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German Band Provides Language Lessons Through Music and Lyrics

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The universal language of music can be a bridge between different countries and cultures – Carl Amadeus Hiller has known this since a very young age. The leader, co-founder and percussionist of the Munich-based band EINSHOCH6, who originally comes from Vienna, will visit Indonesia in early October together with the rest of the group. This project is part of the German Season, a festival organized by the Goethe Institute, the German Embassy in Jakarta and the German-Indonesian Chamber of Industry and Commerce (Ekonid), to celebrate the long-lasting friendship between Indonesia and Germany.

EINSHOCH6 will tour in both Denpasar and Yogyakarta, yet this is not your ordinary music performance: prior to the shows, the band will hold workshops for high school students who are learning the German language. Together, they will write song lyrics and melodeze them. As a special treat, the students will then be invited on stage with the band during the concerts to perform their own songs.

The students participating in this project come from schools across Indonesia that are part of the "PASCH – Schools: Partners for the Future" initiative, a global network of around 1,500 schools worldwide that place a high value on the German language.

Before his departure to Indonesia, Hiller spoke with the Jakarta Globe about the upcoming trip, the band's expectations and the rewarding feeling of spreading interest in the German language all around the world.

EINSHOCH6 is a very unique band, as you combine classical music with hip hop – how did you first come up with this idea?

I grew up in a family that has a strong affection to classical music. Most of the other members also have a classical background, so for us it seemed just obvious to add our skills to one of the most popular music styles of our teenage years -- hip hop.

Some of us still are successfully performing as classical musicians. But even after 12 years of band history we are constantly experiencing how energetic and exciting this collaboration can be.

In collaboration with Deutsche Welle, you have created the so-called 'Band Diary with EINSHOCH6.' Could you explain this concept to us?

"Band Diary with EINSHOCH6" is a web series targeting young students and teachers of the German language. It is completely free to watch and download. The 53 episodes of the series offer users around the world an unusual learning experience that incorporates a combination of education and entertainment. "Band Diary" not only makes it easier to remember German syntax, intonation and vocabulary through the medium of hip-hop songs, it also provides a look at the daily lives and the culture behind the music of the band EINSHOCH6. Every episode includes additional educational features and accompanying learning materials. Subtitles and interactive practice sessions are available for individual learning, as are teaching suggestions and worksheets for educators. A karaoke video and MP3-version of each song is also included, so students can sing and rap along to the music.

Why do you think it's important to engage yourselves in projects such as this one?

On our tours with the "Band Diary" we have experienced how enthusiastic people all around the world are about German language and culture. We are very happy to provide a way to get to know a foreign language -- through music. Everyone knows how easily a text can be adapted through a song, and how much fun it can be. We are very fortunate to be able to show a young, modern and joyful version of German culture. And of course it is a great opportunity for EINSHOCH6 to gain fans all around the globe.

You will be visiting Denpasar and Yogyakarta to hold workshops and also perform during concerts. What will the workshops look like, and how will you integrate the workshop results into your live performances?

Three musicians and a trainer by the Deutsche Welle will hold the workshops. Usually we work with groups of 30 to 35 students. The main goal is to get the students singing and then get them to write their own songs. For this purpose we have written a song that is easy to understand. We have developed several exciting games that we play in the workshops to get the students ready for the lyrics of the song.

In the second part of the workshop we encourage the students to write their own lyrics based on the structure of our workshop song. Of course we help them with writing and finding rhymes. We intend to perform those new songs during the live shows in Denpasar and Yogyakarta. This will be an exciting new experience for both the students and us, and probably a very rewarding one as well.

Is this your first time in Indonesia? What are your expectations?

A few of the band members have already been to Indonesia, so the expectations are quite high. As we know, there are many people studying German all around the country, so we are looking forward to have a very interested audience. Most Germans only know about Indonesia as a holiday destination, so we are very happy that we can get in touch

with the local community and learn more about the educational system. And of course we're excited to enjoy the amazing food and later on recover from our work at one of Indonesia's fantastic beaches!

What comes next for EINSHOCH6? You have recently collaborated with the symphony orchestra from Munich. Do you have any other exciting collaborations coming up?

After the release of our latest album, "Die Stadt springt," with the Munich Symphony Orchestra, we are expecting to tour around Germany.

In 2016, we will also be on an orchestral tour in South Korea. Right now we are planning to add more concerts in southern China with a Chinese orchestra. We are always interested in working with local musicians, as we occasionally did while touring with the "Band diary," so we're looking forward to experience more exciting collaborations all around the world.

For more information, visit www.jermanfest.com or www.dw.de/bandtagebuch.