



# Worcation

YOUR SUMMER IN GÖRLITZ-ZGORZELEC



2019



MEETINGPOINT  
MUSIC  
MESSIAEN

# WORCATION

## The idea, the history and the people

Worcation – that means creative international work in a historical place – Stalag VIII A. There is so much to do - digging, sweeping, cleaning, welding and bending and at the same time contemplating! But there is also a lot of fun - chilling out, having barbecues, swimming and exploring the magnificent region.

All this and a lot more is what Worcation has to offer. Every year the Meeting-point Music Messiaen e.V. invites young people from Europe: Italy, France, Ukraine, Germany, Poland to participate.

In the beginning of Worcation a group of 23 young people came together in the Twincity of Görlitz-Zgorzelec on the German-Polish border. After two weeks all of them felt that they have changed with the experience, they were closer to people from other countries, spoke foreign languages and talked about history.

The participants, aged between 16 and 24, learned something about tolerance and confidence to one another and the work as a team. Moreover, they got to know the Stalag VIII A and its history from different perspectives. Together they actively learned to better understand European History, which is still valid today and affects us all more than ever.



Worcation revolves around a place, which has been almost forgotten for decades – the prisoner of war camp Stalag VIII A in former Görlitz (now Zgorzelec). Approximately 120 000 soldiers from all over Europe spend their years of captivity during the Second World War in Stalag VIII A. On January 15th 1941 one of the most outstanding musical masterpieces of 20th century had been performed in one of the barracks - “Quartet for the End of Time” composed by Olivier Messiaen a French composer and soldier, who had been held as a prisoner of war in Stalag VIII A between 1940 and 1941.



Today more and more interested people from the region and from all over Europe are coming to Stalag VIII A. Whether it is the POW's relatives, students, artists, musicians, scientists and citizens – all of them are visiting this place to discover its history. Additionally, they are coming to learn something, being inspired and gain experience, for both the present and the future, by coming together with other people. The opening of the European Centre Memory, Education, Culture – Meetingpoint Music Messiaen in 2015 marks the institutional establishment of this place for the intensive international, experimental and state-of-the-art educational work.



Worcation (until 2014 named International Workcamp) is organized by the association Meetingpoint Music Messiaen since 2008. The former prisoner of war camp Stalag VIII A, the music and creativity of Messiaen are the context and initial point of the Meetingpoint Music Messiaen e.V.'s work. Since 2006 the association has been trying to bring back the memory of the history of Stalag VIII A and many personal stories connected to this place. The association's main focus is working with young people.



# Workshops

## OUR CREATIVE WORK

In the first three days the participants got to know the meaning of the place they came together in an inductive historical workshop. After that they took part in an interactive workshop about forced labour in Görlitz. On the third day the group participated in a panel discussion „Görlitz and Zgorzelec – the cities` history after World War II “. All activities were guided by the motto “Flight and Migration – past and present”. Following, the group split into an archeology, rap and theatre workshop.

# Archaeological WORKSHOP



The participants of the archaeological workshop worked together with the experienced archaeologist Paweł Zawadzki. This year, a barrack's night toilet was uncovered. The participants found artefacts which reflect the reality of life in the POW camp: soldier's equipment from different countries, preserving jars, dishes, coins and various other things of daily usage. During the workshop the group learned how to get to the bottom of historical issues and to interpret their findings with the help of other sources such as photos, documents and statements.

# Theatre



WORKSHOP



The workshop's and the production's effect was a theatre performance inspired by original historical sources, stories and artefacts of Stalag VIII A as well as from the participant's reflections. A creative view on the dramatic personal story of one of prisoners of war in Stalag VIII A shed some light on the fact that our humanity is in grave danger whenever faced with inhumane political ideas. In the workshop Arkadiusz Ziętek – artist, producer and pedagogue - used different methods and techniques used in theatre to help activate the participant's emotions as well as physicality. The final presentation took part on the grounds of Stalag VIII A and was built on realistic as well as symbolic scenic expressions.



