Musical (world) heritage?
The West-Eastern Divan Orchestra

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Introduction

The *West-Eastern Divan Workshop & Orchestra* (The Divan Orchestra) owes its name to a late collection of poems by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, the *West-Eastern Divan* (1819), which, together with the entire literary estate of the Weimar poet, has been a UNESCO World Documentary Heritage Site since 2001. The orchestra's founders, pianist, and conductor Daniel Barenboim (b. 1942), literary scholar Edward Said (1935–2003) and cultural manager Bernd Kauffmann (b. 1944), named the orchestra after the external circumstances of its founding, Goethe's 250th birthday in the European Capital of Culture year. At the same time, with the name of the orchestra, they invoke a line of reception that reads Goethe's *Divan*[1] as a testimony to a cosmopolitan world literature (Gutjahr 2000).

With the founding of the Divan Orchestra in Weimar, the capital of German classical music, and with the reference to Goethe's late work, Barenboim, Said, and Kauffmann had deliberately placed the orchestra in an intercultural frame of reference and reception. What began as an experiment soon became established and today, after more than 20 years, presents itself as a professional orchestra that fills concert halls all over the world and has made a name for itself through CD and DVD recordings. The orchestra consists of musicians who travel from Israel and Palestine, Lebanon, Syria, Iran, the Maghreb countries, Turkey, and Europe to play together in the Andalusian town of Pilas near Seville, where the orchestra has been based since 2002. Both the multinational and multicultural composition and the collaboration with a world-class conductor make the Divan workshops a unique experience for many participants. Furthermore, Barenboim has developed a special mission for his orchestra: He is concerned with a musical education that pursues a basic humanistic approach (Barenboim and Mann 2018, p. 14). Barenboim understands music as a holistic endeavour: "Music is everything and everything is music" (Barenboim 2015,

1 The term "divan" means assembly in Oriental literature (Kiermeier-Debre 2011).

p. 22). From his point of view, music as an art form offers human beings very specific insights into the *condition humaine* – and thus also into themselves. At the same time, the realization of great orchestral works is only possible in the social act, in the interaction between the orchestra members. From this fact Barenboim derives his conviction that musicians should not only master their instrument, but also assume concrete responsibility for society (Barenboim 2006; 2008; 2010; 2015). Music, understood as a universal language, thereby enables a dialogue between people regardless of their mother tongue and culture, and can also serve as a platform for peace. In its social manifestation, music has an educational function that invokes values such as freedom, justice, and humanity.

Against this background, the Divan Orchestra understands music as a universal cultural heritage, whose political frame is "musical diplomacy" (Karamy and Baines 2020). The study examines the extent to which the orchestra's founders understand Western classical music as a common heritage of humanity that conveys universal values such as freedom, justice, and humanity to its listeners, regardless of their origins. It further asks whether this view of music is also shared by the members of the orchestra, and leads them to a new understanding of music as an aesthetically cosmpolitan or postnational identity. The discussion of the opportunities and limitations of the Divan Orchestra's concept, as an example of musical diplomacy that is located beyond national heritage and structures, will contribute to our understanding of the possibility to construct heritage as a platform of acknowledgment and recognition in societies that suffer from a conflict.

Togetherness of the "peoples"? The West-Eastern Divan Orchestra

In their conversation with Ara Guzelimian, printed in the volume *Parallels and Paradoxes* (2002; 2004), Daniel Barenboim and Edward Said recall the founding of the Divan Orchestra in 1999. Actually, Bernd Kauffmann, the manager of the Capital of Culture Year, wanted to get Barenboim to give a few concerts in Weimar. But then the latter said:

> [H]e would love to create something with young people from the Middle East. I asked more specifically what he would think about bringing young people from many Middle Eastern countries and Israel together to make music? (Blech 2019).[2]

No sooner said than done: Kauffmann procured the funds, and Barenboim developed the concept together with Said. In the orchestra, musicians from Middle East-

2 For better readability, quotations from German literature have been translated into English. German sources and literature are marked as such in the bibliography.

ern countries aged 14–25 were to meet and make music together in a summer workshop (Barenboim and Mann 2018). The essential processes and structures for the workshops were already worked out in Weimar. The application was followed by an audition in the home country, selection, and invitation. The orchestra then met in the summer for a six-week workshop followed by a tour. On site, the players received lessons from professional musicians and in their free time had the opportunity to listen to lectures on the social and political situation in the Middle East. The founders wanted to attract speakers of the same caliber as for the lessons on the instrument.

