenting operas or musicals for young audiences and occasional productions of ballets, concerts, and participatory performances. Since the establishment of the *Jung!* department, there has been a noticeable increase in participatory projects that engage individuals under 29 in the young audience category, mainly composed of individuals aged 6-12.

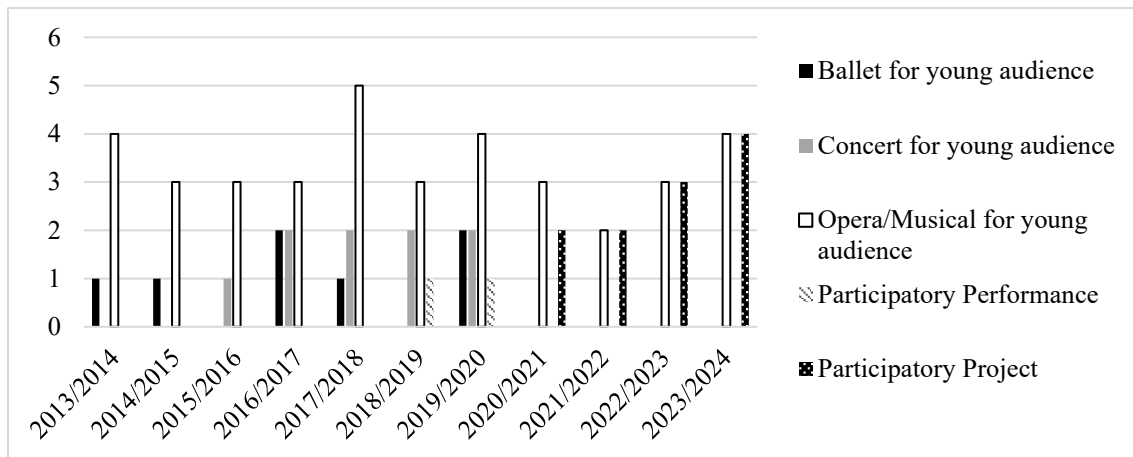


TABLE 6 Number of music mediation formats by the Vienna State Opera per format types for young audience (ballet, concert, opera/musical for young audience, and participatory performance and project) over time (table by the author)

With 37 occurrences, operas or musicals for young audiences are the most frequently occurring format type at the Vienna State Opera. This is followed by 35 introductions, 25 talks, 24 streaming, and 22 guided tours. Furthermore, Table 7 shows that these format types have been consistently present in every season analyzed, except for talks, which were not held in 2019/2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Notably, due to the pandemic, the increased focus on digital formats in society (De', Pandey, and Pal 2020, 1) did not affect the number of streaming in the following seasons. On the contrary, its offer decreased, as did talks, while there has been an increase in the number of introductory formats. This is because they are now organized not only by the dramaturgy department but also by the mediation department. Over the past eleven seasons, the Vienna State Opera has shifted its strategy to engage young audiences through dedicated operas or musicals and the general audience (age group 0-99 years) through various introductory formats, such as matinees, artist talks<sup>53</sup>, or piece introductions.

<sup>53</sup> Artist talks are categorized as introductions rather than talks because the Vienna State Opera uses this format to present and promote its singers, dancers, directors, and choreographers instead of enabling a dialogue with the audience.

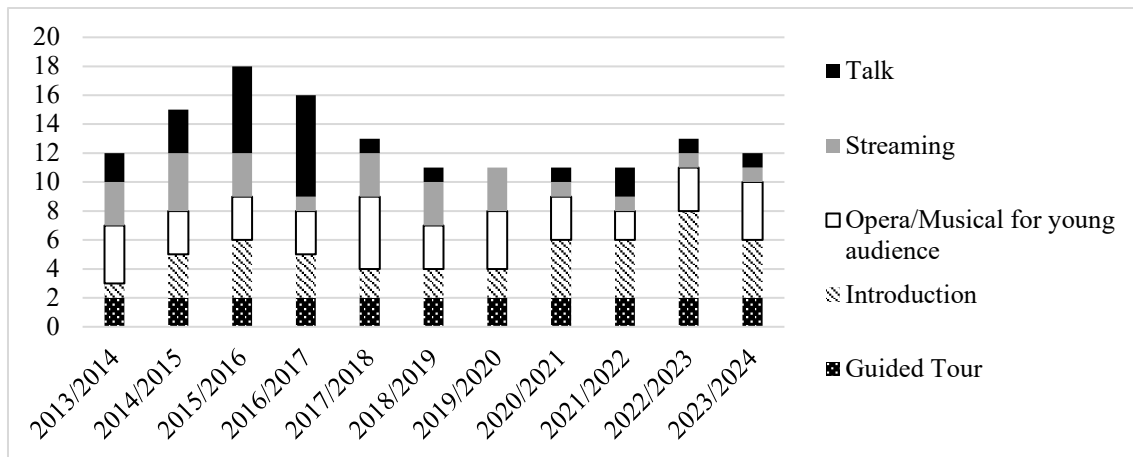


TABLE 7 Number of music mediation formats by the Vienna State Opera per most frequently occurring format type over time (table by the author)

Concluding, from 2013/2014 to 2023/2024, the Vienna State Opera consistently offered a variety of music mediation formats without any discernible decline or growth trends. The recent establishment of the mediation and outreach department *Jung!* in 2020/2021 allowed other departments to shape the mediation formats, prioritizing individuals over pre-existing dialogue or target groups, such as educational institutions. The primary goal is to present and promote the repertoire through dedicated performances for young audiences and introduction formats, aligning with audience development and an affirmative and reproductive type of music mediation. However, there is a growing emphasis on formats that enable transformative approaches, such as participatory projects.

## 5.2 Graz Opera

The Graz Opera, established in 1899, is the second-largest opera house in Austria and is situated in the country’s second-largest city. Inaugurated with Schiller’s drama *William Tell* and Wagner’s opera *Lohengrin*, it was constructed to represent the Habsburgs in the then-fourth-largest city of the Monarchy (Frankfurter 1999, 20). Like the Vienna State Opera but with fewer restrictions, its repertoire since 1945 predominantly features 19<sup>th</sup>-century opera alongside musicals, operettas, and ballet<sup>54</sup>. The opera house has been staging yearly musicals for young audiences since 1991/1992 (Steiermärkischer Landtag Landesrechnungshof 1991, 105). However, it was under the direction of Elisabeth

<sup>54</sup> Since the 2023/2024 season, the dance department of the Graz Opera has shifted its focus from ballet to contemporary dance performances.

Sobotka in 2009/2010 that the music mediation department *OperAktiv!* (opera active) was established (Theaterkompass 2019). One season before, the Graz Theater, a subsidiary of the same holding, initiated the analogous *SchauspielAktiv!* (acting active) as the first pilot project of its kind in Austria (Theaterkompass 2017). On that model, *OperAktiv!* engages educational institutions and individuals of all ages.

*OperAktiv!* is officially designated as a department for music and theater pedagogy, terminologically encompassing two related but distinct fields. Although it focuses on music and theater together and not strictly from a pedagogical perspective (the website uses *music theater mediation* for its formats), there has been no review of its terminology about other terms that unify the fields (i.e., *Musiktheaterpädagogik*) and shift from pedagogy to mediation (i.e., *Musiktheatervermittlung*)<sup>55</sup>. It can be assumed, therefore, that having a pedagogical background has some influence on the mediation approach. However, when reevaluating the direction of departments such as *OperAktiv!*, one crucial factor to consider is the increasing presence of qualified music mediators in opera houses. Since 2009, mediators have had the opportunity to pursue specialized education in mediation rather than pedagogy. The current Graz Opera director Ulrich Lenz introduced the slogan *Oper, öffne dich!* (open opera) for his inaugural season 2023/2024, signaling a clear intent to change the institution's (and the mediation department's) internal and external perspectives<sup>56</sup>.

The intention to rethink the Graz Opera is reflected by the increasing variety of music mediation formats in 2023/2024, a trend that has been noticeable since the start of the period under review, as indicated in Table 8. These formats doubled every five years, reaching 343 single mediation formats, with 238 (69,4%) addressing individuals and 105 (30,6%) educational institutions. While the offer for the former remained consistent over the past eight seasons, the program for the latter increased by 325% (183% over the entire period). This progress gradually reduced the gap between the two dialogue or target groups, evident in the five middle seasons but less pronounced at the start. This suggests an overarching strategy for addressing pre-formed dialogue or target groups. By increasing the offer for educational institutions, mediation formats address young individuals twice: in their private and institutional environment (e.g., as students).

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<sup>55</sup> For terminological clarification, see Chapter 2.

