ABSTRACT Brass music has become increasingly popular in recent years in Europe’s German-speaking regions, especially among young people, who attend brass festivals, such as Woodstock der Blasmusik, in great numbers.

This article examines this phenomenon within the context of its historical weight. Particularly in Austria, brass music is intertwined strongly with local cultural activity and heritage, alpine folklore, and national identity, with the Habsburg Monarchy and the Nazi era as well as with the rise of Volkstümliche Music and Austrian popular music. The study pinpoints the initial spark of the current popularity to the early 1990s, when young brass musicians set new tones musically and culturally. It illustrates how bands such as Mnozil Brass and Innsbrucker Böhmische, and later Viera Blech and LaBrassBanda, renegotiated established conceptions, ideas, and attitudes, and how they have, or have not, overcome habitualized ways of performing and enjoying brass music.

On a broader level, the article uncovers how narratives related to regionality, Heimat, community, institutionalization, virtuosity, internationality, openness, corporeality, and hedonistic pleasure all come together, at times in contradictory ways, in the media and musicians’ ethical-aesthetic discussion about contemporary brass music. Ultimately, a close music-analytical reading of selected songs shows how the music fosters and reflects these interrelations.

KEYWORDS brass music, Austria, Woodstock der Blasmusik, aesthetics

In July 2019, more than 60,000 people attended a four-day, open-air music and camping festival in Upper Austria. At first glance, this doesn’t seem significant, relatively speaking, given that other Austrian festivals—such as Nova Rock, Frequency, or Electric Love—-attract 150,000 or more every year. Skipping through snapshots and video footage of this festival, Woodstock der Blasmusik, one can find common facets of today’s festival experience, in connection with the music-centered experience of joint celebration, facilitated social connections, and separation from everyday lives.1 Put more literally, it is an easy,

fun atmosphere conveyed by predominantly young adult participants singing, dancing, and jumping around in front of stages and tents, with flashy clothing and accessories and, potentially, alcohol-infused moods. But certain aspects remain rather unconventional in such a context. The scenery is awash with visitors wearing traditional costumes, comprising *Lederhosen* and *Dirndl* dresses, as well as festival goers playing their own instruments and watching bands comprising up to sixty members who are, at times, far beyond retirement age. And yet, what seems like a rather discordant mix has become an established event on the Austrian festival landscape. Woodstock der Blasmusik (Woodstock of Brass Music) takes place in the small municipality of Ort im Innkreis. The festival is dedicated fully to brass music, with an audience that has grown steadily since the first festival in 2011. One of its promotional texts reads as follows:

Welcome to Wladiwoodstock: Based on the slogan “Love, peace and brass music” around 50,000 people get together at Woodstock of Brass Music—Europe’s largest brass music festival. [...] Brass music is often, and legitimately, associated with “lederhosen,” dirndl dresses, beer and tradition. But brass music includes much more than the typical “um-ta-ta.” May it be Swing, Jazz, Funk, Ska, Reggae or electronic music—all these genres feature brass music. The mission of “Woodstock of brass music” festival is to show the diversity of brass styles. Mission successful!²

Woodstock der Blasmusik³ most visibly represents the currently wide popularity of brass music in many parts of Austria, Germany, and Switzerland. The music has shaken off its old-fashioned image as military and marching band music and today attracts young people in particular, who also show increasing interest in forming brass bands. The festival’s success can be viewed as a preliminary highlight of a development that began in the early 1990s, when musical, as well as cultural, conventions of established brass music were strongly challenged and renegotiated.

To be able to explain the phenomenon, this article first reaches back in time, from the late nineteenth century to the 1980s, to spotlight the historical backdrop in the context of (national) identity, institutionalization, and repertoire, against which contemporary bands have forged their own ideas about brass music. The article then illustrates, through some of the past decades’ most influential bands, why and how musical advancements occurred since the 1990s in connection with lineup, arrangement, and stylistic variety. The second part of the article examines how contemporary brass music is being framed, discussed, and evaluated in the media and by musicians themselves, among the poles of folk, art, and popular music. In the final section, some of the findings are examined from an aesthetic perspective through a multidimensional musical analysis of bands’ greatest hits.

³ The festival’s original name was *Böhmischer Frühling*. According to festival organizer Simon Ertl, the name was changed to *Woodstock der Blasmusik* to underline the uniqueness of the festival [Simon Ertl, interviewed in “Hoagascht - Woodstock der Blasmusik,” Servus TV, 6 September, 2016, video, 6:45, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gUxovEzpLhM].
Austria has a long and ongoing tradition of civilian brass, wind, and marching bands. In some areas of Austria, the number of marching bands surpasses the number of municipalities, such as the Tyrol province, with 303 marching bands throughout 279 municipalities.\(^5\) Even more remarkably, in 2016, two-thirds of the 500,000 people playing in approximately 12,000 marching bands in Austria were under age 24.\(^6\) Historically, brass music in Austria strongly has been embedded in local cultural activities. From the middle of the nineteenth century onward, many amateur brass bands were founded in Central Europe but also in Great Britain and the USA.\(^7\) In Austria, one main reason for this development can be found in Article 12 of the Habsburg Monarchy’s basis law on the general rights of citizens, which was introduced in 1867.\(^8\) It enshrined freedom of association and assembly in law, thereby officially enabling the founding of associations. This was a decisive step for the establishment of brass music’s organizational structure, which is still strongly regional-associational. In many cases, civil amateur marching bands were founded in their home communities by ex-servicemen who formerly played in military bands for the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. Today, the music’s military roots remain evident, most visibly in the band’s standard repertoire, of which old military marches are an important part. A strong bond with the military system also can be found in the more recent past regarding significant involvement in National Socialist propaganda events.\(^9\) Marching bands, and the compositions tailored to them, played a major role in the communication, creation, and

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\(^7\) In Great Britain, the phenomenon of brass bands is mostly discussed with middle-class musicians and entrepreneurs, who organized brass bands as a social activity in the 1840s to "provide an alternative to drinking and promote a strong work ethic through the disciplined routine of rehearsal" to the working classes [see e.g. Denise Odello, British Brass Band Periodicals and the Construction of a Movement," in *Victorian Periodicals Review* 47, no. 3 (2014): 432–53, esp. 432]. See also Trevor Herbert, ed., *The British Brass Band: A Musical and Social History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000). In the USA, brass bands were particularly influenced by British, German, Irish and Italian immigrants, who brought new brass music approaches with them, from the middle of the nineteenth century onwards, and triggered a kind of “brass band movement” in the USA. The flowering of brass music has had an important influence on American popular culture in the 1850s [see e.g. Jon Newsom, "The American Brass Band Movement" in *The Quarterly Journal of the Library of Congress* 36, no. 2 (1979): 114–139].


articulation of national identity during the Nazi era. The cultural and political emphasis on the Volkskultur (ethnic folk culture) was accompanied by attractive financial support, which enabled musicians to purchase instruments and equip rehearsal rooms. Within this framework, marching bands became professionalized, and traditional music was one of the regime’s key tools to mediate its chauvinistic and nationalistic propaganda strategy. However, the fact that the history of brass music is closely connected with military activities is not an Austrian or European phenomenon, but can also be observed, for example, in the history of the American Civil War. During this particular period, the Civil War bands, like their Austrian pendants, underwent a phase of professionalization and played a major role in inciting “the men to heroic deeds” in their battles, as Jon Newsom mentions. After 1945, when Nazism in Austria officially was banned from the political and cultural public square, many “compromised artists were quickly denazified and [...] able to continue their careers unhindered.” As a result, their repertoire still gets played.

