

# 100 Years The Voggenreiter Story 1919-2019





The <sup>Leerzeile</sup> *Voggenreiter* Story  
*Dear customers,  
friends and family*

We are proud to present you with this book celebrating our history: "100 Years of Voggenreiter".

As we set out on the journey of researching this chronicle our first thoughts and thanks went to our grandad Heinrich and his brother Ludwig; .

Further thanks are due to our father, whose life was so tragically cut short in December 1992.

These men worked for many years laying the foundations of the publishing business which we are now honoured to run under the name Voggenreiter Verlag. The acceptance and development of their values is what has always and continues to drive us on.

We hope that reading our company's history gives you as much pleasure as we had researching and writing it. So please accompany us on an exciting trip back through one hundred years and get to know us and our business a little bit better.

*Charles Voggenreiter*   *Ralph Voggenreiter*

# *A story to fill 100 books*

## **A novel, a manifesto or a detective story.**

“This story would fill a whole book!” is an exclamation often heard when talking about past events.

In the case of Voggenreiter Verlag one book would not suffice. Our company’s history has so many facets and twists and turns that each of its chapters could easily fill a whole book.

The story of the company’s foundation resembles a political manifesto, the first years an adventure and the Third Reich a Shakespearian tragedy. Since the end of the war song books, light novels, dramas and text books have followed. It is almost as if the company has lived its own portfolio of literature.

Join us for a look at 100 exciting years and let us tell you some of the many small stories which illustrate how the publisher originally working for the “Bündische Jugend” (a German youth movement) has grown into a 21st century international music publisher.

But the Voggenreiter story does not end here. We very much look forward to adding to our company’s history and sincerely hope that you will continue to accompany us while we do so.

So enough of the introductions: let’s go!

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1924

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# 1919 – 2019

*1966*

Ernst Voggenreiter takes popular songwriters on board.



*1975*

It's easy if you know how  
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The Catastrophe  
On the 17th December Ernst  
Voggenreiter crashes his Cessna 421  
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*2002*

Breaking new ground with Voggy  
"Voggy" is born – our cheerful new  
mascot.



*2018*

Voggy goes digital  
Production of our first musical  
instrument sets with interactive  
learning software.



# Chapter 1

## *A look back in history*

### **Sticking together in hard times**

#### **The Voggenreiter family**

The family's history starts in a small industrial town in Germany. Max Voggenreiter is the book-keeper in the local steel mill until a weak heart forces him to retire and move to Regensburg, where the family lives in humble conditions. Ludwig and Heinrich are two of Max's six children. The family's financial situation deteriorates further with the outbreak of the first world war.

*1898*

Ludwig Voggenreiter is born in Sulzbach-Rosenberg.



#### **Ludwig and Ludwig**

While still at school Ludwig Voggenreiter meets his friend and later business partner Franz Ludwig Habel (also known as Ludwig), who lives close by. The two share a passion that will later determine their lives – the German youth movement.

In 1914 both Ludwigs join the “Bayerischen Wehrkraftverein”. This youth association is founded in 1910 under the protectorate of Prince Regent Luitpold as a patriotic Bavarian alternative to the “Wandervögel” and the German Scout movement, two other recently created youth organisations. The Wehrkraftverein's objectives are physical activity, a love of nature, self-discipline, team spirit and (of course) Bavarian patriotism.

## The lights go out in Europe

Following the outbreak of the First World War on 3 August 1914 the boys in the Voggenreiter and Habel families are called upon to do their duty. In April 1916 Max, the eldest Voggenreiter son, is called up for service in the infantry. His brother Ludwig and his friend Franz Ludwig Habel take the "Not-Abitur" (a premature high-school examination allowing young students to complete their schooling quickly and then to volunteer for war service) and are sent to Flanders in 1917.

The close friendship bonds formed in the youth movement are maintained all the way to the Front. In his personal memoirs Ludwig Voggenreiter writes of his Wehrkraftverein comrades who "stick together like glue, despite relentless fire, injury and death".

1916

Max Voggenreiter is called up.



1917

Ludwig Voggenreiter goes to war.



## Revolution

On 11 November 1918 the ceasefire agreement is signed and the First World War is over. But that doesn't mean peace in Germany. Instead the Country descends into political chaos.

"Kaiser Wilhelm has abdicated. The old and the rotten, the monarchy has collapsed. The new may live. Long live the German Republic" proclaims Philipp Scheidemann in Berlin on the 9 November 1918. But Scheidemann is not the only one who wants to take control of the situation. In Bavaria and other places Soldatenräte (Soldiers' councils) modelled on communist ideals are set up.

The two Ludwigs are in hospital in Regensburg as imperial Germany collapses, and both find the resulting chaos extremely distressing. Their war experiences and the situation at home are in strong contrast to the principles of freedom and structured order that they knew from the pre-war youth movement.

During the war they had met "Wandervögel" who had made a strong impression on them. Together they decide to set up a new youth group which includes the Wandervögel's principles of freedom. Along the same lines as Martin Voelkel's work in Berlin, they hope to implement a "crusade for youth" to offer disoriented young Germans a spiritual and social feeling of belonging.

# Chapter 2 The political manifesto

## The Weiße Ritter ventures forth

### Orientation for the post-war youth

The new youth movement to be created was to stand for chivalry and a positive attitude towards the future, and thus to provide a strong contrast to the dark times of war and the ensuing unrest in Germany.

However, in order to spread the message of the youth movement throughout the Country a suitable method of communication is required and missing. A first effort to solve this problem is Franz Ludwig Habel's publication of the leadership magazine "Der Aufbau" (Development) using his father's publishing company. This magazine,

targeted at the leaders of all the different youth associations, does not catch on.

So Franz Ludwig turns once again to his friend Ludwig Voggenreiter, who is searching for work. Ludwig Voggenreiter agrees with the other Ludwig's idealism and wish to support the German scouting movements, which in turn propagate the ideal of a new peaceful republic and promote ways of preventing a breakdown into reactionary or Marxist micro-states (as had happened following the Napoleonic wars and was in danger of happening again).

Together the 2 Ludwigs develop a new concept. Their new magazine is to be for all groups of the German youth movement in the young republic i.e. the Wandervogel and the German Scouts. The magazine is to provide independent information and general principles compiled by Ludwig Habel with the support of his father's publishing house, and also using its employees and materials.

Martin Voelkel



1919 1919

"Der Weiße Ritter"  
is published

Early editions of  
"Der Weiße Ritter"





## Der Weiße Ritter (The white knight)

Once the basic structure of the magazine has been decided upon, all that is missing is a catchy logo to ensure that it is recognised throughout the Country.

Doch im Frühjahr 1919 beginnen Martin Voelkel und die beiden Ludwigs mit der Vorbereitung eines deutschen Pfadfindertreffens. Es findet Ende Juli 1919 auf Schloss Prunn, westlich von Regensburg, mit über 200 Pfadfinderführern aus ganz Deutschland statt. Für die beiden Ludwigs der perfekte Anlass, ihr neues Magazin bekannt zu machen. Auf dem Treffen zeigt sich deutlich die innere Spaltung zwischen traditionellem Pfadfindertum und jugendbewegten Neupfadfindern. Dennoch bekennen sich die teilnehmenden Pfadfinderführer zur Erneuerung der Pfadfinderei.

In Spring 1919 Martin Voelkel and the 2 Ludwigs start preparations for a national scout convention. This takes place in Prunn Castle, west of Regensburg, with over 200 scout leaders from all over Germany. Although it is the perfect opportunity for the 2 Ludwigs to present their new magazine, the convention opens up a rift between the traditional scout movement and the progressive movement supported by its younger members. Despite this chasm the participants are able to agree on a joint motion which represents a significant reorientation within the scout movement. This motion is known as the “Prünner Gelöbnis” and contrasts sharply with the strict pre-war rules of obedience within the scout movement to emphasise trust and voluntariness:

“We scouts want to be young and content and to live our lives purely and with integrity.

We want, wherever needed, to support good and fair ideas with words and actions. We trust our leaders and pledge loyalty to them.”

In October 1919 the first issue of the 2 Ludwigs’ new magazine is published with the compelling name “Der Weiße Ritter” (“The White Knight”). With its detailed reporting of the exciting events at the Prunn Convention the magazine gains nationwide interest. The neutral presentation of the discussion concerning the reform of the scout movement give the magazine the reputation of being non-partisan. The magazine also prints the entire “Prünner Gelöbnis”, Despite the hopeful tone of the Prünner Gelöbnis the chasm between the old and the new scouts cannot be bridged. In December 1920 Martin Voelkel and Ludwig Voggenreiter are expelled from the German Scout Association. They immediately proclaim their own independent association of new scouts which gains national attention. Of course the new association already has a magazine which is recognised throughout the Country – “Der Weiße Ritter”.



# 1919

The first German Scouting Day was held at Prunn Castle in 1919.





## Publishing House: “Der Weiße Ritter” (The White Knight)

Through its reporting of the convention in Prunn “Der Weiße Ritter” magazine is recognized as an important news medium for the group of youth associations known as the “Bündischen Jugend”.

At this stage the facilities used by the 2 Ludwigs are pretty basic, their company is part of the Habel family’s publishing business and is named after their most important product: Der Weiße Ritter. Their first office is in Franz Ludwig Habbels’ private apartment. The 2 Ludwigs work at their desks surrounded by piles of books. Scouts work as volunteers when the magazines have to be distributed. As the young publishers can use the printing machines belonging to the Habbels, their fixed costs are minimal.

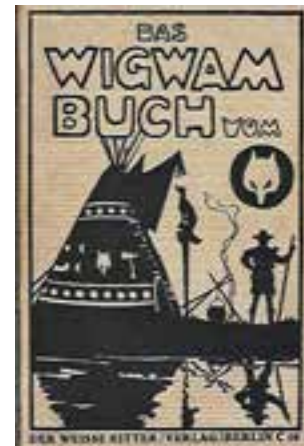
## Zeitgeist

Each of the 28 independent youth organizations that exist in 1920 and are later known as the “Bündische Jugend” have their own publication. “Der Weiße Ritter” is undoubtedly the best of these, being one of the few that adopt the progressive, artistic, literary and life philosophy of the youth in post-war Germany.

By 1921 the company has grown to have its first employees. In the following year Karl Sonntag takes over as editor of “Der Weiße Ritter”. This leaves Ludwig Voggenreiter time to work on other publications and soon the first books are published. Habel translates several books about American Indians written by John Hargrave – who set up his own youth organisation based on the philosophy and craftsmanship of the Indians with the intention of propagating a new socio-economic order and basically world peace.