While in the beginning it was primarily schoolchildren and music students who were invited to the annual workshops, over the years the ensemble has shown greater heterogeneity. Although young, newly discovered musicians continued to form the actual target group, professional players or students from the *Barenboim-Said Academy*, founded in Berlin in 2016, also took part in the workshops and concert tours when needed (Naumann and Barenboim 2018). Those among the participants who repeatedly came to the workshops mostly aspired to a professional career as musicians and hoped for support for this from Barenboim and the network he had established around the orchestra over the years.[3] The founders of the orchestra themselves, however, did not only have the musical training of top musicians in mind, but also a social function that was to be achieved along with the training: musicians from hostile countries were to come into contact and break down barriers by playing together. To this end, the orchestra offered three levels of encounter. First, personal contact with one another; second, the aesthetic experience of playing together; and third, music, which as a "universal" language could open up a form of postnational communication (Robson 2014).

On all three levels, the orchestra had the task of working not only towards musical perfection, but also towards the realization of values such as justice, freedom or "brotherhood". This is how its own website describes the Divan Orchestra:

> Through its work and existence, the orchestra demonstrates that bridges can be built to encourage people to listen to the Other's narrative. While music alone cannot resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict, it grants the individual the right and obligation to express herself or himself fully while listening to his or her neighbor.

3 In Andalusia, the *Junta de Andalucia* has supported the summer workshops since 2002 by providing funding for the orchestra and the Pilas rehearsal venue (Beckles Willson 2009a); in New York, *the Barenboim-Said Foundation* (2004) is active; in Berlin, the *Daniel Barenboim Foundation* (2008) and the *Barenboim-Said Academy* (2015) promote the training of musicians from the Middle East and North Africa (see Other Sources: No. 1). The *Berlin Musik Kindergarten* (2005) provides for the musical development of children and young people; in Ramallah, the *Barenboim-Said Center for Music* has existed since 2012 (see Other Sources: No. 2). Like the orchestra, the networks aim to realize encounters and intercultural dialogue through classical music.

> Based on this notion of equality, cooperation, and justice for all, the orchestra represents an alternative model to the current situation in the Middle East (Other Sources: No. 3).

At the same time, the founders repeatedly emphasized that the orchestra and its work were "apolitical": "The West-Eastern Divan Orchestra cannot and will not formulate any political statements; it sees itself as apolitical in the highest degree" (Kauffmann 2000, p. 23). To make this statement plausible, they resorted to the term "people" instead of "state". Accordingly, for them, the Middle East conflict did not represent a dispute between the states of Israel and Palestine (especially since officially there was no state of Palestine at all), but "between two peoples" (Barenboim 2018, p. 19). With the frame of reference of the "people", they distinguished civil societies from their governments and followed a humanistic view of the conflict. In doing so, they marked the Middle East conflict in a similarly postnational way as the UN did: via the people's right, they connected it to the frame of reference of human rights and interpreted "brotherhood" as a form of fundamental solidarity. It is obvious that this view was built on terminological subtleties that could hardly be sustained in political practice, especially since civil societies were repeatedly threatened by tangible wars. Through them, the orchestra was repeatedly confronted with the politics of the states. Nor could it be ignored that the founders, namely Barenboim, became increasingly politicized. Today he can be described as critical of Israel.[4]

Methods

The research applies methods of content analysis and interviews. Various documentary sources were analysed, including: published conversations, essays, autobiographical writings by the orchestra's founders Said and Barenboim, Elena Cheah's collection of interviews with orchestra members, and the documentary *Knowledge is the beginning* by Paul Smaczny (2005) that follows the orchestra's early years (1999–2005). In order to compare these statements, some of which are older, with a current voice from the orchestra, an interview with one of the Divan members was also conducted in 2021.[5] The orchestra member, a Jewish bassoonist from

4 Well-known examples of this are Barenboim's 2004 speech in the *Knesset* on the occasion of the awarding of the Wolf Prize for Peace and International Understanding, and the anti-war declarations in 2006 on the Lebanon War and in 2009 on the Gaza War (Smaczny 2005, track 10; Beckles Willson 2009b). This stance is also represented by the institutions and foundations that Barenboim established (see Other Sources: No. 2).

5 Interview with a young Israeli musician of the Divan Orchestra, conducted by Kai Erdlenbruch and Kinnereth Suissa on January 2, 2021 (recorded video conversation).

Israel, was interviewed while he was studying at the Barenboim-Said Academy in Berlin, after joinning the Divan Orchestra in 2019 and touring with the orchestra in Europe and South America.[6] The interview was conducted online in English and lasted about half an hour. The transcription was made from the recording by the conference software Zoom.

