



## **'Music From the Elbe Islands'**

### **ACTIVITY REPORTS 2008-2014**

**Founded in 2008, our network is based** on the simple idea that music can create international understanding beyond language. The network is growing rapidly: Today it encompasses a wide range of activists from the field of music on the Elbe Islands. Taking part are committed public school music teachers, professional concert and festival organizers, plus all kinds of musicians: from Gipsy Swing to Samba, from vocal coaches to Musical performers, from DJs to VJs - all from a diverse variety of cultural heritages.

#### **Context: The Neighborhood „Elbe Islands“**

Located in the southern part of Hamburg, the Elbe Islands, which is divided into the districts of Wilhelmsburg and Veddel, is Europe's largest inhabited river island. (The worlds largest is Manhattan Island)

The average number of people living on Elbe Islands and coming from an immigrant background is higher than anywhere else in the city. The number with immigrant background is 55% in Wilhelmsburg and 70% in Veddel, The citywide average is only 29%. Wilhelmsburg is also a very young district. More than one-fifth of the population is under 18 (21.7%), of which 73.3% have a immigrant background. Wilhelmsburg has also always been home for mostly blue collar workers ....

Today, with the crises of the recent years almost a quarter (23.8%) of the population is living in so-called "communities of need" supported by government help (Hamburg average: 10.8%). Cheap rent and high vacancy rates have also contributed in recent years to Wilhelmsburg becoming home to more and more young students and creative people.

Currently, the Elbe islands are attracting the attention of the Hamburg City Development which developed programs such as "Leap across the Elbe" designed to help the socially disadvantaged neighborhoods of Wilhelmsburg and Veddel.

Since 2007, with 2013 being the big presentation year, two International Events started their businesses in our neighbourhoods: The International Garden Festival (IGS) and the International Building Exhibition (IBA) in order to boost the city development in Wilhelmsburg and Veddel.

„Network for Music From the Elbe Islands“ a project by Stiftung Bürgerhaus Wilhelmsburg.

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**Topography 2008** „Music From the Elbe Islands“ began with taking stock and composing a musical topography of Hamburg’s Wilhelmsburg district. We registered semi-professional bands and professional artists as well as existing music education projects. A vibrant network has grown connecting the varied institutions and artists from the Elbe islands. We conducted a regional survey to research various music activities in Wilhelmsburg. We collected information and contacts to organize the “Day of Action: Music From the Elbe Islands!” featuring more than 100 musicians on stage and providing valuable networking opportunities.

### **Action Day: Music From the Elbe Islands**

During the first Action Day in September 2008, over one hundred musicians from diverse musical genres, cultures und generations presented themselves. Marily Stroux, a photographer from Hamburg, portrayed the island’s musicians; students of the Institute of Cultural Anthropology of the University of Hamburg produced the documentary film „Stadt / Klang / Fluss“ (“City/Sound/Stream”); a musicologist and a cultural manager conducted high-quality interviews with Wilhelmsburg’s musicians.

### **Elbe Island Gipsy Festival**

This annual festival started March 2009 in close co-operation with the Weiss family living on the Elbe island since. Each year musicians of the Weiss family, a famous Sinti family in Wilhelmsburg, team up with other nationally renowned Sinti musicians and together they present their music. Opportunities for an inter-cultural exchange are provided before and after the event.

### **Elbe Island Music Teacher Conference**

The first network meetings made clear that the demand for cross-institutional networking was especially high in regard to schools. Thus, the network ‘Music From the Elbe Islands’ organized the first ever music teacher conference in May 2009 to develop strategies for improved networking regarding freelance teachers, presentations in schools, etc.

This lead to the event “**Your Future in Music**“ – **Job Orientation Day**”. It took place in the Community Center Wilhelmsburg in November 2009 and September 2010. Questions concerning the music industry were answered, i.e.: “Popstar? Or... what does an instrument maker, DJ, light or sound technician do? Who designs the CD cover or concert poster? How do you become an actor in Musicals? What does the occupation of a musician actually look like? What does ‘booker’ really mean?”

A full day of workshops, talks and presentations with experts from the music industry took place. Young acts from the district were presented on stage. Also on offer: an internship platform for students from the Elbe islands. Mostly local people creative in music gave insight into their day-to-day work in the music business. From DJ, VJ, event technician, instrument maker, to conductor.

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The underage festival “**Daughterville**“ is a cooperation with the MS Dockville Festival, an international music & arts festival, that takes place in Wilhelmsburg each August.

Since 2012 Daughterville is a career oriented project for teenagers from ages 15 to 18 years old. The goal is to provide thorough insights into the professional field of event organization and to cultivate independent work in teams.

Learning booking, public relations, production and financing the 15 teens are charged with organizing their own youth Festival program themselves. They are encouraged to research relevant bands, contact the respective agents and initiate negotiations, as well as develop communication strategies, write press releases and push their project.

[www.daughterville.de](http://www.daughterville.de)

### **ExTra! Exchange Traditions – Hamburg Wilhelmsburg Sound Ateliers – Workshops – Concerts**

**This event took place in June 2009 and June 2010.**

The network “Music From the Elbes Islands” invited all in Hamburg to discover the sound of Wilhelmsburg. Musicians from the Elbe islands presented themselves and their musical world. Turkish wedding music, young Saz talents, Nigerian Spirituals, dance from the Black Sea Coast, finest Gipsy Jazz, Shanty’s from Hamburg and international kids tunes, that are sung right on the doorsteps of the neighborhood - to hear what the district has to offer. The artist’s music was explained in sound ateliers and workshops and the event was rounded off and ended with an inspirational collective jam session.

### **„48 Hours Wilhelmsburg“**

This event first took place on the weekend from Friday to Sunday, June 18-20, 2010. It’s a music marathon with global sounds: “Music From the Elbe Islands” invites kitchens, churches and kiosks to turn into stages. Music from and in all corners of Wilhelmsburg! 48 hours long: On balconies, in living-rooms, Afroshops, bakery’s, in the hall that renowned Hamburg filmmaker Fatih Akin used to shoot his film “Soulkitchen”, in churches, in the garden or on the ferry, in the restaurant or café, or in many many other different places in the district. The goal is to make Wilhelmsburg sound off its music for 48 hours. With recorder concerts, choir singing, Gipsy Swing, Turkish wedding music, funky Groove power, Soul or wild electronic beats – to hear how varied Wilhelmsburg’s cultural life really is. Wilhelmsburg insiders know of the cultural diversity of the district. ‘48 Hours’ demonstrates where ‘music from the Elbe islands’ is created, where it takes place, and brings it on to the stage in a diverse array of locations. In 2014 we had 162 concerts at 80 different venues.

[www.musikvondenelbinseln.de/48h](http://www.musikvondenelbinseln.de/48h)

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