

# Learn To Think to the Sound of Swiss Music

## Philosopher au rythme de la musique suisse

### Die Philosophie der Schweizer Musikszene

project application for the *Agora* funding scheme  
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September 1, 2019

Start date: 1st of March, 2020.

Duration: 3 years.

Funding requested: 199984.80 CHF.

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Third parties: philosophie.ch, Valros filmproductions, Science et Cité.

The present AGORA submission proposes to organise a series of philosophical discussions, open to the general public, between Swiss musicians and academic philosophers, on topics of contemporary concern, both within academic philosophy and in our society as a whole. These discussions will be filmed and distributed, in edited form, on social media and on the Swiss philosophy portal <https://www.philosophie.ch>.

The aim is to increase the level of sophistication and of conceptual clarity of the general discussion, by making philosophical concepts and distinctions relevant to the contemporary debate. To this end, academic philosophers are invited to take ideas and opinions voiced in contemporary songs as their starting-points, and make their contributions intelligible and interesting to their authors; musicians take the stage to serve as intermediaries between philosophers and the general public.

The project is a resubmission of an AGORA application entitled "Philosophy Bites" (CRAGP1-184354) submitted a year ago to generally positive reviews and intends to allay the doubts voiced last year concerning its feasibility; it is also more detailed and more focussed than its predecessor.

By involving, other than philosophers, people who enjoy some general popularity and who themselves are reflective on and sensitive to societal concerns, the project aims at creating public awareness, not just of philosophical perspectives on the questions under discussion, but of the possibility of involving academic philosophers in today's intellectual discourse more generally. It is hoped that during the discussions to be organised, some memorable and quotable statements will be made, which may then 'go viral', and may also lead to press coverage in more traditional outlets. To achieve this aim, the project will produce both short and smart-phone adapted jingles, conforming to contemporary *infotainment* standards, as exemplified by the *konbini* or *buzzfeed* items (or RTS's *tataki* experiment).

Topics for the discussion events will be set in accordance with the participants. A preliminary list focusses on questions in social and political philosophy and in ethics which are both of the pro-or-contra and of the what-is-it kind, often interwoven together: patriotism, monogamy, democracy, happiness, political correctness, children, feminism, migration, taxation, war, capitalism, the financial crisis, social democracy, liberalism, beauty, implicit bias, food, freedom, punishment, discrimination, pornography, to name just a few.

Scheduled events are publicised timely and widely, through conventional channels such as mailing lists and posters, but also through the newsletter of <https://www.philosophie.ch> and a communication partnership with *Science et Cité*. Registered participants will receive relevant readings in advance, and the participating philosophers will be informed of philosophically relevant bits in the artists' works. These bits of information will be made available on the web-based platform of the project, to be integrated into the general architecture of <https://www.philosophie.ch>, where a blog-function will also encourage online discussion. These discussions will be carefully monitored, and their content as well as their extent will in turn influence the planning of future events: for each of the three years, five events are planned, and each annual series will take into account lessons learned from the previous one(s).

The events of the first year will take place in Biel, at the Restaurant "Les Trois Gorges" (Taubenlochweg 4, 2535 Biel), reducing organisation costs. They will consist in short inputs by the two invited philosophers and the moderator, a discussion between them and the invited musician and a general discussion with the invited public. They will be held in either French or German, with real time translation done, if needed, by the moderator. The aim of these discussions is not just to articulate and defend the respective views, but to raise the standards of public discourse on the topic more generally, using distinctions and concepts introduced in the philosophical literature and presented at the event by the moderator.

# Detailed Research Plan

“Learn To Think to the Sound of Swiss Music”  
project application for the *Agora* funding scheme (39'195 words)  
Philipp Blum & David Furrer, University of Lucerne

Philosophy should be sung.

In his *Republic*, Plato made two concrete proposals on how to make the world a better place: philosophers should be kings, and poetry and poets should be banned from the ideal city. The present project aims at proving him wrong: art, and music in particular, is not just a good thing in itself, but may help to make the world a better place. It may also help to improve philosophy. Philosophical theorising does not take place in a vacuum: it interacts with, responds to and in turn influences the general societal discourse, which in turn is shaped, catalysed and conceptualised by the music people like to listen to. Both philosophers and musicians are in the business of articulating views, sentiments and situations and seek to understand their times through an abstract medium. Both philosophers and singers, in particular, use language to express perspectives on the world, in order to re(de)fine, ameliorate and better articulate both the world itself and our understanding of it.

Collaboration between philosophers and musicians may thus turn out fruitful, beneficial for both sides separately, but also for society as a whole. The present project aims to contribute to this aim, by organising a series of interactions between Swiss philosophers and musicians, away from their home turf and outside their comfort zone.