# Rap

WORKSHOP



Writing, rapping, performing and presenting were all core elements of the rap workshop. Participants could actively involve themselves in a creative way and also had the opportunity to develop their own track. Together with a workshop leader, Christian Weirich, the participants dealt with this year's project topic "Flight and Migration" in an artistic way. During a process oriented writing workshop participants worked on their texts in their own languages and then tried to incorporate their results into music. In doing so, the group was able to connect cultural and linguistic aspects of their work. During the final presentation they performed two songs "Utopia" and "Migration" in English, French and Polish.

"I got a new family."



"You opened my mind,  
forever glad."

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"I feel more comfortable in English, I learned new things about history and about new culture."



“I will take with me the best part of everyone in this group we created. Your patience, your smiles and your tears.”



“I really liked the workshops in general and the fact that the organizers allowed us to do what we wanted in many occasion. I never felt like I had been forced to do something.”



“In this group I felt myself more self-confident and that is the best way to build up friendships and relationships. I won't forget all the things I have learned.”



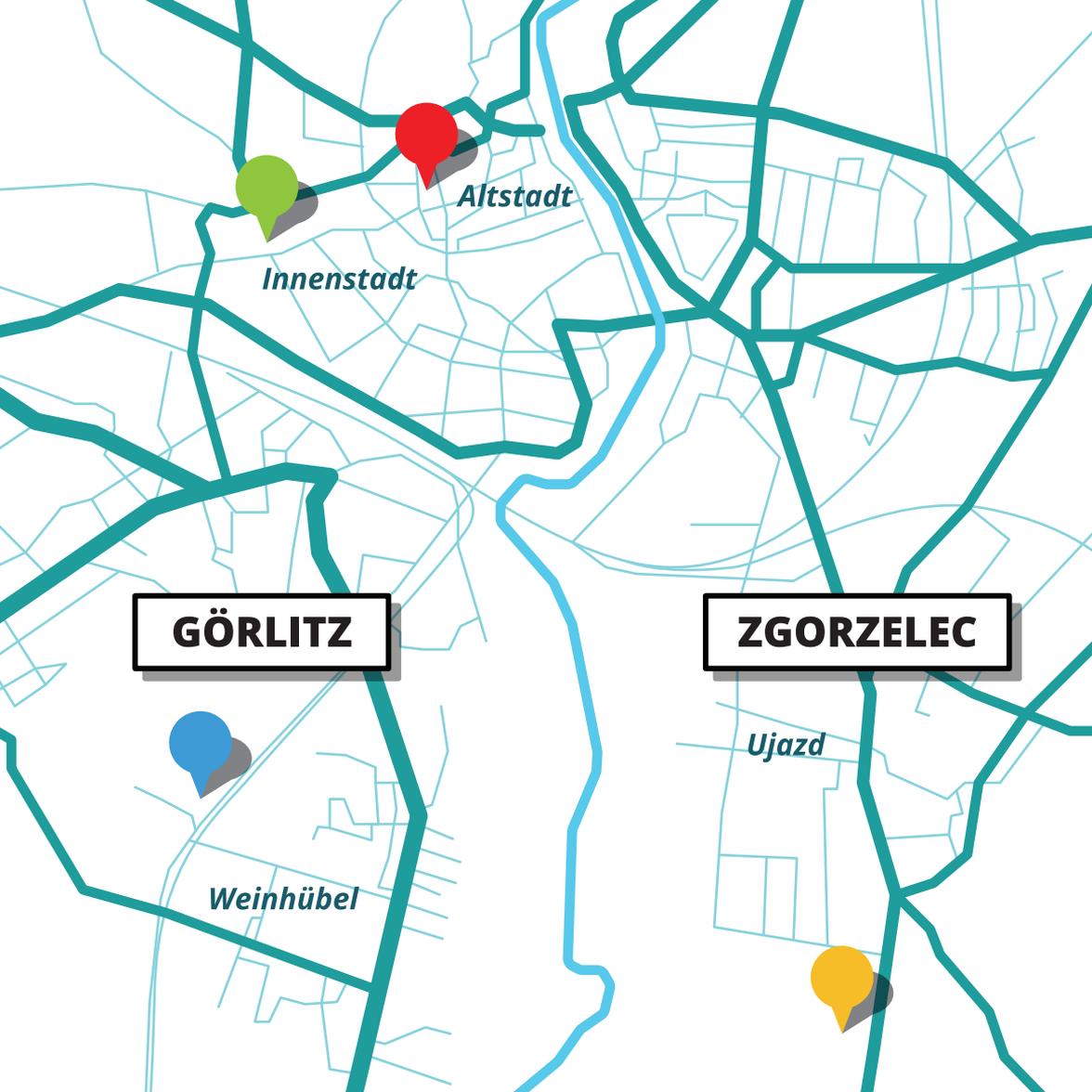
# Venues



WHERE DOES WORCATION TAKE PLACE?

All participants are accommodated in the CVJM Peregrinus hostel in Görlitz. The group has the whole hostel for its sole usage and therefore can evolve very freely. One of the most important parts of Worcation is “self-organizing” which means the group has to cook, wash, clean and organize their evenings amongst themselves. The hostel is located in the middle of the old town of Görlitz which means all the interesting places are in a walkable distance and you can easily cross the border to the Polish part of the twincity: Zgorzelec.

The workshops take place on the grounds of the memory site Stalag VIII A. In 2015 the European Centre Memory, Education, Culture – Meetingpoint Music Messiaen has been opened on the memorial site. It provides the participant´s with an exhibition and room for an initial workshop about the history. The final presentation is also held in the European Centre.