In the 1950s, new brass music bands, such as Ernst Mosch (and his Original Egerländer Musikanten), and Oberkrainer formations, such as Slavko Avsenik (and his Original Oberkrainer), emerged, which playfully overcame the concept of art and culture being naturally innate and self-enclosed. They performed nineteenth century Alpine folklore and dance music (marches, polkas, waltzes, and Ländler), as well as music from Egerland and Oberkrain (Slovenia), in swing-influenced arrangements. Essentially, they became important representatives of an early form of Volksstümliche Musik and brought brass music to a mass audience. Essentially, they became important representatives of an early form of Volksstümliche Musik and brought brass music to a mass audience in Germany (top of the LP/MC-bestseller-list in 1981), Switzerland, and Austria:

Until the 1960s, the term [Volksstümliche Musik] was mostly associated with instrumental folk music, in particular wind music [...]. Later on, the term was used to generally describe new compositions or arrangements of traditional pieces that were widely used in the media [...] and, thus, conceived for a mass audience.

Mosch can be viewed as particularly important for alternative developments in brass music, in that he established both an extended repertoire and a smaller lineup compared

10. For another example of brass bands examined in the context of (regional) identity see e.g. Stephen Etheridge, “Southern Pennine Brass Bands and the Creation of Northern Identity, c. 1840–1914: Musical Constructions of Space, Place And Region” in Northern History 54, no. 2 (2017): 244–61.
with traditional marching bands. The reduction in the number of musicians, accompanied by a more or less fixed instrumentation, made a decisive contribution to the development of a new sound ideal beyond large marching bands. Also, his sophisticated arrangements, with a characteristic clean and precise phrasing\textsuperscript{16} that he developed following the swing rhythm of big bands, served as a role model for numerous groups and for the stylistic way of playing Bohemian brass music then and now. As Ernst Hutter, who succeeded Mosch as Egerländer Musikanten’s band leader, states:

He [Ernst Mosch\textsuperscript{17}] has absorbed influences from German and Austrian brass elements. He has adopted a lot of classical elements, and he has let himself be influenced above all by swing, by the music of the big bands, because he was himself a big band and jazz musician.\textsuperscript{18}

Besides Mosch’s work, internationally successful brass ensembles of the 1950s and 1970s—such as the Philip Jones Brass Ensemble, Canadian Brass, the New York Brass Quintet, and German Brass\textsuperscript{19}—also were influential in this phenomenon’s development in Europe’s German-speaking regions. These bands comprised musicians from professional symphony orchestras who came together with the objective to be active in chamber music as well. The resulting bands mainly composed and arranged pieces for two trumpets, horn, trombone, and tuba. They created a novel chamber music repertoire for brass instruments, including new compositions, arrangements of classical music, and entertainment and show music.

In the 1970s and 1980s, when Austrian popular music became widely successful through so-called Austropop, artists began to negotiate and promote notions of national identity and Heimat.\textsuperscript{20} More and more musicians started to write rock-infused songs in local dialects, and songs such as “Fürstenfeld” (STS), or “I am from Austria” (Rainhard Fendrich), were—more or less critically—stressing the desire for local belonging. One of Austropop’s follow-up genres in the late 1980s was the Neue Volksmusik or Volxmusik, in which musicians combined elements of Alpine folk music with jazz, punk, hip hop, disco, and dance music.\textsuperscript{21} At that time, the lines between traditional and popular music were

\textsuperscript{16} Norbert Rabanser, interviewed by Bernhard Achhorner, Innsbruck, 22 February 2017.
\textsuperscript{17} Ernst Mosch was a professional trombonist in the Südfunk-Tanzorchester of the Süddeutscher Rundfunk (SDR) – today’s SWR Big Band.
\textsuperscript{19} For an introduction to “Brass chamber music”, see e.g. Raymond David Burkhart, Brass Chamber Music in Lyceum and Chautauqua (Los Angeles, Premiere Press: 2016).
\textsuperscript{20} The term “Heimat” (home, homeland) in German-speaking regions has strong connotations of romanticism and regionalism, particularly regarding the understanding of culture, nature, and identity; or, as Uta Larkey puts it in her article “New Places, New Identities”: “Heimat has been constructed traditionally as an aggregate concept for sentimental longings, idyllic landscapes, and idealized relationships free of conflict.” [Uta Larkey, “New Places, New Identities: The (Ever) Changing Concept of Heimat.” German Politics & Society 26, no. 2 (2008): 24]; the picturesque, the clichéd romantic nature or the exaggeration of religious feelings was often expressed in songs as well [Achhorner, Musik und kulturelles Gedächtnis, 13]. See also, e.g., Edward Larkey, “Austropop: popular music and national identity in Austria.” Popular Music 11, no. 2 (1992): 151–83.
\textsuperscript{21} Barbara Boisits, “Neue Volksmusik,” Oesterreichisches Musiklexikon online, last modified 6 May 2001, https://www.musiklexikon.ac.at/ml/musik_N/Neue_Volksmusik.xml; see also: Thomas Nussbaumer, ed., Das Neue
becoming increasingly blurred, yielding commercial success. This process eventually not only led to the *Balkanmusik*\textsuperscript{22} and *Volkstümlicher Schlager* booms,\textsuperscript{23} but also triggered new developments in the field of contemporary brass music, seizing the idea of merging traditional forms with various musical styles across genre boundaries.

In the following section, we outline musical developments, goals, and approaches since the 1990s by examining the pioneering bands *Die Innsbrucker Böhmische* and *Mnozil*.
Brass, both founded in 1992, as well as the highly popular Viera Blech (founded in 2004) and LaBrassBanda (founded in 2007).

**KICKING HABITS: FROM MNOZIL BRASS TO LABRASSBANDA**

The Austrian term Bradln means “playing together freely and unreestrictedly without sheet music.” It is an expression of spontaneity guided by the joy of improvisation, and an essential basis that links together many of today’s successful brass bands, even though they seem to be rather distant from each other stylistically. What further connects the bands are their rather small lineups, often comprising seven musicians, and quite similar instrumentations. These details, as we will show, can be traced back to several reasons related to new ideas of playing and new sound conceptions.

Mnozil Brass, Die Innsbrucker Böhmische, Viera Blech, and LaBrassBanda all experimented for quite some time with lineup sizes. One reason for reducing the number of musicians, compared with traditional marching bands or the Egerländer Musikanten which comprise up to forty musicians, was to create new musical challenges. By reducing a band’s lineup to a chamber-music-like formation, all band members suddenly had to fulfill solo functions and move to the ensemble’s forefront. This gave the young musicians, who were mostly professionally trained at universities, an opportunity to apply and live up to the skills they had learned through formal education. In the process of working out their own approaches, however, the bands initially started in even smaller formations than septets (e.g., quartets and quintets) and subsequently increased their numbers of musicians.