### 1921

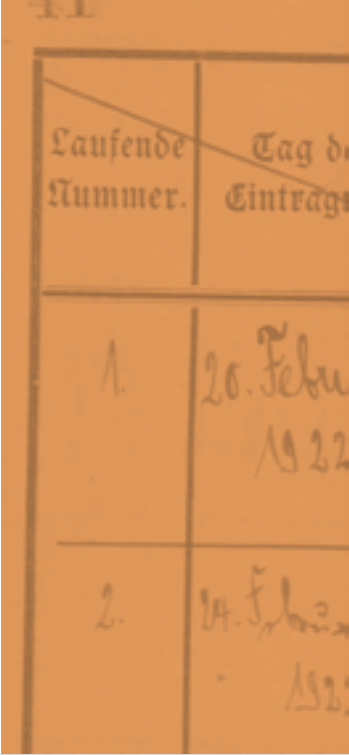
The Wigwam book was one of the company’s first books.



## The Separation

By this time the ambitions of Ludwig Voggenreiter and Franz Ludwig Habel are diverging. Habel wants high quality content in high quality books and to achieve this he joins Germany's first offset printer Naumann to found the Publishing House Habel & Naumann in

1924. In 1922 Ludwig Voggenreiter moves to Berlin to join his friend Martin Voelkel, who has been running the New German Scouts since 1920. Both Ludwigs continue to be active in the "Bündische Jugend".



| 41               |                     | Nummer des                                     |  |
|------------------|---------------------|--|--|
| Laufende Nummer. | Tag der Eintragung. | Bezeichnung der Firma.                         | Inhaber der Firma.                                   |
| 1                | 20. Februar 1922    | Der Weiße Ritter<br>Verlag Ludwig Voggenreiter | Ludwig Voggenreiter, Schriftführer<br>des BfV Berlin |
| 2                | 14. Februar 1922    |  |  |

| Firmenregisters: 49.                                |                |                      |   |
|---|----------------|----------------------|---|
| Sitz der Firma.<br>Zweigniederlassungen.            | Profutaristen. | Nummer der Reg-Atten | Bemerkungen.  |
| <del>Königsberg.</del>                              |                | 1.                   | <del>gegründet: 1. Okt. Nr. 16.<br/>auf Naumann, O. Th.</del> |
| <del>2. Kfz. Eisenwerk<br/>auf Berlin verlegt</del> |                | 4.                   | <del>gegründet: 1. 10. 1921<br/>auf Naumann, O. Th.</del>     |
|   | Abgeschlossen. |                      |   |

Company registration:  
"Der Weiße Ritter" 1922

# Chapter 3 The Adventure Story

## Flight from Regensburg

A publishing house dedicated to young ideals doesn't just make friends and, at the start of the twentieth century, Regensburg is a conservative and catholic town.

"We can't stand the smell of the loathsome incense, we want to smell the earth – full and pure ... there is more permanency in every proud movement of our bodies than in the elevated theories of a moral and aesthetic transcendence"

This quote from "Der Weiße Ritter" leads, not surprisingly, to a conflict with the church in Regensburg, which is horrified by the "excesses of the free and wild youths, the gypsy-like behaviour of uncontrollable hordes of young good-for-nothings and precocious girls". The catholic youth organisations are instructed to steer clear of "Der Weiße Ritter" and both overt and discrete pressure is put on "this kind of magazine".

At the same time, in liberal Berlin Martin Voelkel is beginning to draw the main players in the scout movement together. He suggests that Ludwig Voggenreiter should join him, and that he should bring his "Der Weiße Ritter" with him.

The Diocese in Regensburg causes  
Ludwig Voggenreiter's move to Berlin.

## New beginnings in Berlin

So, on 24 February 1922 “Der Weiße Ritter Verlag Ludwig Voggenreiter” opens in the Alten Leipziger Straße 10 in Berlin. Premises are found close by for the storage of magazines and books.

The number of titles in print also increases. As a complement to “Der Weiße Ritter”, from 1922 until 1928 the Bündische Jugend magazine “Die Spur in ein deutsches Jugendland” (Tracks in a young German’s country) is published and quickly attains the status of a general magazine for young people. A whole series of books called “Bücher der Waldverwandschaft” (Books about our relationship with the forest) are published.

In 1922 Voggenreiter publishes two books by the Berlin writer and “philosopher” of the youth movement, Hans Blüher. These books “Secession judaica” and “Der Judas wider sich selbst” (published under the pseudonym Arthur Zelvenkamp) are closely related to

Two of the Verlag’s famous authors: Eugen Roth and Paul Alverdes



Theodor Herzl’s book “Der Judenstaat” (1896) in which zionism is first discussed, along with the idea of founding a Jewish nation. Without the benefit of hindsight, the content of these books would seem quite harmless.

Alongside his general strong focus on literature concerning and written by members of the youth movement (Paul Alverdes, Martin Voelkel) Ludwig Voggenreiter also publishes a variety of other authors such as Eugen Roth.

## 1922

Publication of the first “Die Spur” Annual.



WOCHENEND  
IM ZELTLAGER



HANDBUCH FÜR ZELTLAGER  
UND FREILUFTLEBEN  
DER WEIßE RITTER VERLAG POTSDAM



Jugend heraus!  
Kleines Handbuch für deutsche Jugendgruppen



### Brotherly support arrives

In 1924 Heinrich Voggenreiter joins his older brother in Berlin. Trained in trade and banking his first task is to take on the commercial aspects of Ludwig's business.

The number of titles published by the company grows steadily and thanks to Heinrich's arrival Ludwig has more time to concentrate on the development of content. He also uses his newfound spare time to intensify his work with Martin Voelkel and the reformed scout movement, becoming treasurer and representing the organization at several major scout meetings.

Heinrich Voggenreiter



Alongside the successful magazines "Der Weiße Ritter", "Die Spur in ein deutsches Jugendland" and "Der Pfadfinder" (The Scout), song books, literature for young people and books related to the Bündische Jugend are published. In 1924 Ludwig Voggenreiter publishes more than 20 titles. Soon the company employees are treading on each other's toes as well as on those of youth movement representatives sharing the rooms already crowded with books – it is time to move!

### Potsdam

So mid 1924 the Voggenreiter brothers decide to break camp and move the business with its seven employees into Ludwig's private residence in Potsdam. With more room to develop, the company strengthens its position as the a-political communications organ of the Bündische Jugend and publishes titles which cover the entire bandwidth of the German youth movement – including titles with conflicting philosophies and content. For example, in the fifth edition of "Der Weiße Ritter" the draft of a general constitution for an umbrella organization planned to cover all German youth associations is published.

In addition, the publisher's program is expanded to include a wider range of literature including poetry and art, educational science, philosophy and civic education as well as books for young adults, ledgers, books of games and other handbooks. A series of books called the "Grenzlandbücherei" (Borderland library) are intended to attract readership from the Germans living in the forfeited eastern regions and contain stories and prose from Bohemia and Silesia. In order to

further propagate the philosophy of the Bündische Jugend, travel journals from trips to England and Scandinavia are also included in the Voggenreiter program.

When Franz Ludwig Habel's publishing house runs into difficulties in 1925, his friend Ludwig Voggenreiter is there to help him. He takes on the copyrights and the remaining publications and markets these through "Der Weiße Ritter". The success of their own publishing activities doesn't diminish the impact that Franz Ludwig's failure has on the Voggenreiter family.

In 1925, taking advantage of the success of the magazine "Die Spur in ein deutsches Jugendland", Ludwig Voggenreiter starts the annual production of two diaries: "Spurkalender" (Tracking diary) and the "Pfadfinderkalender" (Scouts' diary). These are very popular – particularly as school diaries and not only for members of the Bündische Jugend.

Voelkel and Voggenreiter's efforts to consolidate the German confederation's scout association (including the reformed scouts association) and the Wandervögel into an association called the "Deutschen Freischar" (The German Volunteers) finally comes to fruition in 1926.

The idea is to strengthen the Bündische Jugend. The first leader of the Deutschen Freischar is Ernst Buske, a politically moderate man. He also has an influence on the Voggenreiter publications portfolio. Sales

of the star magazine "Spur in ein deutsches Jugendland" are falling, with a print run of just 3000 copies. Ernst Buske gives it a complete makeover and the new, simpler title "Spur" (Tracks). Soon a team of five employees works on just this one publication.

1925

"Der Spurkalender" was one of the Verlag's first bestsellers.



## Re-orientation

The Voggenreiter brothers are now faced with a very basic strategic question: to what extent is such intensive support of the Bündische Jugend (BJ) compatible with the business ambitions of the publishing house? Although Ludwig Voggenreiter is still a very loyal supporter of the BJ and still wishes to examine all aspects of “providing a structure for the lives of the German youth”, he has to accept that he doesn’t get much support for the work that he puts into the publications and that his scouting colleagues make no apparent effort to ensure the economic viability of the titles which are printed for the BJ. He resigns himself to the fact that, if he wants to save his business, he is going to have to reduce the titles in his BJ portfolio to a viable few. This decision should still be seen in context: the BJ was not just bad news for Ludwig – the new “Spur” and “Das Handbuch zum Lagerleben” (Camping handbook) were the company’s biggest sellers in 1926.



## The Ludwig Voggenreiter Publishing House

After eight successful years, the magazine “Der Weiße Ritter” is taken out of print in 1927 and the re-orientation away from the emphasis on BJ publications is communicated publicly through the renaming of the company as “Ludwig Voggenreiter Verlag”. Verlag is the German word for a publishing house.

Although such a close relationship doesn’t end overnight – the shift in emphasis is not completed until well in the 1930s – a first success with a customer segment not involved in the BJ is achieved with the first part of “Das Deutschen Spielehandbuch” (German handbook of games) in 1928. The complete handbook, published in 1929 as a “compilation of all known German games and the rediscovery of some that are in danger of being forgotten”, is greeted enthusiastically. This is also the period during which the Voggenreiters start to work with

1929

Voggenreiter's first ever songbook.



1930

“Der Kilometerstein”, Top seller for more than 30 years





music. “Die deutschen Volkslieder mit ihren Singweisen” (German folk songs with all the melodies, parts 1-6) published in 1929 is the BJ’s first successful song book. A positive effect of the concentration on the economically viable publications is that Ludwig can continue with his “hobby” and still publish titles for the BJ.

The finalization of the repositioning process can be marked by the Verlag’s signing of the north German author Martin Luserke and his entire works in 1930.

### Crisis

The economic depression of 1929 hits the publishing industry with full force. Bad debts and falling turnover drive the Ludwig Voggenreiter Verlag into a major crisis. In 1931 Heinrich Voggenreiter, who has only just been promoted to management, is forced to lay staff off to pay the company’s debts. In the following months the situation deteriorates even further. At the end of 1931 not even enough cash flow is available to pay debts of 25 Reichsmarks. The Voggenreiters have to fight to keep the business afloat.

On a positive note – one of the Verlag’s most important early titles is first produced during these difficult times. The songbook “Der Kilometerstein” (milestone) is born. This collection of “marching songs, songs for the road, music for every day, and all sorts of other nonsense” would remain one of Voggenreiter’s best sellers for three decades.