## 1 Context

In recent years, Swiss academic philosophy has undergone a generational change. While many new professors have been appointed, and new programs and curricula have sprung into existence, the wider public has not took much notice of this recent invigoration of Swiss philosophy. The aim of the present project is to improve on this, and to let talented Swiss philosophers break free from their self-imposed chains and explore the real world beyond their ivory towers.

Such institutional change in Switzerland happens against the background of a broader cultural change in the discipline as a whole. In some part anticipating, in some part reacting to societal and political changes, many new themes have found their way into mainstream philosophy, which in the still not too recent past was largely focused on what were then called ‘core’ areas, i.e. logic, language, epistemology, mind and metaphysics. On many such new themes, philosophers directly compete with social scientists, empirical psychologists, literary theorists and other ‘people of letters’. In our view, such competition presents philosophy with a challenge that should be welcomed, and met on its own terms. Philosophers should leave their study rooms and engage, directly and in public, with philosophical and more generally intellectual questions and opinions of non-philosophers.

Many of the ‘new’ themes are new only with respect to the dominant, so-called ‘analytic’ mainstream, in particular of Anglo-Saxon philosophy. Other traditions, institutionally often anchored in other fields such as literary, film, cultural, gender, race and disability studies, in comparative literature and some departments of sociology, have long been dealing with such political, ideological and societal issues. It is one of the subsidiary aims of the present project to overcome such artificial divisions and bear all strands and traditions of original thinking to bear on the issues at hand.

Bringing philosophy out onto the marketplace of ideas allows us to test the viability of its claim that it has something unique to offer, not just in terms of analytical tools and debating skills, but by illu-

minating humdrum topics from some theoretical distance, providing hindsight, drawing important distinctions, highlighting forgotten theoretical possibilities and finding promising new avenues for contemporary thinking. In this respect, the present project offers to test a hypothesis: not just that philosophers have something relevant to say, but that what they say will find an interested public.

The exchange thus fostered should be two-way. Not only does society need philosophy (or so the present project aims to show), but philosophy increasingly feels it needs society, in part to overcome its own sociological problems. Especially in Anglo-Saxon countries, but increasingly in Continental Europe as well, the rejuvenation, professionalisation and specialisation of philosophy as an academic discipline, in combination with an increasingly hostile political environment, has led many young philosophers to pioneer a new self-understanding of the discipline of philosophy as politically and socially avant-garde not just in theory, but in practice as well. There has been a lot of criticism, particularly among younger members of the discipline, of the underrepresentation among the higher ranks of professional philosophers of women (compared to the proportion of female students), of members of lower (or even average) economic strata and of first-, second- and third-generation 'immigrants', especially in comparison to other academic disciplines, as well as the absolute (though not necessarily comparative) scarcity of members of discriminated minorities, such as non-heterosexuals, disabled people and others.

Opening up philosophical discussion to a direct engagement with other formers of public opinion, not less intelligent and often more creative, as well as better attuned to the opinions, sensibilities and concerns of the younger members of our society in particular, will hopefully create a win-win situation, where non-philosophers learn to appreciate the type of stand-alooof radicalism abstract philosophical theorising can provide, and philosophers learn how to make themselves, their discourse but also their opinions easier connectable to the concerns of the people ultimately responsible for their salaries.

The present project plans to organise a total of fifteen major events, of intense discussion between, on each occasion, two philosophers and one non-philosopher, on a collaboratively chosen topic of present concern, to be filmed and subsequently edited into both short appetisers and longer info-documentaries, distributed through Facebook, Youtube, Instagram and other social media.

One particular group has been chosen as providing the non-philosopher interlocutors, not just asking questions, but themselves coming forward with hypotheses and claims of a more 'philosophical' nature: the Swiss music scene. The Swiss music scene is a quite diverse microcosm of many different characters, but densely populated with intelligent, witty, outspoken and articulate individuals who think, often quite deeply, about people and their place in society as well as in the universe. In addition, many such individuals have considerable stage-experience, are well-known (thus likely to attract attention to the events and to the subsequent info-documentaries), not just for their music, but for their lyrics, attitudes, opinions, interview comments and postings as well. Their respective fans (or 'followers') often not only appreciate the aesthetic qualities of their work, but identify with their 'style', their relative positioning with respect to societal issues and groups, and sometimes even with their 'world-views'. In now fashionable terminology, they are the original 'influencers', not just musically and aesthetically, but intellectually as well. Such exponents of the Swiss music scene are thus ideally suited to confront philosophers, not just with their own questions and ideas, but in the name of those they influence. They may serve as spokespeople of the 'ordinary persons on the street', voicing their concerns, opinions and questions on stage.

