



MEETINGPOINT  
MUSIC  
MESSIAEN



# WORCATION 2017

# YOUR SUMMER IN GÖRLITZ - ZGORZELEC



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## 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 barbecue, swimming and exploring the magnificent region.

All this and a lot more is what Worcation has to offer. Every year the MEETINGPOINT MUSIC MESSIAEN e.V. invites young people from Poland, Italy and Germany to participate.

In the beginning of Worcation a group of 22 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 26, learned something about tolerance and confidence to one another and the work as a team. Moreover, they get 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 then ever. They are guided by the motto "European Youth Works European History".







In this summer the association Meetingpoint Music  
Messiaen organized Worcation for the 10th time in  
Görlitz-Zgorzelec.



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). It is here, where the participants also cleaned a small cemetery, which should remind us of thousands of dead soldiers – mostly from the former Soviet Union – that were buried here namelessly. Approximate 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 the STA-LAG VIII A. Whether it is relatives the POWs, 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 Center 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.

This summer, Worcation (until 2014 named International Workcamp) was organized by the association MEETINGPOINT MUSIC MESSIAEN for the 10th time. The former prisoner





The public final presentation of Worcation took place on August 04. The participants presented their work and the results and remembered the victims of the Stalag VIII A.

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 human stories connected to this place. The association's main focus is working with young people.

## ARCHAEOLOGY

### Digging for knowledge in the Stalag VIII A

The participants of the archaeological workshop work together with the experienced archaeologist Pawel Zawadzki. This year there were two archaeological sites in the part where the Soviet soldiers have been kept separately. The participants found a lot of artefacts that reflect the reality of this place: soldier's equipments from different countries, preserving jars, dishes, coins and various other things of daily usage. The archaeologist showed the group how to correctly clean the artefacts, document the findings and how to make conclusions out of the findings. The young people also cleaned various places like the memorial stone and the cemetery of Soviet POWs.



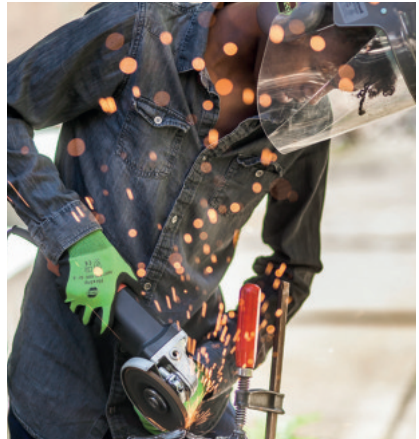


# METAL

## Giving prisoners of war a face

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In this workshop the participants were able to show their creativity as metal artists. Under direction of the experienced pedagogue and metal artist Matthias Beier, the participants designed and created portraits of three POWs from Stalag VIII A. At beginning the group was dealing with the biography of the three soldiers kept in the Stalag VIII A during World War II. During the workshop the granddaughter of POW Hecquet visited from Belgium to look for her grandfather's remains. Marie Hecquet filled the participants in on her grandfather's life and the meeting became an essential and inspiring moment for the group. Now the soldiers are not anonymous numbers anymore, but touchable men for



visitors of Stalag VIII A. So the work of the metal workshop is a huge contribution in the process of creating a place of remembrance that raises the dignity of the former POWs.



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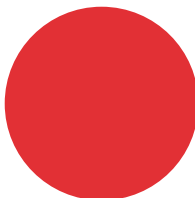
Sabina: "Taking part guarantees you fun, wonderful experiences, that you don't experience anywhere else, and - first of all - you can meet great people who can be friends for rest of your life."



Ola: „This group means more for me than my class."



Tomek: "If you want to know more about history and cultures of many nationalities. Worcation is for You!"



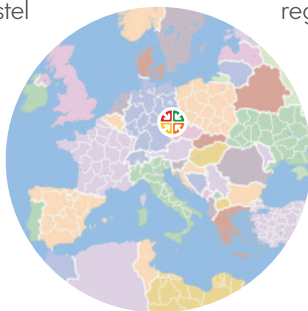
## PLACES

### Where did Worcation take place?

For the first time all participants were accommodated together in the CVJM Peregrinus hostel in Görlitz. The group had the whole hostel for its sole use and could evolve very freely. One of the most important parts of Worcation is "self-organizing" which means the group has to cook, do grocery shopping, 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. The metal workshop took place in an old factory named „Kühlhaus“,

which is a place for subcultural events, concerts, sports and recreation. This place is build by young people in the region and also it is the home of the metal workshop.



The archaeological workshop takes place on the grounds of the Stalag VIII A. In 2015 the European Center 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 as well as room to take a break or clean up the artifacts.



**Görlitz**

**ZGORZELEC**

**UJAZD**

**NIKOLAIVORSTADT**

**STADT**

**INNEN**

**WEINHÜBEL**

**B 99**

**B 99**

**B 99**



## FREETIME

### What happened after the workshops?

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

On the few days free of work in the

workshops the group started to get to know the so called Euroregion. During a trip to Dresden the group visited the German Museum of Military History which gave the participant's more background-knowledge on what happened during the Second World War and led 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 a rather relaxing trip to the nearby Berzdorf lake.

After work the group had the chance to get to know other young people in Görlitz during a barbecue at the youth center "Rabryka" and a concert of classical music as well as on different occasions.







Michal: "The most beautiful part of WORCA-TION 2017 was spending time with other people and talking, learning from each other and laughing."

## RESULTS

### Memorial ceremony and results

The project's final phase starts with the preparation of the final presentation in the European Center 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 thousands of victims of the 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 others 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.



After two weeks of hard work the participants present the results and share their experiences with friends, supporters and guests and thus commemorate the victims of Stalag VIII A.



## FACTS

### Worcation in numbers

-  more than 120 artefacts found on the archaeological site
-  1 visit of a POW's granddaughter
-  two wonderful weeks (22th July till 05th August 2017) with great people
-  22 participants born in 10 different countries
-  5 boats 5 teams and an extremely competitive river race
-  record: 14 mosquito bites in one day
-  more then 15 kilos cooked rice
-  3 metal sculptures representing POWs from Belgium holding up the memory of 120.000 POWs

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BE THERE WORCATION 2018!





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