Martin Luserke was one of the Verlag’s most important authors.





Without the business acumen of Heinrich Voggenreiter the company would not have survived the economic crisis. He manages to persuade some creditors to wait for their money until 1932 and so can concentrate on the payment of the most critical bills. At the same time Ludwig Voggenreiter uses his literary knowledge to increase sales. This split of responsibility proves successful and results in Heinrich becoming Ludwig's business partner in 1933.

The brothers' success in stabilizing and consolidating the business is partially due to the success of "Der Spur" and the "Spurkalender". The latter has customers in high places – in December 1933 Ludwig Voggenreiter even receives a thank you letter from President Paul von Hindenburg for the present of the Jubilee Edition of the diary.

Thank you letter from the President of the German Reich Hindenburg, 1933



# Chapter 4

## The Tragedy

### Like Goethe's Faust

#### The end of the Bündische Jugend

The political landscape in Germany changes dramatically in 1933. With Adolf Hitler as Chancellor the takeover of power by the national socialists cannot be stopped. The BJ initially position themselves in opposition as their ideal of freedom is in direct conflict with that of the national socialists. Unfortunately, however, the BJ leadership principle and the desire for a national order fit in perfectly with the NS ideology and the national socialists are able to leverage this common ground to convince a large proportion of the BJ to adopt their ideas.

Ludwig Voggenreiter is one of the converted. He sees the "Führer" as a way out of the chaos left by the Weimar Republic. For a long time he holds out hope that national socialism will adopt the ideals of the BJ and thus joins the NSDAP (the Nazi party) in 1934. A fatal mistake. Ludwig has sold his soul to the devil.

His brother Heinrich doesn't trust the "brownshirts" (Members of the SA), but accepts his brother's decision and agrees to cooperate with the NS leaders in order to protect the business. In the May edition of the *Spur* there is then a surprising and dramatic change of

position in the form of a statement of loyalty to Adolf Hitler. Heinrich Voggenreiter's mistrust is well-founded. On 17 June 1933 Baldur von Schirach, Youth Leader of the German Reich, orders the dissolution of the Großdeutschen Bund (Greater German Youth Association), which had previously been the umbrella organization of nearly all the BJ members. At the same time all related organizations and publishers are closed down, their employees arrested and all publications destroyed. Documents show that a commando was also arranged for the Ludwig Voggenreiter Verlag, but for some reason they never arrive. One explanation is that the "Spur" and the "Spurkalender" along with new contracts signed with different NS-units protect the company. Whatever the reason, the Voggenreiter brothers can only keep working by sticking to the rules of the NS leadership. They are subject to the same requirements to prove their Aryan descent and have to submit each publication to the authorities for approval prior to printing, as do all other publishers.

Torchlight procession of the SA through Berlin, 1 May 1933

## A new take on an old idea

The dissolved BJ associations are replaced by the Hitler Youth. However, the people now in charge have no idea or experience of how to lead young people. So the natural thing to do is to take the experience of the German scout movement on board. For the Voggenreiter brothers this means that their old publications are back on the table: edited to reflect Nazi ideology and published with a new design.

In this way the book “Führen und Folgen – Ein Katechismus für Hitlersoldaten” (Leading and Following – a catechism for Hitler’s soldiers) by Alfred Roß is published in 1934. Further examples are the training books for the Hitler youth “Pimpf im Dienst” (Boys in Service) and for the Federation of German girls’ “Mädel im Dienst” (Girls in Service), which still clearly contain the basic structures developed by the BJ. The BJ songbooks are either forbidden or revised. An example of the latter is “Der Bannerring” by Georg Blumensaat, which is completely reworked by the NS-youth leadership, a few ideological songs added, and then published under the name “Lied über Deutschland” (Song about Germany).

The success of this songbook marks the establishment of the Ludwig Voggenreiter Verlag as a music publisher. In the following years a whole series of themed songbooks are produced.

## Voggenreiter under Hitler

One year after Hitler comes to power the company has recovered financially. All debts have been paid and the order books are full – not least due to contracts from the NS. Without these contracts the company would certainly not have survived, but Heinrich Voggenreiter knows from the start that they have entered into a pact with the devil. His brother Ludwig, on the other hand, remains loyal to the national socialists despite the radical dissolution of the BJ organisations. Ironically, Hitler in particular is apparently the personification of the ideal BJ leader for Ludwig.

1934

“Pimpf im Dienst”, one of the first books published for the NSDAP.



A number of publications certainly leave no doubt as to Ludwig's conviction concerning national socialism and give the distinct impression that the Verlag has become a Nazi publishing house. In 1937 Erwin Rommel's "Infanterie greift an" (Infantry Attacks) is published. This volume is translated into a number of other languages in the 1990s. The "Spur" is renamed the "Potsdamer Reiter" (Potsdam Horseman) and becomes an NS magazine. In just a couple of years nearly all the BJ titles reappear as NS literature.

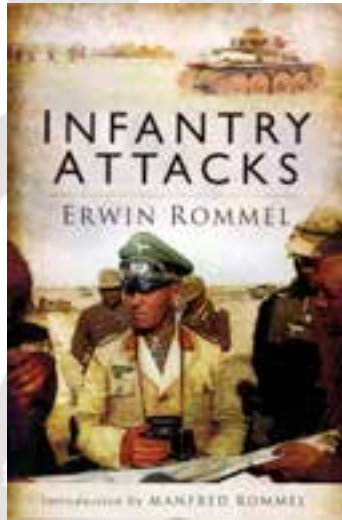
But these are still just part of the portfolio. Songbooks, novels, sports instruction manuals and, in particular, music publications continue to be produced. Ludwig is keen to develop the music activities and all sorts of projects land on his desk: from choir books to whole operas. Here there is naturally some overlap with NS subjects – the songbook "Singend wollen wir marschieren" (We want to march singing) is a major success.



A letter from Erwin Rommel to Ludwig Voggenreiter

International licensed editions of Rommel's "Infanterie greift an".

GB(1990)



Italy (1937)



China





VOGGENREITER  
FELDPOST-  
TASCHENHEFTE

LUDWIG  
VOGGENREITER  
VERLAG  
POTSDAM

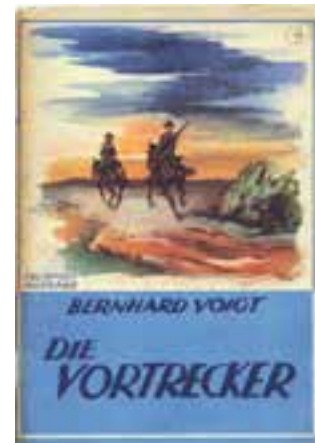
## Literature for the Front

By 1939 there is no longer any doubt about Hitler's objectives – Poland is invaded. Immediately following the outbreak of war the company applies for the status of a company “essential to the war effort”. This application is successful due to the delivery of important documents to the army and the marines. The status “very important” not only makes it easier to get hold of materials, but also prevents the employees from being called up.

At this time a major innovation is made by Ludwig Voggenreiter in the form of lightweight paperback novels for soldiers going to the Front. These books are soon recognised as being important for the morale of the soldiers and are sold in incredibly large numbers – 100,000 books are ordered in November 1941 alone. The need for additional materials and printing capacity mean that Heinrich often has to travel across war-stricken Europe.

In 1942 two NS Officers join the Ludwig Voggenreiter Verlag as board members. Today it is not possible to say whether this move was voluntary. There had long been plans to close the company and transfer its work to the NSDAP printers, the political pressure on the Voggenreiter brothers must have been hard, and the war also made it more and more difficult to get hold of materials. The presence of military officers in the management is probably a further tactic to keep the company going.

Popular on all Fronts: Novels for soldiers published by Voggenreiter





In early 1945 there is a rush of events and suddenly the war is in Potsdam. While the Verlag offices remain unscathed, the Voggenreiters' private house is severely damaged.  
On the 27 April the Red Army marches into Potsdam. The Verlag comes under communist control and business is no longer possible.  
The NS Officers have disappeared.  
The Voggenreiters are on their own again.

Martin Luserke - Reise zur Sage



Ludwig Voggenreiter Verlag, Potsdam  
In Zusammenarbeit mit der  
Deutschen Verlagsgemeinschaft in Bonn  
1944  
Verkauf nur für das Ostland zugelassen



# Chapter 5

## The Historical Thriller

### The Smugglers of Bad Godesberg

#### With empty hands

With the Red Army's arrival in Potsdam the Second World War is over for the Voggenreiters. Their business is confiscated, but no one tells them that.

From this moment in time the company is actually being closed down. The brothers don't know which books they are still allowed to sell and which are now forbidden. Even after Russian officers have removed all 'unsuitable' volumes from the storerooms they are still not allowed to sell what is left.

Pressure is growing on the Verlag and also on the family. As soon as the war ends, Ludwig Voggenreiter is banned from entering the office building. The "Nazi Publisher" is regarded as a potential threat by the Red Army. Heinrich is allowed into the offices, but it is made clear to him that it would be better to close the business down.

In June both brothers are arrested by the Red Army. Heinrich is released quickly, but Ludwig is sent to the Prisoner of War camp in Jamlitz. His name is deleted from the company's register soon after. Apart from a few brief letters in the first weeks following his arrest, that is the last that is

heard of him until news reaches Heinrich in 1949 that his brother is dead.

As the only remaining owner of the company, Heinrich starts to prepare for business again, while taking great care not to upset the Red Army. But to no avail - the Soviet administration seizes the Verlag's office building and orders Heinrich to leave within 24 hours. With the help of his remaining employees and a horse and cart Heinrich moves everything remaining to his mother-in-law's house. At this stage it becomes clear to him that he will not be able to run the business as he wishes in the Soviet zone.

But still he waits for Ludwig. Without his brother he doesn't want to leave Potsdam. In order to live, the family sells off the Verlag's remaining stock on the black market.

Etwa zu dieser Zeit wendet sich der Erfolgs-Autor Martin Luserke vorübergehend vom Verlag ab. Aufgrund der damaligen Situation hegt er keine großen Hoffnungen mehr, dass der Verlag je wieder seine Bücher veröffentlichen würde. Ein großer Irrtum, denn nur wenige Jahre später sollte der norddeutsche Schriftsteller wieder zu einem der erfolgreichsten Autoren des Verlags werden.

### Waiting for Ludwig

Even when the Ludwig Voggenreiter Verlag is officially liquidated on 9 October 1946 Heinrich, in contrast to many of his colleagues in Potsdam, does not leave. He has to wait for Ludwig.

