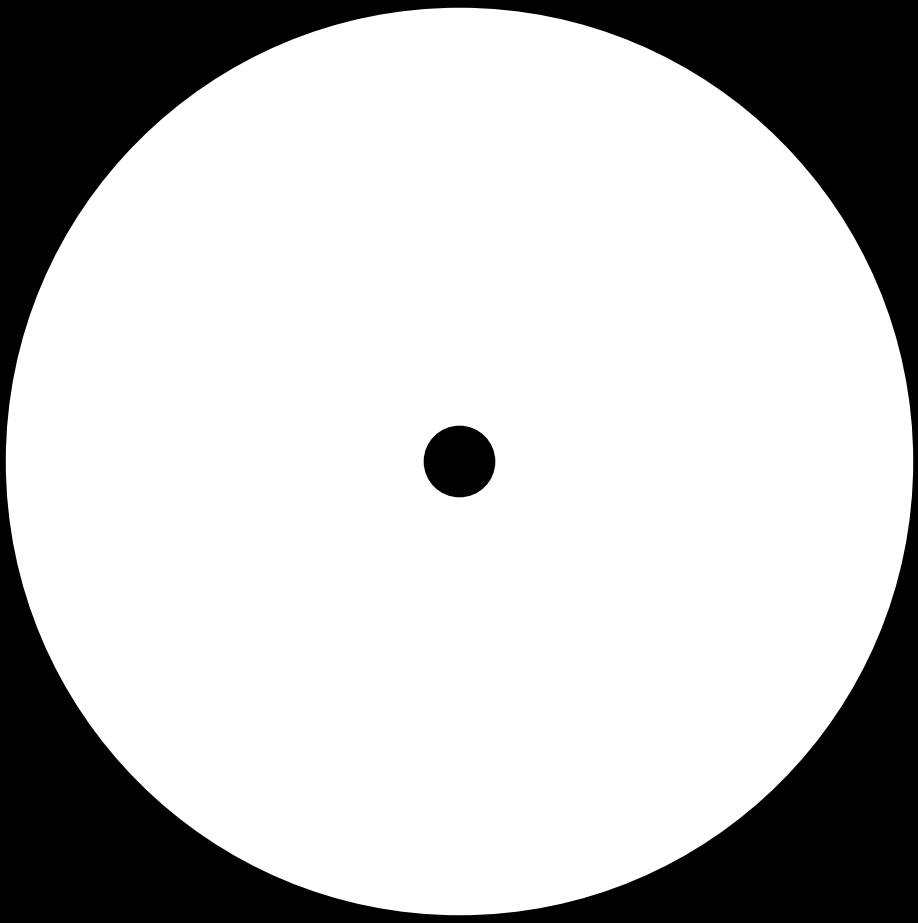
MUSIC STRATEGY



UNESCO
City of Music

HANNOVER

Music Strategy for Hannover
as a UNESCO City of Music

The wide diffusion of culture, and the education of humanity for justice and liberty and peace are indispensable to the dignity of man and constitute a sacred duty which all the nations must fulfil in a spirit of mutual assistance and concern.

A peace based exclusively upon the political and economic arrangements of governments would not be a peace which could secure the unanimous, lasting and sincere support of the peoples of the world. ... Peace must therefore be founded, if it is not to fail, upon the intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind.

From the constitution of the Organization for Education, Science and Culture (UNESCO), https://www.unesco.org/en/legal-affairs/constitution

THE CITY BREATHES MUSIC (SPAX)

Music is art
Musik is culture
Music is life

Music is emotion -
tangible, palpable, audible

1. This city breathes music –
its own pulse – its own beat –
for a long time now – its own vibe, self-driven heat –
here's my bow to the diversity –
the magic of the city on the Leine - you'll see.

Music from basements – from rehearsal rooms –
people with melodies and big dreams in bloom –
with the hunger and the longing for freedom –
lights on – sound up – no more being alone.

The scene gets a tailwind here –
we build bridges – where there are none, nothing to fear
Young professionals – established artists, peer to peer –
exchanging what they wish for. Cheers!

UNESCO –

City of Music –
it matters, because it's more than just cool shit–
networking – community – beyond every border, the rule is loud:
real music shuts no one out.

2. At the kiosk plays the band you don't know yet –
within reach – for new fans to check –
everything's live – immediate and real –
a runway – into music deals.

An anchor point – here you can try things out –
cure your stage fright, work it out –
the motto: nothing's forced, everything's allowed!
Wanting to be niche – niche is great – Period - no doubt!

Democracy needs culture – culture is music –
and so much more – more than you see in it.
Everyone should do what they love –
the perspective is the future – the future the goal we're made of.

We've got a plan – a strategy –
digitalization – EMIL – AI –many dreams -
think tanks – we dive in – deep dive -
we bring everyone along, on the team, side by side.

Creative people – creative towns –
networks cast their nets – where now? all around –
beyond every border –
real culture shuts no one out. - The Order

3. Music has a value of its own –
but with empty pockets, the heart turns to stone –
artists need money to live –
rent, food, and something to give.
What's needed –
funding – we have to support –
be reliable – no empty words of any sort –
because we're on the ground – always in dialogue –
open ears, open hearts – closeness that counts, no fog.

City of culture in the heart of Europe
We've made our choice – "We are Hannover"
We set the impulse – we take a stand –
from the independent scene deep into the city's hand.

Hannover has everything we need –
we can make music, play music, sell music indeed.
Impulses come – from within and from outside –
international – the world could use that ride.

A strong foundation –
keep what's good – try something new –
recognize art's creation -
There's so much potential - it's getting better
art and culture always matter.

Diverse, colorful – more than a label –
music is my life – more than just a fable –
beyond every border –Say it loud:
good people shut no one out.
That's how it is.

A SHARED PLAN FOR HANNOVER'S FUTURE AS A CITY OF MUSIC

This strategy describes how we want Hannover to evolve over the coming years as a city of music.

It shows:

- what makes Hannover special as a centre for music;
- where key potential and challenges lie; and
- goals and measures arising from this.

Developed in a broad-based participatory process with stakeholders from the music scene, public administration and policymakers, it forms a shared guiding framework for moving Hannover forward as a UNESCO City of Music.

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↑ Alicia Cibola and Rosy Vista
→ HOOLA from the UNESCO City of Music Daegu (South Korea)

Tenth-anniversary celebrations for Hannover as a UNESCO City of Music,
Opening event, 30 November 2024, Pavillon Cultural Centre
Photo credit: China Hopson



HANNOVER AS A UNESCO CITY OF MUSIC: A CITY IN HARMONY

Hannover is a great city of music – and has been for centuries. Music helps shape the city's cultural identity, the way it is perceived internationally, and the day-to-day lives of its people. It gives voice to its artistic diversity and is an asset driving its economic development, while also being a key factor in social cohesion.

In 2024, the City of Hannover had already been a *UNESCO City of Music* for ten years. This anniversary was not only a moment to recognize what had been achieved to date, but also a clarion call to action going forward, to think strategically about the next steps for the state capital as a city of music, to build on its strengths, to focus on enhancing its potential, and to more effectively communicate the significance of this status and the opportunities that come with it.

This Music Strategy is the outcome of a broad-based, participatory engagement process with stakeholders from across the music ecosystem. It draws on the City of Hannover's Cultural Development Plan, taking these themes and exploring them further within the realm of music.

In a time of profound societal and economic change, music occupies a special place: it connects people, makes them more resilient, creates spaces for interaction and helps stabilize democratic governance. Especially in challenging times, a clear guiding framework is needed to ensure long-term cultural development. At the same time, music can also be an international language that bridges divides and contributes towards the city's global connectivity.

It is the Music Strategy that provides this guiding frame of reference. It defines Hannover's essence as a city of music, where it stands today and in which direction we want it to go over the coming years.

We are grateful to all those involved for their time, ideas, critical reflections and other input that have helped birth this strategy. And, of course, for their music, their creative drive and energy without which Hannover would not have been awarded the title *UNESCO City of Music* in the first place – or sustained the spirit behind it.

1 HANNOVER AS A CITY OF MUSIC – PROFILE, POTENTIAL AND PURPOSE

A triad: origins – present – Hannover's future as a city for music

As a centre for music, Hannover has a long heritage and a bright future. Over a period of decades, a rich music landscape has developed here, striking in its diversity: from world-renowned institutions and a vibrant independent scene to a robust ecosystem spanning education, training and the music industry.

On being designated a UNESCO City of Music, this development gained an international dimension. It points not only to the quality of what already exists, but also to the special role that music plays for the city as a whole.

A look at the present situation reveals a dynamic and multifaceted music ecosystem. However, it is also evident that many of its strengths emerge only in combination. There is room for growth here.

Against this background, Section 1 brings together three different perspectives: the city's organically evolved identity as a place where music thrives; its present-day structure and diversity; and the resulting opportunities for future growth.

1. Tradition meets tomorrow: Hannover's musical DNA

As a city of music, Hannover has evolved historically while constantly being reimagined. Key to its development is a remarkable fusion of artistic excellence, cultural representation and technological innovation.