The Tyrolean band Die Innsbrucker Böhmische—which is, regarding their repertoire, rather traditionally oriented toward pure Bohemian brass music in the style of Ernst Mosch—started as a studio quartet mainly playing an Oberkrainer repertoire.24 Their increasing desire to be able to perform their own compositions live—outside the studio, in which four people played up to six instruments (two trumpets, accordion, guitar, midibass, and voice)—led to an adaptation and extension of the band’s lineup and repertoire. In the case of Mnozil Brass, which is oriented toward 1950s brass ensembles25 and is considered widely as the pioneer of the new brass music boom, the lineup varied for a long time. Among others, this variability was due to the band’s informal way of playing concerts early in its existence, when it played improvised gigs in small pubs in Vienna and surrounding areas so that its musicians could earn some extra money while studying.26 Accordingly, the band’s music once was described by journalists as “applied brass music”27—a term that...

27. Brandstötter, interview.
refers to the band’s very early roots and underlines the importance of improvisation. Also Viera Blech, from Kössen in Tyrol, which is one of the signature bands at Woodstock der Blasmusik, used to experiment with its instrumental setup. The name of the band goes back to its initial lineup as a quartet with two trumpets, a tenor horn, and a tuba (“Viera” refers to “four members” in Tyrolean dialect). Bavarian band LaBrassBanda, which is currently the most successful of these bands commercially, comprised five musicians in its first six years. Its original lineup already was rather unconventional for traditional brass music, as the band played with a trumpet, trombone, tuba, e-bass, and a rock drum set. But after competing in the German qualification round for the Eurovision Song Contest in 2013, with the song “Nackert,” the band added two more trumpets to its lineup to be able, as band leader Stefan Dettl explains, to expand its musical possibilities, repertoire, and flexibility. Musical variability and flexibility also were important reasons that Viera Blech cited for expanding its instrumental setup to seven musicians. In 2006, the band decided to add jazz-experienced trombonist Alois Eberl, who also plays the accordion and was responsible for Viera Blech’s “jazzy note” in its repertoire. Furthermore, it also added a (professional) tubist as well as a third trumpet. Through this step, according to band leader Martin Scharnagl, who switched from tuba to his primary instrument, the drums, at this point, the band was much more variable and could expand its repertoire.

The first band to establish a lineup of seven brass musicians, however, was Mnozil Brass—at least according to the band’s tubist, Wilfried Brandstötter. He considers it an ideal combination to achieve the band’s ideas of how it wanted to sound: The tuba simultaneously was a bass and rhythm instrument, and the three trombones formed the harmonic foundation on which the three trumpets could unfold the melodies in three voices. This allowed the band to produce an orchestral sound in a chamber-music formation, which facilitated its desire to play chamber music in concert halls. A rather different motivation for evolving into a seven-musician lineup can be found with Die Innsbrucker Böhmishe, which converted its third trombone into a percussive instrument to add an additional rhythmic layer to the aural fabric. Bandleader Norbert Rabanser’s own compositions always were accompanied by a third trumpet voice, which fulfills, like in a conventional marching band, the function of signaling. Thus, it needed

28. This aspect is also confirmed by the festival organizers’ reference to the band on social media as the “#hausundhofband” [Woodstock der Blasmusik (13 October 2019), Re: Viera Blech – Augenblicke (Offizielles Video) [Facebook comment], https://www.facebook.com/108945741348/posts/10157771048381385?sfns=mo (accessed 29. October 2019)].
33. Brandstötter, interview.
34. The origins of wind instruments’ “signaling function” lie way back in history, as they were used (and still are used) to make announcements in military, representative, and cultic contexts. Influenced by this original purpose,
to make a three-part trumpet set available for its concerts and added two tenor horns and a tuba. Generally, Die Innsbrucker Böhmisches’s most distinguishing features—compared with its idol, Mosch—are first, its lack of woodwind instruments, and second, the characteristic movements and ornamentations of the tuba, which very often plays fast sixteenth-note runs that can be considered, according to Rabanser, a connecting, overarching element of the music. The pieces are adapted to these runs, in that the compositions are conceived to leave space for them. They are, actually, both functional and virtuose, and they help make the texture denser as well. In this context, one also could speak of an emancipation of the tuba in brass music. The other instruments’ functions are, compared with conventional brass settings, redistributed, e.g., because of the lack of woodwinds, which normally take over this texture-filling function. The goal of achieving higher density also was another reason for Viera Blech’s evolution into a septet. The third trumpet mainly is used, besides its usual signaling function, to provide a third, texture-thickening, melody part in some passages. A further aspect of using a septet setup concerns the physical challenges resulting from the reduction in musicians, while simultaneously trying to maintain a room-filling sound for a concert lasting two to four hours. Mnozil Brass’ ultimate formation enabled the musicians to exchange parts during certain passages, which is important because playing continuously in, e.g., the higher register, would be too strenuous in the long run. The songs’ carefully designed arrangements try to consider this conceptually by regulating takeovers in melody and accompaniment between the individual trumpet and tenor horn parts, and determining when musicians can rest. Consequently, this aspect is even more pronounced in the band’s self-composed songs and can be tailored directly to band members’ skills and abilities.

In addition to their own compositions, Mnozil Brass, Innsbrucker Böhmisches, Viera Blech, and LaBrassBanda can fall back on a common standard repertoire. Typically with brass music, the musicians share a common background in local marching bands in which they become (musically) socialized and stimulated at a joint starting point for musical experiments. Although the bands try to find their own way of interpreting these standard pieces, e.g., when playing around with rhythmic components in the polka accompaniment, they must observe, particularly during live performances, certain basic structures that can be guaranteed only by the presence of a certain minimum number of musicians. For Scharnagl, the seven-part instrumentation is the minimum requirement to cover the central parameters of the band’s music, and it is also necessary for covering the essential characteristics of (Alpine) wind music, i.e., one of the roots of modern brass music. The melodies, which mostly are built with respect to the basic major/minor structures of

signals also were integrated into various types of music and also to compositions of Alpine wind and folk (-influenced) music, in which they often are used as introductory or transitional figures for individual parts of the piece or to mark the end of a piece. Listen, for example, to Viera Blech, “Viera Blech – Von Freund zu Freund | Das Original (Offizielles Video),” 15 October 2017, video, 1:36; 2:28; 3:49; 4:22. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ScGjvRIKeHk&rel=53s.


36. Rabanser, interview.
Alpine folk music and its common limitations to a polyphony in thirds and sixths, usually are performed in two parts.\textsuperscript{37} As melody and accompaniment constantly alternate between high-brass and low-brass sections, it is necessary that both the trumpets and tenor horns are doubled, at the very least.