Daniel Barenboim: Music as a universal language

British musicologist Kate Wakeling has pointed out that Barenboim, who made his name as a pianist with the *London Symphony Orchestra* (1968), as chief conductor of the *Orchestre du Paris* (1975–1991) and the *Chicago Symphony Orchestra* (1991–2006), and as the lifetime conductor of the *Staatskapelle Berlin* (since 2000), as general music director of the *Staatsoper Unter den Linden* (1992–2023) and as music director of the opera house of *La Scala* in Milan (since 2011), has made a name for himself as an interpreter of classical music, and with the Divan Orchestra has mainly performed works of European classical and romantic music – in particular Beethoven, the "poster boy for the German nationalist Romantics" (Wakeling 2010). Beethoven does indeed play an important role in the repertoire of the Divan Orchestra and its founder. His *Ninth Symphony* (1822–24), however, is not only popular with the Divan Orchestra, but is considered one of the most frequently performed works in the world, which is how the German UNESCO Commission justifies "its importance for international cultural dialogue" (see Other Sources: No. 4). Since 2001, the symphony's autograph has also been part of the World Documentary Heritage. For the European Union, the fourth movement of the symphony, which sets Friedrich Schiller's *Ode to Joy* (1785/1803) to music, serves as a unifying, postnational anthem. With this choice, Beethoven's music takes on a political dimension, justified by the tie-in to Europe: "The anthem symbolizes not only the European Union, but also Europe more broadly. With his 'Ode to Joy', Schiller expressed his idealistic vision of all men becoming brothers – a vision that Beethoven shared" (see Other Sources: No. 5).

Beethoven's special place in the Orchestra's work may be down to personal preferences (Guzelimian 2004), but it also suggests music philosophical positions. In a conversation with Ara Guzelimian and Edward W. Said (2004), Barenboim elaborates on his idea of music; it actually follows the Romantic idea of music as a universal language. For Barenboim, a work that invites self-reflection through content and form is universal. In this sense, Beethoven is for him an absolute musician who speaks through music:

6 To avoid being recognized, the interviewee asked that his statements only be used anonymously.

> AG (Ara Guzelimian): Doesn't this ideal of a common language, of mutual exchange, appear in Beethoven – to take up your expression again and to accentuate it a little differently – as one of the most powerful driving forces?
> DB (Daniel Barenboim): Yes, of course. 'All men become brothers' (Guzelimian 2004, p. 202).

Barenboim's reference to a line from Schiller's *Ode to Joy* reinforces his notion of music as a repository of ideas such as humanity, justice, and freedom. He is interested in the ethical potential of music. Great works not only give a picture of musical traditions and personal skill, but also tell of the conditions of human existence (Guzelimian 2004). The value of music is expressed on the one hand in its aesthetic form, and on the other in the actualization of these ideas and messages. In Beethoven, as in Wagner, Barenboim sees a revolutionary of his time, since he "rethought and remade everything that existed, he dismantled it in order to create it anew" (Guzelimian 2004, p. 130). As Wakeling points out, this reading of music, which he represents as an intellectual and an artist, is also important to Barenboim in his orchestral work. Here, the performers listening and responding to the content of the works is central: "The first impulse must come from the person who produces the sound, from each individual musician" (Guzelimian 2004, p. 102). Music consists of tempo and sound. Both are central elements in Barenboim's musical argumentation, according to which a symphony is realized through listening, interacting, and the state of interdependence (Wakeling 2010). Characteristics of the classical symphony that the orchestra has to elaborate are its dramatic density, its motifs, and its intense contrast; recognizing and deciphering these characteristics is the responsibility of the listener (Whale 2015). Transferring Barenboim's considerations to orchestral work, it becomes obvious that the realization of a symphony concerns the aesthetic and the human togetherness in the orchestra, with the rehearsal process intertwining the dynamics. This implies a mutual growth in playing. In its performance, finally, the symphony is realized; the respective specific interpretation reveals its aesthetic, but also its emotional content. Against this background, Barenboim combines his idea of music as a universal language with an understanding of performance that focuses on listening and responding. Music is communication, which is why it has a content side and a relationship side. Barenboim also applies this idea to the Divan Orchestra:

> In the West-Eastern Divan the universal metaphysical language of music becomes the link, it is the language of the continuous dialogue that these young people have with each other. Music is the common framework, their abstract language of harmony (Barenboim 2006).