The themes of the public discussions will be chosen in accordance with the participants and the list of themes will be constantly adapted, as a result of the feedback on and impact of the foregoing events (cf. below, "Implementation").

A preliminary list of themes is as follows:

**The Philosophy of Patriotism** Should people love their countries, act in their perceived interest, be prepared to sacrifice themselves for them? What is patriotism directed at – a country, a nation, a group of people, an ‘identity’ or an idea? What is the relation between patriotism and loyalty, patriotism and love of ‘Heimat’, patriotism and feelings towards our family, the place where we were born, the landscape we know, the sports clubs we support?

**The Philosophy of Monogamy** Should we be monogamous and why? What does monogamy mean? Does monogamy have anything to do with the social roles of marriage and of the family? How does monogamy relate to desire? Does the concept of monogamy have application beyond romantic coupling (perhaps to dual citizenship, to the having of pets, the adoration of Gods)?

**The Philosophy of Democracy** Why is democracy a good thing and what is to be done to preserve it? What is the relation between democracy and the practice of voting (could democratic decisions be reached by polls, or ‘likes’)? What does it mean to have ‘universal’ suffrage? Does an argument for democracy have sociological premises, e.g. that people are sufficiently informed, or reflective, or not only self-interested?

**The Philosophy of Happiness** In what sense is happiness the meaning of life? Is it a state of individuals, or rather a condition of groups, an ideal, a guiding principle? How does happiness relate to effort-reward (can it be ‘earned’?), and more generally to a vocation-centred view of the meaning of life? Is happiness a positive or a negative condition, something to be achieved or rather something to be allowed?

**The Philosophy of Social and Political Correctness** What should freedom of speech, freedom of expression be? What is bad about slurs, about derogatives, about discriminatory discourse? Does what is bad about them attach to the expressions themselves, to their use or to their users? Does it relate to their uptake, a way of understanding them? Can people be made better by not allowing them to speak in certain ways?

**The Philosophy of Procreation** Should, or should we not have children? To what extent is this just an individual question, to what extent a question of concern to society as a whole? Who should ‘have’ children? What are ‘children’ anyway; are they just young people, or is a more general conception of ‘dependents’ more useful? What, if anything, have questions about children and child-raising to do with anti-discrimination movements?

**The Philosophy of Feminism** What should feminism mean today? Does the “female” in “feminism” stand for gender or sex? What does feminism mean for men, what does it mean for trans-people? What if equality of opportunities for well-off women leads to social discrimination of women in general? Is every type of stereotyping bad? Is there, or should there be, an analogue of the feminist movement for men, for so-called ‘underrepresented groups’, for any type of oppressed minorities?

**The Philosophy of Migration** Why do people think it is acceptable to let drown the refugees trying to get to where we live? What, if anything, is the difference between refugees fleeing prosecution and those migrating for economic reasons? Should immigration be conditional and if so, on what? Should there be a cap on it? What does it mean to migrate; is there a connection between migration and assimilation?

**The Philosophy of Taxation** Why should there be taxes? If any, how much taxation is just? Who should be taxed? Should taxation be redistributive, progressive, flat, of income, land, property in general, or of consumption? Who should be allowed to raise taxes? May taxes vary geographically, even within nations?

**The Philosophy of War and Terrorism** Is war always bad, unjust, morally or politically forbidden? If there is war, who should fight it? What is, and what is not allowed in war, and why? Should wars be fought by robots? How is war different from other types of aggression? Has the concept of war application beyond the paradigmatic case of organised physical violence – could there be a ‘war on drugs’, a ‘war on terrorism’, a ‘war on malaria’ (or mosquitoes)?

What is the relation between war and terrorism? What is terrorism? Is it always bad? Is it sometimes excusable?

**The Philosophy of Capitalism** What is it that makes our society capitalist? What is capitalism – a system of rights, of norms, of values, an ideology or a way of life? Can, and should, capitalism be overcome (and if so, how)? What could replace it? Does capitalism have ‘natural’ borders (e.g. with respect to the selling of organs, slavery, intangible assets)? How is capitalism changing?

**The Philosophy of the Financial Crisis** What was the financial crisis about? Was it caused by people, or institutions, and if so, intentionally or accidentally, or was it rather (something akin to) a natural disaster? Was the political reaction adequate? Where did the newly printed money go? Who is to blame? What political, economic and social morals are to be drawn?

**The Philosophy of Social Democracy** What is it, what should it be? Why should workers vote social democrat, why do they not? How has social democracy evolved, and how should it? Is there anything specific to Swiss social democracy, and if so, is that a good thing? Should political change always be incremental, can it always be? Who are social democrats speaking for, whom are they representing?