Ultimately, the extension of the lineup to seven musicians not only influenced the standard repertoire, but also was pivotal in establishing the groups’ own idiosyncratic styles and the overall variety in today’s brass music. For example, Viera Blech’s compositions initially all were conceived for symphonic wind orchestra. But due to the success of its first album, which the band recorded as sextet, composer Scharnagl intensified the writing of pieces for small lineups. In addition to the bands’ traditional compositions, such as polkas, marches, waltzes, and \textit{Boarische} (“Bavarians”), which partly are influenced by symphonic wind music from, for example, Dutch composer Jacob de Haan or film score composer John Williams, the Viera Blech repertoire also includes jazz and pop pieces. Typical of its arrangements of the latter, such as Michael Jackson’s “Smooth Criminal” or Robbie Williams’ “Let Me Entertain You,” are open solo parts for improvisation. Although these improvisations mostly are left to the trombonist’s jazz skills, virtuoso solo pieces are written for all instrumentalists and adapted to each soloist’s individual strengths.\textsuperscript{38} As for Mnozil Brass, being inspired by 1950s brass bands did not direct it toward performing chamber music and brass-quintet literature conventionally. Independently of its education in classical music, the band interpreted, in its own style, many different kinds of music:

That was actually also the basis of all our musical activities. We actually did not let anyone dictate to us what and where we have to play. We actually did what was funny and entertaining for us. And this spark has always jumped over to the audience. We did not give anything to conventions and also played folk music, jazz, \textit{Schnulzen} [schmaltzy songs], and mainstream music. We also never had any fears of contact with the Schlager.\textsuperscript{39}

Today, Mnozil Brass performs in concert halls worldwide with a repertoire that “ranges from typical brass music, German Schlager hits, jazz, and pop music to opera and operetta, all spiced up with a whole load of comedy slapstick.”\textsuperscript{40} LaBrassBanda, which, like Mnozil Brass, also uses vocals in its songs, provides another facet of the broad repertoire of contemporary brass music. Its music strives to cause energetic audience reactions and vital feedback; thus, playing music perfectly, which is, for example, the aspiration of Die Innsbrucker Böhmsiche, in which “every detail has to be checked and run smoothly into each other,”\textsuperscript{41} is not the band’s main objective. But a high standard of quality also is pivotal

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{38} Scharnagl 2017, interview.
\item \textsuperscript{39} Gerhard Füssl, interviewed in “Mnozil Brass Documentary: “Die Erwas Andere Blasmusik (2005),” Play it again, Sam, 7 January 2014, video, 11:34, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-mW2CtdwA.
\item \textsuperscript{41} Rabanser, interview.
\end{itemize}
for LaBrassBanda’s performances. It combines musicality with energy and party sounds, but integrates sustaining melodies and other fragile sounds as well to capture the audience’s attention.\textsuperscript{42} Basically, the band characterizes its music as a “wild mix of modern Bavarian folk music, ska, punk, techno, reggae, and, of course, brass.”\textsuperscript{43} In its press text, it strongly underlines that the band “is more than the typical […] stereotype of traditional German sounds often heard at beer festivals around the world.”\textsuperscript{44}

Up to this point, we can conclude that since the 1990s, a particular brass music field has emerged out of specific musical ideas, goals, and attitudes. Together with these developments, brass music generally experienced a remarkable upswing in popularity, which has become most visible through the increasing success of Woodstock der Blasmusik.

POPULAR BRASS MUSIC – TOPICS AND VALUATION CRITERIA

In connection with the above analysis, we now want to examine, on a broader level, how contemporary brass music is framed, negotiated, and evaluated. We are particularly interested in the following questions: Are there recurring topics in the media, marketing, and musicians’ narratives about brass music (and its peculiar past)? Do these narratives point to specific ethical-aesthetic criteria as to matters of production, reception, and way of living in connection with brass music?

Since the overlap of notions of folk/traditional, art/classical, and popular music will be an important aspect of our examinations, it is important to point out that the idea of such a superordinate genre trichotomy is considered by us only as a conceptual tool that helps to systematize the discourse. Throughout the last decades, several scholars have reflected on the (im)possibilities of distinguishing among these three musical spheres.\textsuperscript{45} Across most of these writings, there is a prevailing agreement—which we support—that static distinction concepts which try to tie down, e.g., folk music to oral transmission, popular music to mass media, or classical music to autonomy and complexity, are inadequate and misleading because they tend to scholarly reproduce ideological stances and do not live up to the hybridity and dynamics of actual musical-cultural processes. At least with regards to the Austrian musical landscape, however, the differentiation among Klassik, Volksmusik, and Popularmusik remains an important factor, according to Gebesmair\textsuperscript{46} because the categories function as fundamental types of musical practice and are strongly institutionalized in social life. Therefore, we consider them, and respective demarcations, blurrings,

\textsuperscript{42} Dettl, “Auf dem roten Stuhl.”
\textsuperscript{44} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{46} Andreas Gebesmair, \textit{Die Fabrikation globaler Vielfalt: Struktur und Logik der transnationalen Popmusikindustrie} (Bielefeld: transcript, 2008), 56.
and interdependencies, as discursive instruments of cultural debate, whose analysis helps us to better understand the musical field.

Methodically, we combine a discourse-analytical approach toward evaluative, aesthetic schemata with the concept of a broad qualitative context analysis and extended music analysis. The main focus of our ethnography is on Woodstock der Blasmusik and seminal groups Mnozil Brass, Viera Blech, and LaBrassBanda. We use empirical data from self-conducted and other interviews for our analysis, as well as press material, media reports, documentaries, live footage, and reviews.

Our aforementioned observation that a close relation to traditional forms is a central characteristic of the musical approaches becomes strengthened with regard to further aspects. Musicians, journalists, and organizers frequently talk about the importance of tradition in contemporary brass music. Scharnagl of Viera Blech puts his band squarely in the realm of folk music, noting, “Folk music is tradition. You grow up with it; thus, it is part of it. And although we have quite a colorful mixture and a crazy outfit, we do also foster traditional pieces [. . .]. I guess it would be a shame if this kind of music wouldn’t be applied anymore.”

Marches, polkas, Gstanzln, waltzes, Boarishe, Ländler, Egerländer, Oberkrainer, and military music, as well as Tyrolean, Bohemian, Czech, and Moravian music—all appear in descriptions of the musical repertoires. But also beyond musical matters, the topic of tradition becomes prevalent in connection with life attitudes, values, identity, authenticity, roots, and Heimat. For Rabanser of Die Innsbrucker Böhmische, brass music personally means digging far back into one’s own history—a childhood memory about tradition, father, fellows, brass ensembles, and a small-structured system within a municipality, where it is not rock music or “ethnomusic” that is played, but brass music, an important part of one’s own culture and identity. The musicians, promoters, and media stress the bands’ rural roots explicitly and frequently mention their provincial hometowns—from Übersee in Bavaria to Kössen in Tyrol. In the case of Woodstock der Blasmusik, the fact that the event is situated in the small town of Ort in Upper Austria is, indeed, an essential part of its narrative. The strong regional bond is propagated further by the musicians—who often are dubbed with the rather old term Musikanten—exemplified by Viera Blech wearing T-shirts with the slogan “made in tirol” and promoting themselves with the phrase “high-class brass music from Tyrol,” or by LaBrassBanda leader Dettl regularly emphasizing at concerts that he “really speaks that way,” i.e., his


52. Rabanser, interview.
Bavarian dialect. The deliberate renouncement of High German language also can be found in documentaries’ voice-overs and depictions, such as *Stubn* (living room), *Stadln* (haystack), and *bärig bunte Bühnen* (bearly colored stages), all of which try to emphasize regional identity and authenticity. In the case of LaBrassBanda’s singer, the newspaper *Süddeutsche Zeitung* remarks that Dettl’s farmhouse is an allegory for how the great trends of our time influence pop: “The closer the world moves together thanks to the Internet, Facebook, and no-frills airlines, the greater the desire for regional identity. In the past few years, there has been an increasing desire for roots also in pop music.”