<sup>56</sup> The slogan for the 2024/2025 season expanded to *Oper, öffne dich/mich!* (open/open me opera), reinforcing a bidirectional exchange with society.

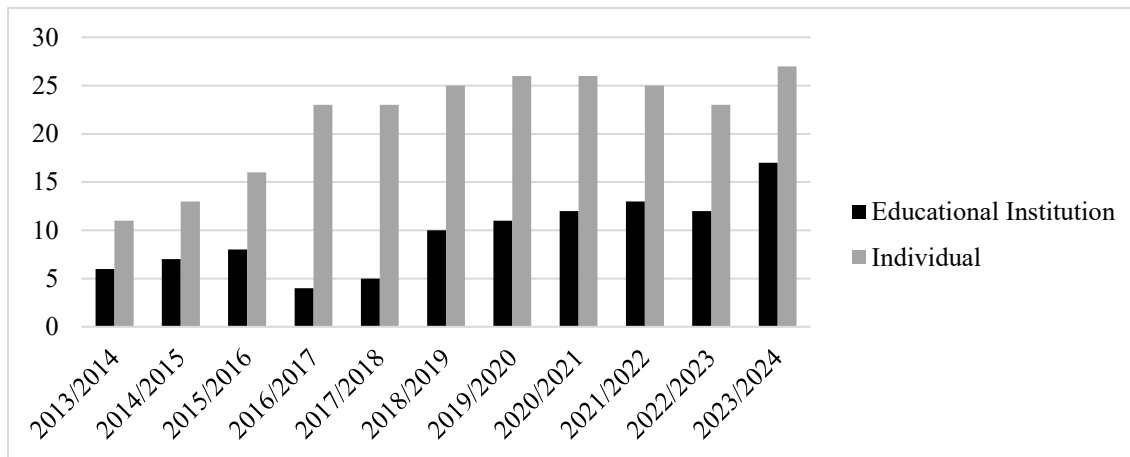


TABLE 8 Number of music mediation formats by the Graz Opera per dialogue/target group over time (table by the author)

The data in Table 9 reveals that primarily the *OperAktiv!* department has offered music mediation formats since 2013/2014. Over time, the department has consistently increased its offer, totaling 241 formats (139 for individuals and 102 for educational institutions), which accounts for over 70% of the total. According to the consulted sources, other departments (mostly dramaturgy) offered 102 formats (99 for individuals and 3 for educational institutions), with a relatively consistent seasonal offer of 10 or fewer (the 2018/2019 and the 2023/2024 seasons should be considered exceptions). However, the last seasons may indicate the beginning of a rising trend. The *OperAktiv!* department specifically offered concerts for young audiences, educational material, festivals, participatory concerts, participatory projects, (preparatory) workshops, and training, while other departments offered specifically ballet and operas/musicals for young audiences and public rehearsals.

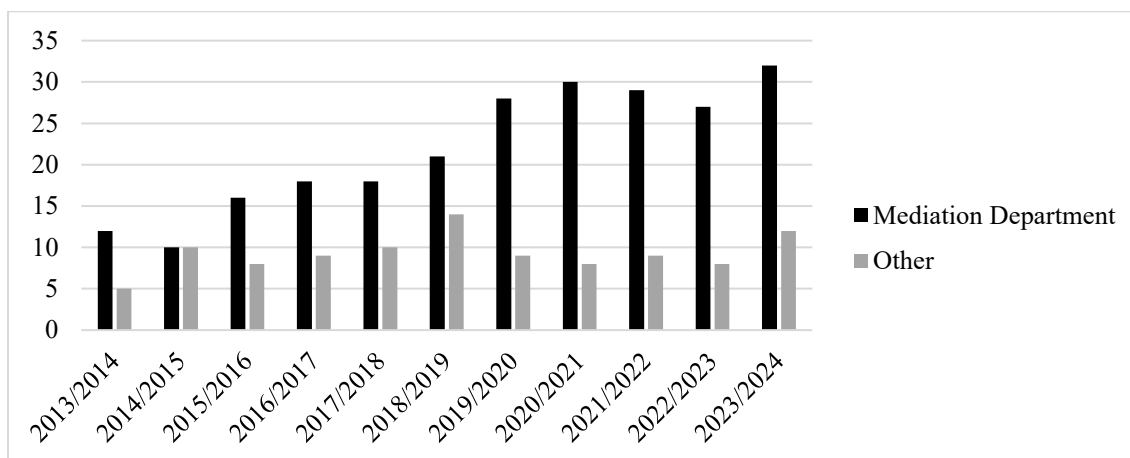


TABLE 9 Number of music mediation formats by the Graz Opera per organizing department over time (table by the author)

The most addressed age group is the 6-12, with 81 formats, followed by the 0-99 group with 72, and the 0-5 and 6-19 age groups with 61 and 58 (all other age groups are at or below 16). The logarithmic trendlines in Table 10 reveal that most of the offer is aimed at the 6-12 and 0-99 groups, with a steady increase over time. However, the 0-5 age group displays the most significant growth. Additionally, the decreasing trendline of the 6-19 age group indicates a growing emphasis on individuals aged 12 or younger, leveling diversification for all groups from early teenage years onwards in cross-generational formats.

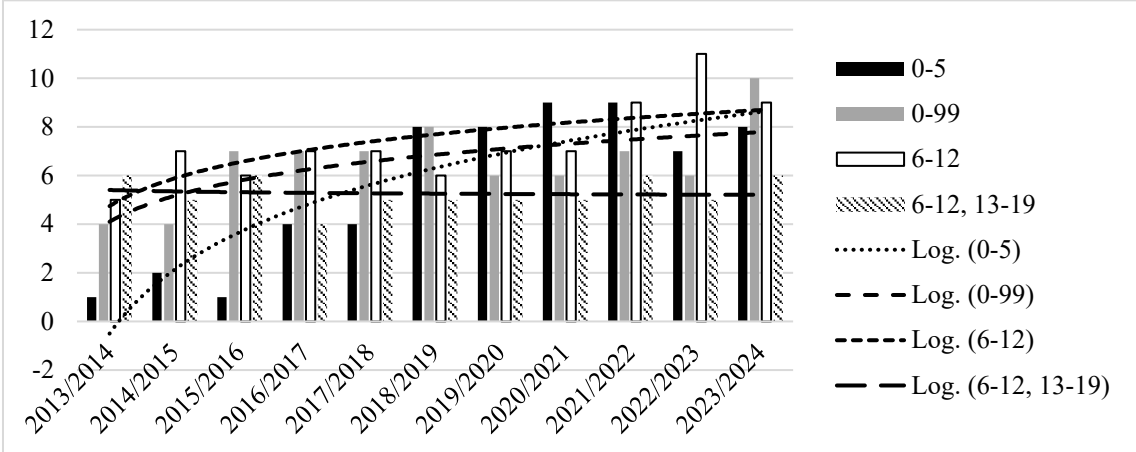


TABLE 10 Number of music mediation formats by the Graz Opera per most frequently addressed age groups (0-5, 0-99, 6-12, 6-19) over time, with logarithmic trendlines (table by the author)

Music mediation formats for educational institutions mainly consist of workshops (39), participatory projects (19), preparatory workshops (16), and guided tours (12) (all organized by the mediation department). In contrast, the number of workshops has significantly increased since the 2018/2019 season, while the other mentioned format types have remained at a range of one to two per season. On the other hand, 35 workshops were offered for individuals, showing no notable diversification of this format type for the two dialogue or target groups. Particularly for individuals, the other most offered formats were concerts for young audiences (42), participatory performances (41), and operas or musicals for young audiences (22), with the last format types organized entirely by departments other than the one for music mediation. Broadly categorized, music mediation formats for individuals account for 31% of the total mediation formats and consist of 107 staged performances, with the mediation department organizing 67% of them.

The formats for young audiences (0-19 and 0-29 years), ballets, concerts, operas, musicals, participatory performances, and projects outlined in Table 11 collectively

contribute to 43% of the overall music mediation formats. The primary focus is on concerts (49), participatory projects (38), and participatory performances (35), all of which have shown consistent growth over time. Operas or musicals were almost consistently presented twice per season, whereas only two ballets were staged in eleven seasons. As the format type with the most transformative potential, the number of participatory projects has increased, although not to the same extent as concerts and participatory performances, reflecting the focus on staged performances.