Wakeling criticized Barenboim's conception of music as essentialist and questioned his idea of music as a universal language. Although it superficially presents itself as purposeless and timeless, it is precisely because of this that it invites alternative messages and meanings to be accommodated within it – for example, ethical readings. Furthermore, she critically notes that Arabic classical music is never on the program: "I suggest it is an intriguing omission that an ensemble based on Goethe's West-Eastern Divan – a work devoted to the exploration of Middle Eastern culture – makes no connection to any kind of Middle Eastern music" (Wakeling 201 p. 8).[7]

It may be due to Barenboim's training as a Western-style artist that he has not included any classical Arabic music in his repertoire. However, his musical philosophy also assumes that he can achieve his goal of creating an encounter through music with Western classical music – thanks to its universality (Mann and Barenboim 2018). In the ideal of universality, moreover, classical music meets with ethical values such as human rights – a view that Barenboim shares with Edward Said.[8] In light of these thought processes, it is not a contradiction for Barenboim to assume that an orchestra that works out musical harmonies and gains intercultural experience at the music stand can also transfer these to other (life) contexts. For him, there is no question that the musical principles described are equally suitable for negotiating conflicts beyond the concert hall. What is revelant for Barenboim is not that there are differences, but whether the participants move toward each other – in the symphony as in life.

Edward W. Said: Counterpoint discourses

Edward Said stood for the Divan Orchestra's examination of history, geography, and identity constructions. The literary scholar was the inventor of the workshop lectures that accompanied the rehearsals and were intended to invite reflection on the Middle East conflict. Said died of cancer in 2003, so his active involvement with the Divan Orchestra was limited to a few years; however, his influence on his friend Daniel Barenboim and on the project's philosophy cannot be underestimated. Said's lectures included the idea of reflecting on the Middle East conflict from a postnational perspective, in order to stimulate a change of perspective that was not possible from a national position. Lectures, film screenings, and discussions with experts

7 In Paul Smaczny's documentary *Knowledge is the beginning*, as well as in the interviews conducted by Elena Cheah and by the autors of this article, it sounds as if Arabic music is very present in the orchestra; it is used for relaxation, dance, and entertainment (Smaczny 2005, track 3).

8 Like Barenboim, Said loved Western classical music and made no secret of his rejection of Arab classical music (Robson 2014).

were intended to invite participants to learn more about the Middle East conflict and the Other and to reflect on their own constructions of identity – a task that many orchestra members found confusing, painful, or ambivalent. Moreover, two worlds collided in the lectures (Smaczny 2005; Riiser 2010). Whereas the founders of the orchestra embodied a fluid, aesthetic identity with their cosmopolitan views, the musicians saw themselves as committed to the identities of their home countries, to which they usually returned after the workshops (Cheah 2015).

Barenboim and Said shared a cosmopolitan identity, even if their cosmopolitanism was fed by different sources. Barenboim, born in Argentina in 1942 to Jewish Ashkenazi immigrants, gave public concerts as a child and toured worldwide. He experienced his youth in Israel, but frequently spent time in Europe and the U.S. for his education and artistic activities; today he lives in Berlin. Born in Jerusalem, Palestine, in 1935, Said lived mostly in Cairo and returned a few times to visit Palestine after the establishment of the State of Israel. As a well-known literary scholar, postcolonialism thinker and university lecturer in the U.S., he traveled the world, but analyzed his old homeland only from a distance. Not least because of this, he was said to have a U.S.-European socialization, which Barenboim also hints at in his conversations with Ara Guzelimian: "A large part of your interests could be characterized as European" (Guzelimian 2004, p. 21).

Laura Robson has contradicted this assessment to the extent that she emphasizes the role of Arab cosmopolitanism in Said's thought. Cosmopolitan Cairo, where Said grew up as a Palestinian Christian, was still shaped by English colonialism and offered the mobile, transnational, multi-religious (predominantly Christian) middle and upper classes, to which Said's parents also belonged, many educational opportunities along Western lines. Said also owes his preference for Western classical music to this. The cosmopolitan climate, which was also conveyed by numerous institutions such as music schools, opera houses, and theaters, disappeared under the renationalization of Egypt by Gamal Abdel Nasser (1918–1970) in the 1950s and thus at the same time that Said left Cairo to continue his education in the United States (Robson 2014). However, the disappearance of Arab cosmopolitanism, after the loss of his geographical home, meant for Said also the loss of his intellectual home (Said 2000c). What remained for him from this early socialization was his love of literature and music. While still in the U.S., they furnished him with that autonomous, de-geographized "space" in which the idea of a Western-style cosmopolitan Arab identity could be preserved.

