

I AM NOT ALONE

LIVE-SOUNDSCAPE ABOUT THE
ANCIENT ROUTE OF THE VIA EGNATIA



PROJECT DOSSIER

2020/2021

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Contact Production Management

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THE PROJECT IN BRIEF

The Soundscape «I am not alone» will be performed in 15 museums around Switzerland by the end of 2021. After the tour in Switzerland the live-soundscape will be shown at selected venues. This can be at international cultural, music and theatre festivals as well as for international organisations, scientific conferences and companies with an affinity for cultural issues. The starting point is the ancient route of the Via Egnatia, which connected Rome with Constantinople as an extension of the Via Appia. The live-soundscape not only focuses on 'being on the road', but also on current cultural and economic discourses, which have an impact on the relationship between Switzerland and the world.

Seven professional musicians depict this ancient route via an acoustic tableau. Sounds, voices and instruments form the soundscape, coupled with fragments of original dialogues from the locals, excerpts of songs from the Balkans and improvised sounds, which are then adapted to the ever-changing museum context.

In each performance a local artist or author assumes the role of narrator continuing the story of the Via Egnatia, providing their own interpretation of the route in the context of a specific museum. This material is then captured and transformed by the musicians, evolving into a new script for performance in the following museum. Thus, the soundscape veers away from the original material at every resting place on its journey across Switzerland and reflects an echo of a cultural route on which people, ideas and artefacts have circulated for over 2000 years.



PERFORMANCES

Musée Visionnaire Zurich	05 September 2020
Textilmuseum St.Gallen	07 November 2020
Polenmuseum Rapperswil	22 November 2020
Vindonissa Museum Brugg	23 May 2021
Münzkabinett Winterthur	29 May 2021
Jüdisches Museum der Schweiz, Basel	30 May 2021
Musée des Migrations Lausanne	27 June 2021
Ritterhaus Bubikon	03 July 2021
Kloster Schönthal/Skulpturenpark	11 July 2021
Museum Eduard Spörri Wettingen	15 August 2021
Ikonenmuseum Lenzburg	21 August 2021
Kunsthaus Pasquart Biel/Bienne	18 September 2021
Gletschergarten Luzern	24 October 2021
Museo Villa dei Cedri Bellinzona	14 November 2021
Musée Barbier-Mueller, Genève	21 November 2021
Fondation Martin Bodmer, Genève	05 December 2021

Festivals after the end of the tour through Switzerland

Literaturhaus Zürich	20 January 2022
12th festival «Balkans Beyond Borders»	date in clarification
Theaterspektakel Zurich 2022	dossier in preparation
Festival Avignon, France 2022	dossier in preparation
Tage des Denkmals CH 2022	dossier in preparation
Lucerne Festival 2022	dossier in preparation
Gstaad Menuhin Festival 2022	dossier in preparation
Music Festival Plovdiv, Bulgaria 2022	dossier in preparation
Alexandrinsky Festival St.Petersburg 22	dossier in preparation

CAST LIST

Performers

Miro Hanauer	voice / violin
Regina Hui	voice / violin
Andrea Knutti	voice / recorders
Eva Mann	voice
Anna-Kaisa Meklin	voice/ viola da gamba (03.07.21)
Chiara Selva	voice / violoncello
Reto Senn	voice / clarinets
Beat Vögele	voice / reed organ

Authors and artists as guests

Giorgina Hämmerli	Musée Visionnaire Zurich	05.09.2020
Kosta Athanopoulos	Textilmuseum St.Gallen	07.11.2020
Sarah Elena Müller	Polenmuseum Rapperswil	22.11.2020
Sunil Mann	Vindonissa Museum Brugg	23.05.2021
Ruth Loosli	Münzkabinett Winterthur	29.05.2021
Dragica Rajčić	Jüdisches Museum der Schweiz, Basel	30.05.2021
Marie-Jeanne Urech	Musée des Migrations Lausanne	27.06.2021
Alexander Markin	Ritterhaus Bubikon	03.07.2021
Stéphane Montavon	Skulpturenpark, Langenbruck	11.07.2021
Karin Richner	Museum Eduard Spörri Wettingen	15.08.2021
Sascha Garzetti	Ikonenmuseum Lenzburg	21.08.2021
Antoine Rubin	Kunsthhaus Pasquart Biel/Bienne	18.09.2021
Martina Clavadetscher	Gletschergarten Lucerne	24.10.2021
Matteo Terzaghi	Museo Villa dei Cedri, Bellinzona	14.11.2021
Guillaume Rihs	Musée Barbier-Mueller, Genève	21.11.2021