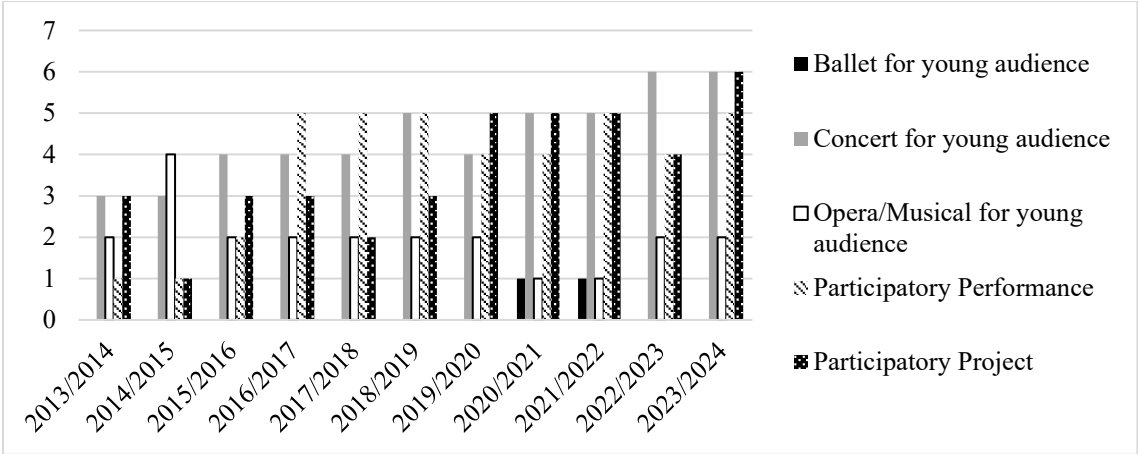


TABLE 11 Number of music mediation formats by the Graz Opera per format types for young audience (ballet, concert, opera/musical for young audience, and participatory performance and project) over time (table by the author)

The emphasis on staged performances and engaging young audiences is further reflected in the most frequently occurring format types for each season, which include workshops (74), participatory projects (40) and performances (41), and concerts for young audiences (49). These numbers have consistently increased over time, as seen in Table 12 (other recurrent, unvisualized format types are guided tours, introductions, operas/musicals for young audiences, and preparatory workshops, with values equal to or below 23).

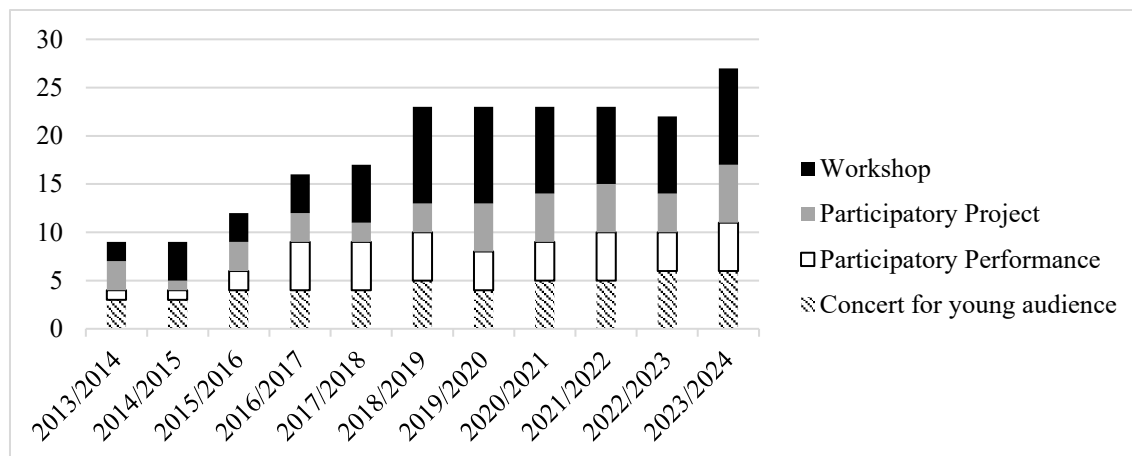


TABLE 12 Number of music mediation formats by the Graz Opera per most frequently occurring format type over time (table by the author)

Overall, between 2013/2014 and 2023/2024, the Graz Opera and its department for music and theater pedagogy *OperAktiv!* consistently expanded their range of music mediation formats, whereby the offer for educational institutions has significantly increased in the last eight seasons. Having been established four years before the analyzed period, the results show that the department is mainly responsible for music mediation formats and focuses on cross-generational and young age groups. The latter is being addressed by 43% percent of the total number of formats, reflecting the overall institution strategy to rejuvenate the audience through music mediation, recurring to one of the foundation discourses of the discipline regarding safe measures to preserve Western art music, as stated by Voit (2023a) and already exposed in Chapter 2. *OperAktiv!* primarily reinforces affirmative music mediation approaches, providing a great variety of workshops and staged performances (these results are the outcome of a purely quantitative analysis). While there is a growing number of participatory projects that are potentially transformative, they remain outnumbered by other format types that affirm the Graz Opera as an institution and reproduce Western culture without allowing a critical perspective. The effectiveness of the proposed slogan *open opera* in bringing about transformative change in 2023/2024 cannot be conclusively determined based on the available data and analysis.

### 5.3 Musiktheater Linz

The Musiktheater Linz am Volksgarten<sup>57</sup> building is situated in Austria's third-largest city and was inaugurated in 2013 with the world premiere of Philip Glass' opera *Spuren der Verirrten* (*The Lost*). It is not only Austria's most modern opera house but also proclaimed as Europe's most modern opera house (Landestheater Linz 2024b). The institution is the venue dedicated to opera, operetta, ballet, and musicals of the Landestheater Linz, the largest theater in Upper Austria. Musical also have a distinct ensemble, which is "unique in the German-speaking theatre world" (Landestheater Linz 2015b, 9). Despite its recent construction, plans for an opera house originated during the Nazi regime when Hitler designated Linz, one of the Führer cities, as *Patenstadt des Führers* (the Führers' adopted hometown), intending to transform the city into an important industrial and cultural center (Oberösterreichische Nachrichten 2008). However, the construction was never realized. It was only in 1984, under the guidance of the association *Freunde des Linzer Musiktheaters* (Friends of the Musiktheater Linz), established for this purpose, that politics resumed the planning process. After a prolonged dispute lasting decades between internal and external parties, especially concerning the construction location, the area was confirmed in 2004. Five years later, the groundbreaking ceremony took place, and in April 2013, the opera house finally opened to the public (Landestheater Linz 2024a).

The current mediation department of the Musiktheater Linz *SEI DABEI* (be part of it), dedicated to opera, dance, and musicals (including theater)<sup>58</sup>, was established in the 2019/2020 season. This followed the introduction of a department for these genres in 2012/2013. Prior to that, there was only a department for theater pedagogy<sup>59</sup> (without a specific name), introduced in 1998/1999, as the Landestheater Linz presented the *u\hof: Theater für junges Publikum* (reorganized in *Junges Theater* in 2016/2017), focusing on performing theater for young audiences in the Schauspielhaus and Kammerspiele, the venues for theatrical performances (Landestheater Linz 2015a). After adding a dedicated department for music theater pedagogy (without a specific name) in 2012/2013, the Landestheater introduced the music mediation department *MOVE.ON Orchesterwerkstatt*

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<sup>57</sup> The Volksgarten is a public park adjacent to the Musiktheater in Linz.

<sup>58</sup> Since the 2022/2023 season, the department *SEI DABEI!* has also offered formats for theater performances, although these are not performed at the Musiktheater Linz.

<sup>59</sup> The historical development of education and music mediation departments of the Landestheater and, accordingly, Musiktheater Linz could be traced using the seasonal programs of the institutions. For terminological clarification, see Chapter 2.

(orchestra factory) one season after. Since 2004/2005, the latter department has been offering mediation formats by the Bruckner Orchestra Linz, the symphonic orchestra of the federal state Upper Austria, and at the same time, the orchestra playing at the Musiktheater Linz, as two subsidiaries of the same holding (Land Oberösterreich 2015). Therefore, the orchestra has its music mediation department, which operates independently from the Landestheater Linz. However, the shared ownership promotes it at the same level as the departments for theater mediation and music theater mediation. Even though the departments are separated (theater for young audiences, music theater, and music), the Landestheater has always used one label to promote all of them. The formats were labeled *theater pedagogy* until 2020/2021. In 2021/2022, the label changed to *theater mediation*, followed by *music theater mediation* in 2022/2023. In 2023/2024, the label was simplified to just *mediation* (returning to *theater mediation* in 2024/2025)<sup>60</sup>. Misleadingly, while the labeling for the departments for theater for young audiences and music theater changed over time, *MOVE.ON* remained unchanged but was included in the overall pedagogy/mediation section of the Landestheater. Table 13 provides an overview of the institution’s overall and departmental labeling over time. The diverse number of music mediation format types regarding staged performances compared to the Vienna State Opera and the Graz Opera are due to this departmental structure.

