

Speech of MdB Ernst Burgbacher, President of the BDO

Everything began with a small harmonica in the year 1857. Who would have thought at that time that this instrument could become such a triumphant success around the world, and who would have thought that this new industry, rather arisen from poverty, would be dominant for Trossingen and the whole region. Over a period of 150 years the name of Hohner has become a big name in the whole world. Many other companies envy Hohner for its name. I myself make the experience again and again, no matter in which country I am: When I say, I come from Trossingen, not everyone knows where I come from. But when I say "Hohner", I see a glow in the eyes of my counterpart. Actually everybody knows Hohner. And although there were as well minor notes besides the major notes during the history of 150 years, I am particularly happy that today the name of Hohner is still closely connected with Trossingen and that it has lost nothing of its good sound.

An important reason why this development could have taken place was that Hohner built up a very active orchestra movement. With the Schittenhelm orchestra, to which I have a special relation because my mother used to play there actively from its beginnings, a wide orchestra movement was initiated in Germany and far beyond it. Hohner supported this movement quite actively. With the foundation of the Deutscher Harmonikaverband (German Harmonica Association) it was further strengthened. The harmonica was added. My orchestra, "Hohnerklang", where I played for many years, was founded in 1932. With this, Hohner formed a movement which made the accordion an important orchestra instrument.

Naturally, amateur orchestras mainly consist of brass sections. However, the harmonica orchestras are right on second place. Without the Deutscher Harmonikaverband (German Harmonica Association), without the numerous accordion orchestras all over the country and therefore also without Hohner, the orchestra movement would be unimaginable. And therefore I can proudly say, as president of the Bundesvereinigung der Deutschen Orchesterverbände (Confederation of the German Orchestra Associations), that in Germany alone about 1.6 Mio. people make music in a total of 23,000 orchestras.

Now it is important that we do not rest on our laurels. There is a variety of offers for our adolescents: sports, media, and also the passive listening to music. We have a high responsibility to make sure that young people not only listen to music but make music by themselves. We know of the high influence that music has on character-building, on the development of cognitive and creative abilities, but also on the development of social competence. And therefore I campaign for the possibility of every child to learn to play an instrument.

This must not fail because of the parents' lack of interest or because of lack of financial means. Making music in the classroom, especially with harmonicas and accordions, is an excellent start to reach the mentioned aim. If we together proceed on this path, politics, the respective associations but also the industry, especially Hohner, our musical future will be under a clear fortissimo.

With this in mind, congratulations for 150 years of Hohner! With many thanks for everything that you have achieved for the music in our country and in the whole world. Good luck for the next 50 years. I wish you a future full of success and harmony.