Collaborators: Marcel Babazadeh (audio recording), Joanna Baumgartner (translation French), Naomi Blackwell (translation English), Nicole Honegger (graphic design & print) Aline László (film documentation), Claudio Mascolo (web design)

Project Organisation

Manuela Casari	project management
Serge Honegger	artistic concept
Dr. Sandra King-Savic	research associate

BACKGROUND AND STARTING POINT

Via Egnatia

The ancient Via Egnatia linked Durrës on the Adriatic Sea to Constantinople, and is one of Europe's oldest, most travelled, and culturally influential land routes. The Via Egnatia stands for the connection between Western and Southeastern Europe and bears witness to our interwoven European history.

Still today, the ancient route witnesses migratory movements in both directions driven by many different reasons. People, objects, cultural traditions, hopes and ideas are mobile and continue to write the millennia-old history of the Via Egnatia.

A research project in the Balkans becomes a work of art

Sandra King-Savic, a lecturer in migration and cultural studies at the University of St.Gallen, hiked the Via Egnatia in 2016 together with her partner Joshua King. Starting in Durrës (Albania) they made their way to Thessaloniki (Greece) to learn more about the everyday life of individuals along the route and to understand how they perceive the Via Egnatia, the Balkans in general, and crucially, how they perceive the "West" from afar. The visual and oral data collected was transformed into a script by the dramaturg Serge Honegger, on which the Soundscape «I am not alone» is based.

Museums as venues

At the beginning of the project, the question was how could a road like the Via Egnatia be represented and conveyed. On this basis, we started looking for spaces in which the public could circulate freely and decide for themselves at which point they chose to stay and when they chose to leave. Museums proved ideal in offering the perfect setting.

Nowadays, museums stand as a place of reflection, which is an important element of cultural and social self-understanding. From here the ancient Via Egnatia can be recoded and reconstructed as an imaginary route. In its non-visual form, the live-soundscape invites you to communicate with the works presented in the exhibition rooms. Thereby the architectural conditions and the existing museum contents are used for the sound image and processed in the improvisational parts.

LIVE-SOUNDSCAPE

Artistic intervention

„I am not alone“ is a live-soundscape. It is not a classical performance, but rather a performative-vocal intervention in a museum context. The Via Egnatia will be presented via narrative fragments, voice improvisations, sounds and musical quotations. The sound picture unfolds in waves over the duration of the performance and can range from a discrete acoustic sound, building up to an energetic jam session - the precise substance depends on the venue and the reactions of the audience.

Creation of open moodspaces

Soundscapes form a conceptual pivot in the debate around spatial atmospheres in the areas of architecture, theatre and public spaces. Different listening experiences can be designed in which heterogeneous elements are united in common moods, narratives or effects. Our soundscape „I am not alone“ is to be understood as an exemplary project, presenting a topic in different contexts and attracting a varied audience. In many cultural institutions, especially in museums and theatres, an intensive discourse is taking place on how visitors can be involved via acoustic phenomena.

Integration of different points of view

The soundscape „I am not alone“ presents the reasons for migratory movements as part of a cultural-historical and social reality. It is the task of a democratic system to deal with this, whose functioning and legitimacy depends on the ability to integrate different views, in a productive manner. In our project this outlook is reflected in the seven different voices of the artists. They shape the performances in their own individual way and weave together an acoustic landscape determined by plurality.

STRUCTURE OF THE PERFORMANCE

Mobility of performers and audience

The live-soundscape can last up to several hours. A duration of three hours has been agreed with most museums. The seven musicians sit/stand distributed throughout the room. The soundscape unfolds in waves and the visitors are free to choose how long they wish to stay. «I am not alone» can be played in exhibition rooms, outside or in the spaces in between. The very simple and open format of the soundscape offers an experience for a broad range of visitors, allowing each visitor their own personal interpretation, evoking their life experiences - no prior understanding of the Via Egnatia or the Balkans is necessary to be able to enjoy the full experience.

Ultimate flexibility

The project responds to a need in the concert and musical theatre sector, where formats which work in the current pandemic context are currently being sought. „I am not alone“ provides a form of making live music while operating with the greatest possible spatial flexibility.



TARGET GROUPS AND AUDIENCE

„I am not alone“ focuses on a cultural region to which 10 percent of the permanent resident population of Switzerland has a biographical reference. We would like to highlight the many and varied points of contact with the cultural area along the Via Egnatia and the many interdependencies between Switzerland and the Balkans.