**The Philosophy of Liberalism** What is it, what should it be? How does contemporary liberalism relate to its historical ancestors? What is liberal about neo-liberalism (what is the latter)? Is there a distinction between social and economic liberalism, and if so, what are their relations? What is the relation between liberalism and the welfare state; are their aims reconcilable, or in what sense do they stand in tension?

**The Philosophy of Beauty** What is it? Does it come in different kinds? What is physical beauty, and why is it important? Are all material things physically beautiful (or not) in the same way? Is ‘beauty’ a social category, socially constructed, just in the eye of the beholder, can it forever remain unrecognised? In what way are conceptions of beauty (or perhaps beauty itself) changing? Is beauty itself discriminatory, should the ugly be respected more, perhaps even aesthetically?

**The Philosophy of Implicit Bias** What is it? Is it always bad? When it is bad, why? How does it relate to heuristics, guessing, discriminatory opinions? Should, and can, people get rid of implicit bias, and if so, how? What are the effects of implicit bias, for the biased and for those they are biased against? What would it mean to get rid of biases in general, implicit or explicit?

**The Philosophy of Food** What should we eat? What are reasons why some things should not be eaten? Are they all the same, do they have equal weight, do they compete? Does it morally, politically, socially matter why someone is a vegetarian? What is vegetarianism; how does it relate to animal rights? Is eating a kind of perception? Can taste be trained, be changed, be ‘cognitively penetrated’?

**The Philosophy of Freedom** What is it to be free? Is freedom always a good thing? Can you be free while not exercising your freedom? Can freedom be given up, and how? Is it ever justified to give up freedom, to bind oneself and what are the limits of the freedom of self-binding – can e.g. slavery ever be voluntary? How could the world be made freer?

**The Philosophy of Punishment** Why is there, why should there be, punishment? What is it to punish someone? What is the difference, if any, between individual, group and state punishment? Should all crimes be punished? What is the relation between punishment and redress, revenge, forgiveness, reparation, mercy? What should punishment be, who should be able to exercise what punishments?

**The Philosophy of Discrimination** What is it to discriminate against someone? Is discrimination always a bad thing? Should it be discontinued? What is the harm, if any, done by discrimination, what are possible forms of redress? In what ways does non-discrimination fit into a broader picture of social virtues, of recognition, identity-politics, solidarity? If discrimination is a bad thing, what can be done about it – legally, politically, socially, individually? Do we need ‘safe spaces’, insulation of discrimination?

**The Philosophy of Pornography** What is pornography? Is there something bad about it, and if so, what is it and what is it constituted by (its production, its existence, its consumption, its uptake)? Would a world without pornography be a better world? Could such a world be brought about, and how, or why not? What role does pornography play in our society, and how is this role changing?

All these topics are related, sometimes directly, sometimes more indirectly to competitively evaluated research by the PI, most of the time to the SNSF funded research project “A World of Perspectives” (P300P1-147788). As part of that project, the PI studied different phenomena of perspectivity, mostly in social philosophy and the philosophy of values, participating in both Barcelona and Berlin very actively in reading and discussion groups on feminist philosophy, the philosophy of sex and gender and social ontology. In Berlin in particular and during the time of the massive influx of refugees, he expanded his interest in the direction of political philosophy. Under the title “Discrimination is about Politics, not Ethics”, the PI presented part of that research in the form of a commentary on Kasper Lippert-Rasmussen’s “Born Free and Equal? A Philosophical Enquiry into the Nature of Discrimination” (2014) at the 10th NOMOS meeting. The topics relate not just to peer reviewed research of the PI, but also of the prospective invitees, e.g. to the SNSF-funded projects “L’expérience des états mentaux” (PI Gianfranco Soldati, 177538), “Feel bad, live well! The value of negative emotions for well-being” (PI Julien Deonna, 176364), “Value-Based Non-Consequentialism” (PI Jörg Löschke, 176703), “The Conceptual Space of the Affective Mind” (PI Kevin Reuter, 169484), “Complicity in the Global Marketplace” (PI Anna Goppel, 172668) and the SNSF grants “On Tragedy and Comedy as Political Concepts” (Leonie Hunter, 184090), “The Territories of Critique: Decentering Philosophy in Postcolonial Times” (Lucie Mercier, 183813), “The Dining Experience: New Questions for Theoretical Philosophy” (Patrik Engisch, 180925). There are also multiple points of contact with the editorial work the PI has been doing for the last twenty years for the journal *dialectica*, reading and evaluating most of the more than 600 submissions it receives per year.