As long ago as the Baroque period, Hannover was already a leading European centre for music. Working at the court in Herrenhausen Gardens was a composer of international standing, Agostino Steffani. His contribution had an impact far beyond the city and meant that, even back then, Hannover was part of what we would now call European-level networks. Exploration of the musical legacy surrounding Steffani is the chief aim of the Forum Agostino Steffani, which holds an annual celebration week. In the 18th century, George Frideric Handel was a leading player in Hannover's music scene while he served as Kapellmeister (director of music to the court) there. Other names that gave important new momentum to the city on the River Leine included Wilhelm Herschel and his sister Caroline Herschel, Heinrich Marschner, Joseph Joachim – after whom a contemporary award for violinists is named – and Johannes Brahms.

In the 19th century, Hannover once again had a pioneering role, this time in music technology. With Emil Berliner and the development of the phonograph record, the city was the birthplace of an innovation that globally revolutionized the way in which music was listened to and disseminated

worldwide. Hannover became a major early focal point of the global music industry.

This know-how and willingness to embrace new technology continued in the form of the TELEFUNKEN brand and the two-spool cassette format, and later with the very first mass production of compact discs anywhere in the world, which Polygram manufactured in Langenhagen from 1982.

This historic lineage is more than a piece of cultural heritage. It points to a defining aspect of the city's fabric: the ability to combine artistic practice, technological advances and social dynamics. To this day, this interplay remains foundational to Hannover's identity as a centre for music, while also being the point of departure for its future development.

2. A city full of sound: diversity as a systemic and defining strength

Today, Hannover enjoys a remarkably broad-based and diverse music ecosystem. A very wide range of different forms of musical expression, cultural scenes and ways of producing music are brought together within the city: from amateur music, the independent scene and club culture to internationally renowned institutions and educational opportunities.

This variety is particularly apparent in the coexistence and reciprocal enrichment of different scenes. For example, Hannover boasts an internationally visible and highly regarded choral culture, featuring multiple acclaimed semi-professional choirs, as well as the Mädchenchor Hannover girls' choir and the Knabenchor Hannover boys' choir, along with the International Children's and Youth Choir Centre (IKJCZ) at the Christuskirche church in Hannover. Jazz culture here – centred around Jazz Club Hannover (with its concerts), which goes back 60 years, the Jazz Musicians' Initiative (Jazz-Musiker*innen Initiative), the Fette Hupe ensemble, and the Tonhalle Hannover training centre – is steeped in tradition, vibrant and experimental. The classical-music scene in Hannover is also strong and prominent, with institutions such as the Hannover State Opera and the NDR Radiophilharmonie orchestra – as well as acclaimed independent performing-arts ensembles such as Musica Alta Ripa, the Treppenhausorchester ensemble, la festa musicale and musica assoluta, to name but a few. The PRO MUSICA concert promoter presents international stars from Hannover's cultural community at top-tier concerts. And, with its series of events called Nahklang held at the Orangerie venue in the Herrenhausen Gardens, the Kammermusik Gemeinde e.V. society – which has been active for almost one hundred years – promotes chamber music in the city. Hannover has another unique musical aset in the form of Villa Seligmann, a cultural centre for Jewish music. Additionally, Neue Musik – roughly equivalent to contemporary classical music – is also well represented, with the Musik 21 project, the Neue Ensemble and the Hannoversche Gesellschaft für Neue Musik e.V. society. There is also an increasingly dynamic pop and rock scene featuring many exciting solo artists

and bands such as JEREMIAS, Linski, anaïs and SERPENTIN, as well as artistic collectives including the HIDDEN Kollektiv. A number of important networks are emerging from degree programmes at the University of Music, Drama and Media in Hannover (HMTMH). Other initiatives, such as the Session Room Project, are aimed at the full spectrum of people working in music with a self-taught background, as well as musicians outside Germany's academic system, thus facilitating access to spaces and helping people connect through music.

Popup Initiative 25 serves as a hub for the interests of this diverse scene, having communicated these needs in a publicly visible manner at the Music Strategy launch.[1] A vibrant club culture and festival landscape is opening up spaces for new artistic growth.

This creative diversity is sustained by robust infrastructure. Hannover has a wide range of venues of various sizes. Large sites such as the ZAG Arena, Theater am Aegi, the State Opera House, the NDR Concert Hall (NDR Konzerthaus), the Pavillon Cultural Centre (Kulturzentrum Pavillon), the LUX club, the FAUST cultural centre and the MusikZentrum facility exist alongside smaller venues and clubs such as the RAMPE coworking space, Feinkost Lampe, the Kulturpalast and Béi Chéz Heinz. There are rehearsal and production spaces, established festivals such as KunstFestSpiele Herrenhausen, baroque music festival Herrenhausen Barock and Fährmannsfest. In addition, there are more recent and experimental event types including Kiezkultur, SNNTG and the FuchsbauFestival, genre-specific festival formats such as the Liepe & Co. Festival, a celebration of percussion called the Überschlag-Festival, the International A-cappella-Woche Hannover, the Chortage choral-singing event, die Steffani-Festwochen (or Steffani Festival Week), the Klangbrücken (Sound Bridges) festival, the Hannover Klassik Open Air classical-music festival held in the Maschpark public park, and Jazzwoche Hannover (Hannover Jazz Week). And the diverse landscape of event organisers and other community members also includes specialized platforms such as Fête de la Musique and crowd-pullers such as enercity swinging Hannover and the Chopin Society's open-air concert at the Wilhelm-Busch-Wiese site. The demand resulting from this broad range is not met by the supply, with a mid-sized open-access concert venue lacking, as well as additional rehearsal spaces.

Private-sector participants also play a major role. In the form of Hannover Concerts (covering rock and pop) and PRO MUSICA (within the realm of classical music), Hannover can boast two of the country's leading concert promoters, which help significantly enhance the city's national visibility.

It is in this structural diversity that a key strength lies: Hannover boasts a robust music ecosystem. This enables different musical approaches to coexist, meaning it remains highly adaptable against the backdrop of ongoing societal transformation.

1 S. https://popup25.de/ (letzter Zugriff: 17.4.2026).

3. Developing talent, building for the future: Hannover's music education landscape

Another distinctive characteristic of Hannover as a city of music is its remarkably strong infrastructure serving education and training. It combines support for grassroots participation with internationally visible excellence, enabling seamless educational trajectories.

Institutions such as the University of Music, Drama and Media in Hannover – which is among Europe's most prestigious educational centres, and which has a unique asset in the Institute for the Early Advancement of the Musically Highly Gifted (IFF), aimed at nurturing excellence in school-age musicians – and the municipal Städtische Musikschule Hannover school are mainstays of this system. With the voice academies (Singschulen) of Hannover's Boys' Choir and Girls' Choir, the city offers systematic vocal and musical training for children of preschool age and upwards. This can lead to their turning professional and is, in this form, unique Germany-wide. Hanover Symphony Orchestra (SOH) is an outstanding platform for emerging young musicians, serving as a bridge between amateur and professional music-making.

There are also numerous privately run educational establishments, such as the Music College, as well as institutions, initiatives, ensembles and funding programmes that allow musical development in various different contexts. The international Joseph Joachim Violin Competition puts Hannover's stages in the spotlight for violin soloists from around the world

And, as the capital city of its federal state of Lower Saxony, Hannover is also home to numerous regional networks which, as well as advocating for members' interests, offer guidance and help participants connect. These include the State Music Council of Lower Saxony (LMR), the State Association for the Promotion of Popular Music in Lower Saxony (LAG Rock), the State Association of the Independent Classical Music Scene in Lower Saxony (Freie Klassik Niedersachsen e.V.), the Musik 21 Niedersachsen networking project, and an association of concert and club culture professionals in Lower Saxony called KlubNetz e.V.

Musikland Niedersachsen, the service centre for the professional music sector in Lower Saxony, provides many opportunities for skills enhancement and networking, especially in the field of music outreach and audience engagement. It provides expertise and support in the form of professional-development days and a wide range of services. The kreHtiv Netzwerk Hannover network fosters advancement, and another network – women* in music hannover – advocates for gender equality in accordance with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). House of Music Hannover e.V. (HOM) provides freelance musicians with opportunities for professional growth in connection with services provided in the Rampe coworking space.

The framework ranges from early-childhood musical education, school-based and extracurricular offerings, to advanced professional training in all areas of the music industry, including event technology, event management and audio engineering. It thus creates an environment in which

musical talent can be discovered, nurtured and retained over the long term, and professionals supported within the challenging reality of life as an artist. Above and beyond the purely musical aspect of such offerings, however, music also opens up space for self-expression, boosts one's sense of agency and provides experiences of social connection. Making music with others promotes a sense of belonging, communication and trust, and thus extends far beyond the purely artistic realm.

Therefore, a further strength of Hannover consists in an integrated system that marries individual development with broader cultural and societal impacts.

4. Creative, economic, impactful: music as a future growth sector

As an important centre for music Hannover is, alongside purely artistic output, also a key hub for the broader music sector and for the wider cultural and creative industries. Businesses from a range of fields – the music industry, the events sector, management and distribution – contribute to economic value and help define the city's image. These include audio equipment manufacturers Sennheiser and Kling & Freitag Sound Systems, electric-guitar maker Duesenberg and concert promoters such as Hannover Concerts, Living Concerts and PRO MUSICA, as well as many other promoters and festivals, recording studios, record labels, and those involved in booking and artist management.