Through the production of the project at diverse venues as well as through the easily understandable narrative, which also injects humour into the performance, the soundscape reaches a wide audience. In the test version in St.Gallen in 2019 and at the premiere in the Musée Visionnaire on 5 September 2020, this approach has proved to be very successful. Balkan experts recognised an echo of the current economic and cultural issues of the local population, children were attracted by the playful characters and people who were interested in intercultural facets, explored the connection between the two geographical regions.



THE PROJECT'S PURPOSE

Migration as an important cultural factor

„I am not alone“ makes an artistic contribution to an expanded concept of migration, which includes mobility of linguistic, acoustic and narrative elements. Hopes and fears regarding the relationship between Switzerland/Central Europe and the Western Balkans/Eastern Europe gain a societal and cross-cultural significance. The voices in the soundscape can also be interpreted as voices from people living in Switzerland and the concept of migration is thus freed from one of purely political viewpoints.

Breadth and new audiences

The soundscape increases the awareness of an important cultural area for Central Europe and Switzerland among the audience. Thematic points of contact are created reaching a considerable part of the population of Switzerland as around 10% of the people living in Switzerland have biographical links to the cultural area of the Via Egnatia.

Musical practice in an interdisciplinary context

Acoustic phenomena are intensively discussed in the current museological discourse and illuminated in exhibition projects. The live-soundscape „I am not alone“ provides an important contribution to an aesthetics of sound in the exhibition context.

Impulses for the traditional concert business

Based on the experience gained from the production of the project, we would like to provide a knowledge transfer for the classical concert and musical theatre sectors. This is where future-oriented formats are currently being sought, to use alternative spaces, set new themes and create novel reception settings.

National and international networking

The project not only provides a network between different cultural institutions throughout Switzerland, but also promotes, in particular through international cooperation partners, a cultural exchange between Switzerland and the Balkans.



BIOGRAPHIES

Via Egnatia (association)

A first version of the live-soundscape was performed in St.Gallen on 27 September 2019. The production with the title “Voices of the Via Egnatia” was supported by the Landis & Gyr Foundation and the Ernst Göhner Foundation. Due to the success of this first test version the project team decided to develop the soundscape further and to tour 15 distinct museums in Switzerland. The association „Via Egnatia“ was founded in October 2019 with the purpose to implement an artistic mediation project with reference to the Via Egnatia, an ancient trade and migration route. The entire project organisation is handled through this association.
www.viaegnatia.ch

Serge Honegger (dramaturgy)

Serge Honegger is a dramaturg, director and cultural scientist. He specialises in choral performances and contemporary musical theatre. He worked at the Theatre St.Gallen as a senior dramaturge and as dramaturge for the ballet of the Bavarian State Opera Munich since September 2020. Comparable performances of „I am not alone“ have been performed for the Theaterspektakel Zürich („Requiem-Reloaded“) and for the Theatre St.Gallen („The heart beats in silence“). Engagements include productions for the Zurich Opera, the Staatsoper unter den Linden Berlin, the Hessian State Theatre Wiesbaden and numerous projects in the independent scene. In the project „I am not alone“ Serge Honegger oversees the concept, creates the performance script and accompanies the rehearsal phase.
www.sergehonegger.com

Manuela Casari (production coordination)

Manuela Casari is a trained geographer and historian. She worked at the University of St.Gallen in the field of „international relations“ and as co-director at the legal advice centre „Freiplatzaktion Zürich - legal assistance asylum and migration“. She is currently working on the „Mapping Switzerland“ project, which is devoted to various integration concepts for people who have moved to Switzerland from abroad. Manuela Casari contributes her vast experience in project and event management and in transcultural communication to the project. She is responsible for the concept and strategy and is our networking lead.

Sandra King-Savic (research)

King-Savic is a lecturer on migration and cultural studies the University of St. Gallen. She received her Ph.D. in Organization and Culture (DOC) at the University of St. Gallen in February 2019, where she presently serves as a Postdoc at the School for Social Sciences and Humanities. She volunteered as a human rights educator for Amnesty International and conducted open source research for the Foreign Military Studies Office, Fort Leavenworth, at the University of Kansas before receiving a Swiss National Foundation scholarship for her dissertation on the transversal relationship between migration and informal markets. Sandra King-Savic examines how labor migrants and refugees from the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia define their experience with deservingness of 'integration' in Switzerland. www.sandrakingsavic.com

PHOTO DOCUMENTATION OF THE RESEARCH

Sandra King-Savic, together with Joshua King, undertook a research trip to the Balkans in 2016 and conducted interviews with the local population. This material formed the source material for the performance script. The following images are from the tour along the Via Egnatia.