Season	Theater for Young Audiences Mediation Department	Music Theater Mediation Department	Orchestra Mediation Department	Landestheater Linz Overall Labeling
98/99		-	-	Theater Pedagogy
12/13	Theater Pedagogy	Music Theater Pedagogy	<i>MOVE.ON</i>	
16/17	(Music) Theater Pedagogy			
17/18	Theater Pedagogy			
19/20	<i>SEI DABEI!</i>			
21/22				Theater Mediation
22/23	<i>SEI DABEI! Junges Theater</i>	<i>SEI DABEI! Oper, Tanz, Schauspiel, Musical</i>		Music Theater Mediation
23/24	<i>Vermittlung Junges Theater</i>			Mediation

TABLE 13 Mediation Departments by the Landestheater Linz per section and overall labeling over time (table by the author). Source: Seasonal programs of the Landestheater Linz between 1998/1999 and 2023/2024

As a modern building, the Musiktheater Linz presents itself as a modern opera house also concerning its repertoire, which is yearly introduced by a unique theme or slogan (from

<sup>60</sup> When navigating on the Landestheater’s website, the URL of the mediation subsite for contact and support is [www.landestheater-linz.at/Kontakt/theaterpaedagogik](http://www.landestheater-linz.at/Kontakt/theaterpaedagogik) (accessed August 08, 2024). This is a never-updated path component that documents the former labeling.

*the living environment or forever young to origin or how do I want to live*). Since its opening in 2013, the institution has featured works ranging from the 17<sup>th</sup> century to present-day premieres, with a balanced emphasis on the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century in opera and operetta and a focus on the 21<sup>st</sup> century in musicals. This direction aligns with the city’s Cultural Development Plan, which aims to foster a contemporary music theater (Gemeinderat der Stadt Linz 2013, 34).

Between 2013/2014 and 2023/2024, the Musiktheater Linz offered 220 single mediation formats (only considering the music mediation department for music theater shown in Table 13), comprising 144 for individuals and 77 for educational institutions. Excluding the first and last season with remarkably higher amounts, the overall trend, in contrast to Vienna and Graz, is decreasing (see Table 14). Furthermore, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is evident in the downturns observed in 2020/2021 and 2021/2022. However, this decline primarily affects formats for individuals, whereas the offer for educational institutions remained stable for ten seasons and significantly increased by 122% in the last season. Although the two trendlines may appear to be converging, it is not possible to make any forecast based on the data that has been collected.

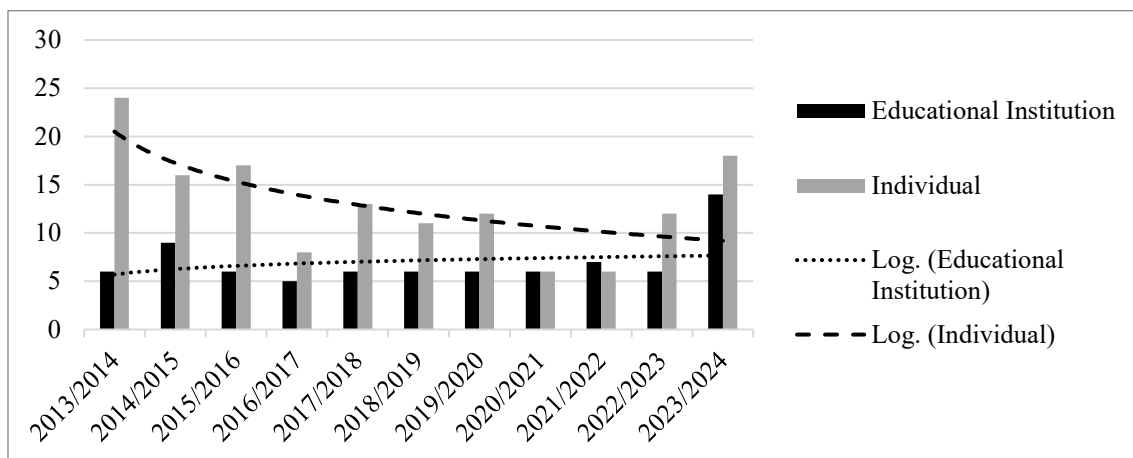


TABLE 14 Number of music mediation formats by the Musiktheater Linz per dialogue/target group over time, with logarithmic trendlines (table by the author)

The mediation department organizes most mediation formats by the Musiktheater (see Table 15), as the opera house was only established afterward. 26% of the formats are organized by other departments (excluding the *MOVE.ON* department) and exclusively address individuals. Thus, the music mediation department is responsible for 74% of the formats for individuals and 100% for educational institutions, addressing both dialogue or target groups almost equally, with a slight preference for individuals. The mediation department specifically offered educational material, guided tours, (preparatory)

workshops, and training. Other departments offered specifically ballet and opera/musical for young audiences, podcasts, public rehearsal, and symposia.

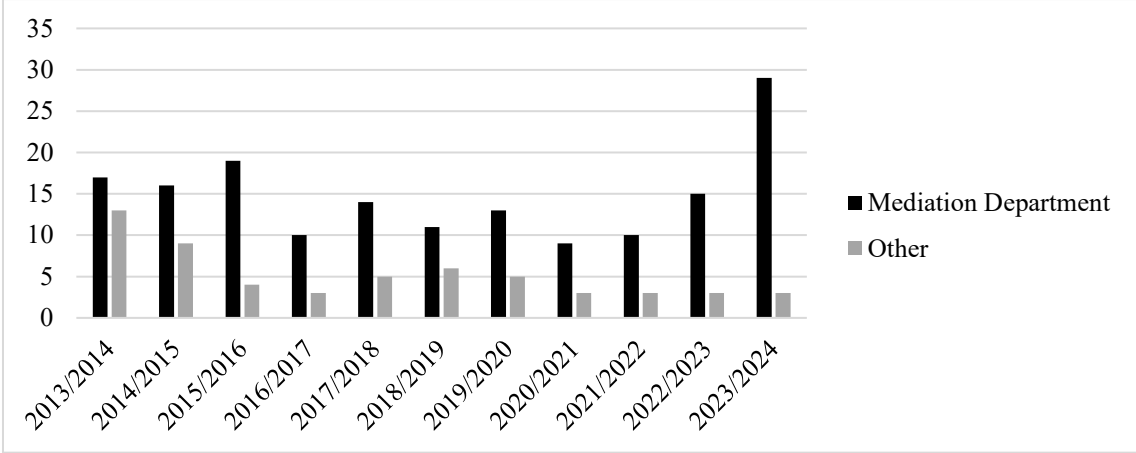


TABLE 15 Number of music mediation formats by the Musiktheater Linz per organizing department over time (table by the author)

With 29% and 25%, the age groups 0-99 and 6-19 are the most frequently addressed at the Musiktheater Linz. This aligns with the trend observed at the Vienna State Opera and the Graz Opera, where formats without age restriction and those targeting young audiences below 19 years make up 44% of the total formats. The cross-generational 20-59 age group is the third most addressed, accounting for 8.5% (the remaining age groups are at or below 7%). The related logarithmic trendlines in Table 16 indicate a slight increase in this age group, while the 0-99 and 6-19 groups decrease. This approach demonstrates the Musiktheater Linz’s strategy of engaging with various age groups.