Outwardly Said, who was a well-known advocate of Palestinian rights and a pioneer of postcolonialism – his books *Orientalism* (1978) and *Culture and Imperialism* (1993) have become classics – perceived himself as an exile (Said 2000a; 2000b). Inwardly, based on art, he defined himself as a cosmopolitan with universal values. From this self-image, Said acted both as a critic of colonialism and as an enlightener of European character. As a thinker of postcolonialism, he deconstructed Euro-

pean literature and its Eurocentrism; as a modern Enlightenment thinker and politician, he held fast to the idea of universal values – certainly with reference to postnational institutions such as human rights as the basis of world democracy (Said 2000c; 2004).

A central figure of thought for Said's thinking and writing, as has been pointed out several times, is the musical principle of counterpoint (Toch 2005). Said was interested in the principle of counterpoint because it offered the possibility of making visible and audible a second voice in texts, similar to music pieces, which, within the framework of harmony, is on an equal footing with the actual melody (Etherington 2007).[9] As a philosophical figure of thought, the counterpoint also determines Said's lectures to the Divan Orchestra. In the discourses with the musicians, he was concerned with exposing national and ethnic stereotypes, discussing (painful) differences, and thus creating the conditions for a change in individual attitudes (Beckles Willson 2009b). Counterpoint discourse could, at its best, lead to the willingness of participants to engage with the topic, hear the opposing voice(s), and subsequently match their own arguments with other, third-party arguments. Etherington (2007) has pointed out that in his lectures Said referred to another philosophical framework that he also took from music, that of musical autonomy. Musical autonomy offered the ability to understand music as an open form of communication and to discuss it without presuppositions, without immediately falling into old enmities: "The ideal of musical autonomy therefore plays a direct interventionary role as a 'late style' answer to Middle-Eastern politics" (Etherington 2007, p. 126). In this "thinking space" it was possible to acquire knowledge, to examine other perspectives, and to initiate processes of understanding.

If, on the one hand, the aim of the *Reith lectures* was to impart knowledge that might not otherwise have been available to the participants, on the other hand, they pursued the intention of forming the musicians' personalities. Like the rehearsals with Barenboim, the lectures with Said envisaged a "change of identity" (Guzelimian 2004). More precisely, detaching from a national or ethnic self-conception and turning to a postnational self-conception based on an aesthetic-ideal understanding:

> There was an Israeli group and a Russian group, a Syrian group, and a Lebanese group, a Palestinian group, and a group of Palestinian Israelis. They all suddenly turned into violinists and cellists playing the same piece in the same orchestra and under the same conductor (Said, in: Guzelimian 2004, p. 26).

9 Etherington also points to contradictions in Said's musical thought: he states that in the last chapter of his book *Culture and Imperialism* (1993), Said attempted to combine the two – basically incompatible – musical principles of atonality and counterpoint: "There an atonal counterpoint is seen as an ideal way of renewing the universal framework of comparative literature" (2007, p. 125).

That such a construction of identity is called "apolitical" lies in the chosen frame of reference of the argumentation and its underlying postnational approach. That it is not apolitical, however, is shown by the fact that within this frame of reference, Said nevertheless makes proposals for a (political) solution to the Middle East conflict. He repeatedly spoke out in favor of the coexistence of the Israeli and Palestinian peoples in a binational state in which not national but human needs would be met (Said 2000c). It is legitimate to ask whether such a construction of identity is not ultimately utopian. For even if Said's own cosmopolitanism and his exile experience were the inspiration for his identity construction, the question must be allowed whether this identity could also be lived by the young participants. His understanding of a postnational identity as an intellectual and a music lover takes shape from a geographical distance to the homeland and a broader philosophical bird's-eye view of it.

Positions of the participants: Music and identity

The political situation in the Middle East continues to thwart the programmatic intentions of the orchestra's founders to this day – in a very real and political way. This also has consequences for the self-perception of the orchestra members (Cheah 2015). They face, on the one hand, the hopes and ideas of the workshop leaders and, on the other, the suspicions of their closest friends and relatives: "'Watch out, they're going to brainwash you'" (Shapiro, in: Cheah 2015, p. 154). In addition, there are difficulties that primarily affect Arab musicians, insofar as they travel directly from their home countries. They usually need special permits from their governments to come to the workshop and perform with the orchestra.

