

# Spotlight on Jean Heinrich Diehl

A 'Q & A' between SESCA's Cheryl Wason and the Conductor of Einhausen's Musikcorps

*(Some content edited for clarity)*

**How long have you been a member of the Musikcorps?**

I have been a member of the Musikcorps since 2006...so 15 years!

**What instruments do you play?**

I have been playing sax, guitar, and keyboards as my main instruments, but I do a lot of singing in my pop group called "Pink Panther."

**When did you become the conductor for the Musikcorps?**

I have been the conductor of the band since December 1st, 2018 but have been conducting the "youth band" as well as an "in-training" type of group that is learning how to play instruments. These two groups were a "feeder" program to our main band.

**What goals do you have for the Musikcorps?**

My goals are to encourage the musicians from these groups above to join the Musikcorps (our main band). I want them to have fun with the music we are playing and feel like they have had an enjoyable time each time they show up to a rehearsal. We want to be playing a bright mix of songs that include traditional German music, pop, rock and also soundtracks from movies and musicals.

**What has the Musikcorps been doing since Covid-19?** We have not been rehearsing since March of 2020 except for a short window of time in September and October, when the covid numbers were down. Even then, we only had 4 rehearsals and the group had to be spaced almost 10 feet apart from each other on both sides and front and back. That was quite a challenge, and we needed a very large space. We had to break up the band into sections and have some rehearsals on Mondays and other smaller groups on a different night. As you can imagine, it was very challenging.



We hope to start rehearsing again by mid-June and have to wait to see what the state of Hesse has to say about restrictions for musicians. We may have to require that people rehearsing who are not vaccinated or have had Covid get a fast (rapid) Covid test. We must try everything to get our musicians back playing.

One new change will be that we no longer have the youth band and the “in-training” band and have integrated them into the main orchestra. I think this will be good for all musicians and the stability of the Musikcorps.

Another challenge we have had is that our usual place to practice, which is in the firehouse, has been closed during the pandemic and we will not have access to this space and it is still closed until further notice.

We also usually host the Heckenfest in June, and this was cancelled last year and again this June. That is a big fundraiser for us and quite a blow to the band. Some of you may have attended the Heckenfest over the years.

In our state, you may find it interesting that since March, no dancing is allowed in open-air concert venues open to the public at all in Hesse. This is all quite different from what is happening in the USA at this moment.

**How many members are currently in the band?** The Musikcorps has 45 members currently. We have lost members due to the pandemic, but hope to get them back as restrictions start to loosen starting June 30th. This includes the integration of the youth band and “in-training” band.

**What does this summer look like for the band?** We hope that we can play outdoors with 1.5 m distance. We want to begin in the middle of June/soon.

**What made you decide to accept the position as the Conductor of the band?** Our former conductor of the band had resigned and it was logical for me to become the new conductor as I had already been teaching and conducting the youth groups for the past 12 years (from 2006-2018). I had also taught many of them in private music lessons. The Musikcorps leadership asked me to consider this position and I was very happy to do this. I have really loved playing in the group. You may not know, but I am from the small town of Lorsch (nearby) and not born in Einhausen. This didn't make a difference, however, as I have been so involved in the community already. The Einhausen community is truly a very special and close knit place and I feel so at home there.

**Do you do music full-time, or do you have another job outside of the Musikcorps?** I have been a full-time musician for 37 years and started in 1984. It is my passion and I believe an important part of a person's life to have music as a part of their lives whether it be playing it or listening to it.

**Have you ever been to Shoreview, MN? If so, when and what did you think of your experience there?** Yes I was there with the Musikcorps in 2012, it was great! I absolutely loved playing at Benson Hall in such a beautiful venue and will never forget it as long as I live. I was also very impressed with the Slice of Shoreview event and being able to play there, march in the parade and do concerts with the Shoreview Northern Lights Band and the 451st Army Band from Fort Snelling.

**Have you ever visited the US outside of a visit to MN? If so, when? What were your impressions? Did you travel with the Musikcorps or privately?** Yes, in 2006 and 2008 I was with my family in Florida and in 2018 with friends in Nashville, Memphis and New Orleans.

**Did you have a host family during your stay in Minnesota?** My host family in 2015 was Julie and Ron Mikolai. Julie is the lead clarinetist in the Shoreview Northern Lights Variety Band. She is also the vice president of that band! We had a fantastic time together and living with an American family was a great experience.

I know that our mayor- Helmut Glanzner- wants to travel with us to Minnesota the next tour we take. He used to play trumpet in the Musikcorps!

**Are there plans for the Musikcorps to come to Minnesota and the USA on a trip in the future? If so, when?** At this time there are no plans to travel to Shoreview, MN, but we are hopeful after the Coronavirus is under control to come again. I believe our two cities have a great relationship and we should keep our sister cities strong. I know that many of the members of the Musikcorps are interested in traveling again to Shoreview and the USA on a band tour.

**Were you in the band when the Shoreview Northern Lights Variety Band came to Einhausen? What year was that, and what was your favorite memory of that visit?** I think it was 2015...I was in the band at that time. It was a wonderful experience to have both bands do separate concerts and then play several musical pieces together. What a sound we had and even if some of the musicians from Shoreview could not understand everything; we had music as our international language to communicate. The turnout was fantastic at this joint concert, too. I hope we can do it again!

**Have you ever hosted someone from SESCA or Minnesota during their visits?**

Yes, we hosted two musicians from the Shoreview Northern Lights Variety Band: Greg Sackreiter (tuba) and Zack Reisman (clarinet). We had a great time. Greg Sackreiter was also a member of the 298th Army Band from Berlin, that came here to Einhausen often in the 1970's. Some of you may know that there has been a strong bond with the 298th Army Band in Berlin and musicians coming to stay with host families in Einhausen for many years.

**Is there anything else you would like to add to this interview?** I was very excited to be spotlighted in your newsletter for SESCA and look forward to many more years of working together. I believe that music is a key part of who we are as human beings and our need to be artistic, creative and be inspired. The pandemic has taught me to really focus on what is important in your life and to simplify things. It will give the Musikcorps the opportunity to reorganize and redefine ourselves as we move into 2022 and beyond. I am very optimistic!

I also hope that one day the SESCA, Shoreview Northern Lights Variety Band and our Musikcorps will all be able to perform in our new multi-purpose community center. It is beautiful.

Thank you again for allowing me to introduce myself and I look forward to meeting all of you in person either in Einhausen or Shoreview!