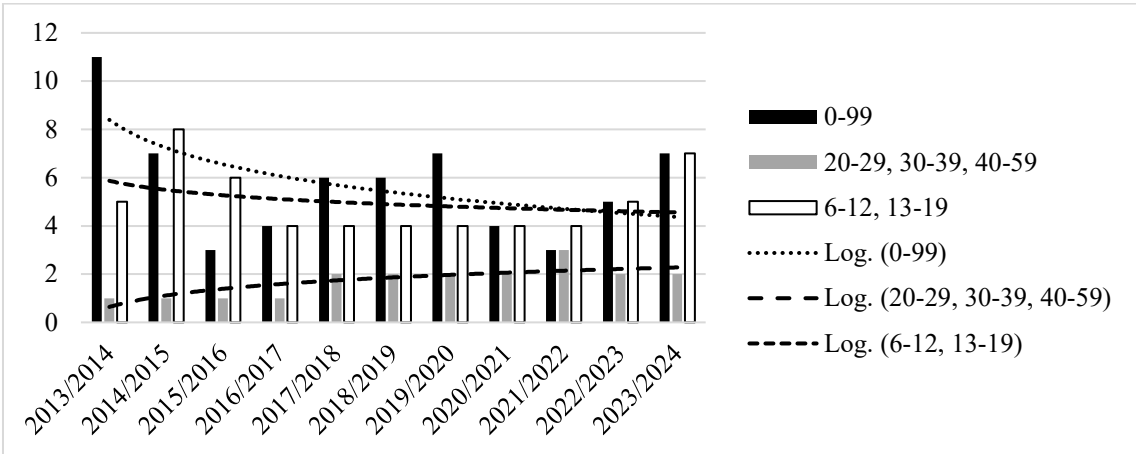


TABLE 16 Number of music mediation formats by the Musiktheater Linz per most frequently addressed age groups (0-99, 20-59, 6-19) over time, with logarithmic trendlines (table by the author)

Considering the focus on educational institutions (Table 14) and a young audience (Table 16), possibly under 29 years, the Musiktheater Linz is subtly showing concern for a developing culture-consuming society that is becoming younger. The commitment to

enable dialogical settings through mediation formats is a key aspect, further confirmed by the number of participatory projects, which are the most offered format type for individuals (32) and educational institutions (14). Similarly, educational format types such as workshops are equally offered for educational institutions (24 workshops, of which 13 are preparatory) and individuals (21). However, the amount decreased for the latter dialogue or target group over time. Guided tours rank third in frequency as format type (18 for individuals and 13 for educational institutions), and 20 of 27 talks are mainly for individuals. Among the listed format types, only 17 talks are organized by departments other than the one for music mediation, which are also responsible for all operas or musicals for young audiences, while entrusting the mediation department with format types that seek direct communication with the dialogue or target group. Considering the subdivision of music mediation fields by the Musiktheater Linz (see Table 13) and the *MOVE.ON* department, which offers participatory performances and concerts for young audiences (but not operas, musicals, or ballets), is important. However, the main focus of the here considered department is participatory projects, followed by other format types addressing audiences equal to or below 19 and 29 years (see Table 17), organized to 68.5% by the mediation department. Although the Musiktheater Linz is an institution that offers operas (and their variants), musicals, and ballets, dedicated performances for young audiences are only staged once per season and are limited to operas or musicals. Participatory projects, in contrast, are offered at least four times per season (except for the reduced frequency during the COVID-19 pandemic) and show an increasing trend.

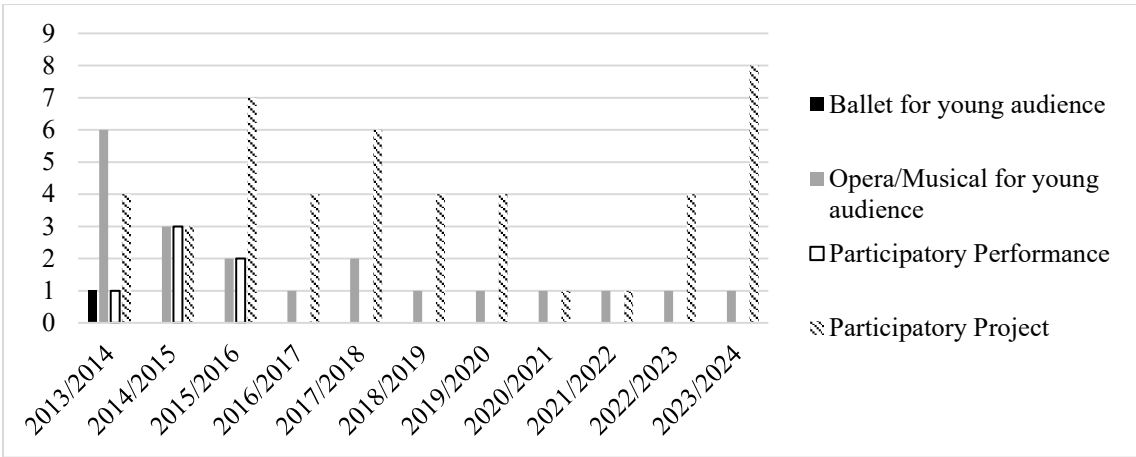


TABLE 17 Number of music mediation formats by the Musiktheater Linz per format type for young audience (ballet, opera/musical for young audience, and participatory performance and project) over time (table by the author)

Participatory projects were also the most frequently occurring format type (see Table 18), 46 times, followed by workshops, guided tours, talks, and opera for young audiences 32, 31, 27, and 20 times, respectively.

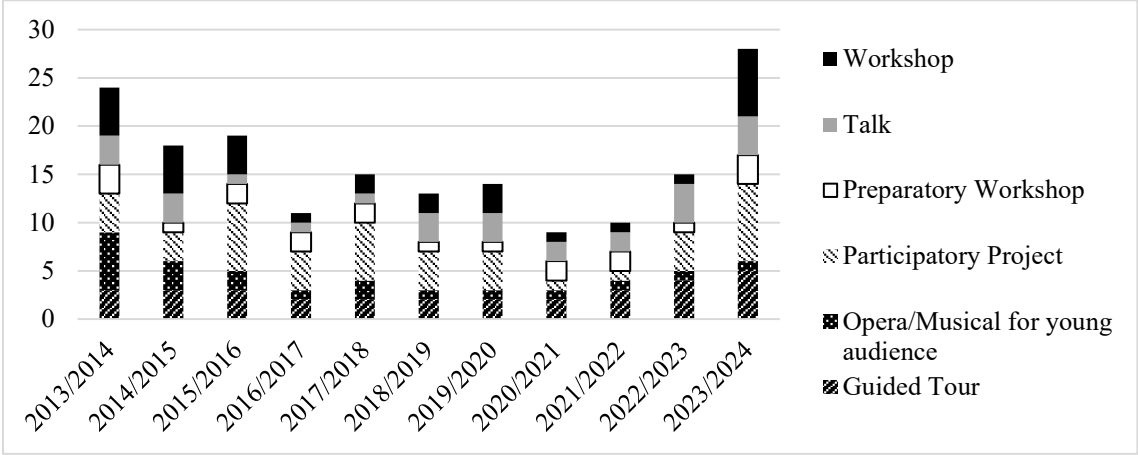


TABLE 18 Number of music mediation formats by the Musiktheater Linz per most frequently occurring format type over time (table by the author)

Table 18 also indicates that, besides guided tours, the number of operas for young audiences remained constant despite rapidly decreasing after the first considered season. Conversely, other format types fluctuated from season to season, starting with a large offer in 2013/2014, remaining low for the remaining nine seasons, and finally experiencing a notable increase in 2023/2024. This trend is consistent with the overall number of music mediation formats presented in Table 14.

In summary, from 2013/2014 to 2023/2024, the Musiktheater Linz increased its music mediation formats by 156%. A shifting focus from formats for individuals to formats for educational institutions could be observed. However, the most offered format types of participatory projects and workshops almost equally address dialogue or target groups. As an institution whose first full-term season coincided with the first season of the analyzed period, the overall strategy could easily be traced. The aim to be a modern house, in terms of architecture and artistic programming, is also evident in its music mediation offer, which concentrates on dialogical settings through participatory projects and talks and addresses the growing influence of younger generations. While affirmative and reproductive formats are prevalent in most major music institutions in Austria, what distinguishes the Musiktheater Linz from the Vienna State Opera and the Graz Opera is its proactive approach to incorporating transformative strategies (mostly with participatory projects) to achieve a balanced approach.

## 5.4 Vienna, Graz, and Linz in Comparison: Results and Discussion

The analysis of the music mediation departments at the Vienna State Opera, the Graz Opera, and the Musiktheater Linz has shown that they all offer similar formats. However, each institution has a unique focus, employing different format types to address different dialogue or target groups. Before examining all opera houses as one entity to detect overall developments and trends, the following comparison charts (Tables 19 and 20) briefly summarize each institution's and mediation department's key findings, spotlighting similarities and differences.