Apart from anything else he is concerned that if he leaves for the west then this may have negative consequences for Ludwig. At the same time, he starts to gather all the Verlag's manuscripts, drawings, printing plates, files and office materials and to smuggle them over to west Berlin for safe-keeping until he can transfer them out of the Soviet zone at a later date. When the family receives some smuggled letters from Ludwig in Jamlitz they decide that they must wait for him, but then at Easter 1947 he is transferred to Buchenwald and contact is broken off.

While still in Potsdam Heinrich Voggenreiter starts to prepare for the future with his decision to continue the Verlag's business, but to concentrate exclusively on music. In this way he also hopes to avoid any problems arising from work carried out during the Third Reich.

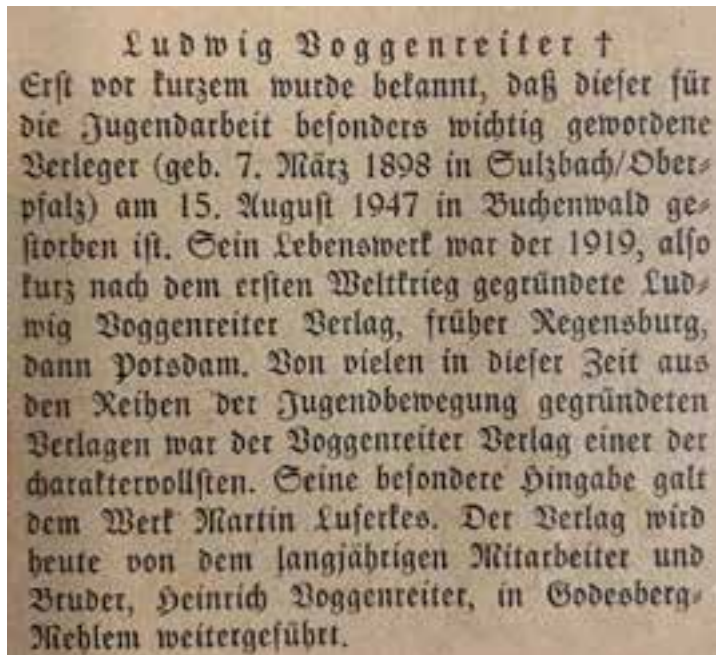
German Prisoners of War held by the Red Army, post-1945



## Escape to the West

Ludwig Voggenreiter dies in Buchenwald on the 15th August 1947.

The family only finds out in 1949. Then things happen very quickly. As soon as he hears of his brother's death it becomes clear to Heinrich that he must leave for the West as soon as possible. This decision is made easier when he receives written confirmation that the Verlag in Potsdam has been confiscated since 1945 and that its registration in the companies' register has been deleted. All the Verlag's property has been transferred to the local authorities in Potsdam.



Memorial stone at Buchenwald

In the following months all the materials that Heinrich has collected in west Berlin are secretly transported to Bad Godesberg near Bonn. When the “move” is nearly completed Heinrich's loyal employee Werner Kleinow is caught transporting material. He is arrested, charged with “economic crimes”, and sentenced to 18 months in prison. The few remaining materials in Potsdam are confiscated by the authorities, but nearly everything is already safe in Bad Godesberg.

And that is where Heinrich finally ends up too. Without his brother and in a completely unknown environment, he has to start again.

1949 is a year of new beginnings, the year in which the German Constitution is signed in Bonn. Just a few kilometres southwards in a suburb of Bad Godesberg called Mehlem another new beginning takes place on the 11th July – the foundation of the “Heinrich Voggenreiter Verlag”.

Konrad Adenauer signing the Constitution in Bonn, 23rd May 1949



# Chapter 6 The Family Saga

## Starting again

### A new beginning in memory of Ludwig

At the end of 1949 Heinrich Voggenreiter starts working as a publisher again. This time in the Siegfriedstraße in Bad Godesberg-Mehlem. But things are not easy – nearly all the Verlag's assets have gone, nothing is left to be offered as security for a bank loan. Luckily Heinrich has friends and other publishers help him with a small loan. With this he is able to publish his first five titles in Bad Godesberg.

An additional and very basic problem for post-war publishers is the shortage of paper. Heinrich buys whatever he can find, but still only 1000-1500 copies of each title can be printed. With such short print runs little profit can be made – but at least it is enough to survive. To ensure that at least everything is sold that he is able to print, Heinrich produces a regular newsletter for bookshops and readers called the “Fähnlein an der Lanze” (“Flag on the Lance”). This name refers to the traditional Voggenreiter Logo for the “Weißen Ritter”, who carries a lance with a small triangular flag at its tip.

The Godesburg

1941



Heinrich's loyalty to his dead brother's memory is also to be seen in his choice of publication. Once again he concentrates on books concerning the youth movement – following his brother's example of 30 years earlier to provide young people with orientation and support in the chaos of post-war Germany.

In the Autumn of 1950 the company has developed an attractive portfolio of publications. These are based on the titles that had already been published in Potsdam and cover four main genres: Prose, youth literature, books of games and song books. Heinrich takes great care with the selection of the books.

Only publications which are politically harmless and have absolutely no connection to the NS philosophy are considered for the Verlag's new programme.

A further reference to Ludwig's continuing influence on Heinrich is the resumption of the "Chorblattreihe" (Choir music series) in 1951.

The Verlag's emphasis is gradually shifting towards music publishing, but neither company nor family are financially secure.

## 1950s

Catalogue and newsletter in the 50s: "Das Fähnlein an der Lanze"



## 1952

"Das Godesberger Frühstück" by Heinz Magka 1952



## 1952

Heinrich Voggenreiter



## Back on track!

The main objective of the publishing house is still to provide young German people, who have survived the trauma of the “dictatorial state and the destruction of war”, with “appropriate guidance” and thus to “facilitate their growth into adulthood as a generation of moderate and liberal individuals”.

In order to achieve this, and with the hope of commercial success, Heinrich decides to reprint the old bestsellers “Die Spur” (The Track) and “Der Spurkalender” (the accompanying diary) as a series of small, low-priced paperbacks. The intention is that these books will support the sales of a wide range of games and handbooks and the step is finally taken in 1952 – whereby “Spur” is published under the name “Folge der Spur” (Follow the Tracks). In the same year a wide range

of youth activity books are published and the “Lagerfeuer” (Campfire) is the first magazine published for the Bündnische Jugend since 1933. A series of adventure stories called “Zeltbücherei” (Camping Library) complete the portfolio. The genre “books for young people” is once again the company’s most important market segment and the spirit of “Der Weiße Ritter” lives on.

The second important market segment remains that of the song books. A new edition in 1952 is the songbook “Karussell” (Merry-go-round), and at around the same time the first songbook for boys “Turm” (Tower) is published. Four further editions of this book are published – the last in the mid-1990s.

Despite this apparent continuation of numerous much earlier activities, Heinrich Voggenreiter doesn’t want to carry on as if nothing has happened and publishes a number of books which deal critically with the development of the youth movement and the Third Reich. A title worth specific mention is the novel “den ich küssen werde” (“The one I kiss”), which uses Judas’ betrayal as a symbol for denunciation in the Third Reich. In the 1950s this book is distributed for free to young dissidents from the Soviet Zone – something that is very much in line with Heinrich’s objective of supporting young people. This is also reflected in his activities as an advisor for the West German association of youth groups (“Bundesjugendring”).

The song book genre is given a boost at around the same time. In 1957 a joint venture with the Möseler Verlag produces “Unser

### 1954

“Die tolle Fahrt der Artemis” from the “Zeltbücherei” series



### 1955

“Den ich küssen werde” (1955) was one of the first post-war successes.





fröhlicher Gesell” (“Our cheerful companion”), a compendium of German post-war songs which quickly gains popularity in West German schools.

### Let's sing, comrades!

The company's profit line doesn't benefit from the large portfolio of publications. Too many loss-making items have to be carried by the few profitable publications. What is missing is a real success – a book with mass turnover.

The solution comes from an unexpected source. Heinrich's work with the Home Office opens doors in other ministries. At the same time, the company still has the rights for the soldiers' song books from the Second World War – a difficult inheritance but one that suddenly becomes useful. In 1955 the newly founded Bundeswehr (West German Army) decides that they need a songbook and approach Heinrich. In 1958 the resulting “Liederbuch der Bundeswehr” is published in cooperation with two other publishing companies (Möseler Verlag and Tonger Verlag).

The commercial success of this book is bitter-sweet. Although the guidelines for its compilation were very clear – no glorification of war, no dreams of victory, no national pathos – the book was criticized by the upcoming left-wing protest movement as some of the composers had also worked on NS songbooks. The company found itself confronted with its NS past and once again attacked as the “Nazi Printers” – a development that reached its climax at the festival in Burg Waldeck in 1964.

In the mid 1950s Ludwig's son Reinhard Voggenreiter joins the company for a short time, but in 1969 his inherited share of the company is paid out to him and from then on the Voggenreiter Verlag is run by Heinrich and his son Ernst.

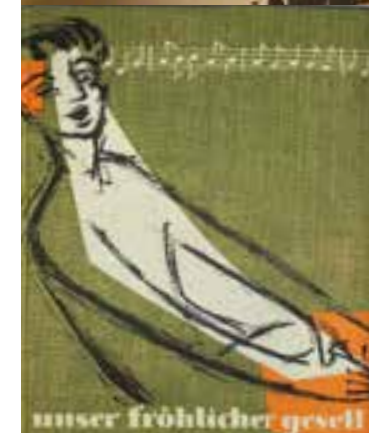
1952

“Der Turm”



1958

Bundeswehr songbook



# Chapter 7 The Songbook

Book Fair 1965, Frankfurt a. M.



## Music was my first love

### The man with the guitar

In the 1960s Heinrich Voggenreiter concentrates increasingly on the youth movement in Germany (die Bündische Bewegung). In 1963 he publishes two books about the Wandervögel (a youth organization, the name literally means “Migratory birds”) and in 1965 more publications follow with which he reassumes the status of publisher for the youth movement that the Verlag had had pre-1933. Unfortunately, this status isn’t worth that much: formal youth organizations are of ever-decreasing interest in a social environment moving towards the protest generation of 1968.

In 1964 the “Arbeitsgemeinschaft Burg Waldeck” (ABW), a progressive branch of the “Wandervögel, organizes the first ever music festival on German soil at Waldeck Castle, close to Frankfurt. With the motto “Chanson Folklore International – Young Europeans sing”, songwriters from throughout Europe are to meet to perform together, and to participate in workshops and discussions. Participants are to include Franz Josef Degenhardt, Hannes Wader and an unknown artist called Reinhard Mey. One of the Festival’s supporters is Helmut König,

who works as an editor for the Voggenreiter Verlag. He tells Ernst Voggenreiter about the event.

When Ernst Voggenreiter joins the company he does so free of any feeling of historical obligation to his father and uncle's legacy. He is particularly interested in the music business and sets up the record label Xenophon. Helmut König is made artistic director of the label and the two of them go to Waldeck Castle. There they meet young talented musicians and take these under contract. In 1966 the duet Schobert & Black and Reinhard Mey, the unknown man with the guitar, are among the first to sign.