The orchestra, which has now been following the political agenda of its founders for over 20 years, thus finds itself in a field of tension. On the one hand, as Barenboim repeatedly emphasizes, it is a "utopian republic" (Barenboim 2006), a musical-political model design for a region that has not been at rest for 75 years. As a utopia, this "republic" has the potential to become the perfect social order, but it presumably remains (this is also part of this utopia) a fiction. On the other hand, for 20 years now the orchestra has shared Said's fate, being "an orchestra in exile" (Barenboim 2018, p. 18). "Exile, that means being in a foreign country – but also being exiled because the circumstances in one's own homeland are unbearable" (Barenboim 2018, p. 18). On closer inspection, however, this exile is one turned on its head: Barenboim does not relate the metaphor of the "orchestra in exile" to the orchestra members (they are not exiled, they are removed from their regional contexts by the orchestra), but to the institution of the orchestra (Riiser 2010). It is in exile because there is no support for it in the region it targets. "The orchestra has many admirers worldwide, but the governments in question don't want to know about our orchestra" (Barenboim

2018, p. 18). By anchoring the orchestra in Europe, a "homecoming" to this region becomes no less utopian then the very idea of a "utopian republic". But what do the players have to say about this? The following account of their positions follows Robson's three levels of encounter: (1) personal contact, which is meant to bring about a "breakdown of destructive stereotypes"; (2) music, as a universal language, which, like the lectures, is meant to offer alternatives to hostile political exchange; and (3) the musical/social experience of playing together "that replaced national/political identifications" (Robson 2014, p. 130).

(1) *The personal contact*: Face-to-face encounters have lost little of their appeal for Divan Orchestra members since its beginnings. In the 2021 interview, the young bassoonist mentions his curiosity about other fellow players: "When I joined the Divan, I noticed that everyone was really nice to each other and respected each other." The differences between the musicians are minor, he says: "Playing together takes place as in any free orchestra with changing participants, which requires a certain professionalism." What hasn't changed, however, is the outside perception of the orchestra in his homeland: "If I said in Israel that I was playing next to a man from Syria, for example, that he was playing in the orchestra with me and we were having […] fun, […] some people would think […] that I was crazy." The conflict in the Middle East gives rise to distrust not only of the orchestra, but also of its players.

The orchestra is still often the first *contact zone* (Beckles Willson 2009a) for encounters between Israelis and Arabs – even for Arab and Jewish Israelis – and in many cases it leads to friendships (Cohen, in: Cheah 2015). Most of the musicians interviewed by Cheah (ibid) agree that getting to know each other in person changed their perspective and initiated a process of reflection. One violinist reports that today she views not only the political situation but also the Israeli educational curriculum differently: "What we learn in school in history is in many cases subjective or subject to a certain narrative" (Kadichevski, in: Cheah 2015, p. 212). The interviews reveal the players' curiosity and willingness to question previous national or ethnic identity designs and associated cultural heritage. At the same time, they also draw attention to the fragility of the endeavor, as the workshop has little to do with their everyday lives and, for them, risks being caught in identity conflicts: "But that's *so* far from reality" (Cohen, in: Cheah 2015, p. 40, emphasis in original). Not all players are therefore willing to engage with other nationalities and with the concept of lectures. One Arab violinist said goodbye after four years when he realized "that I am not very liberal" (Zaki, in: Cheah 2015, p. 274). He was critical not only of the lectures – "it's not a good idea to gather people together and then say, 'well, now let's discuss the Middle East conflict in a difficult foreign language.' That doesn't do anything at all" (Zaki, in: Cheah 2015, p. 277), but also of the motivation of the Israeli players:

> The first group is absolutely liberal-minded and has nothing to do with their government. The second group is a bunch of actors. As soon as Daniel Barenboim or

> TV cameras are around, they say: 'But of course they're our friends.' They mostly keep to themselves. And the third group obviously doesn't even want to have anything to do with us (2015, p. 275).

The impression that participants group themselves by nationality as soon as they have the opportunity to do so is confirmed by Riiser (2010). The interviews reveal the willingness of many Israelis to be self-critical when it comes to Israel's position in Middle East policy (Kadichevski, in: Cheah 2015). This observation raises the question of whether the cognitive processes described stem from the beliefs of the interviewees or whether they can be explained by the response tendency of social desirability. For example, the orchestra members are also aware that Daniel Barenboim takes a critical stance towards Israeli politics. For some musicians, this creates a conflict of goals: as much as they appreciate Barenboim as a teacher and hope for his help in their careers, they cannot or do not automatically want to follow his political position.[10] The bassoonist also shows little interest in expressing himself politically: "But I'll leave politics aside now, because we don't talk about politics so much in the orchestra, I mean, […] because politics always comes from two sides." The Arab co-performers are less self-critical in this regard; rather, they talk about their approach to classical music as a foreign cultural heritage, their often arduous educational processes in their home countries due to a lack of infrastructure, or their difficult overall situation unless they live abroad (Yammine, in: Cheah 2015; Ahmadie, in: Cheah 2015).