In particular, new scope for development is emerging in the popular-music genre. Digital means of production and distribution, as well as new business models and increasing synergy with other creative industries, are fundamentally changing the policy environment. At the same time, the live entertainment sector is growing in importance as it provides immersive experiences and enables new forms of value creation.

Hannover has a great deal in place to proactively shape this evolution. The combination of artistic quality, technological expertise and entrepreneurial practice builds on the city's historical innovative strength and opens up new prospects for the future of the music industry.

A prominent example of how music, production and international connectivity mesh is the privately operated Peppermint Group, with the Peppermint Pavillon serving as a visible hub for modern music production and marketing. This is augmented by established production facilities such as the Tonstudio Tessmar recording studio and other studios including Frida Parkstudio, Horus, Magic Mile and the non-profit studio at MusikZentrum Hannover, a centre which has for some decades been an integral part of the city's professional music production scene. With its unique training programme on a charitable basis, the MusikZentrum enables 30 young people each year to explore and learn within several different vocational fields in the music and events sector.

This wide range of players involved exemplifies the existing infrastructure and expertise in the field of music production, highlighting Hannover's potential as a location for more strongly integrated developments within the music industry.

The city can, with targeted measures, further encourage this potential and harness it on a more systematic basis. In particular, there is an opportunity to create end-to-end value chains: from training and artistic development to production and the professional branding of individual talent. Stronger, strategically oriented promotion of popular music can serve as a driving force to better integrate existing structures, foster innovation, and further enhance Hannover's reputation as a dynamic hub for the music sector.

5. Globally connected: Hannover as a UNESCO City of Music

Receiving UNESCO City of Music status made Hannover part of a global network of places for which music is key to their cultural and urban development, which seek international connectivity, and which advocate for solidarity and democracy while upholding the guidelines of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN). This membership creates a wide range of possibilities for collaboration, interaction and dialogue, as well as joint projects. It cultivates ties with international partner cities, promotes artist mobility, and enables the growth of platforms for innovation in a global context.

And the title comes with a clear mandate: to appreciate that music is an integral part of sustainable urban development, to actively pursue this further, to promote international exchange within the UCCN, and to implement the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Experience to date shows that this potential has not yet been fully realized. Greater strategic use of this worldwide network —through targeted collaborations, joint projects or greater international visibility, for example — therefore represents a key starting point for advancing Hannover still further as a city of music.

6. Moment of truth: an anniversary as a turning point

When Hannover marked ten years of UNESCO City of Music status in 2024/2025, this proved a pivotal moment with regard to taking stock of the current situation here, and in terms of finding a new direction. As part of the anniversary celebrations and the updating of the city's Cultural Development Plan, it became particularly clear once again that Hannover boasts an exceptionally diverse and vibrant music scene. It does, however, also face systemic and strategic challenges. There are key aspects of its development potential that have not yet been fully utilized.

In the light of this, a broad-based participatory process was initiated that brought together players from the music scene and public administration,

as well as policymakers. This process pooled different perspectives, identified needs, and gave rise to initial strategic approaches.

What became particularly evident is that, as a city of music, Hannover has reached a point where the focus is no longer primarily on building the structures themselves, but rather on strengthening their foundations, pursuing targeted development, fostering connectivity and providing strategic direction.

7. Music as a key cultural resource for the city

That Hannover grows into its City of Music status is important in terms not only of cultural policy, but also of strategic investment in the town's future.

Music plays a vital role in fostering social cohesion and strengthening civic participation by creating spaces for connection and exchange, self-expression and inclusion, thus making a significant contribution to a resilient urban community.

At the same time, it is an important factor in how attractive the city is for skilled professionals, for the creative industries and for overall economic development.

Against the background of current transformative processes, it is apparent that existing strengths must be specifically built on if their long-term benefits are to be ensured. The Music Strategy provides a common framework for this.

Making the music ecosystem visible: stakeholder mapping for Hannover

To make visible the diversity and connectivity of Hannover's music scene, digital mapping of stakeholders was carried out as part of the Music Strategy. This mapping process shows Hannover's music ecosystem as an interactive and interconnected whole. It highlights key groups of community members – ranging from artists, ensembles and choirs to venues, festivals and the music industry, along with networks, music-education and music-outreach structures, as well as funding contexts – and reveals the links between them.

What is evident is that, as a city of music, Hannover is not merely a collection of participants acting independently, but a closely integrated system with diverse connections, clusters and development potential. Stakeholder mapping is designed as an open-ended instrument with scope for growth. It is constantly being expanded, with those in the music scene able to actively contribute to it.[2] Such mapping potentially serves not only as a visualization tool, but also as a vehicle for networking, visibility and the strategic growth of Hannover into a music hub.

2 An interactive map can be viewed online at: https://musikstrategie-hannover.de (Last accessed: 13 April 2026).

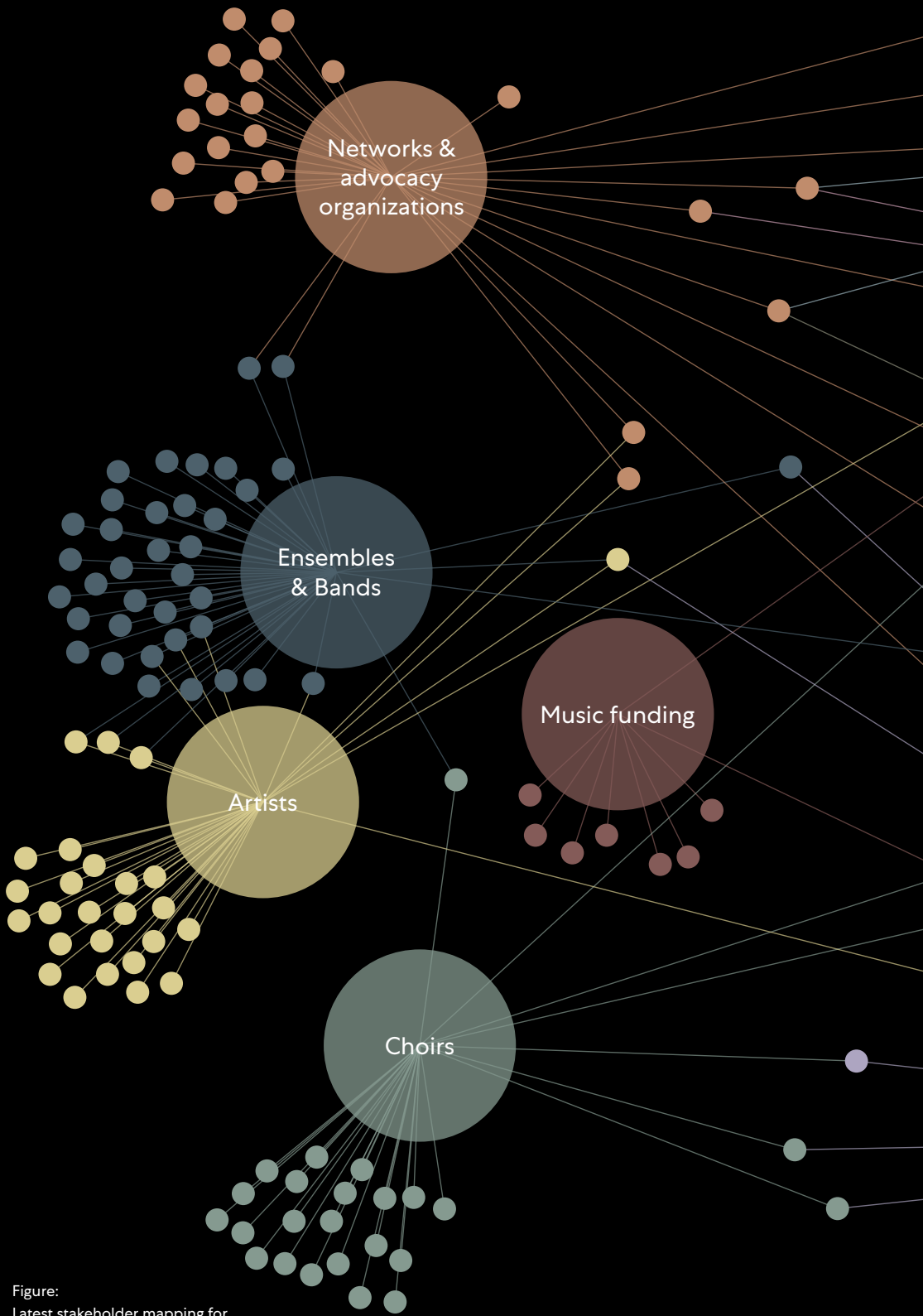
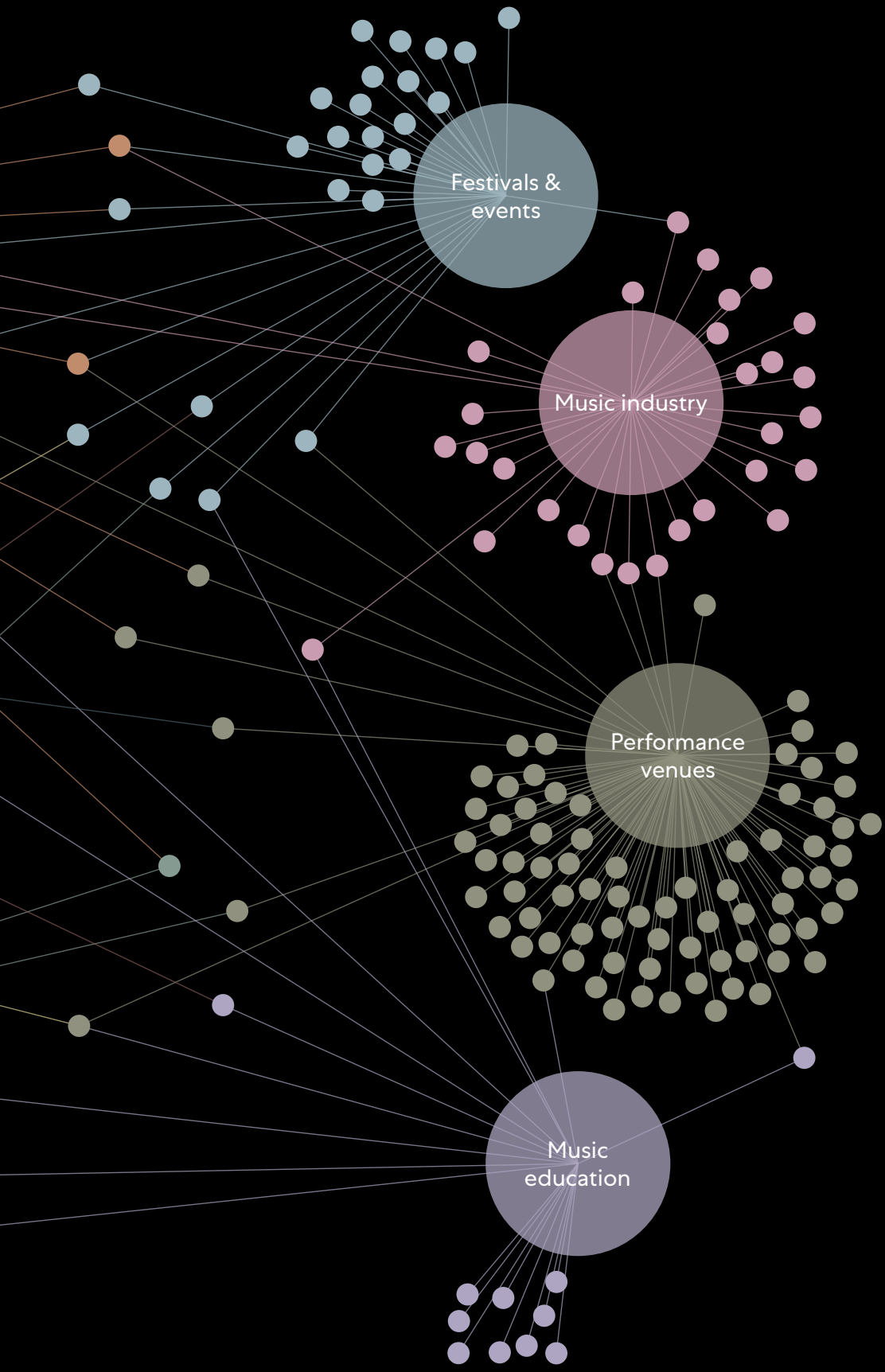