This marks the beginning of a long success story.

Ernst Voggenreiter "discovers" Reinhard May – soon to be the most famous singer in Germany. He releases the singer's first two singles (EPs): "Fred Kasulzke Protestatzki" and "Die drei Musketiere" under the name "Chansons" It is the start of a great career. The next song "Ich wollte wie Orpheus singen" is published in cooperation with the established record label Intercord. Hits such as "Über den Wolken" and "Mein dreivierteil Lorbeerblatt" follow soon after.

Ernst Voggenreiter founds the Chanson-Edition as a joint venture with Reinhard Mey and his first wife Christine. Chanson-Edition holds the rights for all of Reinhard's songs until 1985, Ernst manages it until his death.

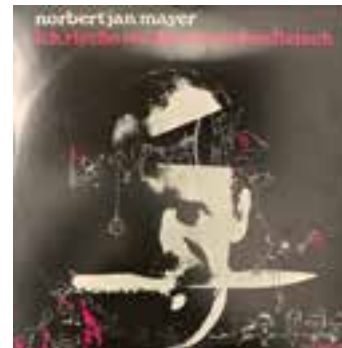
Xenophon 1967



Xenophon 1968



Xenophon 1970



Ernst Voggenreiter 1971





## You can fly ... (over the clouds)

Music wasn't the only love that bound Reinhard Mey and Ernst Voggenreiter. They both loved flying too.

Sometime in the early '70s the two met at the small private airport called Hangelar, close to Bonn. Ernst already had his pilot's licence and took the young musician for a joy ride over the Rhine river. Reinhard Mey's passion for flying and thus the inspiration for several of his biggest hits such as "Über den Wolken" (Over the clouds) or "Lilienthals Traum" (Lilienthal's dream) had its beginnings in Ernst Voggenreiter's plane!



## Thoughts are free

For the fourth festival at Waldeck Castle in 1967 a live recording is planned. Polydor had already tried to do this in 1965, but it didn't work and so they decline a request to try again in 1967. Helmut König and Ernst Voggenreiter decide to give it a go with their record label Xenophon – planning to take responsibility for both the recording and for the marketing of the resulting record.

When Ernst Voggenreiter and Helmut König arrive at Waldeck Castle with all their recording equipment they are surprised to find themselves facing strong opposition. In the four years since the founding of the Waldeck Festival the music makers have become more politically aware and the left-wingers object to the recording of their songs by the “Nazi-p publishers” who (to make things worse) have just published a songbook for the German army.

But this is not the only problem – the organizers of the festival are already under pressure from critics complaining about the commercialization of a festival which was originally planned to be “alternative”. Commercial success is equivalent to a pact with the devil in the eyes of the first post-war generation, and this reaction proves to be a forerunner of what is to come in the late sixties.

Ernst Voggenreiter, just 27 years old, doesn't do the easy thing and turn and run. He faces the critics at Waldeck and answers all their questions about the Verlag's past and the Bundeswehr songbook. He doesn't try to play down the doubtful nature of some books published during the Third Reich. As his father was never an NSDAP party

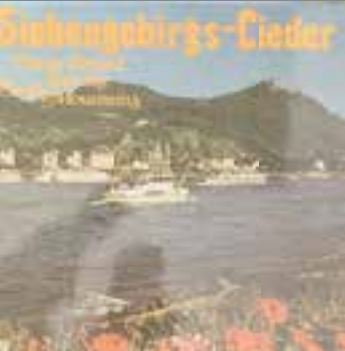
member and he wasn't born until 1940, his open and honest responses mean that the Verlag's image as a “Nazi publisher” can finally be buried for good.

It isn't until 1968 that Ernst Voggenreiter finally manages to issue the live recording of the festival under the Xenophon label. Although undoubtably a milestone, it isn't the recording itself that is so very important for the Verlag, it is the contacts that the young Ernst Voggenreiter makes during the Festival that change the company's fortunes.

## 1967

Spectators at Burg Waldeck





### The publisher for all musicians

The success of the record label Xenophon knocks on to the rest of the Voggenreiter business. A song book from the rising star Reinhard Mey is published by the Verlag and as a result other musicians start to take notice of the publisher from Bad Godesberg.

Ernst Voggenreiter is convinced: a focus on song books and music scores is the route to success for Voggenreiter Verlag. His father gives him a free rein.

In 1972 Heinrich Voggenreiter hands the business over to his son. At 65, after surviving two world wars, fleeing as a refugee and starting from scratch in Bad Godesberg, he takes his well-earned retirement. Ernst agrees to pay his father a monthly pension and to purchase his siblings' shares in the company.

Once passed on to the next generation the Verlag kicks off with song books covering a wide range of music styles. A particularly close

Heinrich and Ernst Voggenreiter



relationship is developed with Willy Millowitsch, who publishes his "Thekenlieder" (Bar songs) with Voggenreiter Verlag in 1974 and is often to be seen at the Verlag's public events during this era. Just how wide the range of styles covered is can be illustrated perfectly in 1975. In that year the "Berghüttenlieder" (Mountain chalet songs) by Luis Trenker, the "Wanderlieder" (Trekking songs) by Rudolf Schock and Peter Bursch's Guitar Book are all published more-or-less simultaneously. In just a few years Ernst Voggenreiter has developed the old youth movement's publishing house into the trendiest song book publisher for rock and pop in Germany.

It goes without saying that many of the songs out of the song books are also recorded in the Xenophon recording studios. Willy Millowitsch records there, and the actor Ralf Wolter's album "Songs" is recorded there in 1975.

1974





Luis Trenker, Ernst Voggenreiter, Reinhard Mey  
(1974, Music Fair, Frankfurt a.M.)



Luis Trenker, Willi Millowitsch,  
Reinhard Mey, Ernst Voggenreiter  
(1974, Music Fair, Frankfurt a.M.)

# Chapter 8 The Success Story

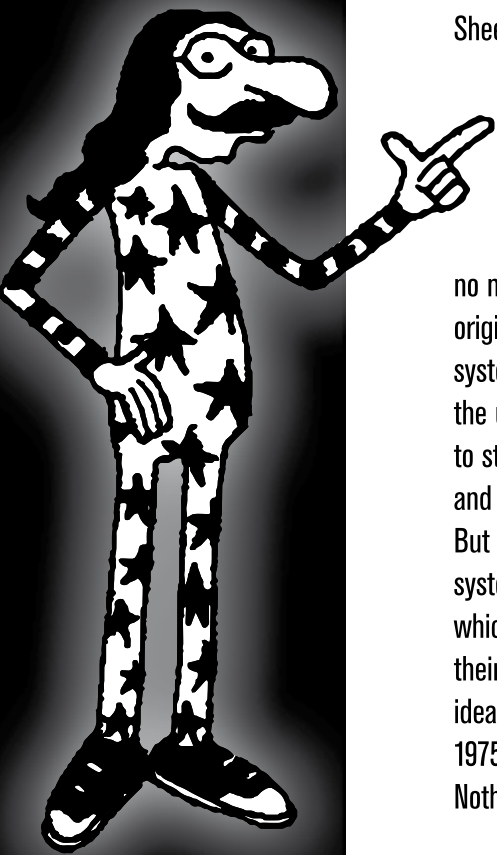
## Music in his veins

### The stave revolution

Sheet music consists of staves, notes and text – this framework used to be taken as given by all musicians. The Voggenreiter Verlag published music for decades under this premise too. But one day Ernst Voggenreiter meets a young musician who is not only a fantastic guitarist but who has also developed a whole new way of learning to play. In Peter Bursch's books there are no notes. Instead he uses the guitar tablature. This was a method originally developed to notate chords, a widely used music notation system in the USA. This revolutionary system, which completely avoids the use of stave music notation, makes it much easier for beginners to start playing the guitar. It is easy to learn, leads to success quickly and can be learnt without the need for a teacher.

But the traditional music publishers don't like Peter Bursch's new system. None of them are willing to print this innovative method, which has been developed specifically for those wanting to learn on their own. Ernst Voggenreiter is the exception. Always open to new ideas and willing to take a risk he develops the book with Peter and in 1975 "Peter Bursch's Gitarrenbuch" is published.

Nothing is left to chance. Ernst Voggenreiter knows that the book's



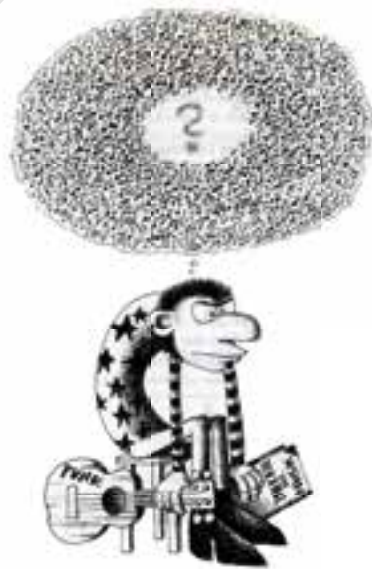
1975

Peter Bursch's Guitar Book





method is going to be too unconventional for the traditionalists in the music industry. So he decides to let the book break conventions as openly as possible and hires the illustrator Jürgen Pankarz to produce a cover which is modern and unconventional too. His idea works. "Peter Bursch's Gitarrenbuch" is a massive success for both author and publisher. Sales rocket and in the following years several sequels are published. Popular German bands such as the Toten Hosen are influenced by the books. Even today Peter Bursch's books are among the most successful guitar courses available. Beyond this individual success, the book provides the foundation for a whole new genre of music teaching courses and turns the Voggenreiter Verlag into the innovator in the music publishing business.



Peter Bursch

## Voggenreiter, the Bundeswehr and a good deed

The cooperation with the Bundeswehr continues in 1978. At the request of the Federal President's wife Mildred Scheel an album of music played by Bundeswehr musicians is produced in support of the Deutsche Krebshilfe (German cancer foundation). Various choirs volunteer to record a total of 12 songs from the Bundeswehr songbook. The "Bild am Sonntag" supports the project with a number of newspaper reports.

On 13 December 1978 the first album "Der Bundeswehr Singt" ("The Bundeswehr sings") is presented to Mildred Scheel at an official ceremony.

Ernst Voggenreiter uses the occasion to hold his traditional annual company party in Bad Godesberg. With a strong police presence and cordoned-off roads the President's wife is accompanied to the Voggenreiter HQ in the Viktoriastraße. Numerous well-known faces from the German entertainment industry such as Chris Howland, José Licks and Bigband leader Kurt Edelhagen, as well as representatives from politics and business join her.

The Verlag's own stars such as Willy Millowitsch, Schobert & Black, Ray Austin and Peter Bursch are of course present too. Focal point of the evening is the album and the financial benefit of the project to the Deutsche Krebshilfe.