The topics mentioned have seen much discussion recently. Even restricting our attention just to books, just to books in English and just to books published since 2014 by major university presses, we may mention:

- on capitalism, private property and the financial crisis: [Rognstad \(2018\)](#), [Ocampo and Stiglitz \(2018\)](#), [Quigley \(2018\)](#), [Coates \(2018\)](#), [Laborde \(2017\)](#), [Mounk \(2017\)](#), [van Parijs and Vanderborght \(2017\)](#), [Brennan, van der Vossen and Schmitz \(2016\)](#), [Cox \(2016\)](#), [Hendry \(2015\)](#), [Spiegler \(2015\)](#), [Kaufman \(2014\)](#), [Lanteri and Vromen \(2014\)](#), [Ross \(2014\)](#), [Pratten \(2014\)](#);
- on democracy and its problems: [Nyirkos \(2018\)](#), [Scanlon \(2018\)](#), [Brito Vieira \(2017\)](#), [Kerr \(2017\)](#), [Segall \(2016\)](#), [Rinderle \(2015\)](#), [Ferrara \(2015\)](#), [Lippert-Rasmussen \(2015\)](#), [Frankfurt \(2015\)](#), [Lynch \(2014\)](#), [Sher \(2014\)](#);
- on discrimination, slurs, and implicit bias: [Sosa \(2018\)](#), [Ásta \[Ásta Kristjana Sveinsdóttir\] \(2018\)](#), [Fairweather and Montemayor \(2017\)](#), [Brownstein and Saul \(2016a,b\)](#), [García, Flores and Spotti \(2016\)](#), [Eidelson \(2015\)](#), [LeBar, Davies and Schmitz \(2015\)](#), [Brown \(2015\)](#), [Lippert-Rasmussen \(2014\)](#);
- on feminism, in particular with respect to the discipline of philosophy: [Tyson \(2018\)](#), [Bergès and Siani \(2018\)](#), [Downs and Surprenant \(2018\)](#), [Garavaso \(2018\)](#), [van Norden \(2017\)](#), [Manne \(2017\)](#), [Barnes \(2016\)](#), [Borden Sharkey \(2016\)](#), [Finlayson \(2016\)](#), [Mikkola \(2016\)](#), [Lovibond \(2015\)](#), [Veltman and Piper \(2014\)](#), [Disch and Hawkesworth \(2016\)](#);
- on racism, and what to do about it: [Zack \(2018\)](#), [Hardimon \(2017\)](#), [Jaksič \(2015\)](#), [Smith \(2015\)](#), [Jackson \(2015\)](#), [Yudell \(2014\)](#);
- on immigration: [Grundmann and Stephan \(2016\)](#), [Miller \(2016\)](#), [Wolin \(2016\)](#), [O’Neill \(2016\)](#), [Barry and Øverland \(2016\)](#), [Lomasky and Tesón \(2015\)](#), [Gould \(2014\)](#);
- on war and terrorism: [Gross \(2015\)](#), [Fabre and Lazar \(2014\)](#), [Finlay \(2015\)](#), [Frowe and Lang \(2014\)](#), [Frowe \(2014\)](#), [Janes and Houen \(2014\)](#), [May \(2015\)](#), [Draper \(2015\)](#), [Mann \(2014\)](#), [Miller \(2014\)](#), [Scheid \(2014\)](#), [Tanssjö \(2015\)](#);

- on pornography: Bauer (2015), Aubry (2018);
- on vegetarianism and animal rights: Korsgaard (2018), Smith (2016), Visak and Garner (2015);
- on punishment: Zaibert (2018), Kelly (2018), Lenta (2017), Surprenant (2017), Waller (2017), Wringle (2016), Nussbaum (2016), Tuckness and Parrish (2015), Weisman (2014), Norrie (2014);
- on love, sex and marriage: García-Andrade, Gunnarsson and Jónasdóttir (2018), Grossi and West (2017), Malinowska and Gratzke (2017), Chartier (2016), Brogaard (2015), Liao (2015), Brake (2015), Maurer, Milligan and Pacovská (2014), Blackburn (2014), Lee and George (2014), Thatcher (2014);
- on liberalism, freedom, liberty, and paternalism: Hanna (2018), Grill and Hanna (2018), Cohen (2018), Brennan (2017), Bejan (2017), Bowlin (2016), Barnett (2016), Wall (2015), Le Grand and New (2015), Coons and Weber (2014).

Relevant excerpts of and reading guides to this vast contemporary literature will be made available to both discussants and participants in advance, as well as posted on the project's websites.

## 2 Methods

The present project aims at bridging the gap not just between academia and the wider public and between so-called 'analytic' and 'continental' philosophy, but also between language regions and pedagogical formats. Involving philosophers and musicians from all parts of Switzerland, it will help create a common identity of both groups, and help define what is meant by Swiss 'philosophy' and 'music' scenes.