Figure:
Latest stakeholder mapping for Hannover's music ecosystem


Festivals &
events
Music industry
Performance
venues
Music
education

2 FRAMEWORK, MANDATE AND WAY FORWARD FOR THE MUSIC STRATEGY

2.1 From Cultural Development Plan to Music Strategy: strategic underpinning

The Music Strategy builds on key insights and objectives of the Cultural Development Plan (KEP)[3] and translates them into concrete actions — essentially as an offshoot of the KEP — for the city's music ecosystem. Chief among these are the following:

- Safeguarding and further developing cultural infrastructure;
- Enhancing inclusive participation in, and access to, cultural activities;
- Promoting collaboration and connectivity; and
- Incorporating culture into integrated urban-development processes.

As part of the updating of the Plan[4], a situational analysis of Hannover's music scene was carried out as well. This revealed a nuanced picture:

- A vibrant and diverse music landscape;
- A robust training framework; and
- Internationally visible institutions and networks; but also
- Systemic challenges, especially in the areas of infrastructure, funding criteria, and transition pathways into careers.

It is at this very interface that the Music Strategy comes in: it takes the strengths, challenges and areas for development identified in the KEP and translates them into a specific strategic framework for the music sector.

This means it represents all of the following:

- A **detailed elaboration** of the Cultural Development Plan;
- A **clarification** of cultural policy objectives in the music sector; and
- A **bridge** between cultural policy for the city as a whole and the specific needs of the music ecosystem.

3 S. https://www.hannover.de/content/ download/826511/file/Kulturentwicklungsplan- Hannover-2030.pdf (last accessed: 25 March 2026).

4 S. https://www.hannover.de/content/download/1061534/file/KEP.UPDATE_finale%20PDF.pdf (last accessed: 25 March 2026).

2.2 UNESCO City of Music: recognition, mission and potential

Hannover's status as a *UNESCO City of Music* (UCOM) serves as a key reference point for moving its Music Strategy forward.

In this connection, the ten-year anniversary in 2024 marked an important moment of reflection and recalibration. In joining the UNESCO Creative Cities Network, among the goals to which the City of Hannover has committed, include appreciating music as an integral part of sustainable urban development and actively promoting its further evolution. The title signifies not only international visibility, but also a cultural and political aspiration: the ongoing nurturing, enhancement and expansion of the music ecosystem, international collaboration within the UNESCO Creative Cities Network, and the implementation of the United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It became apparent that, although Hannover has a solid foundation in place, a more strategic use of the UNESCO Creative Cities designation is required.

The Music Strategy's rationale is to take up this mandate and translate it into a long-term vision for Hannover's development as a centre for music. Its primary aims are as follows:

- To specifically intensify international connectivity, in particular by establishing strategic partnerships with selected UCOM partner cities ('key axes');
- To make use of the existing and growing network as a catalyst for nurturing young talent and artistic development;
- To greatly boost Hannover's visibility within the international context as an important city of music (e.g. its presence on social media and in key media outlets within the music scene); and
- To reinforce the significance of the UNESCO Creative Cities designation within the urban community, and harness it as pointing to a key aspect of our identity.

This means that UNESCO Creative Cities status is seen not merely as an accolade, but as an active tool for urban development.

2.3 Objectives and functions: an overview

The Music Strategy is the joint guiding framework for moving Hannover forward as a UNESCO City of Music. It creates a shared vision that, together, policymakers, public administration and the music community can work towards. This makes it a 'joint action plan' that aligns different perspectives.

Its purpose is as follows:

- To provide orientation and guidance;
- To strengthen collaboration;
- To guide developments strategically; and
- To boost Hannover's standing as a city of music.

2.4 Developed together: process, participation and methodology

The Music Strategy is based on a broad-based participatory and analytical process that has brought together diverse perspectives and experiences from Hannover's music scene.

Key elements of this process were as follows:[5]

- A launch conference attended by representatives from all parts of Hannover's music ecosystem, as well as a closing event with stakeholders from all key sectors;
- Themed workshops on key Areas for Action with those involved in the music world there, with music industry perspectives specifically included;
- Systematic stakeholder mapping;
- An online survey on needs for measures to support strategic development within the community; and
- The consolidation of knowledge and perspectives in a structured process of analysis.

In addition, existing policy ideas, studies and core strategic principles – most notably the Cultural Development Plan – were taken into account during the drafting process.

The outcomes of this process were compiled, evaluated and integrated into a systematic analysis. Drawing on this,

- key challenges were identified;
- potential for development was highlighted;
- strategic guidelines were drafted; and
- Areas for Action and objectives were defined.

5 Further information on this process is available under 'Musik Strategie – Hannover.de' (last accessed: 14 April 2026). More details can be obtained from the Cultural Affairs Office upon request.

The process therefore not only forms the basis of this strategy, but also serves as a starting point for its further development. Going forward, incorporation of the local music scene and relevant stakeholders will remain integral to ongoing strategic efforts.



↑ Musik Kiosk at Kröpcke square
Photo credit: Leona Ohsiek

↓ Music Strategy Workshop:
Launch Event, 28 June 2025, Pavillon Cultural Centre
Photo credit: Helge Krückeberg





↑ Joy Bogat, Musik Kiosk:
Opening of Sommerbühne programme, 24 April 2025
Photo credit: Leona Ohsiek





Brazzo Brazzone,
flash mob at the New Year's Reception held by the Lord Mayor, New Town Hall, 10 January 2025
Photo credit: Florian Arp

3 HANNOVER AS A CITY FOR MUSIC: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

As an important centre for music, Hannover can boast a remarkably diverse and robust music infrastructure. The combination of breadth and excellence, the flourishing educational landscape, and international interconnectedness form a sound basis for future advancement.

At the same time, the findings of the broad-based participatory process — especially those from workshops, stakeholder mapping and in-depth discussions with representatives from all areas of the city's musical life — reveal that these strengths do not automatically lead to lasting development trajectories. Indeed, structural, organizational and communication-related challenges exist that necessitate a strategic, targeted approach to moving things forward.