Ernst Voggenreiter and Mildred Scheel at the official presentation of the album "Die Bundeswehr singt"





**Learning should be fun.**

The guitar books sell like hotcakes and the Verlag's classics like "Der Turm", "Der Bettelmusikant" (The busker) and the Bundeswehr songbook continue to sell well. Really successful at last, in 1976 Voggenreiter Verlag is able to move into a more representative office, a villa in Viktoriastraße, Bad Godesberg.

In 1978 Ernst Rüdiger Voggenreiter publishes his own PhD. It's a bit of a cuckoo in the Verlag's normal portfolio: "Investigation of the Operas of Attilio Ariosti (1666 – ca. 1729)".

Although enjoying his success, Dr. Ernst Voggenreiter still doesn't want to sit back and relax. His next project is to transfer the concept for autodidactic music courses to other instruments. He implements this idea with Werner Boekels, who joins the company as an apprentice in 1978 and soon becomes his right hand man.



*1981*



*1981*



In May 1981 the small paperback "1.000 Tipps für die Gitarre" is published and immediately climbs to second place in the Verlag's bestseller list. In August of the same year a further newly published paperback "Songs, Songs, Songs" makes it into the top ten. A total of 4 new publications enter the top ten sellers' list in 1981: Das klassische Gitarrenbuch" (The classical guitar book), "Pickings" (Guitar), "Das große Buch für Schlagzeug & Percussion" (The big book of drums and percussion) und "Auf los geht's los!" (Ready Steady Go! for keyboard). All are designed for the autodidactic musician and reflect the spirit of the times.

The early eighties are ruled by guitar heroes like Eddie van Halen and Angus Young. Glam rock conquers the continent and rock giants like Queen fill huge stadiums. Children and teenagers everywhere want to be just like their stars and to play music just like them. Ernst Voggenreiter sees this trend coming and provides the ideal teaching material for self-learners at exactly the right time.

Siegfried Hofmann's "Das große Buch für Schlagzeug und Percussion" is followed by Dieter Petereit's "Easy Rock Bass" using the same concept. New editions of both books are still in the Voggenreiter Portfolio.

At around the same time Werner Boekels gets to know the Swiss pianist Henning Blunk. This excellent player can't read music and so the two men get together and produce "Das unglaubliche Pianobuch" (The unbelievable piano book), a piano course without notes but with pictures of the piano keys. This book is presented in the Züricher Musikhaus in 1985 and sells well throughout the German speaking world.



Werner Boekels and Ernst Voggenreiter with customers at the Music Fair 1981

1981



1985



Hey Leute,  
aktiviert Oma  
p-oder beso  
Euch ein  
Keyboard!



## If you can do that, you have the job!

When he presents his “Klavierschule ohne Noten” (Piano school without notes) to the Voggenreiter Verlag, the pianist Henning Blunk is so sure of himself that he announces that absolutely anyone could learn the piano using his method.

“OK”, says Ernst Voggenreiter. “This is my son, Charles. He can’t play any instrument at all. You have two hours with him. If at the end of that time he can play one song without any mistakes then we will publish your book!”

So the 14 year old Charles and the pianist disappear into the Xenophon sound studio for two hours of piano practice. On their return Charles plays a Boogie-Woogie piece perfectly. Ernst Voggenreiter keeps his word and publishes “Das unglaubliche Pianobuch”.

It is a great success.

Willi Millowitsch and Radiomoderator  
Frank Laufenberg at the piano with the  
“unglaubliche Pianobuch”

## Song books by Voggenreiter

In the mid-eighties Voggenreiter starts to publish more song books by prominent music stars. The idea is built on an old tradition. In 1975 the Verlag had published its first song book series with collections from Willy Millowitsch, Luis Trenker, Rudolf Schock and, finally, Reinhard Mey. Then, in 1977, Ernst and Reinhard Mey had a new idea. The song collection “Von Anfang an” (From the beginning) contains not only traditional scores but also fingering and tablatures for 120 Mey songs. It is a success and is regularly updated and re-issued. With “Und so geht's weiter (1988-2000)” (And so it continues) and “Bis heute (2001-2013)” (Until now) a trilogy of Reinhard Mey's work is complete.

In the eighties the Voggenreiter Verlag shifts its emphasis to publish song books with works by pop stars, such as “4630 Bochum” to accompany Herbert Grönemeyer's hit album in 1985 and then the

follow up “Sprünge” in 1986, as well as the “Klaus Lage Songbook”. The books sell well, but this niche is not Ernst Voggenreiter's main concern.

At this time the Verlag is number one in the German music publishing business and Ernst Voggenreiter wants to keep his pole position. He starts to look for a new star product. Something that will sell as well as “Peter Bursch's Gitarrenbuch”.

1977



Song books from Reinhard Mey, Herbert Grönemeyer and Klaus Lage are published in the late '70s.

2001



2014



HERBERT GRÖNEMEYER  
4630 BOCHUM



SONG-BUCH

HERBERT GRÖNEMEYER  
-SPRÜNGE-



VOGGENREITER

REINHARD MEY



KLAUS LAGE  
SONG-BOOK



### The competition never rests.

As the proverb says: “It is hard to reach the top, but it is much harder to stay there.”

Thanks to the continuing expansion of the portfolio of music teaching books to cover an increasing range of instruments, along with the success of the song books, the Voggenreiter Verlag can hold its position at the top for some time. But the competition is not resting.

Following a careless promotional event at the Frankfurt book fair where Ernst Voggenreiter mentions just how much money the music teaching books are bringing in, the competition realises that the market is worth looking into. Everyone knew that the Voggenreiters

were successful, but once the numbers are made public other publishing houses start to produce books using the Voggenreiter principle. What was meant to be a marketing measure to increase sales turns into a wake-up call for the competition.

Ernst Voggenreiter is not too concerned, he is already on the scent of new ideas. The solid turnover means that the company can risk experiments.

Not everything works. A first attempt to sell musical instruments fails. Barock wooden music stands from Italy and percussion instruments from Brazil (sold as “Bongo”) flop. But an idea is born that will be brought to fruition by Ernst’s sons two decades later.

### The colleague at the Sparkasse

In the 1980s Werner Boekels quickly becomes a jack of all trades at the Verlag. He thus starts to develop his own ideas. One of these is a project to provide the local Sparkasse (Savings Bank) with small promotional gifts. When he gets to his appointment at the bank he finds himself talking to an old friend from his student years. The firm bonds made in these formative years result in the young man acquiring an impressive contract for a song book compiled especially for the Sparkasse.





Instead the sound studio comes back into focus. Although Reinhard Mey leaves for another label in 1985 and the search for a replacement, sometimes with the support of the producer Pal Bercovic, is not successful, the studio proves to be an ideal complement to the music teaching books. Play-alongs and other audio support material for the music books begins to be produced in the Verlag's own sound studio.

Ernst Voggenreiter is always on the look-out for new opportunities to increase turnover. He doesn't only work with traditional music and book shops as customers for his portfolio, but contacts big concerns such as WOM (World of Music), Brinkmann Department Stores in northern Germany, and mail-order companies such as Conrad Electronic and Völkner Versand. His sons Ralph and Charles later develop this concept further.

A further area of expansion is into international markets. The success

of the music teaching books and increasing international interest encourages Ernst Voggenreiter to test the waters for export in the mid-eighties. English language versions of the Verlag's bestsellers are published.

This provides the basis for further licensed publications. Selected titles are printed and distributed by international partner publishers in further foreign languages, e.g. French and Greek.

Shopfront of a WOM branch displaying Voggenreiter books



1989

"Home Recording" in Greek



## Reorientation

At the beginning of the nineties the Verlag faces a challenging time. Competition is growing and the company's turnover is under pressure. Ernst Voggenreiter decides to increase the range of products to compensate for the failure to find one big success. But lots of small products are not the same as one big seller with large profit margins. More products mean more sales effort, more storage space, and a need for more art work and editors. The effort means that the company's turnover is maintained, but the profit margin is reduced significantly.

The situation is not threatening, but the days of plenty are over. Ernst Voggenreiter has turned 50 and is ready to off-load some of the responsibility for the company. Apart from anything else he wants to be able to concentrate on his sound studio.

Hermann Schrage is the support that he is looking for. As his "right hand man", the plan is that Hermann will support Ernst Voggenreiter in his work with customers and dealers. The first step is taken and "Germany's best paid salesman" takes to the road to get to know the Verlag's customers. It looks as if the course for the future has been set. But things turn out differently.

Hermann Schrage prägt seit fast drei Jahrzehnten die Geschichte des Voggenreiter Verlags und unterstützte die Brüder Ralph und Charles vor allem in der schweren Zeit nach dem Tod ihres Vaters Ernst Voggenreiter.

Dieser lud Hermann Schrage 1992 zum Vorstellungsgespräch in den Konferenzraum eines Frankfurter Hotels. "Den Doktor können sie ruhig weglassen", begrüßte der Verleger Dr. Ernst Voggenreiter den jungen Mann. Auf dem Besprechungstisch lagen diverse Bücher und der aktuelle Jahreskatalog, wegen seiner schönen Hintergrundbilder auch "Reisekatalog" genannt und der ganze Stolz von Ernst Voggenreiter. Also fragte er seinen Bewerber ganz direkt: "Wie finden Sie den Katalog?" Dieser antwortete ebenso deutlich "Der ist sc...!" – Auf seine Branchenkenntnis angesprochen entgegnete Hermann Schrage: "Wissen Sie, wir wollen erfolgreich verkaufen. Und ob es sich dabei um Zahnpasta, Würstchen oder Bücher handelt, ist sekundär." So viel Offenheit beeindruckte Ernst Voggenreiter. Und obwohl Hermann Schrage sicher ist, das Gespräch vermässelt zu haben, wird er wenig später eingestellt. Frechheit siegt eben doch manchmal.



## Patronun böylesi (türkisch: What a great boss!)

Ali Kutlu, long time employee of the Voggenreiter Verlag, has his very own story to tell.

In 1978 Ali arrived in Germany from Turkey to study business.

His passion for football results in the ex-profi from Trabzon playing in the regional league for 1. FC Godesberg. As a sponsor of the club Ernst Voggenreiter gets to know him and offers him an apprenticeship in the Verlag – which he completes in 1985.

The friendship between the two men is so strong that Ernst Voggenreiter twice flies his employee home to his family in the company's Cessna. This event even catches the interest of Turkish newspapers.

The Voggenreiter family plays an important role at Ali's wedding too – the young sons Ralph and Charles entertain his guests as his DJs.

For these and many other reasons, Ali is a permanent fixture in the Voggenreiter Verlag and, as its longest serving employee, he will always be willing to recount stories about the last 38 years in his broad Rhineland accent.