Vienna State Opera	Graz Opera	Musiktheater Linz	
205	343	220	<i>Tot. number of formats</i>
36%	159%	7%	<i>% change</i>
79% individual 21% edu. institution	69% individual 31% edu. institution	65% individual 35% edu. institution	<i>% of formats per dialogue/target group</i>
12% mediation dep. 88% other	70% mediation dep. 30% other	74% mediation dep. 26% other	<i>% of formats per organizing department</i>
43% 0-99 yrs. 33% 6-12 yrs.	24% 6-12 yrs. 21% 0-99 yrs.	29% 0-99 yrs. 25% 6-19 yrs.	<i>First two most freq. addressed age groups</i>
18% opera/musical 5% part. project	14% concert 12% part. performance	21% part. project 9% opera/musical	<i>First two format types for young audience</i>
18% opera/musical 17% introduction	22% workshop 14% concert	21% part. project 16% workshop	<i>First two most freq. occurring format types</i>

TABLE 19 Overview table of the Vienna State Opera, Graz Opera, and Musiktheater Linz music mediation formats per amount, percentage change, organizing department, most frequently addressed age group, type for young audience, and most frequently occurring type between 2013/2014 and 2023/2024 (table by the author)

Based on the data in Table 19, the Graz Opera has the highest number of mediation formats and the largest percentage change between 2013/2014 and 2023/2024. During the same period, the formats offered by the Musiktheater Linz only increased by 7%. The primary dialogue or target group for all institutions is individuals. One notable difference between the opera houses lies in the distribution of formation formats between the mediation department and other departments – specifically, in Vienna, 88% of the formats were the responsibility of other departments, which can be attributed to the recent establishment (2020/2021) of a music mediation department. However, even considering only the last four seasons, the latter department organized only 35% of the total amount of mediation formats, being the only one among the three departments not responsible for the majority. The Vienna department also demonstrates the most significant imbalance between the first two most frequently addressed age groups, prioritizing formats without age restriction over the 6-12 age group. Graz and Linz address these groups almost

equally, but Linz is expanding its reach to include the 0-19 age group. Like Vienna, the Graz Opera prioritizes a younger age group, mainly through staged performances. In Linz, participatory projects constitute one-fifth of the total mediation formats, making this format type the most frequent annually, alongside workshops. Graz focuses on workshops and performances for young audiences, following a similar approach to Vienna, which includes introductory format types, maintaining the institution’s traditional alignment. When considering all three institutions as a whole, it is evident that individuals of all ages are equally valued, with a particular emphasis on the young audience, especially those between 6-12 years old. The offer of affirmative and transformative mediation formats is becoming more balanced for the latter. However, it is worth noting that affirmative formats continue to be the predominant focus among the most frequently occurring format types.

A comparison chart using the same data categories but only considering the music mediation departments of the three opera houses (see Table 20) reveals similarities in the content alignment of each institution, as shown in Table 19, and potential differences from it.

<b>Vienna State Opera</b>	<b>Graz Opera</b>	<b>Musiktheater Linz</b>	
2020/2021	2009/2010	2012/2013	<i>Launch Date</i>
Jung!	OperAktiv!	SEI DABEI!	<i>Music Mediation Dep.</i>
Mediation & Outreach	Music Theater Pedagogy	(Theater) Mediation	<i>Labeling</i>
0-27 yrs.	0-99 yrs.	0-99 yrs.	<i>Dialogue/target group</i>
25	241	163	<i>Tot. number of formats</i>
60%	167%	71%	<i>% change</i>
68% individual 32% edu. institution	58% individual 42% edu. institution	53% individual 47% edu. institution	<i>% of formats per dialogue/target group</i>
48% 6-19 yrs. 40% 13-29 yrs.	47% 6-19 yrs. 23% 0-5 yrs.	34% 6-19 yrs. 18% 0-99 yrs.	<i>First two most freq. addressed age groups</i>
44% part. project 8% opera/musical	17% concert 16% part. project	28% part. project 2% part. performance	<i>First two format types for young audience</i>
44% part. project 16% podcast 16% publ. rehearsal	29% workshop 17% concert	28% part. project 19% workshop 19% guided tour	<i>First two most freq. occurring format types</i>

TABLE 20 Overview table of the Vienna State Opera, Graz Opera, and Musiktheater Linz music mediation departments and their formats per dialogue/target group, amount, percentage change, most frequently addressed age group, type for young audience, and most frequently occurring type between 2013/2014 and 2023/2024 (table by the author)

The different content alignments of the departments are partly reflected by their labels. While the departments in Vienna and Linz use the term *mediation*, Graz has consistently used *pedagogy* since its establishment in 2009/2010 (inconsistently referring to *mediation* formats on its website). Vienna further distinguishes its role by adding the term *outreach*. The department names also indicate their audience and approach: Vienna for the young

audience (*Jung!* = young), Graz for personal experience and activation (*OperAktiv!* = opera active), and Linz for being involved (*SEI DABEI!* = be part of it). Table 20 indicates that the mediation department in Graz organizes the most formats and has seen the most significant percentage change. Vienna has the lowest numbers, but this is due to only covering four seasons within the period under consideration. All three mediation departments primarily focus on individuals rather than educational institutions, with Linz showing the least variation in formats for the two dialogue or target groups. Most formats are for the age group 6-19 years. However, the second most addressed age groups differ: teenagers and students in Vienna, toddlers and preschoolers in Graz, and individuals of all ages in Linz. In essence, all music mediation departments aim to engage with young audiences, but there are differences in how they diversify age groups, whether consciously or otherwise. While the *Jung!* department in Vienna is explicit about its approach, Linz and Graz claim to offer formats for everyone, but the actual number of formats of the latter contradicts this statement. Notably, young audiences are all addressed by participatory projects, where transformative mediation approaches can occur. The Viennese department focuses mainly on this format type, followed by Linz, as part of an institution where repertoire promotion and staging performances for young audiences are essential. In Graz, participatory performances are just as important as concerts, but they only represent 15% of the overall formats by the mediation department, on the same level as participatory performances. The extent to which these performances enable transformative approaches cannot be determined through quantitative research. In this sense, the row in Table 20 indicating the first two most frequently occurring format types primarily presents affirmative formats in Graz. However, the row also includes public rehearsals, workshops, and guided tours in Vienna and Linz. Considering all mediation departments collectively, the trends observed in Table 19 are consistent: there is a particular emphasis on engaging with young audiences aged 6-19, with a greater prevalence of transformative formats for this age group. Additionally, while there is a nearly equal balance, affirmative formats are the most frequently offered type of mediation.

After the comparative analysis of music mediation formats by the Vienna State Opera, the Graz Opera, and the Musiktheater Linz, along with their respective music mediation departments, it can be concluded that Vienna prioritizes repertoire promotion. Nonetheless, its mediation department is progressively introducing participatory projects with different goals. In Graz, the institution and mediation department aim to lower the

audience’s average age, while Linz emphasizes creating dialogue settings with and for the youth.

Combining the results of the analyzed institutions, a total of 768 single mediation formats, which increased over time, were identified between 2013/2014 and 2023/2024. Of these formats, 71% addressed individuals (55% by other departments and 45% by mediation departments), and 29% aimed at educational institutions (83% organized by mediation departments and 17% by other departments). This data indicates that the mediation departments organized the majority of the formats, and this trend notably intensified after the 2020/2021 season (see Table 23).

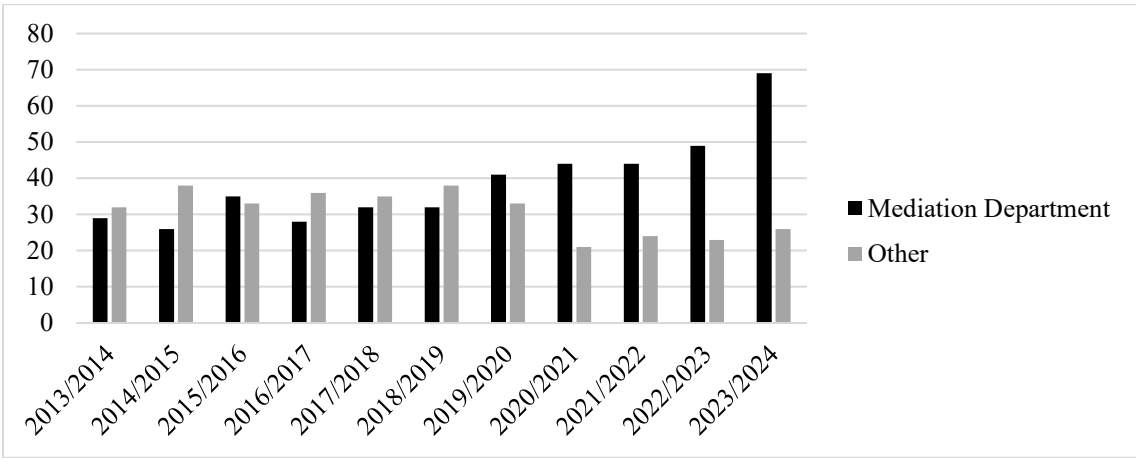


TABLE 21 Number of music mediation formats by the Vienna State Opera, Graz Opera, and Musiktheater Linz per organizing department over time (table by the author)

30% of the formats have no age restrictions (0-99 years) and have been consistently offered throughout the analyzed period (see Table 22). Dedicated formats for young audiences aged 0 to 19 constitute 50% of all formats (other age groups are at or below 4%). It is important to differentiate between primary and secondary school-age individuals, as the formats for the 6-19 age group have consistently decreased and leveled off over the last three seasons. The 6-12 age group slightly increased with the 0-5 group. Considering the declining number of formats addressing the 0-99 age group, Table 22 shows a trend toward using music mediation formats to engage young audiences.