What is striking is that many of the problem issues identified do not occur in isolation but are systemically interconnected: challenges around infrastructure, funding, visibility and connectivity are interwoven and, to an extent, compound one another.

This Section teases out these challenges across key thematic areas while also identifying major potential for development. It thus serves as an analytical basis for defining strategic Areas for Action in Section 4 below.

3.1 The fabric under strain: systemic challenges

Infrastructure and spaces

Access to suitable spaces was consistently identified throughout the participatory process as one of the key challenges.

This affects various levels concurrently:

- **Rehearsal spaces:** especially for bands, independent ensembles, choirs and emerging young practitioners, there is a persistent lack of available, affordable spaces with good acoustics in convenient locations.
- **Production facilities:** studios and technical infrastructure are available, but they are not accessible to all, and/or are not sufficiently coordinated with one another to allow even better (and more closely aligned) use of their potential.
- **Performance venues:** smaller and medium-sized venues in particular, as well as the club scene, are under strain both financially and in terms of space availability. Also lacking is a medium-sized, multi-purpose venue that all those working in the music community can access.

It also became clear that existing spaces are often not used optimally. There is a lack of transparency regarding both available capacity and coordinated access models.

At the same time, certain facilities of strategic importance were highlighted, especially in view of their role in shaping Hannover's public image. To an extent, what we have here are infrastructural weaknesses or development needs that may have long-term impacts on the city's appeal.

Overall, it is apparent that infrastructure is not only a matter of availability, but also of accessibility, quality and strategic development.

The funding framework and policy environment

The analysis shows that, whilst the existing funding framework is generally recognized as an important foundation, there is also a definite need for further development.

In particular, the following points were raised during the participatory process:

- Lack of transparency regarding existing funding options;
- Significant barriers to access, especially for new members;
- Limited planning reliability due to the short-term nature of funding; and
- Insufficient funding coverage, especially in the field of popular music and for innovative, interdisciplinary or experimental projects, as well as projects in music outreach.

It also became apparent that the funding framework is often insufficiently aligned with other forms of support – such as skills enhancement, advisory services and connectivity.

A recurring topic was also the question of fair working conditions in the music industry. Many of those involved work in precarious conditions that make long-term artistic growth difficult.

Overall, there is a need here for a support system that is geared more towards transparency, clarity, accessibility and sustainable development.

Transition pathways to careers, and fragmentation

Despite the flourishing training landscape, a structural problem has come to light in the transition from training to professional practice.

The participatory process made it clear that:

- graduates from educational and training institutions often leave the city due to a lack of prospects;
- existing networks are difficult for many young professionals to access;
- there are too few structured pathways facilitating transition into professional contexts.

The scene was also described as being fragmented. Different parts of the musical landscape — such as the classical community, the independent scene (across all genres), club culture and the music industry — often operate alongside one another without systematic points of connection, even though the city's geography offers ideal conditions for people to come together easily.

Consequently,
- synergies are not exploited;
- knowledge and resources are not shared sufficiently; and
- joint strategic development is rendered more difficult.

The required measures involve not only support for individual players, but also strengthening links right across the music ecosystem.

3.2 Making strengths apparent: visibility and standing

A central finding of the analysis is the discrepancy between Hannover's actual strength as a centre for music, and its external perception.

Despite a wealth of high-quality offerings, there is no clear, unified narrative to highlight what makes Hannover special as a city where music flourishes.

During the participatory process, the following in particular was highlighted:
- Many outstanding individual activities, but little coordinated communication;
- Lack of overarching platforms or narratives; and
- Low visibility outside a given sub-community.

Nor has the title of *UNESCO City of Music* been consistently utilized as a strategic tool to date. Its potential – for example, in terms of international cooperation, raising Hannover's profile or city branding – remains partly untapped.

At the same time, there is a need within the urban community to boost the visibility of the city's music scene, and to more effectively communicate its role in quality of life, identity and social cohesion.

3.3 Actively shaping change: transformational challenges

Digitization and innovation

Digitization is profoundly transforming the world of music — from production and distribution to marketing.

The participatory process revealed that many of those involved already work with digital formats, but also that structural support here is insufficient:

- Lack of convenient access to digital infrastructure, such as event calendars and digital networking opportunities;
- Insufficient offerings for skills enhancement (e.g. in AI, digital production and the platform economy); and
- Limited possibilities for experimenting with new formats.

At the same time, there is great potential for raising Hannover's profile as a hub for music and technology, drawing on its historical role as a centre of musical innovation.

Inclusive participation and access

Questions of inclusive participation, diversity and access were identified as key issues emerging during the stakeholder engagement process.

These include the following:

- Comprehensive access to music education;
- Participation in cultural life; and
- Representation of diverse social groups in the city's music scene.

It became clear that, despite the many services available, barriers still remain – including social, financial and cultural divides.

At the same time, there is a growing aspiration around the greater use of music as a means of participatory social inclusion and civic education, and the reaching of new target groups.

3.4 Harnessing all opportunities: untapped potential

Networking and collaboration

The analysis shows that, as a centre for music, Hannover possesses a high degree of diversity and expertise, but also that this has yet to be systematically translated into collaborative frameworks.

Specific observations from the participatory process:
- Dialogue often takes place on a project-by-project basis but is not sustained;
- There is a lack of established forums or platforms for ongoing collaboration; and
- Many stakeholders would like to see greater networking, but are unsure how this can be organized.

At the same time, there is great potential in strengthening links between the following:
- Different genres of music;
- Institutions and the independent scene; and
- Music and other realms of society (e.g. education, urban development and the business community).

International connectivity

The international dimension of Hannover as a centre for music represents significant potential for development. The UNESCO Creative Cities Network offers a wide range of possibilities for international collaboration, interaction and exchange, and joint projects. During the participatory process it became clear that, to date, these have been capitalized upon only sporadically.

In particular, there is a lack of the following:
- Strategically designed partnership schemes with UCOM partner cities;
- The exploitation of opportunities for international cooperation; and
- Long-term forms of collaboration.

There is an opportunity here to use international networking in a targeted manner as a means of boosting Hannover's appeal.

→ The UCOM Sonderförderung special-funding project
The Treppenhausorchester ensemble: HörMal! Cumberlandsche Galerie
Photo credit: Carina Wehrstedt

3.5 A focus for the next steps: consolidating key Areas for Action

This analysis identifies key Areas for Action that are of special importance if Hannover is to move forward as a UNESCO City of Music.

An emphasis is placed on the following:

- Safeguarding and enhancement of musical infrastructure;
- Further development of the funding framework and policy environment;
- Support for emerging artists, for nurturing of talent and for transition pathways into careers;
- Raising Hannover's visibility and international standing; and
- Strengthening of connectivity and collaboration, both locally and within the international UCOM network.

These identified needs for action are closely interrelated and can be addressed only in combination. They form the basis of the strategic Areas for Action outlined in the following Section.







The Junges Vokalensemble Hannover mixed choir and the Fette Hupe ensemble:
Sacred Concerts, opening of the German Protestant Kirchentag church congress in Hannover, 30 April 2025
Photo credit: Kirchentag Anton Vester

4 SHAPING THE FUTURE: STRATEGIC AREAS FOR ACTION, GOALS AND MEASURES

4.1 From assessment to strategy: identification and overview of Areas for Action

The strategic Areas for Action set out in the Music Strategy are identified directly from the analysis of the current situation, and from the challenges and development needs determined. They bring together key thematic areas where there is a particular requirement for action to ensure Hannover continues to grow as a leading city of music.

These Areas for Action provide a binding framework for the strategic direction going forward. They give structure to the goals and measures of the Music Strategy, enabling specific prioritization as well as clear allocation of responsibilities.



↑ The UCOM Sonderförderung special-funding project:
Quartett PLUS 1: Geschenkt reloaded! tour, Holzmarkt square in Hannover
Photo credit: Isabell Massel

Aspect analysed (Section 3)	Specific challenges/ findings	Identified need for action	Strategic Areas for Action
Infrastructure & spaces	• Lack of rehearsal space and performance venues • Increasing land-use pressure • Not enough accessibility to existing spaces	Safeguarding, expansion and better use of musical infrastructure	**Safeguarding and developing infrastructure and spaces for music**
Funding framework	• Lack of transparency • Poor planning reliability • Funding gaps • (esp. in popular music, innovation) • Few long-term prospects	Enhancement of funding systems for greater transparency and planning reliability, and a more needs-based approach	**Enhancing the funding framework and policy environment**
Career transition pathways & fragmentation	• Discontinuity between ed./training and employment • Lack of systemic career pathways • Fragmentation of scene	Strengthening support systems for emerging talent and transitions into professional practice	**Boosting the next generation, talent development and career pathways**
Visibility & standing	• Poor visibility of Hannover as a centre for music • Lack of a joint communications strategy • Underutilization of UCOM title	Establishing a well-defined profile and communications strategy	**Raising visibility and international standing**
Digitization	• New requirements for production and marketing/branding • Lack of systematic offerings in digitization/ AI	Integrating digitization and innovation in music development	**(Integrated into funding framework & emerging talent – no need for a dedicated area)**
Inclusive participation	• Unequal access • Need for easily accessible opportunities • Societal expectations regarding cultural inclusive participation	Enhancing access, inclusive participation and societal impact of music	**Safeguarding and developing infrastructure and spaces for music** (and integrated into multiple areas, esp. emerging talent and collaborations)
Connectivity	• Insufficient collaboration between stakeholders • A lack of systematic vehicles for dialogue / parallel structures	Expanding connectivity and collaboration as a key resource for development	**Enhancing connectivity and collaboration**
Internationalization	UNESCO network is not used strategically, few targeted international collaborations	Greater use of international networks and partnerships	**Raising visibility and international standing**
Interfaces between all aspects	Many issues are interrelated; lack of systematic governance, limited coordination between stakeholders	Enhancing coordinated collaboration and provision of strategic direction	**Enhancing connectivity and collaboration**

Table: Identification and overview of derived Areas for Action

Under each Area for Action, the starting point for this aspect is first described, followed by the key development needs. Drawing on this, strategic goals are drafted that define the intended path forward. The associated measures identified serve to flesh out these goals and form the basis for the phased implementation of the Music Strategy. Priority measures will be allocated in this context. During the drafting process for the Music Strategy, these measures were identified as major drivers.