# Chapter 9

## The Family Saga



### Nothing is as it was

#### The Catastrophe

On the 17th December 1992 the world changes for Voggenreiter Verlag. In Hamburg a Cessna 421 takes off and then goes into a nosedive. The pilot apparently tries to carry out an emergency landing in some garden allotments between the high rise flats, but the plane crashes and goes up in flames. The only person on board is the pilot and publisher Ernst Voggenreiter. At 22:30 his had been the last permission to take off and he was heading back home to Cologne-Bonn airport. He dies in his plane.

Ernst's sons arrive in Bad Godesberg the next morning. Charles has just arrived for Christmas from the States. His father was meant to meet him at Frankfurt airport. Ralph, his older brother, has his own fashion business. Along with coping with the shock and trauma of their father's sudden death, the two brothers find themselves responsible for continuing the work of the Voggenreiter Verlag. Just as their grandfather Heinrich had to pick up the pieces after the Second World War, Ralph and Charles feel a special responsibility to carry on the business as their father would have wished them to.

## The Legacy: “The Show must go on!”

Following their father’s sudden death Ralph and Charles hold a meeting with Hermann Schrage and the Verlag’s former employee Werner Boekels in the “Turmzimmer” (Tower room) of the offices in Bad Godesburg. Here they discuss the future of the Voggenreiter Verlag. It is already clear to the brothers that they must continue their father’s work, and that they should do this with the help of Hermann Schrage. Elisabeth Voggenreiter, Ernst’s wife and their mother, gives the go-ahead and signs over her share of the inheritance to them. The new management trio makes all subsequent decisions together. Werner Boekels supports them with his management experience and expertise.

The omens for the new Voggenreiter “Triumvirate” are not ideal. Ralph, the older brother, is just beginning to find his way in the fashion business and Charles is still in the middle of his studies at the University of Southern California in the USA. And Hermann Schrage has only been working for the company for four months when Ernst Voggenreiter dies so suddenly. None of them has the knowledge necessary to run a music publishing business. But at no point is there any doubt that Ernst Voggenreiter’s legacy must be carried on. The lack of experience is compensated for with the trio’s sheer determination and hard work. Luckily the Voggenreiter brothers and Herman Schrage are not alone – in the times of crisis all the Verlag’s employees pull together to guarantee a joint future.

Neither Ernst’s sons nor the employees have much time to mourn. Work must be done, contracts honoured and the company held on course. The first major challenge is the Frankfurt Music Fair in Spring

1993. Withdrawing is not an option, so the trio take the plunge. Ralph Voggenreiter and Hermann Schrage make all the preparations and Charles arrives from the States to support them. The first step has been taken and the Voggenreiter Verlag has reported back for business loud and clear. Not that there are no doubts about the ability of the company to survive without Ernst – the competition expresses particular scepticism. But soon the trio will show them who they are dealing with now.

Music Fair 1993, Frankfurt a.M.



### First successful steps

A highly motivated Ralph Voggenreiter sets off on a tour of Germany to visit all the Verlag's existing customers. Step-by-step he begins to find his footing in this completely unknown business. His open and friendly nature is particularly popular with the customers, He even lets some distributors write their own contracts and uses this to gather valuable knowledge. His most important lesson: close cooperation with the distributors is a huge advantage. Through direct communication the Verlag can learn quickly and at first-hand what is "in" and what is not. This realization lays an important foundation stone for the future development of the Voggenreiter product portfolio.

In the interim Charles is making use of his time in the USA and, alongside completing his studies, is establishing contacts in the American music publishing business. The song book product line is extended to include American artists e.g. Guns n' Roses, Metallica and Joe Satriani, and its niche is secured in the German market.

In charge of the administration in Bad Godesberg, Hermann Schrage supports the brothers' activities, coordinates the day-to-day running of the business, and makes sure that the contracts are fulfilled. By working together, the trio not only manages to maintain the company's turnover in 1993, but actually achieves 18% growth. The transition has been mastered and the Voggenreiter Verlag has survived one of its hardest blows of fate.

### New Structure, modern portfolio

In 1994 Charles Voggenreiter completes his degree in the States and can finally concentrate on his work for the Voggenreiter Verlag. An operational trio at last, the management's first joint task is to modernize and expand the music book business. Initially the emphasis is on restructuring the company and bringing the portfolio up to date. Hermann Schrage uses his commercial expertise to optimize the business processes and, in parallel, between 1993 and 1995 the entire range of books is updated, revised and extended to include new ideas. For example: the flexidiscs which had previously been included in the music books are replaced by CDs. This period also marks the end of the Xenophon record label – existing CD rights are passed on to Bell-Records.

Successful product lines are not just maintained they are extended. Under Ernst Voggenreiter's management the Verlag had already become a trendsetter and pioneer in the markets for music books

1994



1994



and music teaching methods. Although a number of other publishers had taken on these ideas, the new Verlag management decides to concentrate on the further development of these segments. To do this new authors are found who can fill the gaps in the portfolio with appropriate publications.

Among the most important new publications at this time are the series “Keyboard Starter 1-3” by Bessler/Oppgenorth and “Ukulele total” by Gernot Rödder. A publication concerning a relatively unknown instrument which came long before the ukulele hype triggered in Germany by Stefan Raab in the late nineties.

And, of course, the bestselling author Peter Bursch remains an important element in the music book portfolio.

From the mid-nineties seven new Voggenreiter Verlag publications are developed in cooperation with Peter Bursch: Das Kindergitarrenbuch (Kids’ guitar book) , Das Kinderliederbuch (Kid’s songbook), Das Bluesgitarrenbuch (The blues guitar book), Zupftechniken (String-plucking techniques), Das Weihnachtsliederbuch (The Christmas Songbook) and two more guitar song books.

Cut out for the job, Charles takes on responsibility for the British and American publishers following his return from the States. As a result of a licence agreement reached with the biggest US music publisher Hal Leonard, the German version of the bestseller “Guitar Secrets” by Guitar-Hero Joe Satriani is presented on the Voggenreiter Stand at the Frankfurt Music Fair in 1994.

In 1996 the first large format guitar poster is published – the launch of a new product line which now has 20 different images and sells very well.

Joe Satriani and Charles Voggenreiter present Satriani’s “Guitar Secrets” at the Music Fair in Frankfurt (1994).



## Unexpected opportunities

Things don't always go according to plan. Sometimes fate plays unexpected opportunities into your hands – even if you don't recognise this immediately.

One day in 1996 the Voggenreiters' bookkeeper Uwe Schwindtke arrives at the office carrying the new Weltbild catalogue. This mail order catalogue for popular books contains a picture of the cover of Peter Bursch's "Gitarrenbuch". The product description attached isn't however for the Voggenreiter publication but for a guitar teaching method published by one of the company's competitors.

At this point in time the company is not selling any products to Weltbild. Charles Voggenreiter contacts the purchasing department only to discover that the error is just that – the wrong picture for the book described. However, the conversation doesn't end there, the telephone call results in an agreement and Peter Bursch's "Gitarrenbuch" ends up being sold by Weltbild after all.

Initially the Voggenreiter Verlag delivers 1000 copies. These sell out fast and, with follow up deliveries, within just one year Weltbild sells 15,000 copies of this one book. Not surprisingly this success leads to Weltbild looking more closely at Voggenreiter's portfolio and including more books from the music book series in their catalogue.

The foundation for a long and very successful cooperation has been laid.



Voggenreiter Products in various Weltbild catalogues



**Das Ukulele-Set zum Superpreis: Hier steckt Musik drin!**

**Voggenreiter**

**Ukulele total**

**Neu!**

• **Buch** mit 400 Lieder und 100 Liedern zum Erlernen und Spielen  
 • **Play-Along-CD** enthält 100 Lieder zum Mitsingen und Spielen  
 • **Ukulele** mit hochwertigen Saiten und einem hochwertigen Korpus  
 • **Play-Along-CD** enthält 100 Lieder zum Mitsingen und Spielen

**Preisleistung!**  
**4 teiles Ukulele-Set 99,-**

**Best-Nr. 143 719**

**Für Kinder ab 8 Jahren**

**One, two – Rock n'Roll!**

- Tolle Kinder-E-Gitarre
- Erfolgreiches Lehrbuch
- Sparsame Verstärker
- Plus Gitarren-Zubehör

umlangelichtes Mini-E-Gitarren-Set mit Lehrbuch + CD mit mehr Buch. Das Buch enthält alle Grundlagen der Gitarre. Kinder ab 8 Jahren, erlernen, nachzuspielen. So lernen Kinder spielerisch und leicht Gitarre – ganz ohne Noten! Buch mit 104 Seiten, zahlreiche Slow-Motion-Fotografien, CD, 6 Gitarren-Zubehör.  
**UVP 149,-**  
 Bei Weltbild im Set 149,- € Best-Nr. 142 794

**2-Gitarre, 2-Singer-Combo-Soundboxen**  
 • 6-Stringe, 33 Halb + Gart  
 • Sauber + Praktisch  
 • Stromgerät mit Batterie  
 • Klappbar  
 • Lehrbuch mit CD

**Best-Nr. 142 795**

**Ab 8 Jahren**  
**Die Blockflöte, Set**  
 Große Blockflöte, leicht zu spielen, mit 100 Liederbuch und 100 Lieder, 64 Seiten, 80 Abb., 21 x 15 cm, kart., 100 Liederbuch, Komplette 99,- €  
 Best-Nr. 143 584

**Ab 6 Jahren**  
**Mundharmonika-Set**  
 Mundharmonika, Komplettes Mundharmonika-Set mit 100 Liederbuch, 64 S., 100 Abb., 21 x 15 cm, kart., Komplette 149,- €  
 Best-Nr. 142 394

**Ab 8 Jahren**  
**Glockenspiel-Set**  
 Glockenspiel, Komplettes Glockenspiel-Set mit 100 Liederbuch, 64 S., 100 Abb., 21 x 15 cm, kart., Komplette 149,- €  
 Best-Nr. 142 409

**Ab 3 Jahren**  
**Tänze und lerne**  
 Für die gemuteten Tänze und Songs in Gottesdienst, Feste, Kindergeburtstag und Schule. Kinder- und Jugendgruppenbuch mit über 100 Liedern, Liedern, Tänzen und Song-Gesängen. Dazu gibt es viele Liedtexte, Gebete und ausgewählte Psalmen in der Übersetzung von Jörg Zink. Mit Noten und Gitarren-Akkorden. 48 S., einige Farbabbildungen. 21 x 18 cm, gelb.  
 Best-Nr. 143 583 **14,-€**

**Ab 6 Jahren**  
**Kinder basteln**  
 Für Kinder ab 6 Jahren. 48 Seiten, 64 S., 100 Abb., 21 x 15 cm, kart., 100 Liederbuch, Komplette 49,- €  
 Best-Nr. 143 494

Voggenreiter Products in various Weltbild catalogues

# Chapter 10

## The new collection

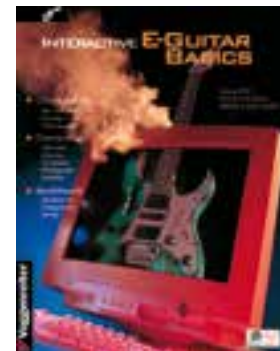
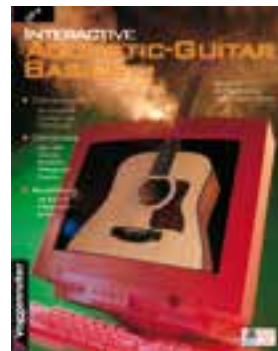
### First experiments with a new medium

Voggenreiter Verlag's management trio learn to operate in the music industry in a very short period of time and the phoenix that rises from the ashes is even stronger than before due to creativity and the incessant search for new ideas. In particular, the integration of new media and trends into the Verlag's program is in management focus.