By choosing an intellectually demanding and marketing-wise ambitious format that requires advance registration of the participants, the project aims to bridge the gap between educational and entertainment aims: the discussion sessions should neither be lectures or seminars as you might find them in popular university courses, nor just display and illustrate views, persons and positions as is done in televised discussion formats. Rather, they should test whether public discussion of relevant issues can be made more sophisticated and more interesting by the explicit use of conceptual tools found in the contemporary philosophical literature. The musicians' role is to test the success of this experiment, by questioning the views laid out and providing background.

Earlier initiatives of the PI have shown that there is much demand in Switzerland for public engagement with philosophers.

The series of public manifestations he organised in 2009 in Geneva – "*Découvrir la Philosophie – Portes ouvertes au laboratoire d'expériences de pensée du Département de Philosophie de l'Université de Genève*" (<https://philipp.philosophie.ch/services/decouvrir.html>) – was aimed at providing introductions to the different sub-disciplines of philosophy, by presenting thought-experiments in pedagogically accessible ways. While these Saturday afternoon events attracted a rather large and diverse public – 40 to 60 people, ranging from retired private bankers to unemployed youngsters –, they were geared at people already interested in typical theoretical questions of academic philosophy.

"Découvrir la Philosophie" was succeeded by a different format, "*Le philomaton mobile*" (<https://philipp.philosophie.ch/services/philomaton.html>), a series of filmed interviews of 'ordinary people' and some philosophers' reactions to it. Conceived as a virtual dialogue and carried out in collaboration with VALROS, the project succeeded in producing a series of widely watched clips (cf. the youtube videos: tK6FChHHGow, US\_A29WN1jU, CEdYbgbwBOo, B3ZOKfdQhYo, IS1WVSCivgQ, 2TKJtZozU38, dRsRoskeHno, \_oCw8\_J4Ies, DiQYnwBzNfw, zsScDqhoYIE, Q5CS9BXhjtW, w5tjaB\_sc8M and 7LeIS2CHVWc). Due to its interactive format, this cinematographic dialogue reached out to people not normally in touch with philosophical issues.

In comparison to our earlier initiatives, as well to all other philosophy outreach projects, the present proposal targets a much wider public, due to its involvement of people with 'star-appeal'. The communication concept to be tried out relies on these individuals becoming genuinely interested in

the philosophical background to the issues treated, and willing to engage in advance both with the philosophical discourse and the literature on the relevant topic. Given this preparation, they may then function as 'gate-ways', interacting with professional philosophers and academic philosophy *on behalf of* their public.

The star-appeal of the non-philosophers involved will be of great help in marketing and advertising. Such marketing will be done not just through the usual channels of philosophical outreach (university newsletters, brochures and flyers, the newsletter and agenda of <https://philosophie.ch>), but through the communication channels of the music scene as well. The technical assistant to be hired will be assigned to this important aspect of the present project, being specifically responsible for promoting its outputs on social media. As a function of the topics discussed, we will also specifically target thematic interest groups, such as Operation Libero, the 14th of June 2019 movement, and vegan, anti-racist, pacifist and libertarian pressure groups.

The present AGORA project will be tightly integrated into the efforts of <http://www.philosophie.ch>. This Swiss Portal for everything related to philosophy has been founded by the principal applicant, Philipp Blum, in 2002. Its aim is to coordinate the activities of the Swiss philosophy departments (event calendar, newsletter), to offer services to the profession (job offers, preprint series) and to prospective students (study plan informations and advice), and to further the contacts between philosophical academia and the broader public. It has profoundly transformed the philosophical landscape of Switzerland and is now supported by all Swiss philosophy departments and generously funded by private foundations, serving 160'000 users in 2018 and in 2019 20'000 per month.

Collaboration with <https://philosophie.ch> (contact person: Anja Leser) offers three important synergies for the present project: the infrastructure, internet traffic and technical know-how. The envisioned platform will be an integral part of the Portal, taking advantage of its safeguards against hacking attacks and the like, but also taking over its the identification methods, where individual user accounts provide the means to easily and effectively restrict access locally to certain groups of users. Transfer of technical know-how is facilitated by the hiring, for the job of the technical assistant, of Sandro Raess who is already well familiar with the programming tasks of the Portal.

A second, complementary communication partnership is planned with *Science et Cité* (contact person: Philipp Burkard), who through their networking role and as organisers of the science cafés in Berne and Thun are ideally suited to reach a large segment of potentially interested people.