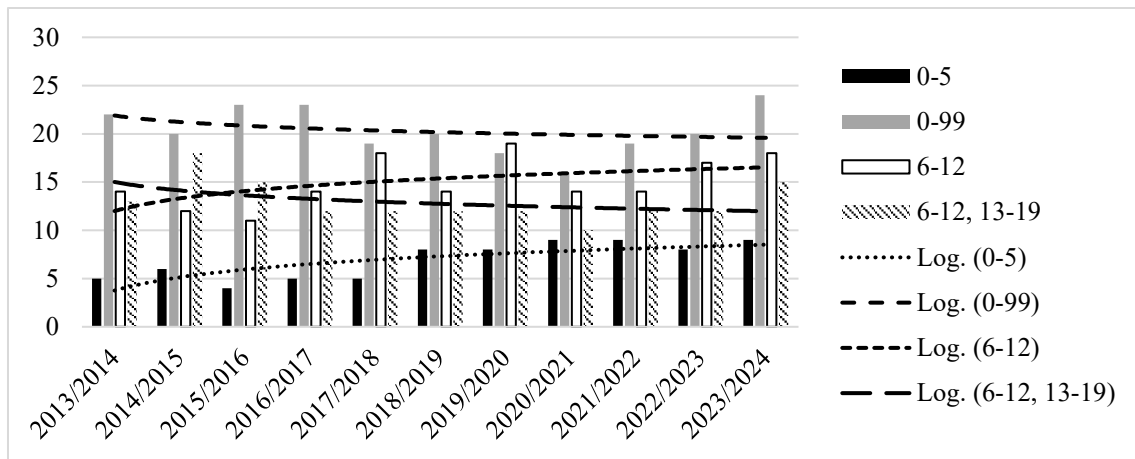


TABLE 22 Number of music mediation formats by the Vienna State Opera, Graz Opera, and Musiktheater Linz per most frequently addressed age groups (0-5, 0-99, 6-12, 6-19) over time, with logarithmic trendlines (table by the author)

Workshops (and preparatory workshops), guided tours, and participatory projects were the most offered format types for educational institutions. For individuals, it was operas or musicals for young audiences, participatory projects, talks, and workshops. This indicates a balanced approach, with format settings with an active dialogue or target group on one side and a passive one on the other, mainly organized by departments other than the ones for mediation. The offer for young audiences (organized by the mediation departments by 61%) principally consists of participatory projects, which increased as the number of operas or musicals decreased (see Table 23). Although these staged performances accounted for 25.5% of the total formats, ballet for young audiences remained a rarely performed genre. This underscores the limited focus on ballet or other dance styles in Austrian opera houses.

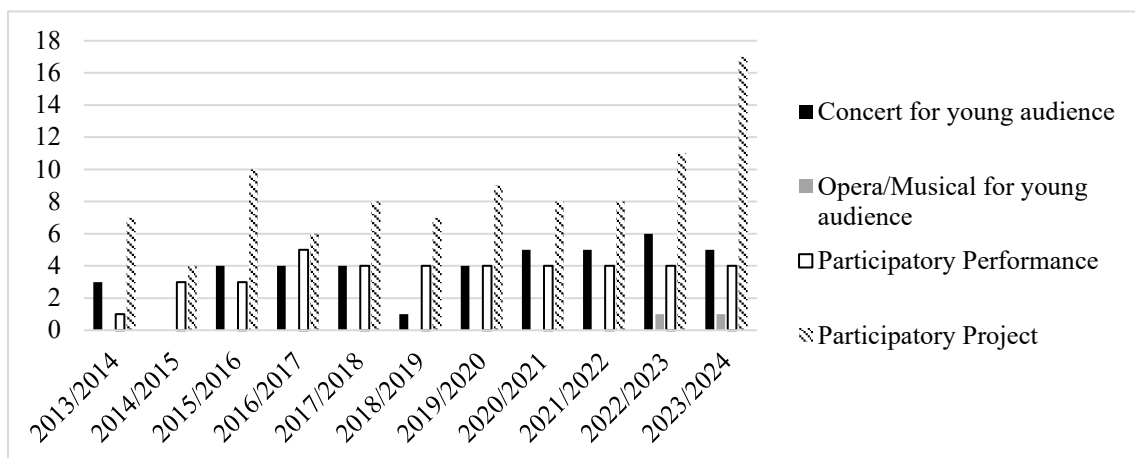


TABLE 23 Number of music mediation formats by the Vienna State Opera, Graz Opera, and Musiktheater Linz per format type for young audience (ballet, concert, opera/musical for young audience, and participatory performance and project) over time (table by the author)

During each season from 2013/2014 to 2023/2024, the analyzed opera houses offered all the listed format types, except ballet for young audiences, educational material for teachers (offered yearly since 2017/2018), and public rehearsals. Podcasts (only in Vienna since 2019/2020) and symposia (in Vienna and Linz until 2015/2016) only occurred rarely. Nonetheless, various music mediation format types have been consistently available since the initial season in 2013/2014.

The Vienna State Opera, the Graz Opera, and the Musiktheater Linz music mediation departments collectively offered 429 single mediation formats, steadily increasing. Of these formats, 56% address individuals and 44% educational institutions. In contrast to the overall evaluation of the opera houses, the mediation departments strive to offer a more balanced range of formats for both dialogue or target groups. The primary focus continues to be on young audiences aged 0 to 19 years. Table 24 illustrates the increasing diversification within the most significant age group of 6-19 years since 2014/2015, resulting in more formats specifically designed for children aged 6 to 12. Additionally, this age group has shown the highest percentage change among the three, followed by the age group of toddlers and preschoolers, which has experienced rapid growth since 2018/2019. The 6-19 age group has demonstrated the smallest percentage change, making it the most stable and consistent of all groups addressed by the music mediation departments.

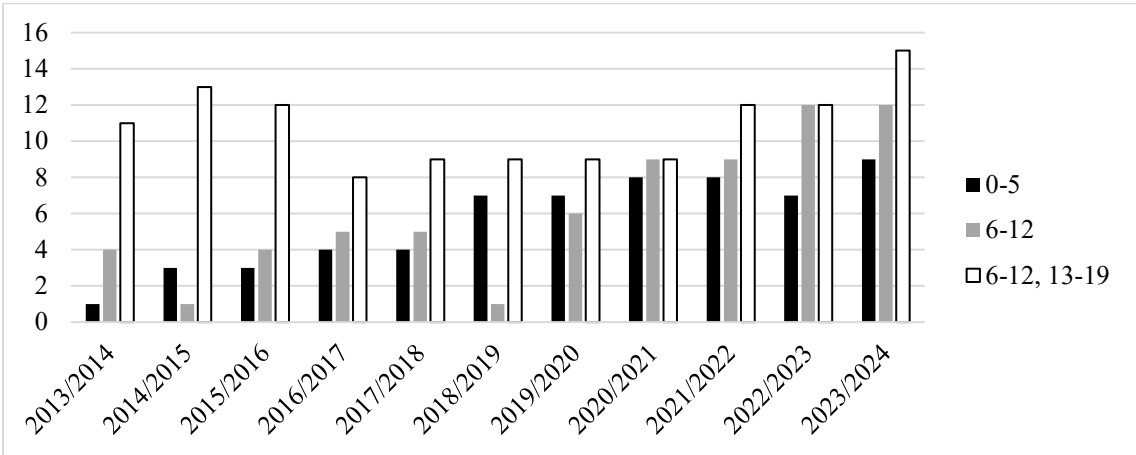


TABLE 24 Number of music mediation formats by the Vienna State Opera, Graz Opera, and Musiktheater Linz music mediation departments per most frequently addressed age groups (0-5, 6-12, 6-19) over time (table by the author)

As observed for the opera houses, the mediation departments support the balance between format settings with an active and a passive dialogue or target group. Workshops and participatory projects are the most commonly offered format types, with workshops

mainly addressing educational institutions, while participatory projects are aimed at individuals. Participatory performances are the third most common format for engaging with both dialogue or target groups and the most offered format type for young audiences (see Table 25). Despite the opera houses' primary focus on the opera genre, dedicated performances organized by the music mediation departments are rare.