(2) *Classical music as a universal language*: Barenboim's commitment to music as a universal language poses no problem for the young musicians, and neither does the Romantic repertoire he has chosen. The majority of the interviewees rave about the conductor's aura and his ability to bring the orchestra together (Cohen, in: Cheah 2015). The criticism that Western classical music is a European (and hegemonic) heritage is not at the forefront of the players' minds. Those who have decided to learn an instrument have already answered this question for themselves. The interview with the bassoonist also shows that playing classical music today is no longer just a question of culture, but also of socialization. For example, the musician emphasizes that he didn't listen to classical music in his childhood home: "When I was born, my parents didn't really like classical music that much, and I wasn't one of those people

10 Both Cheah (2015) and Riiser (2010) describe a young Israeli who defended Israel's policies. Both give different accounts of the consequences of this emotional expression of opinion. While Cheah reports that the musician backed off in the course of the workshop and said that he now understood the opposing position better, Riiser writes that after the incident, older members of the orchestra approached her to soften her (possibly bad) impression: "After a few days, I (Riiser) found that the newcomer (the young musican) had been rebuked by the Foundation, who also 'muzzled' him, as they felt that this kind of behavior was not approriate to the Divan context" (Riiser 2010, p. 30).

who grew up listening to classical music as a child" (Cheah 2015, p. 111). This circumstance changed only when he learned to play an instrument – here the Israeli's story resembles the narratives of some (not all) young Arabs. The assumption that (Ashkenazi) Jews, by virtue of their origin, have a closer relationship to classical music as their heritage, while for Arab players it represents a foreign heritage per se, must be negated as ethnicizing.

The question of whether classical music is a (universal) common cultural heritage draws attention to another observation: the orchestra's increasing roots in Europe. On the production side, Riiser observed in 2010 that many Divan Orchestra players go to Europe to continue their musical education. They receive scholarships and subsequently find their jobs and audiences here. The young bassoonist also confirms this path: "I was accepted at the Barenboim-Said Academy in Berlin and moved here when I was 20." On the reception side, the idea of music as a universal language proves intrinsically European. Classical music, as the remarks about Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony* show, is understood as part of Western culture. This is indicated not only by the decisions of European institutions and the list of UNESCO World Documentary Heritage, but also by the demand in orchestras and concert halls. The Divan musicians, too, bring this cultural heritage to the forefront where it is actively received. It is this connection between production and reception that in the end also "europeanizes" the performers, since they come to Europe out of love for classical music, regardless of their origins, and as people of different cultures of origin they find themselves in a diasporic situation here – as did the orchestra founders before them. Over time, they acquire an outside view of their homeland and undergo a transformation of identity, almost as Edward W. Said envisioned the diasporic situation as a potential for peace discourse. However, these new identities turn out not to be postnational, but subcollectivist and European. They become visible in the union of friendly musicians forming a "Divan community" in Berlin: "In other words, they create a Divan diaspora, where the notion of national identity is replaced with a mixture of Divan identity […], and a German national identity available to them through music" (Riiser 2010, p. 34). Riiser concludes that not only external factors such as the rejection of the countries in the Middle East, but also the internal structures contribute to an "orchestra in exile". Training, support structures, and demand lead to the fact that it is not classical music that arrives in the countries of the Middle East, but musicians from the Middle East that arrive in Europe, where they assimilate.

(3) *The experience of musical interplay*: Barenboim's metaphor of the orchestra as a "utopian republic" describes a body of sound in which universal values such as equality, justice, and fraternity are to be realized – regardless of the origin, orchestral experience or instrument of the members. Indeed, the musicians of the Divan Orchestra feel a sense of togetherness that allows them to experience their body of sound as a "corporate musical instrument" (Riiser 2010, p. 24). This is also confirmed by the Israeli bassoonist: "The main reason why we get along so well in the orchestra is that

we have this music. […] I think that's something I can't explain in words." From the outside, the orchestra receives a lot of encouragement for its vision and values. For example, it is invited by organizations such as the United Nations, which are similarly postnational and placeless.[11]