The measures were selected and allocated according to their strategic relevance, their feasibility, and their role in strengthening Hannover as a city of music in line with the guiding principles drawn up.

4.2 Area for Action no. 1: safeguarding and developing infrastructure and spaces for music

Musical infrastructure forms the basis for artistic production, performance and connection. The analysis shows that access to suitable rehearsal spaces, production facilities and performance venues is one of the main challenges facing the music landscape in Hannover. Significant shortages exist, especially for the independent scene, popular music and emerging artists. At the same time, competition for space, rising costs and changing usage requirements are placing increasing pressure on established venues. In the participatory process, it became evident that infrastructure is not merely a quantitative issue, but also depends fundamentally on the quality, accessibility and strategic development of individual key hubs. One revealing example is the Kuppelsaal (Domed Hall) at the Hanover Congress Centre. The largest concert hall in Germany, it is Hannover's most iconic musical landmark and the major venue for major concert productions. For local concert promoters, the Kuppelsaal is a crucial production venue and an important factor in the city's attractiveness. However, during the strategy process it was repeatedly pointed out that, in particular, backstage and front-of-house areas – including food service facilities and visitor reception operations/infrastructure – now fall short of what is now required. These shortcomings are already adversely impacting Hannover's appeal and, in the long term, may mean the city risks losing productions and artists to other centres.

Another major issue is that of space constraints at the municipal Städtische Musikschule Hannover. In Hannover, this school of music plays a key role in musical education and the advancement of emerging talent, and has close links to the city's University of Music, Drama and Media. At the same time, existing spatial capacity is clearly insufficient and, in key aspects, no longer meet the needs of a modern music school. In view of this, the development of a dedicated 'Music School Centre' is seen as the long-term way forward, aimed at safeguarding and enhancing the quality of music education.

In addition to these key nodes, the participatory process highlighted – in particular – the existing structural deficiencies within the independent scene and the popular-music sector. Even though the Deutsche RockMusik Stiftung foundation is continuously working to expand the availability of rehearsal spaces, there are still too few of them, as well as a lack of flexible performance venues and of easy access to infrastructure. At the same time, existing facilities are often not used to their full potential. This is due to a lack of transparency and the absence of coordinated and flexible access models. This also applies to cultural centres at district level. Hannover needs a vibrant, centrally located space where those involved in the scene can meet, engage in dialogue with the urban community, and do justice to Hannover as a city of music in the way it is presented.

The goal is the long-term improvement of infrastructure, the enhancement of new usage models, and collaboration between existing institutions.

Leitziele

- To safeguard and expand rehearsal spaces, production facilities and performance venues
- To enhance access to existing spaces
- To develop new usage policies and multipurpose spaces
- To strengthen key nodes within the music ecosystem

Measures in detail

An interdisciplinary think tank: Music Spaces

To address the complex infrastructural challenges, an interdisciplinary think tank entitled Musikräume is to be established. This will bring together representatives from public administration (especially community cultural centres at district level, libraries and the school sector), the music scene, urban development, and other relevant players (such as the Deutsche RockMusik Stiftung).

The aim is to produce, for the first time, a systematic and reliable overview of existing spaces, needs and potential uses. Building on this, specific solutions are to be worked on – both for making better use of existing infrastructure and for developing new spaces.

This think tank will serve as a strategic instrument for the ongoing work on infrastructure-related issues, and for bringing together different perspectives.

Musik Kiosk XL

The Musik Kiosk is being developed as an easy-access platform for increasing the visibility of, and connectivity within, Hannover as a city of music. In the anniversary year 2024/25, it was trialled for the first time in the central location of Kröpcke. Here it proved an effective vehicle for bringing music, in all its diversity, directly into the public space and making it accessible to a broad cross-section of the city's population.

The Musik Kiosk functioned as an open showcase for the local music scene. It created visibility for diverse actors, genres and activities, enabled spontaneous connection, and provided easier access to music for the city's people – including those who had not previously had much musical engagement. It also served as a key interface between the music community, the city administration and the public, also providing access to events in Hannover by means of a ticket outlet. The programme, which changed on a daily basis, was augmented by a compact permanent exhibition featuring exhibits on prominent musical figures from here, while also informing visitors about what the *UNESCO City of Music* title means.

Based on its positive reception, the intention is for the Musik Kiosk to be developed further over the long run. The goal is to establish this format on a sustained basis and create a viable operating model for the music scene in Hannover. Since the city, as organiser, is unable to continue running the Kiosk in its current form on a long-term basis, the focus will shift to developing a sustainable management and organizational set-up. At the same time, this approach offers a chance to further pursue the long-standing aspiration within the independent scene to create a facility for joint use – a site that combines different functions within a single space, such as shared areas for rehearsals, storage, performances, socializing and other interaction. This approach involving shared infrastructure across genre boundaries would also address the need for greater connectivity among the various groups. Exhibits from the HörRegion initiative, which bring the world of acoustics to life in a fun and engaging way, could also form part of such a centre.

In this way, the Musik Kiosk can become a permanent place of visibility, connectivity and outreach: an easy-access 'way in' to Hannover as a centre for music, and as a catalyst for sharing and new collaborations.

The Kuppelsaal – Germany's largest classical concert hall

The continued development of the Kuppelsaal venue at the Hannover Congress Centre (HCC) is an integral aspect in ensuring the city's international competitiveness as a place where music thrives. As the largest classical concert hall in the European Union, the Kuppelsaal is a unique 'selling point', so to speak, for Hannover as a centre for music, and a key venue where nationally and internationally important concert events are put on.

At the same time, major infrastructural challenges are becoming apparent, especially in backstage operations/facilities, stage and theatre delivery logistics and entrance areas. These no longer fully meet the current requirements of artists, organizers and audiences, and needs to undergo further improvements in order to help keep the venue – and the city itself – attractive. Feedback on this aspect makes it clear that, in particular, amenity quality in backstage spaces, and the design of front-of-house areas (including lounges, etc.) for visitors could, and should, be better in terms of meeting expectations for an international concert venue. The aim is therefore, using external funding, to enhance these aspects of the Kuppelsaal site, both functionally and with regard to ambience. A special focus here will be on the specific redesign of backstage and receiving facilities, as well as on hospitality. Through contemporary interior design and improved amenity comfort, both working conditions for artists and the overall visitor experience are to be further upgraded. These issues raised in relation to the concert sector, and the resulting measures, will require coordination and harmonization in two primary respects (provided that the necessary financial resources become available in the future): -Firstly, while acknowledging structural constrains that cannot be changed, and with particular consideration for the design-related possibilities and limitations associated with its status as a nationally significant architectural and cultural monument. -Secondly, with regard to the usage policy, for which 'concerts' as a use category are on an equal footing both with 'entertainment and public events' and with 'meetings, conferences and conventions'; conflicting objectives must be taken into account here. This is especially important from a business perspective, as the latter two event categories are of crucial significance. In addition, the usage policy is being further developed to make the Kuppelsaal more amenable to a wider range of new formats, and to secure its role as a versatile and attractive venue for events and concerts in the long term.

Centre for the Music School (MUSIKzentralORT)

The creation of a centrally located site (Haus der Musikschule) for the municipal school of music or Städtische Musikschule Hannover, well equipped for musical practice and to make it customer friendly, is a key measure for the safeguarding and further development of the music education landscape in the state capital. Around 7,400 music students per week, as well as a total of about 45,000 people annually, make use of the music school's teaching and event programmes. This makes it a key participant in the city's music scene and a cornerstone of cultural education, making a lasting contribution to both grassroots and elite advancement. However, in its current form, the central facility neither offers sufficient capacity nor provides the necessary visibility for the music school within the urban space. These conditions make modernization and improvements considerably more difficult than, for instance, at a more open, easier-access 'third place'. Moreover, the broader contextual framework has changed. Decentralized locations in

schools are now only available to the music school to a very limited extent, due to the expanded all-day school programme. The school therefore needs to restructure itself and consolidate its premises further. The aim is to develop a dedicated 'Music School Centre' that will serve as a central hub for musical education. Such a location would not only significantly improve the physical environment in which modern-day education and training in music take place, but also open up new opportunities for collaborations, music outreach events/concerts, and innovative formats. At the same time, it would enhance the visibility of the music school within the urban landscape and underscore its role as a major player in Hannover's music ecosystem. In recognition of conflicts over use at the site, which has hitherto been shared, the municipal administration is launching a process that will ultimately result in a city-wide solution which best meets everybody's needs.