### 3 Implementation

The project is scheduled to start on March 1st, 2020 and is to run for three years. As soon as we know the outcome of the SNSF evaluation, we will proceed as follows:

**preparatory stage** (4 months) We will design, in English, French and German, pages providing detailed information on some of the questions outlined above, with references to relevant literature, and an overview of philosophical discussions relating to them. Two other types of web-pages will be created: (i) "Meet the philosophers", featuring short presentations of candidate philosophers, together with not now publicly available information about their philosophical interests outside of their academic fields of specialisation; (ii) "Meet the artists", featuring a carefully curated list of philosophical, or philosophy-relevant pronouncements of members of the Swiss music scene, be they as parts of songs, in interviews, press-directed comments or documented sayings on stage. These pages will be widely advertised and success in meeting this interim objective will be measured in terms of web traffic, and is to be established at its end, on the **1st of May** of the year in question.

**implementation stage** (6 months) Even though the events will all be public, we will try to have a core segment of the public signed up in advance, and distribute to them the preparatory material especially created for the occasion. This material will also be made available on the



specific websites created for each event. During each event, philosophers and musicians will alternate in their active / passive role, each party 'interviewing' the other. During a break, members of the public will be given the opportunity to formulate philosophical theses on their own, and during a short group work stage of about 15 minutes after the break, these theses are discussed in groups, then put to general discussion during the Q&A session. The events will be held over the summer, and five of them should have taken place by the **1st of November**.

**evaluation stage** (2 months) The two remaining months of the annual cycle are devoted to a three-pronged evaluation, with an eye to learn for the next cycle to be started in the spring of the next calendar year. We will first proceed to a quantitative evaluation, in terms of the public attending, number of hits, number of blog contributions and degree of press coverage. We will evaluate secondly the qualitative satisfaction of the people who have attended at least one event, in terms of a detailed questionnaire to be distributed and evaluated electronically. Our third benchmark of success is in terms of the intellectual progress achieved, as reported by the participating philosophers and musicians by the **31st of December**.

Concretely, the five events planned for the first year will be organised as follows:

- The two invited philosophers, the invited artist and the project team members meet to discuss the purpose, the topic and the schedule of the event. This information will be made public on the event's website and the marketing campaign launched.
- Registered participants receive an information package, carefully curated by the scientific collaborator, with an outline of the philosophers' contributions.
- On the day of the event, the project team, the invitees and the other participants meet at 6.30 pm at the station in Biel/Bienne, take the bus and the leisurely walk to the conference venue (approx. 30 minutes). This way of commencing the event should 'break the ice' and make people at ease.
- Once arrived at the conference venue, participants may order drink and food at their own expense. After a short ( $\leq 15$  min.) introduction by the moderator and the scientific collaborator that summarises the preparation package and presents the main theoretical options, the two philosophers make their opening statements ( $\leq 10$  min.), and the musician briefly sketches the reasons for her/his own interest in the topic. After this, a moderated discussion of 30 minutes ensues, followed by a break and another, open discussion session, featuring the presentation of the group work. The event is scheduled to end at 10 pm., leaving people the time to take the walk back (through the gorge, illuminated by torches).
- After the event, participants are contacted for feedback, suggestions for improvement and invited to join the online discussion. The film crew edits the material to produce both an 'appetiser' jingle of about 3 minutes, presenting the highlights of the evening in an entertaining and accessible way, and a longer documentary of the discussion that also presents the background reading and gives the bibliographical information.

The roles and responsibilities of the members of the project team are as follows:

- The PI's role is in defining the project's outlines and themes, in supervising the organisation of the events, participating in the preparatory meetings, moderating the discussions and being ultimately responsible for their media coverage.
- The scientific collaborator is primarily responsible for the preparation of the documentation, the bibliographical information, the thematic input at the preparatory meetings, the contact with the invitees concerning the substance of their contributions and the vetting / preparation of the philosophical content of the documentary. An ideal candidate would be **Lucie Mercier** (especially during her forthcoming hitherto unpaid maternal leave), holder of two MAs (from Geneva and the London School of Economics and Political Science, in Philosophy and in Race and Postcolonial Studies respectively), who did her PhD at the Centre for Research in Modern European Philosophy at Kingston University.

- The coordinator’s role is in organising the events, both with respect to their content and with respect to their administrative side. S/he’s responsible for overseeing both the cinematographic capture of them, as well as the subsequent electronic dissemination and discussion. The bilingual **David Furrer** is especially suited for this task, as he and the PI have collaborated extensively in the past, especially in the organisation of two international conferences.
- The technical assistant oversees the electronic dissemination of the info-documentaries, and creates the project’s websites, including the blogs. **Sandro Raess**, an exceptionally talented philosopher-cum-programmer, could also facilitate the integration of the project’s websites into the architecture <https://philosophie.ch>.
- VALROS film productions is responsible for the filming and audio recording of the event and the production of the publicity jingles ( $\leq 3$  minutes) and the documentary (full length, with content-wise minimal cuts).
- The PHILOSOPHIE.CH team is responsible for hosting of the projects’ webpages and the presentation of the jingles and documentaries, online marketing and publicity.
- The project has a communication partnership with SCIENCE ET CITÉ that allows targeted advertising to interested members of the general public.