It is not only regional roots that are stressed more than once, but also the musicians’ personal roots participating, since their early childhood, in marching bands and local cultural associations. Playing together, in a collective manner, is a highly important aspect of the music’s creation. Statements such as “brass music simply connects,” “the flair of Woodstock is enchanting—charming, familiar, and hearty,” and, as the Woodstock der Blasmusik’s festival director puts it, “brass music is a cross-generational thing,” are strengthening the impression of musical and social mutuality. The former is helpful, among other things, for the joint musical repertoire to which the musicians can draw without much rehearsal, e.g., when it comes to spontaneous *Bradln*, and the latter is valuable for the narrative of the bands’ inner functioning, by means of different characters coalescing into a group. The idea of togetherness is expressed most significantly in the so-called Gesamtspiel at the annual Woodstock festival, in which 15,000 or more festival goers intone a song together with their instruments. But from a gender perspective, the idea of togetherness obviously reaches its limits when it comes to women in brass bands. Bands with female members—let alone all-female bands like the *Brassessore*—are rare exceptions.

If we look at how the music’s reception is negotiated, we learn that traditional notions of communality and ritualty remain key aspects. The communal experience, particularly at live concerts and processions, is highlighted both visually (e.g., concert clips) and verbally by talking about brass music being a habitat with a worldwide community and a shared common passion. The music mostly is distributed across the community rather face-to-face through live performances, or at least through media coverage concentrated on live playing. The bands’ recordings are rarely found in the charts, and hardly any reviews of studio albums are published. The most visible cue to folklore and tradition, however, is the

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53. See, e.g., Servus TV, “Hoagascht - Woodstock der Blasmusik,” 6 September 2016, video, 8:25, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gUx0vXEpLhM.
55. Servus TV, “Hoagascht.”
style of clothing among musicians and audience members. For the media, it seems particularly noticeable that artists and fans very often wear traditional costumes comprising Lederhosen and Dirndln. Matters of tradition in connection with musical issues generally are thematized concerning the importance of preserving traditional material, particularly regarding how the bands are set up, i.e., their relatively small formation compared with earlier brass music times and how this affects the playing of old repertoires.

Up to this point, the musical field in focus arguably shows strong notions of folkloric music or, in Lena/Peterson’s terms, tendencies of a traditionalist genre form.59 The representations of and discussions about brass music, however, also can be examined from another perspective—one directed toward attitudes, ideas, and valuation criteria typically found in the field of institutionalized Western art music. This is less the case for genre categorizations or lifestyle matters because classical genre labels are mentioned as seldomly as allusions to a specific, potentially bourgeois or elitist way of living. Conceptions and expectations known from the world of classical music become most evident when it comes to the question of artistic legitimation: of how, and by whom, the music should ideally be played and created. It is the skills, the craftsmanship, the education, and the virtuosity which is appreciated and frequently underlined. We find accounts of reputable, highly talented, and virtuosic artists, who are driven by the ambition of professionalism, of delivering premium-quality products, of fully utilizing brass instruments’ manifold possibilities, and of exploring the limits of what is technically feasible.

An important narrative is that musicians’ skills are not due solely to natural talent, but are the result of years-long institutional education. Musicians’ background as university graduates, their experience playing in classical orchestras, and their skills in arranging and composing are pivotal aspects of their media coverage and (self-)representation. Moreover, it is brought up repeatedly that the musicians work as educators themselves at music schools and colleges, with some of them actually being university professors. According to Scharnagl, playing in brass band societies is a hobby, whereas music education is the first step toward professionalism.60

Tendencies toward Western art music practices also can be found in the fact that notation is a common way to distribute the musical material, and to actually generate some income with the selling of one’s own sheet music, as well as regarding the music’s reception. Mnozil Brass’ live performances are prime examples of how brass music sets itself in the context and atmosphere of classical music consumption, because the band often plays in concert halls and theaters to seated audiences. Beyond the rather exceptional scope of these performances, however, it also seems that contemporary brass music stimulates some modes of aesthetic perception familiar from art contexts: among others, the aesthetic experience seems to be fulfilling when the music satisfies the need for intellectual understanding, i.e. for recognizing and ascribing musical structures, references, and (musical and non-musical) symbols. Of course, such listening modes are interrelated

60. Scharnagl 2017, interview.
with recipients’ high poietic knowledge about musical techniques and repertoires. Quite a few listeners obviously have an idea of what it means to be a trumpeter at a two- or three-hour concert, permanently shining in the highest registers, or a tuba player delivering sixteenth-note passages perfectly through the tuba’s usual ambitus and beyond:

Quality is first and not the mass audience; it is not only about people’s entertainment. One tries to find something that evokes an “aha effect” among the listeners, something which they haven’t heard yet. Thanks to Mnozil Brass or Da Blechbauf’n, Volksmusik has become more complex and more interesting [...]. The audience is special because most of the audience members, 90% for sure, are experts.61

Classical-music conceptions also become evident when the interviewed musicians point to the important role of the harmonic make-up, underlining that harmonic complexity and extended harmony are pivotal factors for new sorts of brass music that differentiate themselves from traditional ones.62

So far, both perspectives that we have presented do not seem to have made it sufficiently clear why brass music has encountered such a boom in recent years—particularly among the young audience mentioned at the beginning of our paper. We assume that its current success is, to a large extent, due to the fact that the music—by the way it is produced, experienced, and “lived”—becomes more and more oriented toward popular-music conventions. For this reason, as already indicated in our article’s title, we also chose to situate the musical field that gravitates around Woodstock der Blasmusik and the bands Mnozil Brass, Die Innsbrucker Böhmische, Viera Blech, and LaBrassBanda within the framework of popular music.

A second re-analysis of the empirical data, this time through the lens of popular-music practices, reveals that aforementioned notions of folk and art music also are discussed, at times in contradictory ways, as a kind of negative foil, i.e., restricting conventions that one needs to overcome. Obviously, of utmost concern is emphasizing openness and boundlessness regarding attitude, musical borders, regional and international borders, and especially generational borders. LaBrassBanda and Mnozil Brass’s international tours and their global musical influences are mentioned often in the media—the former described, for instance, as being a cosmopolitan band between Kuhstall (cowshed) and Jamaica63—and Woodstock der Blasmusik advertises itself as having bands from all regions of Europe.64 Also, Scharnagl stresses the necessity to be cosmopolitan as a brass musician and travel the world with open eyes. He considers this approach to be a fundamental

61. Ibid.
62. Peter Laib, phone interview by Bernhard Achhorner, 28 October 2016. See also Brandstötter and Scharnagl 2017.
characteristic of contemporary brass music and traces it back to Ernst Mosch’s Original Egerländer Musikanten, in the 1970s, and to Mnozil Brass. A decisive factor of the current boom is ascribed to the notion that brass music has become attractive to the younger generation, that playing a brass instrument, as Mnozil Brass’ Thomas Gansch puts it, is no longer embarrassing as a teenager. In the introduction to LaBrassBanda’s performance at the German qualification for the Eurovision Song Contest, the moderator stated that “until recently, trombone, trumpet, and tuba were as cool as normal mineral water and a sunburn [...]. But times are changing [...] because hearty [zünftige] brass music coming out of Bavaria is very modern.” Overall, a certain consensus has formed that Woodstock der Blasmusik was the most important catalyst for this development: “Brass music celebrates a comeback because the young want it that way. It has been accomplished to steer brass music away from pure Volksmusik and to make it accessible to a younger audience.”