**GÖRLITZ**

**ZGORZELEC**

*Innenstadt*

*Altstadt*

*Weinhübel*

*Ujazd*

After the workshops the participants come back to their hostel in the old town. The programme is also accompanied by cultural evenings, a city game, daily group sessions, evaluations, language animations, energizing games and free evening programme as well.

On the few days free of work in the workshops the group starts to get to know the so called Euroregion. During a trip to Dresden the group visits the German Museum of Military History which gives the participant´s more background-knowledge on what happened during the Second World War and leads to lively discussions while strolling around Saxony´s capital city. To get moving the group embarked on a boat trip on the river Neiße and also took relaxing trip to the nearby Berzdorf lake.

One part of the historical introductory workshop took place in an old factory named „Kühlhaus“, which is a place for subcultural events, concerts, sports and recreation, build by young people in the region. Another place we get to know during our project was the youth centre “Rabryka”, where we spent a cosy barbecue evening.







# Results

## MEMORIAL CEREMONY AND RESULTS

The project's final phase starts with the preparation of the final presentation in the European Centre Memory, Education, Culture.

Together as a group the participant's show their results and share their experiences with the public. Supporters, friends and city officials come together in the end of this two weeks to commemorate the many thousand victims of Stalag VIII A.

During this two weeks young people from different countries and cultural background got to know and respect each other. The participants have learned more about a not very common historical topic and realized that their own lives and the lives of their families are connected to the past.

Coming together, trying to understand the lives of those who have been held captive in this camp can teach the participants to respect each, other cultures and languages and enables them to not only work together on this project but to work together in building a strong European bond which they are part of.



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Demokratie *leben!*



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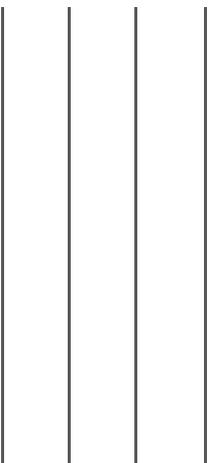


## SUPPORTERS





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