How fragile this "utopian republic" is, however, when confronted with concrete realpolitik and its sanctions, was made visible by the 2005 concert in Ramallah. Smaczny's film reveals the discord and fear of the orchestra members when they hear that they are to play in a city that the Israeli players' own state has declared an enemy and that can only be reached via Israeli checkpoints. The decision-making process leading to participation takes a long time, because the players find it difficult to overcome their own personal fear, the fear of their families, and the regulations of their governments; this fear is still palpable on stage (Smazcny 2005, track 12). The question is therefore legitimate whether making music under such exceptional conditions further strengthens cohesion in the "utopian republic" or whether, on the contrary, the effort that has to be put into it only leads to disillusionment with one's own actions. The fact that political reality repeatedly challenges the orchestra is also demonstrated by the Lebanon War in 2006 and the Gaza War in 2009. Due to the war, some Arab players were not allowed to travel, and others, out of solidarity with Lebanon (Cheah 2015), did not come to the workshop for moral reasons: "I did not feel like going on a concert tour and playing Beethoven's Ninth Symphony – 'Joy, beautiful spark of the gods' – while at the same time one and a half million people were displaced in Lebanon and a hundred people died every day for a month," said Lebanese cellist Nassib Al Ahmadie (Cheah 2015, p. 135). That national solidarity and personal ethics are stronger than the values of the "utopian republic" in case of emergency is an experience of the past 20 years. It is also confirmed by the bassoonist when he refers to Barenboim, who "says that it is a kind of heaven, this orchestra, because in a way it is not really connected to reality."

Opportunity and limits of shared heritage: Musical diplomacy?

Does an orchestra like the Divan Orchestra contribute to the idea of a (universal) common cultural heritage and international understanding? Can the orchestra take on tasks of musical diplomacy[12] for this purpose? These questions cannot be an-

11 In 2006 the Divan Orchestra played at the United Nations General Assembly in New York, and in 2015 at the UN Headquarters in Geneva. Barenboim was named a UN Messenger of Peace in 2007 and the orchestra was named a "UN Global Advocate for Cultural Understanding" in 2016 (see Other Sources: No. 3).

12 Cultural or musical diplomacy is defined as part of public diplomacy, culture used as soft power in political processes to achieve (foreign) policy orientation and common understanding (Karamy and Baines 2020).

swered unequivocally. Barenboim's metaphor of the Divan Orchestra as a "utopian republic" implies a state constitution of the orchestra that can use diplomacy as an instrument for foreign and domestic relations. As a postnational republic, the orchestra engages with the musical heritage of the Western world and makes its universal values, institutions, and cultural identities its points of reference. Against this background, Karamy and Baines attribute a musical diplomatic role to the orchestra: "Divan orchestra can be categorized as one of the non-state actors that have considerable influence in the world, even giving effect to the political situation in the world" (2020, p. 93).

This musical diplomacy expresses itself positively in the interpersonal encounters of the members. The orchestra's activities bring people, even if they come from hostile countries, closer together and into conversation with each other. On the level of a collective identity building, music is also a suitable means for cultural diplomacy, as it opens up spaces and pursues its goal of interweaving relationships even more. On the other hand, this musical diplomacy has a negative effect where the orchestra, in the name of humanistic or universal values, overrides political realities and state power. Here the concept of musical diplomacy is basically abandoned, as the concert in Ramallah demonstrated. The national passports of the orchestra members were replaced by diplomatic passports of the Spanish government in order to allow entry from various countries that did not have diplomtic relations with Palestine, thus enforcing postnational goals (Barenboim and Naumann 2018).

The question is whether such actions ultimately lead to goodwill and the desired goal. Fearlessness, which characterizes Barenboim, does change the world. However, the instruments of musical diplomacy – "to influence the audience and the music lovers to support the desired policy" (Karamy and Baines 2020, p. 90) – could be more sustainable. For all the criticism in detail, it is nevertheless worth emphasizing the tenacity with which Daniel Barenboim has positioned the Divan Orchestra as a "utopian place" over the years. His idea of turning a multinational and multicultural orchestra into a place of encounter and a world-class sounding body has also inspired national orchestras to reflect on their social function. When the Federal Republic nominated the German theater and orchestra landscape for the international UNESCO List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2019, its reasoning was: "Theater ensembles and orchestras are important actors in the sociopolitical contemporary debate. In this way, they help shape our community and our future" (see Other Sources: No. 6). The statement echoes what also drives Barenboim – universal cultural heritage as soft power.

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