Also potentially supporting youths’ growing interest is the tendency to foreground more strongly individual personalities with whom fans can identify. Musicians such as Gansch, Scharnagl, and Dettl often are portrayed in the media as the leaders of their groups, indicating that notions of stardom slowly prevail in this otherwise strongly collectivity-oriented musical field. Individualism’s increasingly important role probably also comes down to the challenges of playing in rather small chamber music ensembles. In a traditional brass or marching band, the single musician disappears relatively quickly in the maelstrom of the many, whereas in a small lineup, seven soloists sit together on stage, with each having his or her specific individual, clearly audible function.

Having earlier examined the importance of educated skills and professionalism, it is noteworthy that nearly all of the interviewed musicians underlined the importance of breaking away from the rules that they learned during their classical training. The musicians point recurrently to feeling relief after their final exams because from that point on, they could select pieces that they wanted to play, or even compose their own pieces. As members of LaBrassBanda state, it was the opportunity to “finally don’t give a shit” and to “sniff one’s snot with full fire into the tube.” The leaving-behind of music scores is a central narrative of this idea of letting loose and rediscovering the fun of playing an instrument, which seemingly was lost during their studies. Gerhard Füssl explains that Mnozil Brass always was kind of driven by the impetus to pass on the spirit of playing on the loose, and not making music primarily on the basis of what has been learned and notated. In this context, he criticizes the educational system and musical

65. Scharnagl 2017, interview.
66. Gansch, interview.
68. Servus TV, “Hoagascht.”
schools for taking music too seriously due to attempts to force musicians into a certain form.\textsuperscript{70}

Along with emphasizing the importance of playing “straight from the shoulder” lies a shift toward a more body-oriented style of playing—jumping, running, and joking around on stage—and more strongly highlighting the corporality of playing a brass instrument. This also becomes important in connection with the audience’s behavior at live performances, which often resembles that of rock concerts. Other than performances with electronic or digital instruments, the physical efforts and immediacy of playing a trumpet, trombone, or tuba are directly palpable and, in the best case, are carried over to spectators’ somatic perceptions. In video reports on Woodstock der Blasmusik or LaBrassBanda concerts, the camera is anxious to catch the moving, jumping, or even moshing audience bathed in bright stage lights and to film close-ups of emotionally singing or screaming fans. For bands such as Mnozil Brass or \textit{Die Bayernischen Löwen}, whose performances primarily are about show and cabaret, recipients’ bodily participation naturally is of lesser importance. These performances, however, also require a “healthy, responsive audience,”\textsuperscript{71} instead of passive seriousness, for them to work. Generally, parody and irony are integral elements of many of today’s brass bands’ creative output and image. But unlike other modern adaptations of Alpine folk music—particularly in the realm of party songs conceptualized for après-ski huts, \textit{Oktoberfest}, or \textit{Ballermann} spring breaks—the irony rarely is directed toward traditional culture and its clichés, but primarily toward pop music in the form of parodies of iconic songs, such as those from Queen or Michael Jackson. Moreover, attendees at the Woodstock festival do not convey the impression that their enthusiasm is grounded in a sarcastic stance or a mocking attitude. From this perspective, brass music remains a rather serious business.

In connection with the somatic aspect of playing and perceiving brass music, further analogies exist to be revealed regarding popular music aesthetics, in that musical particularities often are discussed with an eye toward groove, sound, and energy. These aspects appear when the bands’ aesthetic qualities are described or when it comes to the discussion of the music’s valuation criteria concerning the groove of polkas or Ernst Mosch’s Egerländer,\textsuperscript{72} the groove caused by precisely repeated sixteenth notes, and the driving rhythm and physical pressure that fully grab the listener’s presence of mind. A significant difference from common pop music is that many brass bands do not use vocals in their music. Nevertheless, bands like Viera Blech manage to get the Woodstock audience to sing along with the melody to their polka “Von Freund zu Freund,” similar to the audience at the Reading festival singing along to Arctic Monkeys guitar riffs. The “earworm principle,”\textsuperscript{73} as Scharnagl puts it, has made its way from pop to brass music.

\textsuperscript{70} Füssl, interview.


\textsuperscript{72} Laib, interview.

\textsuperscript{73} Scharnagl 2017, interview.
TRADITION, INTENSITIES, ENTRAINMENT, AND SKILLS IN POPULAR BRASS MUSIC’S SOUNDS

In our paper’s final section, we approach the aesthetic particularities of popular brass music through a music-analytical lens, as we consider it pivotal to connect “extra-” and “intra-musical” horizons of understanding. We interweavingly examine three successful songs, the first being Mnozil Brass’s live-performance recording of “Wilhelm Tell: Ouverture” (2004), which can be described as a persiflage-like medley that mixes parts of Gioachino Rossini’s opera overture with parts of other pieces that have nothing to do with Rossini’s opera. The second song is a Viera Blech fan favorite, “Von Freund zu Freund” (2014), which thousands of brass musicians played at the 2019 Gesamtspiel of Woodstock der Blasmusik. The third song is LaBrassBanda’s biggest hit, “Autobahn” (2008), which has elicited more than 4 million streams on Spotify.

All three songs use traditional forms and/or references to tradition and twist them into their own idiosyncratic style. “Wilhelm Tell: Ouverture” starts with the title melody of the German-dubbed version of the popular children’s anime series Heidi (1974), about a little girl living within the romanticism and sheltered atmosphere of the Swiss mountainside. At the beginning of the song, the German intro of the TV series (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UWvVDJAcxQ) is presented in a rather slow tempo, such that it is difficult to recognize it immediately. After a few seconds, however, the musicians start to yodel the motif, thereby making it fully apparent. In this case, a typical characteristic of the band’s singing style becomes obvious—the usage of the falsetto register, which also can be heard in the band’s arrangement of Queen’s “Bohemian Rhapsody.” The allusion to yodeling is a clear reference to traditional, or rather Alpine folkloristic, music. Another allusion can be found in the third section (C) of the song, in which the traditional Viennese march “Wien bleibt Wien,” composed by Johann Schrammel in 1886 and regularly played at the Vienna Philharmonic New Year’s concert, is integrated.

