

Swiss Collaborators & Institutional Research Network

Project: *The Journey of a Melody*

Purpose

This document records the academic, institutional, and cultural relationships established during the development of *The Journey of a Melody*. The conversations and collaborations documented here are contributing to the project's research methodology, historical accuracy, archival investigation, linguistic authenticity, musical research, and planned 2027 research residency in Switzerland.

1. Ethnographic Mediaspace Bern (EMB) & Visual Anthropology (University of Bern)

- **Key Contacts:**
 - **Prof. Dr. Michaela Schäuble** – Professor of Social Anthropology with a focus on Media Anthropology, Founding Co-Director of the Ethnographic Mediaspace Bern (EMB), and SINTA Doctoral Program Leader.
 - **Dr. Laura Coppens** – Senior Researcher, Department of Social Anthropology / EMB.
- **Institutional Alignment:** Department of Social Anthropology and Cultural Studies (SACS), University of Bern.
- **Status & Residency: Confirmed Hosts for a 4-week Research Residency in May 2027.**
- **Topics & Discussions:**
 - Provided formal institutional support for research residency applications.

- Guidance on sensory ethnography, visual anthropology, and essayistic moving-image dramaturgy.
- Strategies for remediating archival materials (Kobi family letters and personal correspondence) into a multi-layered moving-image installation without falling into nostalgia.
- Spatial installation design, multi-channel projection mapping, and spatialized audio in the EMB media lab.

2. Bernisches Historisches Museum (Bern Historical Museum)

- **Key Contact:**
 - **Dr. Marc Höchner** – Curator of Early Modern Everyday Culture (1530–1850) and Military History.
- **Institutional Alignment:** Bernisches Historisches Museum, Bern.
- **Status:** Confirmed Archival & Material Culture Partner.
- **Topics & Discussions:**
 - **Discovery of Kobi Artifacts:** Located two engraved glass window panels (*Kobi Schliffscheiben*, dated 1803) in the museum archives, donated in 1936 by an "E. Kobi" from Moosaffoltern (Rapperswil, Canton of Bern)—directly connecting to Ryan McLay's maternal ancestral lineage (Anna Kobi and Maria Kobi).
 - **Archival Access & Digitization:** Scheduled in-person examination and high-resolution 3D photogrammetry/photography of the glass panels during the May 2027 residency for digital rendering in the installation.
 - **Historical Context:** Expert consultation on 19th-century rural everyday life (*Alltagskultur*), artisan glasswork, and socio-economic drivers of emigration from the Bernese countryside.

3. Linguistics & Dialectology (University of Bern)

- **Key Contacts:**

- **Simon Kistler** – Historical Linguist and Researcher on the SDATS (Swiss German Dialects Across Time and Space) project.
- **Prof. Dr. Adrian Leemann** – Chair of German Sociolinguistics, Institut für Germanistik.
- **Institutional Alignment:** Institut für Germanistik, University of Bern.
- **Status:** Confirmed Linguistic Consultants.
- **Topics & Discussions:**
 - Provided formal departmental confirmation of interest for grant applications.
 - Consultation on reconstructing early-20th-century (1910) Bernese German (*Bärndütsch*) dialect accuracy, vocabulary, and regional phonetics (Rapperswil / Mittelland dialect).
 - Ongoing script dialogue coaching to ensure historical linguistic authenticity.
 - Sociolinguistic analysis of dialect preservation and transformation within the Swiss-Canadian diaspora.

4. History & Transatlantic Migration (University of Bern)

- **Key Contacts:**
 - **Dr. Agnes Gehbald** – Postdoctoral Researcher, Historical Institute.
 - **Prof. Dr. Christof Dejung** – Professor of Modern History.
- **Institutional Alignment:** Historical Institute, University of Bern.
- **Status:** Confirmed Historical Advisors.
- **Topics & Discussions:**
 - Initial project referrals and historical framing.
 - Provided formal institutional support confirmation.
 - Academic framework on 1890–1910 Swiss transatlantic migration and return migration networks.
 - Guidance on historical communication infrastructure, postal networks, and letter-writing between Bernese emigrants and Western Canada.
 - Directing archival research pathways at the Staatsarchiv des Kantons Bern and Bürgerbibliothek Bern.

5. Ethnomusicology & Swiss Folk Music Network

- **Key Contacts:**
 - **Dr. Lea Hagmann** – Senior Researcher & Ethnomusicologist, Institute of Musicology and Center for Global Studies.
 - **Prof. Dr. Britta Sweers** – Professor of Music Anthropology, Institute of Musicology.
- **Institutional Alignment:** Institute of Musicology, University of Bern.
- **Status:** Primary Ethnomusicology & Sonic Heritage Consultant (Confirmed May 2027 Consultation).
- **Topics & Discussions:**
 - **Melodic Lineages & Pump Organ Traditions:** Detailed exchange on identifying regional folk melodies and "Heimweh" (homesickness) songs resonant in the Bernese Mittelland and Emmental during the late 19th and early 20th centuries.
 - **The Guggisberglied ("S'isch äben e Mönsch uf Ärde"):** In-depth analysis of the iconic Bernese folk song, its minor-key structure, its French counterpart ("*Il est quelqu'un sur terre*", adapted by Benjamin Britten), and its role during the 1960s New Swiss Folk revival.
 - **Historical Archives & Literature:** Shared key literature including Max Peter Baumann's *Bibliographie zur ethnomusikologischen Literatur der Schweiz*, historical songbook archives, Ferdinand Fürchtegott Huber's "*Lueged vo Berg und Tal*", and modern Bernese dialect music traditions (Mani Matter, Patent Ochsner).
- **Extended Ethnomusicology Network Recommended by Dr. Hagmann:**
 - *Dr. Yannick Wey* (Hochschule der Künste Bern - HKB) – Alphorn, yodelling, and military music history.
 - *Dr. Dieter Ringli* (Zürcher Hochschule der Künste - ZHdK) – History of Swiss folk music.
 - *Dr. Johannes Müske* (Schweizerisches Volksliedarchiv / Uni Freiburg) – Swiss and German folk song archives.
 - *Nadja Räss* (Hochschule Luzern - Musik) – Yodelling and vocal folk traditions.

- *Markus Flückiger* (Hochschule Luzern - Musik) – Master of Schwyzerörgeli (Swiss pump organ/accordion).

6. Institutional Support & Guest Housing Contacts

- **Jasmin Fallahi & Welcome Center Team** – UniBE International / Welcome Center, University of Bern (Consulted on guest researcher accommodation and housing resources in Bern).
- **Hans Burgener** – Dürrenmatt Mansarde Bern (Consulted on short-term residency housing options at the historical Dürrenmatt Attic).

Document prepared for website integration and research grant reporting (Current as of September 2026).