4.3 Area for Action no. 2: enhancing the funding framework and policy environment

The existing funding framework provides an important foundation for the music scene in Hannover. However, many of those involved perceive it as lacking transparency, difficult to access in some cases, and insufficiently predictable in terms of planning. There are currently funding gaps, particularly in the field of popular music, although this also applies to innovative and interdisciplinary projects and initiatives in music education and outreach. In addition, there is a lack of long-term funding prospects, and a clearer overview of existing opportunities for financial support is also absent. Hannover is, however, home to major funding bodies and foundations such as the Ministry of Science and Culture (MWK), the Lower Saxony Savings Banks Foundation (NSpS), the Stiftung Niedersachsen foundation, the NDR Musikförderung funding programme, and the Region Hannover authority. In this context, it is important to make effective use of the potential for coordinated action and strategic collaboration, and to establish this on a sustained structural basis. In the participatory process, it emerged that the funding framework is understood not merely in terms of financial mechanisms, but as a key enabler for artistic development, innovation and professional opportunities. There is significant potential for advancement in the fields of popular music and the music industry. With its existing studios, companies and producers, Hannover has a strong foundation in this area, but has yet to make use of this potential on a systematic basis. Against this background, the idea of a 'Hannover Record Label' or a music hub is being discussed as a strategic approach to integrate the entire value chain more firmly in the city — from production and marketing to international connectivity.

Specific approaches introduced during the participatory process highlight the potential of such a model: for example, talented youngsters could produce music in professional studios, work with technical support, gain performance opportunities, and be integrated into international ex-

change programmes. It also became clear that funding must respond more effectively to new developments – such as those in the fields of digitization, AI and new forms of production.

The aim is to enhance the funding framework with regard to planning reliability and a needs-based approach.

Strategic goals

- To improve transparency in respect of funding options
- To enhance long-term and sustainable funding mechanisms
- To eliminate existing funding gaps
- To provide greater support for innovation and for artistic development
- To incorporate local excellence and local potential more strongly

Measures in detail

Expansion of music funding

The existing basic municipal funding scheme for music will be maintained and moved forward over the long term. A key step is the targeted elimination of funding gaps – in areas including specific support of popular music, music outreach and audience engagement. At the same time, new platforms and vehicles such as participation in conferences or in-service training programmes are to be given greater consideration as measures eligible for partial funding. The aim is to create a funding structure that is, overall, more transparent, accessible and amenable to planning, and hence to improve the policy environment for artistic development.

A 'Hannover Record Label'

The establishment of a music hub under the working title Plattenfirma Hannover is conceived as a strategic funding programme aimed at the targeted advancement, professionalization and positioning of musical talent. The goal is to systematically connect Hannover's unique strengths as a city of music along an end-to-end value chain — from talent scouting, production and artistic development to release, marketing and live presentation, while also boosting international visibility.

The emphasis is on support for promising musical talent from Hannover. At the same time, the hub can also be opened up to national and international artists, especially through collaborative initiatives and dialogue/exchange programmes.

A focus on high-quality development under professional conditions is crucial here: artists should be given the opportunity to produce music at a high level, for example in high-performance studio and production

environments such as the Peppermint Pavillon, and to enhance their artistic efforts within an integrated support context. The music hub is conceived not as a traditional record label, but rather as a collaborative development model at the point where cultural promotion, the music industry, technology and international networking meet. The idea is to take the expertise already present at the location and pool it more effectively so that new pathways can be generated for nurturing talent, productions and collaborative projects. Hannover is particularly well suited for this. Internationally renowned artists such as Scorpions, Fury in the Slaughterhouse, Igor Levit and Mousse T. are synonymous with the city's creative appeal. Businesses such as Sennheiser are instrumental in shaping the global development of cutting-edge audio technology, while promoters such as Hannover Concerts are key players in the national and international live music industry. In addition, there are high-calibre training and advancement programmes, such as those offered by the University of Music, Drama and Media in Hannover, as well as other partners in the local music and events sector, including PRO MUSICA and Event It. Exemplifying the city's appeal and capabilities, these actors could — within a cooperative partnership structure — provide the supporting foundation for just such a music hub. On this basis, a new form of collaboration can emerge that more closely integrates production, skills enhancement, technology, marketing and live experience. This would not only create better conditions under which artists can develop, but also strengthen the city's music industry infrastructure as a whole. At the same time, this can help to improve the long-term retention and nurturing of talent in Hannover. Going forward, additional initiatives could help to raise international awareness of the positive outcomes of this elite support programme. One conceivable format would be a Global Sound Week for Hannover, bringing together artists, producers, and international partners within the industry. With Plattenfirma Hannover as a music hub, Hannover will be able to consolidate its existing strengths more strategically, further expanding its role as a modern, internationally visible city of music — a place where music is not only performed, but also produced, developed and disseminated worldwide. Its UNESCO City of Music status can, and should, be actively leveraged in this connection.

EMIL – German Center for Music Technology and Digitization

The planned EMIL (Deutsches Zentrum für Musiktechnik und Digitalisierung) centre, named in tribute to Emil Berliner, will create a central hub in Hannover that brings together music, technology and innovation. This will involve the city strategically building on its historical role as a centre of musical innovation: with the invention of the phonograph record by Emil Berliner, Hannover goes back a long way as a pioneering source of technological transformative disruption in music production and distribution.

Against the backdrop of current developments, particularly in digitization and artificial intelligence, this legacy connection is once again gaining importance. New production methods, changing models of distribution and the use of AI are profoundly transforming the music industry. This highlights the need to actively position Hannover as a hub for the future of music and technology. The aim, therefore, is to develop – from an early stage, and alongside the establishment of EMIL – programmes and forums that address topics such as digital production, AI, new business models and innovative artistic approaches. The goal is to actively involve the music scene, to build and expand expertise, and to create spaces for experimentation and growth. EMIL can thus become a key driving force: acting as an interface between artistic practice, technological advancement and music industry innovation, while also serving as a visible symbol of Hannover's forward-looking development as a centre for music.

↓ Singen-von-Anfang-an (Early Childhood Singing), Musik Kiosk
Photo credit: Franziska Gilli



↓ Hannover Girls' Choir and Hannover Boys' Choir
The Lord Mayor's new Year's Reception, New Town Hall, 10 January 2025
Photo credit: Florian Arp





↑ UCOM special-funding programme:
Via Trio from the UNESCO City of Music Daegu (South Korea):
KulTOUR Karussell series of events at the Ihme Ufer riverside site
Photo credit: Sunhild Wargalla-Voß

4.4 Area for Action no. 3: boosting the next generation, talent development and career pathways

Support for musical talent is crucial to Hannover's sustainable development as a city of music. Although the state capital has a strong and wide-ranging educational landscape, it became apparent that while many talented individuals are taught here, it is not always possible to keep them here in the long term. A major reason for this is the lack of post-training opportunities at system level. The transition from education to a professional artistic career is often not adequately supported or structurally enabled.

It was also pointed out that existing networks are often difficult for emerging artists and young professionals to access. Informal frameworks play a key role, but they are not equally open to all. As a result, the potential that exists is not being fully realized. However, Hannover does offer excellent conditions for establishing seamless pathways for advancement, enabled by close links between educational institutions, the independent scene and professional support structures. Another major aspect is the need to join the dots between local-level development and a more international outlook. Particularly within the context of the *UNESCO City of Music* network, there is as-yet-untapped potential here (e.g. in terms of exchange programmes, residencies or international collaborations.) Furthermore, stronger involvement of internationally experienced community members from the private sector and institutions —in the fields of music production and music technology, for instance — offers the opportunity to contribute additional expertise to local development and to further strengthen the connection between artistic practice, innovation and the market.

The goal is to foster continuous pathways for support and growth, including the integration of education/training, the music community and the employment market.

Strategic goals

- To enhance musical education and of support for the next generation
- To facilitate transitions into professional settings
- To encourage young talent and emerging artists
- To expand vehicles for interaction, exchange and networking

Measures in detail

Mentoring in Hannover as a city of music

The mentoring programme specifically aims to forge links between emerging and established artists, as well as other key figures in the music scene.

What matters here is not only funding, but also providing access to networks, experiential knowledge and professional support structures. The programme can help to ease transitions into the world of work and create long-term opportunities in Hannover. A strategy paper to this end is to be drawn up in conjunction with experts and relevant stakeholders, with the additional aim of boosting institutional collaboration between the City of Hannover and the higher-education sector.

International vehicles for exchange aimed at young professionals

As part of the UNESCO City of Music network, international opportunities for exchange are to be specifically developed with selected UCOM partner cities. These will enable emerging artists from Hannover and fellow UCOM towns to gain international experience, draw inspiration from new artistic trends and become part of global networks. At the same time, they will enhance Hannover's international standing as an important centre within UNESCO's worldwide Cities of Music network.