Viera Blech categorizes “Von Freund zu Freund,” traditionally, as polka, but this classification does not prevent composer Scharnagl from starting the piece structurally with a rather unusual introduction. It is a folk tune, or so-called Volksweise, which teases the first main part’s theme in a slightly varied form. Commonly, in today’s folk-music practice, the Volksweise is an independent piece, mainly used in connection with an event called Weisen-Blasen (Weisen-blowing). The term refers to brass-instrument performances of specific,

77. In Appendix A, an analytical figure is provided for each of the three songs that shows the overall changes in amplitude und spectral energy. Above these physical-acoustic measurements, we added section labels in the form of letters to which we will refer later. Further explanations of the figures can be found in the appendix.
predominantly sostenuto, melodies. These are played polyphonically with two or more voices to express a particular atmosphere of Heimat. In the context of “Von Freund zu Freund,” the Volksweise’s function, as a prefix of the piece, is to attract the audience’s attention, particularly at the band’s live concerts. The first main section of the piece lives up to the expectation of a traditional polka, except for the fact that the trumpets, in addition to their melodic function, also are filling voices, a function that woodwind instruments usually provide in a conventional wind-orchestra setting. The diversified approach, i.e., playing around with conventions, becomes obvious, again, in the trio section, which begins at 2:04.

In an unusual monodic and sostenuto chorale melody, the tenor horns play in unison over a polka-like accompaniment. The chorale melody, which regularly elicits audience singalongs, is divided into two parts with regard to the instrumentation. This aspect, again, is quite typical of the polka genre: After the tenor horns play the first melody, the trumpets take over the melodic function and gradually bring the piece’s lyrical section to a conclusion.

Compared with “Von Freund zu Freund,” LaBrassBanda’s “Autobahn” enters polka mode rather quickly. Without an introduction, a typical polka accompaniment of tuba and trombones that serves as a general basis for the whole piece plays for the first 16 bars until the vocals kick in with the first verse. Not uncommonly, the trombones provide (shortly articulated) offbeat phrasing, while the tuba emphasizes most of the regular beats. But the lines between traditional polka and harder, brass-infused rock genres, particularly ska-punk, become blurred here due to tempo and energy, in a section of the song in which bass guitar and drums are not yet even part of the instrumentation. Another remarkable influence from outside (Alpine-)traditional brass music can be found at the trumpet solo in Section B (0:58), which is characterized mainly by passages of sixteenth notes. The melody’s ornamentation is reminiscent of Serbian and Southeastern European traditional music, in which trumpets gained increasing importance under military bands’ influence in the 1920s. The trumpet became even more popular in 1961, when an annual festival (with a competition) to celebrate traditional trumpet music and brass bands was established in Guća, Serbia. Here, we can find particular evidence of why LaBrassBanda’s music and style often are associated with “Balkan Beats” in audience and media reception.

Viewed from another perspective, the trumpet solo, as well as the ska-punk allusions of “Autobahn,” open up two additional, interlinked, interpretive stances to all three of the songs, which we already have pointed out in earlier sections of this article. The first considers notions of intensities and bodily entrainment, while the second focuses on the importance of technical skills and corporality.

Generally, what unites the three pieces is that they strive to keep the music’s main parts driving at relatively high energy and density levels (see the sonograms and waveforms in


Appendix A) and also attempt to alternate between different intensity states. “Autobahn” and “Von Freund zu Freund” essentially both work with the contrast of rhythmically pushing, percussive parts and parts with a rather drawn-out, texture-stretching character, with a strong emphasis on sustained melodies (“Von Freund zu Freund”) or even bordun-like tones emphasizing the harmonic fundament (“Autobahn”). “Wilhelm Tell: Ouverture” is predominantly percussive, with the calming parts being either cacophonous or dominated by mellow vocal melodies. Interestingly, all three songs navigate toward a peculiar finish. In “Von Freund zu Freund,” the last short bridge gradually increases its intensity and utterly changes the music’s timbre and atmosphere. The band leads to the final section of the piece, which also could be considered a grande finale. Not only the first aural impression, but also the amplitude and spectral intensity, show that they pulled out all the stops. It seems like an entire marching band or wind orchestra is playing, instead of a chamber music lineup comprising just seven musicians. “Autobahn” also finds its climax in the very powerful and repetitive final section, which, during live performances, regularly concludes with an a cappella sing-along with the audience. In “Wilhelm Tell: Ouverture,” the final, powerful version of the original gallop serves as an introduction to the final part, which mainly is characterized by its transitional character as it serves as a linking element between two different pieces of the whole live show.

The songs’ intensities become most apparent in listeners’ outward reactions. Scanning through live performances of “Autobahn,” the audience (as well as the band) immediately connects with bodily movements with the song, often with full body use. Literally, with the first “umpf-ta” sounds from the tuba and trombones, the spectators start waving their hands, jumping, and dancing. Less excessive, but still remarkable, are the bodily reactions during live performances of “Von Freund zu Freund.” The audience members express their engagement with the music through loud chanting and overhead clapping, often combined with gentle up-and-down torso movements. As for “Wilhelm Tell: Ouverture,” which mostly is performed to a seated audience, the reactions are restrained to arms-only clapping and laughing. In this case, the bodily connection between music and audience is created on a more subtle, but no less important, level.

Going into more detail in the studio version of “Autobahn,” the musicians and producers obviously were keen to provide an energetic, bass-like texture from the beginning. Already during the first section, several events are happening in lower-frequency areas. A sonogram analysis of this section supports our listening impression by visualizing how the tuba, the two trombones, and later the vocals are very present below 500 hertz. It is worth noting, in this regard, that the second trombone obviously was added/overdubbed, as it was not part of the band’s lineup at the time of the recording. Because of

83. In Appendix B, one can find analytical visualizations that form the basis of the detailed analyses and can be read in addition to the text. Further explanations of the figures can be found directly below them.
84. See Appendix B.1.
the song’s fast tempo, the first section is also rhythmically very dense. Contrary to the delayed-offbeat character commonly ascribed to polka music, the relation between trombones, tuba, and the fundamental beat is pretty much straightforward and steady, without significant deviations in microtiming. Singer Dettl’s forceful vocal delivery, which is melodically rather linear, adds another strong rhythmic layer to the fabric. He uses nearly every beat for placing a syllable and increases the energy toward phrase endings by diminishing the temporal distance between emphasized accents step by step. A specificity in his articulation can be found in that he often uses tonal slides, especially downward slides, to pronounce certain syllables, which probably is due to his Bavarian accent (“Au-to-ba-hn”; “Au-to-fahrn”; “pas-siert”). This helps maintain a certain liveliness and diminishes the risk of sounding too monotonous in an otherwise quite steady-going rhythmic framework.