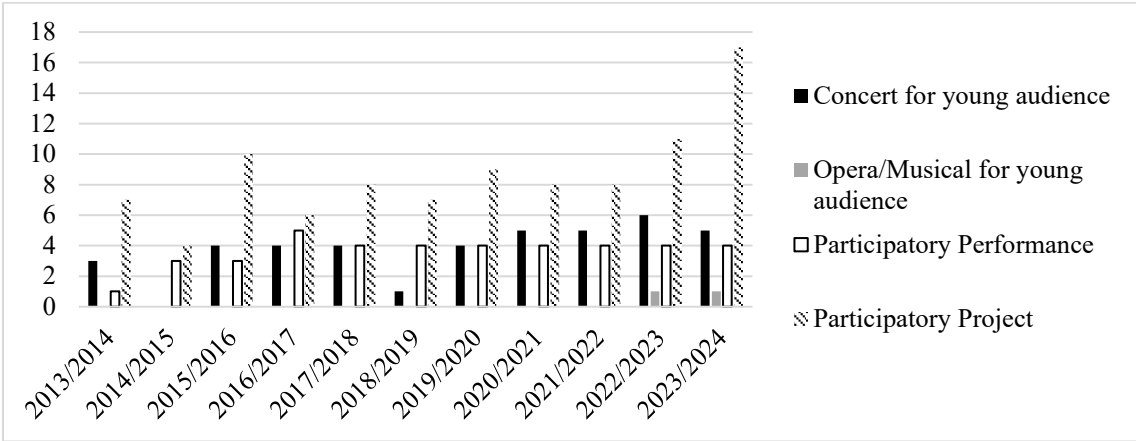


TABLE 25 Number of music mediation formats by the Vienna State Opera, Graz Opera, and Musiktheater Linz music mediation departments per format type for young audience (concert and opera/musical for young audience, and participatory performance and project) over time (table by the author)

Throughout the analyzed period, the format types offered annually, listed in decreasing order, are workshops (and preparatory workshops), participatory projects and performances, guided tours, and trainings. Offering these format types for eleven seasons makes it crucial to include them in music mediation programs, with workshops and participatory projects being the main focus of these departments, making up 24% and 22% of these programs, respectively.

According to this study's findings, music mediation's central role in major Austrian opera houses is actively engaging younger audiences aged 0-19 through a wide range of music mediation formats, which other departments partly organize. While formats without age restriction are important, dedicated formats by the music mediation departments are less prominent. The observed trend within the departments is to diversify the 0-19 age group, mainly focusing on expanding opportunities for preschool and primary school-aged children, emphasizing interaction with individuals rather than educational institutions. Concerning the organization of staged performances, the mediation departments focus on what the opera houses consider supplementary programs, such as concerts and participatory performances (typically in the form of concerts) for children. Producing and directing operas or musicals for young audiences is usually not the responsibility of music

mediators. This gives opera houses the autonomy to decide regarding their core genre form of Western art and culture. However, music mediation departments are entrusted with some artistic programs, which may lead to an increased decision-making role. Finally, besides offering numerous workshops, opera houses and the music mediation departments recognize the relevance of participatory projects, indicating a positive development towards format settings that encourage dialogue and interaction with the audience, opening up the potential for transformative mediation approaches.

## 6 Conclusion

The research presented in this thesis aimed to explore the role of music mediation in Austrian opera houses concerning its transformative approach to redefine the institutions' role in light of cultural and societal change by setting distinct and innovative impulses and its affirmative approach to preserve specific systems and traditions by reinforcing them. I examined Austria's historical development as a territorial, identarian, and cultural concept to better comprehend the significance of the institutions under consideration and the sociohistorical and sociocultural contexts in which they are embedded, proposing that the political utilization of music after 1945 had an impact on music mediation in major Austrian opera houses and contributed to their relevance. A quantitative analysis of the music mediation formats and departments of the Vienna State Opera, the Graz Opera, and the Musiktheater Linz was conducted to illustrate how they developed from the 2013/2014 season to the 2023/2024 season, how affirmative formats represent the overarching trend and transformative ones only a minority, and how they are related to a concept of music that is intertwined with Austrian cultural policy, which ultimately is based on a constructed notion of *Austria* and *Austrianess*. Questioning the role of these and other factors on the way music mediation acts in opera houses reveals the limits of solely relying on quantitative analysis to evaluate this topic. In addition to further research, such as a qualitative study of music mediation formats and departments, analyzing networking processes, identifying opera houses, cultural policy, economics, and Western art music and other potential participants as actors, as conceptualized in Actor-Network Theory (ANT) (Latour 2007), could offer a new perspective and consider the broader context. Nevertheless, the current study and its findings present a preliminary analysis for further research, providing insights into new music mediation approaches, as a comparative study of music mediation in Austrian opera houses has not yet been conducted.

The research findings indicate that the role of music mediation depends on the relative institution, which in turn depends on cultural policy measures that again affect the political function of music. Finally, cultural policy is based on a specific concept of Austrian identity connected to the conceptual building of the country. This determines a linear chaining of different entities overall. On the other hand, music mediation departments, apart from the institutions, are also influenced by their customs and traditions. Established format trends and working models foster the introduction of

similar formats, resulting in institutions expecting specific formats, age groups, and dialogue or target groups to be addressed. The initiation of new formats or settings primarily complements the existing offer and is seldom a replacement due to a reevaluation of mediation approaches, as the formats' descriptions suggest. These constraints arise from the involvement of other departments in mediation formats and, closing the circle, the dependence of music mediation departments on their institutions.

The political utilization of Western art music in Austria impacts how music mediation functions in major opera houses. Considering the interconnection of culture-political, economic, and marketing considerations, these cultural institutions operate in a context where affirmative over transformative mediation approaches are inevitable consequences. This principle is particularly evident in sociohistorically significant institutions, such as the here-analyzed Vienna State Opera and the Graz Opera. Newer institutions, such as the Musiktheater Linz, can position themselves differently within a given yet dynamic cultural-political framework because of their recent establishment.

The need to decolonize Western art music and its institutions, reassess the concept of culture, and engage with society to address 21<sup>st</sup>-century challenges is something that music mediation can incentivize by balancing affirmative and transformative approaches. However, cultural institutions must implement these changes. Especially the potential of participatory projects should be further emphasized as “potent resources for social change and [...] alternative models for citizenship” (Turino 2016, 298). While there is an observable increase in transformative music mediation approaches, substantial changes in overarching structures and societal functions on an institutional level are still lacking. Therefore, the failure of cultural institutions such as opera houses regarding social responsibility in the sense of *artistic citizenship*<sup>61</sup> (D. J. Elliott, Silverman, and W. D. Bowman 2016) does not lie with the music mediators themselves but rather with the structural framework they operate within and the conflicts of interest involving various parties that extend beyond cultural policies. Since this network cannot be avoided, even when artistic citizenship, community music, or other forms of participation occur, their reasoning and legitimation must be questioned, especially considering public incentives, as observed by Krönig (2020, 29). He further points out the policy paradigm of these concepts that aim to be political commitment and, hence, *on the right side*.

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<sup>61</sup> The concept of *artistic citizenship* defines that “artistry involves civic-social-humanistic-emancipatory responsibilities, obligations to engage in art making that advances social ‘goods’” (D. Elliott, Silverman, and W. Bowman 2016, 7).

However, this form of music meditation can only be considered political if it diverges from current cultural policy and government measures and opposes them, as political dichotomy implies. Attributing positive values entails the risk of promoting transformation while complying with affirmation (Krönig 2020, 29–30). Finally, in line with Krönig (2020, 31), new forms of music mediation within the opera houses must be intensified, facilitating social participation without compromising the autonomy of arts through affirmative mediation or education approaches.

In summary, I argue that in addition to transformative mediation approaches, a reevaluation of the societal significance of opera as a genre and an institution is necessary to transform the predominantly affirmative environment of major Austrian opera houses. Music mediation has the potential to set new impulses, but its effectiveness is contingent upon the context in which it operates and its role in driving societal transformation. Analogous to refurbishing old and valuable paintings with new frames or refreshing their colors, the initial step is important, but diminishing the value of new paintings impedes progress. The musical selections in the formats examined in this study largely adhere to a standardized Western art music canon, which can challenge transformative participatory formats if this canon is expected to be used. In such instances, a shift in ideology is required – from merely facilitating points of contact between the opera houses and society to enabling co-creation that offers fresh perspectives and outcomes without compromising the essence of the genre and the institution. Addressing these pivotal junctures necessitates thorough evaluation, willingness to take risks, and restructuring of existing institutions to integrate music mediators into strategic decision-making processes for future implementations.

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