Strengthening emerging festivals –
enabling professionalization and networking

Emerging festivals are key drivers in Hannover's ongoing growth as a city of music. They serve as experimental spaces for new artistic formats, as platforms for addressing and reflecting on social issues, and as accessible entry points for reaching new audiences. Events such as the KiezKultur Festival, SNNTG, Überschlag-Festival and Fuchsbau Festival are prime examples of the potential for innovation within the independent scene.

The aim is to support these initiatives in their structural development without compromising their artistic autonomy. Emphasis will be placed on streamlining organizational processes, achieving structural sustainability, and actively fostering interaction and collaboration. Through greater connectivity, synergies can emerge – through the shared use of resources, knowledge transfer and increased visibility, among other benefits.

The specific details of such funding and support measures will be determined as part of the Cultural Development Plan's broader, higher-level programmes, especially in the context of updating this plan. This is where vehicles such as the intergenerational Generationswechsel II – along with other initiatives including a production office and a multi-location 'festival lab' (Hildesheim–Hannover) – come into play, responding to the specific infrastructural/organizational needs of such festivals.

It is here that the Music Strategy explicitly references these existing mechanisms, the rationale being to provide a framework. The strategy highlights the importance of emerging festivals to the musical ecosystem, supporting them as integral to Hannover's long-term, sustainable overall development as a city of music.

4.5 Area for action no. 4: raising visibility and international standing

Hannover boasts high levels of quality and diversity in its music scene. However, this has not yet been sufficiently recognized – either within the city itself or in a national or international context. The participatory process revealed the absence of a coherent shared narrative that brings together Hannover's strengths and distinctive assets as a city of music while also communicating them effectively to the outside world. Many outstanding activities exist side by side without their impact being amplified by any overarching strategy.

Hannover's *UNESCO City of Music* status provides a key foundation for this, but has yet to be leveraged on any systematic basis. Its potential in terms of international cooperation, raising Hannover's profile and city branding has not yet been fully realized, and neither has the title's significance as signifying potential and as a means of promoting democracy. At the same time, the process highlighted a need within the wider urban community to raise awareness of the importance of music and a thriving musical scene — not only as a cultural asset, but also as a social and economic driving force. The goal is to firmly position Hannover as a national and international centre for music.

Strategic goals

- To increase the visibility of Hannover as an important musical centre through targeted and strategic use of the *UNESCO City of Music* title
- To expand international collaboration by developing clear thematic priorities and long-term partnerships
- To develop and implement a joint communication strategy for Hannover as a city of music
- To improve presentation of, and raising of awareness about, the significance of the *UNESCO City of Music* title

→ Hört!Hört! (Hear! Hear!)
Artwork from the 2026 Unboxing campaign by
Hannover Marketing & Tourismus GmbH

Measures in detail

Presenting the UNESCO City of Music narrative

This measure is intended to ensure the targeted communication – to specific audiences, and in a sustainable manner – of the diversity, quality and distinctive aspects of Hannover as a *UNESCO City of Music*. It is about both how the city is perceived from the outside and strengthening a sense of belonging within it. The public-private agency Hannover Marketing and Tourism GmbH has recognized the potential of this status and, in its current 'Unboxing Hannover' campaign to promote the state capital beyond the region, is using the *UNESCO City of Music* designation as one of its defining themes. Building on this, collaboration with the municipal marketing team is to be strategically intensified in order to specifically highlight and promote key aspects of Hannover as a centre for music. This also applies to its cityscape. Since December 2025, the popular Musikgully art installation, with piped music emerging from a manhole cover outside the Central Station, has been augmented by the much-used outdoor piano in the Kulturdreieck (Culture Triangle), a city centre zone where the arts are emphasized. The idea emerged as part of the Dialog im Dreieck initiative in cooperation with an association called Piano Bombing e.V..

Starting in May 2026, a column heavily adorned with posters in the Kröpcke square will also draw the attention of passers-by to the UNESCO title. As part of its national press campaign, "Hannover – City of Culture" will be highlighting its status as a *UNESCO City of Music* in spring 2026; musical events are already being promoted via the City of Culture's social media channels. All of these measures will contribute to the UCOM narrative; going forward, however, they will require systemically improved coordination and integration.



An international network

Global connectivity within the *UNESCO City of Music* network is to be strategically expanded. As 84 cities worldwide are now part of this network, one particular emphasis is on working hard to build robust, long-term collaborations with selected partner towns from within the UCOM network. The goal is the advancement of strategic partnerships that extend beyond isolated one-off or individual projects, and are designed for continuous cooperation with a special focus on promoting sustainability, gender equality, and peacebuilding through culture. Key to this are joint projects, exchange programmes and the development of strong, dependable relationships within the *UNESCO City of Music* network, which promote artistic growth, knowledge transfer and international visibility in equal measure.



↑ Keno Weber conducting Was uns verbindet [What Unites Us]: The Public Domain, a collaborative project between Hannover State Opera, the Musikzentrum and the City of Hannover, 14 June 2025, Opernplatz Hannover

↓ Britta Görtz,
New Year's Reception held by the Lord Mayor, New Town Hall, 10 January 2025
Photo credit: Florian Arp



4.6 Area for Action no. 5: strengthening connectivity and collaboration

The analysis shows that many of Hannover's potential strengths as a city of music have yet to be fully capitalized upon; dialogue, collaboration and co-ordination among those involved still, in some cases, do not take place on a systematic enough basis. During the participatory process it became evident that, although there are numerous initiatives and networks, these often operate in isolation and are only loosely connected. As a result, synergies remain untapped and shared development is made more difficult. At the same time, there is a clearly expressed interest in stronger networking and cooperation. Many stakeholders see this as a key prerequisite for Hannover's future progress as a leading centre for music.

For strategic advancement, three levels of collaborative development can be distinguished:

- Within individual subsectors ('bubbles') of the music landscape (e.g. choral music, classical music, pop, the independent scene): the goal is to foster closer alignment within the various categories (e.g. through vehicles such as round-table sessions, coordinated programme planning, or interaction between professionals on specific topics).
- Between the different sectors within the music community as a whole: the focus here is on strengthening the connective tissue between institutional actors, the independent scene, the music industry, and education/training in order to improve transition pathways into careers, make use of synergies, and enable the joint advancement of the music ecosystem.
- Beyond the music scene and into other spheres of society: collaborations with players in urban development, education, business and other social domains open up additional potential, and strengthen the role of music for the city in its entirety.

The aim is to systematically strengthen these three levels in order to unlock Hannover's existing potential, and its development dynamics, in a targeted and sustainable way.

Strategic goals

- Strengthening collaboration between stakeholders Enhancing the existing networks
- Creating new forms of collaboration
- Improving dialogue/exchange and coordination
- Promoting new partnerships (both within and beyond one's own 'bubble(s)' Kooperationen, auch außerhalb der eigenen
- Connecting music with other spheres of society

Measures in detail

Strengthening interdisciplinary networks

In order to structurally improve collaboration and knowledge transfer, Hannover will establish specific vehicles for interaction, exchange and gatherings, and existing networks will be strengthened. The aim is to establish lasting platforms for communication, cooperation and joint project development. This can help make better use of existing potential and provide new momentum for the state capital as a city of music.

Round-table discussions

Specific round-table discussion sessions (on, for instance, the medium-term planning of choral and orchestral repertoire) will enable targeted coordination within individual areas of Hannover's musical life. They will provide a forum for discussion about programmes, changes and challenges, and help to better coordinate such programmes – as well as activities and schedules – in the context of joint strategic development.



↑ Klaus Meine, launch event:
10 years of Hannover as a UNESCO City of Music, 30 November 2024, Pavillon Cultural Centre
Photo credit: China Hopson



5 MOVING FURTHER AHEAD – OUTLOOK

The Music Strategy of the City of Hannover is intended to follow on from the Cultural Development Plan (KEP), and as a continuation of its key objectives in the realm of music. As part of efforts to update the Plan, the following guidelines bring together the chief findings from the analysis and participatory process, translating them into a clear strategic framework. They chart a course for the fundamental development of Hannover as a city of music in the coming years. As an overarching frame of reference, they provide guidance for policymakers, public administration, and stakeholders in the music scene, linking cultural-policy objectives with specific needs for action. To ensure that the Music Strategy is impactful in the manner desired, a system of ongoing monitoring will be put in place. The Music Strategy is designed as a learning and adaptable tool, based on a rolling planning approach. In an interactive process with the city and its cultural ecosystem, it is continually evolving.

← New Year's reception given by the Lord Mayor,
New Town Hall, 10 January 2025
Photo credit: Florian Arp

1

Strengthening music as a driver of urban development

2

Fostering resilience through relationships and international connectivity

3

Preserving and developing musical diversity

4

Safeguarding infrastructure and spaces for the long term

5

Designing the funding framework to be transparent and sustainable

6

Providing targeted support for emerging talent

7

Creating access and enabling inclusive participation

8

Increasing Hannover’s visibility as a UNESCO City of Music

9

Fostering innovation and creating spaces for experimentation

10

Strengthening fair and sustainable working conditions

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