A closer examination of “Von Freund zu Freund,” particularly the first main section, reveals that Viera Blech favors a more transparent texture in which it applies its own methods of adding groove—or, in more colloquial brass music terms, a Zupf—to its song, which is, compared with “Autobahn,” rather slow. As for aspects of microtiming, the tenor horns’ offbeat phrasing is not in alignment with the fundamental beat. The horns’ accents are played slightly after the weak beats of 1+, 2+, etc., resulting in the aforementioned delayed-rhythm feeling of traditional polka. This section’s fluent “earworm” melody, which is played by the trumpets, comprises archetypical “processes,” i.e., very continuous and to-be-expected tone-to-tone successions. What adds dynamics to the melody is that the trumpets are playing in accordance with the displaced horn accents. This becomes particularly important at the motive’s third note and in relation to the subsequent strong accent at the melody’s high anchor point. Due to the delay, the space to the downbeat is shortened significantly, causing a brief buildup in tension that immediately is released by the sustained trumpet tones right at the beginning of the next bar. The fundament of these processes is, similar to “Autobahn,” the very percussively and strong-blown tuba, which has spectral characteristics close to a rock bass drum.

Another way to convey energy and elicit bodily entrainments can be found in “Wilhelm Tell: Ouverture,” where the music’s bodily aspect and intensity become primarily apparent in the musicians’ efforts while playing. Although the audience’s responses are rather guarded, it is, nevertheless, an essential aspect of this piece that listeners can lock into the music and that the synchronization with the rhythm does not get interrupted at the transitions between the different sections and pieces. Otherwise, the element of surprise and humor would be diminished. For example, between seconds 54 and 55, the fast-paced gallop of the march of the Swiss Army crosses over into the

85. See Brandsto¨tter, interview.
86. See Appendix B2.
“Wien bleibt Wien” march, through the significant short-short-long upbeat that both marches share. This transition, which starts at the last weak accent (4+) of bar 20, does not affect the tempo and timing at all, as bars 20 and 21 both have the exact same duration of 1.42 seconds. Slight differences concern matters of articulation and the density of spectral energy. Compared with the “Wilhelm Tell” section, the Viennese march’s tones are intonated rather smoothly and are less harsh (less brassy, so to speak), which becomes most obvious in the reduced intensity above (roughly) 1,500 hertz and the smaller amplitude. Moreover, some fast upbeats are played less disconnectedly to each other than before, and the accents show a tendency toward being placed soon after the beat, unlike the strongly forward-pushing overture section. These kinds of nuances subtly change the atmosphere toward a short illusion of Viennese-tavern laidbackness, leading to the audience clapping along and giggling suddenly, without any interruption in musical fluency. The intense effort to perform the song becomes most evident in the subsequent, technically highly challenging Section B’, which begins at 1:05, particularly in this specific arrangement for brass instruments. The part is characterized by numerous, very quick and percussive sixteenth-note passages, demanding exceptional physical strains. Evidence that this passage is particularly challenging also can be found in the fact that the main melody line is divided among the three trumpeters to save (physical) power.

Overall, most of the three songs’ described particulars can only come into full effect when the music is played with strong technical skills and high precision—or, again in more colloquial terms, when it is guaranteed that the instruments picken (stick together). For example, the tones of the gallop motif in Section B are repeated with nearly identical articulation by all the trumpets, notwithstanding their duration of roughly only half a tenth of a second. The band’s sheet-music edition of “Wilhelm Tell: Ouverture,” Section B’, includes the following remark: “Was du heut’ noch Hier kannst üben, das verschiebe nicht auf Dru¨ben,” i.e., if you can practice this part today, you should not postpone it. Regularity and accuracy also are decisive factors in songs such as “Von Freund zu Freund” and “Autobahn.” Scharnagl underlines the importance of knowing precisely how to play and place a sixteenth note, eighth note, or accompaniment. If the system, as he puts it, gets regular, then a sense of groove comes into being. In the case of “Von Freund zu Freund,” this system obviously also includes constant microtiming deviations. For LaBrassBanda, which often downplays the pretension of perfection, precision in timing and interplay is essential to its music’s energy, particularly during live performances. The fact that the tubist must jump around with an instrument, a helicon, that weighs roughly 20 pounds for one-and-a-half hours, while needing to ensure that his blowing pressure and accents remain constant, is emblematic in this regard. The band’s former bass guitar player put it this way: “Through a set, there is no way of tailing off, even for a second. Stefan [Dettl] would notice immediately and give me the evil eye.”

88. See Appendix B3.
90. WDR Rockpalast, “La Brass Banda.”
CONCLUSION

Since the late twentieth century, brass music in Austria has evolved into a vital and heterogeneous phenomenon, particularly popular among young audiences. Woodstock der Blasmusik, which can be viewed as a microcosm for the phenomenon, promotes itself and the performed brass music with the slogan grenzenlos anders (boundlessly different). This slogan implies, however, that there are or were certain boundaries that need(ed) to be crossed, and it also implies that there is or was some “other” from which it differentiates itself. As our article has detailed, brass music, indeed, is characterized strongly by the ways in which it has or has not detached itself from conventions and attitudes established through Austrian brass music’s longstanding history. The musicians overcame constraints with regard to lineup, instrumentation, repertoire, notation, and sound ideals, and they generally broke away from habitualized ways of performing and enjoying brass music. Moreover, they shook off the idea of brass music representing national cultural identity, and thereby they do not facilitate, contrary to populist Austrian Volks Rock’n’Roller Andreas Gabalier, opposition to other, allegedly “non-Austrian,” cultural values. The different “other” of contemporary brass music can be found on a more subtle level, by stressing the idea of brass music being a social unit in the form of a trusted family, community, or “habitat” that upholds and celebrates, in its own peculiar way, (its own) traditions, (rural) regionality, and (male) musical expertise. Aesthetically, the music fosters and reflects these somewhat contradictory interrelations in that it extracts and combines, albeit with varying intensities, popular music’s hedonistic side with the artistic pretension of classical music and the symbolic world of Alpine folklore.

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APPENDIX A: SURFACE-LEVEL ANALYSIS

The following three figures combine physical-acoustic measurements with form-related analysis. The sonograms and waveforms show the overall changes in amplitude und spectral energy throughout the songs, hinting at processes regarding, for example, texture and intensity. Above these physical-acoustic measurements, we added information regarding when different sections occur and labeled them, neutrally, in the form of letters to which we will refer, sporadically, in the main text.
Appendix A.1: “Wilhelm Tell: Ouverture”

Appendix A.2: “Von Freund zu Freund”

Appendix A.3: “Autobahn”
APPENDIX B: MICRO-LEVEL ANALYSIS

Appendix B.1: “Autobahn”

The figure, which can be read comparatively from the top to the bottom, shows the (unofficial) notation,\(^3\) amplitude, articulation shapes, and rhythmical layers of the song’s starting section. One can see a spectral-analysis-based visualization of the single voice’s most prominent partials, together with a schematization of the pulse and the instruments’ fundamental accents, the latter located at the bottom of the figure.

\(^3\) “Autobahn - LaBrassBanda [Brass Quintet],” musescore, last modified 8 December 2016, https://musescore.com/user/6214831/scores/3047896. The notation has partly been reworked/corrected by us.
Appendix B.2: “Von Freund zu Freund”

This figure can be read in the same way as the above analysis of “Autobahn.”
For a better orientation, we put Thomas Gansch’s official trumpet notation (in Bb) on top. On the basis of physical-acoustic measurements, we analyzed the exact duration of the trumpets’ tones and transcribed the findings into a piano-roll-like notation (green bars), to be found below the sonogram together with equidistant dots representing the (virtual) fundamental beat.