The budget is as follows:

<b>salaries</b>	annual salary	year 1	year 2	year 3	total (incl. social costs)
scientific preparation (post-doc) 10% (incl 16% social costs)	117856	11785.6	11785.6	11785.6	35356.8
coordinator (can-doc) 15% (incl 16% social costs)	54566	8184.9	8184.9	8184.9	24554.7
technical assistant 10% (incl 16% social costs)	51736	5173.6	5173.6	5173.6	15520.8
<b>honoraria</b>					
5 times 2000 CHF		10000	10000	10000	30000
<b>organisation</b>					
5 times 600 CHF		3000	3000	3000	9000
<b>digital documentation</b>					
5 times 4903.50 CHF		24517.5	24517.5	24517.5	73552.5
<b>distribution, marketing, publicity</b>					
philosophie.ch		3000	3000	3000	9000
Science et Cité		1000	1000	1000	3000
<b>total project costs</b>					<b>199984.8</b>

The philosophers specifically to be addressed by the project are the professional philosophers of Switzerland, i.e. all those holding (permanent and non-permanent) positions in Swiss universities, in- and outside of philosophy departments, as well as Swiss nationals holding such positions abroad. Many of these academic philosophers already have experience in outreach activities, having participated in “Découvrir la philosophie” (e.g. Julien Dutant, Francis Cheneval, Fabrice Teroni, Fabrice Correia, Julien Deonna, Laurent Cesalli, Bernard Baertschi, Samia Hurst, Nicolas Tavaglione), in philosophy slams (e.g. Gianfranco Soldati, Philipp Reichling) and in media appearances and collaborations with <https://www.philosophie.ch> (e.g. Christine Abbt, Georg Brun, Anna Goppel, Susanne Schmetkamp, Markus Wild, Michael Hampe, Patrik Engisch, Adrien Glauser, François Jaquet, Olivier Massin, Marcel Weber, Giovanni Ventimiglia, Kevin Mulligan, Michael Groneberg, Christoph Pfisterer, Martino Mona).

The artists to be courted are Swiss, or Switzerland-based musicians intellectually curious about current events and general topics, holding argumentative views of their own and courageous enough to question, criticise and intellectually engage with professional philosophers. While quotes from

their lyrics may help philosophers to engage, their authors are of course not expected to defend them as literal truths – it is obvious (and will repeatedly be stressed at the events) that song lyrics are artistic creations and that musicians are not committed to defending them as first-order assertions. Participating artists are expected, however, to critically engage with the information provided and to play an active role in provoking, questioning and challenging the philosophers taking part.

The following artists have already (conditionally) be invited to participate:

- \*Miro Caltagirone (Puts Marie)
- \*Sarah Palin
- \*Jürg Halter
- \*Simon Jäggi (Kummerbuben)
- \*Baze (Basil Anliker)
- \*Bubi Rufener (Bubi Eifach)
- Big Zis (Franziska Schläpfer)
- Evelinn Trouble (Linéa Racine)
- Steffe la Cheffe (Stefanie Peter)
- Kuno Lauener (Züri West)
- Endo Anaconda (Stiller Has)
- (Manuel) Stahlberger
- Faber (Julian Pollina)
- Sophie Hunger

The people whose names are starred (“\*”) have explicitly expressed an interest in taking part in the project. These written confirmations are available on request.

## 4 Expected Impact

In qualitative terms, success is to be measured in terms of the project’s impact on academic philosophy and its public perception. In the first dimension, we will review the events’ success in conversation with the philosophers involved, and ask them to formulate what they have learned from the experience. This information will be shared on the project’s webpages. In the second dimension, we will try to appraise by a careful review of the project’s press coverage to what extent the project has succeeded in changing the perception of the discipline.

In quantitative terms, the project’s success is more easily measured: by the attendance of the public events, by the quantity of feedback we receive during the preparatory and the evaluative stage, by the number of hits on the project’s webpages and by the number of blog entries continuing the discussions in the virtual arena.

Risk management plan: Should our hope to make the events open and accessible to a wider public prove unrealistic in the first year, we will seriously consider the possibility, already discussed with the directors of *Science et Cité* and of *philosophie.ch*, to formally integrate the events into existing event series, such as their ‘Science Cafés’ and ‘Cafés Philo’ respectively.

It is possible, though unlikely, that we fail to convince enough high-profile philosophers or musicians to take part in our activities. In such a case, we will cast our net wider, to include more junior and less well-known people, as well as people outside of Switzerland.

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