In 1997 a new trend is integrated into the Voggenreiter business portfolio.

As the result of a cooperation with the SRG Music School in Offenbach 20 teaching videos for guitar, bass guitar, drums, keyboard and piano are produced in a very short length of time. In the following year the first interactive multimedia guitar courses on CD-ROM are introduced into the market. Working in cooperation with the established German supplier Meinl, these products even include a shop for guitars.

For the first time a would-be musician is able to use the accompanying CD-ROM to try out different guitars, amplifiers and effects equipment. However, although the technical development of these two courses "Interactive Acoustic Guitar Basics" and "Interactive E-Guitar Basics" is fantastic and music journalists have nothing but praise for them, they prove to be a bit ahead of their time. One main problem is that a computer has to be close at hand so that the software can be used. If tablet computers had existed in 1998, the sales statistics would certainly have looked very different. The digital age is still in its infancy, but the Voggenreiter Verlag has already started to gather experience in digital media. This pays off nearly 20 years later with the release of the first Apps.



## A meeting with consequences

The Music Fair in Frankfurt is a fixed date in the Verlag's diary. In 1998 Ralph Voggenreiter is working at the busy company stand when Ka Brackmann introduces herself. The graphic designer from Essen runs a design studio with her husband Chris. The Voggenreiters are immediately taken with their work. In the years to follow nearly all the company's covers are designed by the couple and these covers are reputed to be the most attractive in the branch. Catalogues and packaging also benefit from Ka and Chris's expertise.

Here too Ralph and Charles recognise that they are applying their father's recipe for success. In times gone by Ernst Voggenreiter was also known for his good taste and his ability to spot trends as well as the contemporary design of his music books.



A Ka and Chris Brackmann design: the cover of "supersonic guitar improvisation". It is still recognised as one of the Verlag's best covers ever.

## "Zur schönen Müllerin"

In 1994 the invitation to the Voggenreiter music fair party in the restaurant "Zur schönen Müllerin" is issued for the first time. At these legendary parties the who-is-who of German music business– shop owners, distributors, authors, musicians and international publishers – come together to enjoy the Voggenreiter hospitality and to talk business.





## Voggenreiter goes English

A further part of Ernst Voggenreiter's legacy was to be developed later by his sons. Before his tragic death he had already seen the potential of internationalisation and had started to translate his most successful titles into English.

The brothers supplement these original titles with five new publications and present these to an international audience at the NAMM-Show in California in 1998. This participation in the

Joe Napoli at the NAMM-Show



famous American music trade fair results in the Voggenreiter Verlag establishing sales contacts throughout the English-speaking world. This small series of English language editions provides the basis for the company's international licencing business.

In the years to follow Voggenreiter music books are published under licence in Brazil, Italy, France, Spain, Portugal, China, Estonia and Singapore.

At the Book Fair with our Brazilian licencees (Diego Drumond, Sandro Alosio)



## The Voggenreiter Roadshow

True to the motto that a moving train will only keep up speed if continuously stoked, the Voggenreiters return from California only to leave immediately for their "MUSIC on TOUR" roadshow organized in collaboration with a selection of music instrument makers and suppliers.

The promotion bus tours with the Verlag's sales representative Olaf Boles and a tour crew. Stops are made at the major German rock festivals such as Hurricane, Rheinkultur, Hard Rock, Bizarre and the legendary hardrock festival Wacken Open-Air, as well as at numerous music outlets to actively support local sales activities.

Tour Locations 1998  
Open-Flair  
Hurricane Festival  
Rheinkultur  
Wonderworld  
Super Crash Open-Air  
The Event 1  
Wacken Open-Air  
Rock Hard  
Zillo Open-Air  
Bizarre Festival  
The Warped Tour



Rock on! The Voggenreiter tour crew in front of the "MUSIC on TOUR" bus at Wacken Open-Air 1998

### Then we'll do it ourselves!

As well as having a lot of fun the two brothers make an important discovery during the roadshow: The Voggenreiter Verlag should enter into agreements with instrument makers to be able to offer customers a package including both an instrument and the accompanying teaching materials. This isn't a new idea, but one intended to complement the company's existing portfolio. The established instrument makers and sales organisations fail to see the advantage that such a cooperation could bring them and send the Voggenreiters home empty-handed.

When Voggenreiter identifies a new opportunity, Peter Bursch is sure to get involved. His guitar books have been part of the guitar sets from the start.



As Ralph and Charles Voggenreiter are absolutely convinced that the idea will work they simply buy instruments and put their own starter sets together.

In 2001 the first instrument sets are launched by the Voggenreiter Verlag. A guitar set and a ukulele set, this time perfectly timed to coincide with the Stefan Raab ukulele craze in Germany. The company already has the perfect sales partner – Weltbild soon places the first order for 3,000 guitar sets.

Annual turnover grows to reach 15,000 sets in the following years. Other big customers such as Conrad Electronic and Quelle (a mail-order company) are delighted with the Voggenreiter Instrument Set and order unexpectedly large numbers.

At this time the Verlag's existing storage space, which was originally only intended for books and was the company's HQ when Heinrich Voggenreiter was in charge, is bursting at the seams. Additions to the product portfolio have already led to additional premises being leased, but these too have reached full capacity. The turn of the century sees Voggenreiter facing a major logistics problem.

The triumvirate Ralph, Charles and Hermann put their heads together and examine the alternatives open to them. Outsourcing the delivery services is practical but has a number of disadvantages. Once all pros and cons and all costs have been examined the result is conclusive: keeping the logistics in-house is both cheaper and easier to manage in the long term.

So the trio decides to build a warehouse on a new industrial estate in nearby Wachtberg.

With the benefit of hindsight it is clear that this step was the right one. At the time the Voggenreiter brothers often wonder how on earth they will ever fill the huge storage space, but the developing business in musical instruments mean that this question has already been answered.

In the following years two further warehouses are built and finally, in 2017, the company moves its entire office to Wachtberg.

Voggenreiter Verlag's new home in Wachtberg, not far from Bonn, with photovoltaic and solar panels on the roof.



The songbook products experience a revival from 2001. Well-known artists such as Die Toten Hosen and Reamon publish their song books with the Voggenreiter Verlag.





# Chapter 11

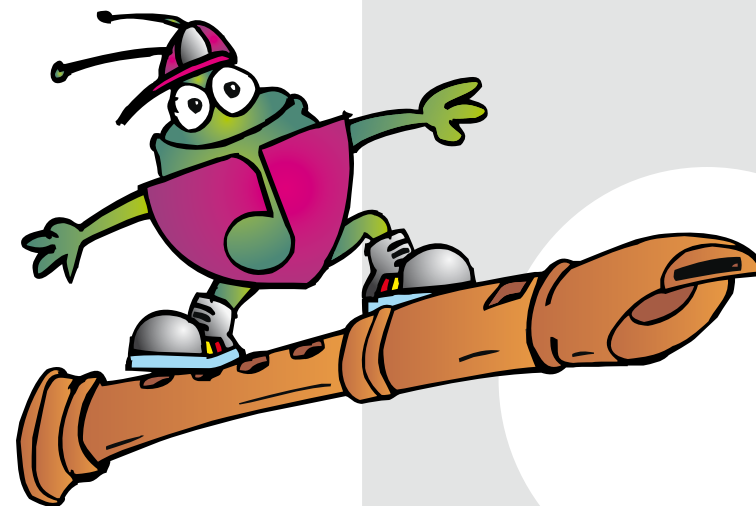
## The children's book

### Breaking new ground with Voggy

#### May we introduce you?

Voggy, the Voggenreiter Verlag's cheerful mascot, is born in 2002. For both brothers Voggy is the affectionate nickname given to them by their friends. Chris Brackmann is Voggy's creator: A friendly little mascot who is mad about music and who accompanies children on their journey of discovery into the world of music in the Voggenreiter books.

The first products are Voggy's Kindergarten Recorder Set, Voggy's Recorder Set und Voggy's Percussion Set. Of course each set includes a matching Voggy book. These are followed by Voggy's Guitar Set, Voggy's Harmonica Set und Voggy's Glockenspiel Set. There are now 16 German Voggy books and most are also available in English. Licenced editions are available in Italian, French, Dutch and Chinese. But Voggy is not just there for little children, teenagers and grown-ups are also targeted with sets for the electric guitar, ukulele, electric bass guitar, and percussion.





## Unknown territory

Little Voggy's big success leads the company into unknown territory. In 2003 Voggenreiter exhibits for the first time at the international toy fair in Nürnberg. The first exhibition stand is small and black. The Voggenreiters have simply taken their concept from the music trade fairs and set it up amongst the bright and colourful surroundings of the toy fair. But learning by doing is a Voggenreiter strength and in the following year the company's stand presents them perfectly as the supplier of attractive musical instrument teaching sets that they want to be.

That's not to say that the subject "making your own music" is not rather exotic at a toy trade fair. Indeed – no other exhibitors offering a similar product are to be found in the numerous exhibition halls. With a combination of musical instruments and teaching books for children Voggenreiter has found a unique selling proposition in the world of toys. Other suppliers offer cheaply produced simple instruments, but none can claim the quality offered by Voggenreiter.

Nevertheless – the toy market is completely new territory for the Voggenreiter brothers. How can they make a name for themselves? What rules are to be observed in the industry? Someone who knows the answers to these questions is Dieter Wohlfahrt. After introducing himself in Nürnberg, this retired expert in the toy business offers to work as an advisor to the newcomers Ralph and Charles. In the following months Dieter Wohlfahrt helps the Voggenreiter Verlag to win a contract to supply the first Voggy Sets to one of the biggest European drugstore chains.

At the same time his experience and reputation ensure that the company is registered with all the relevant industry associations, a step which is absolutely vital for any company hoping to establish itself in the German toy industry.

Dieter Wohlfahrt, Jeanette Huppertz, Charles Voggenreiter





The Voggenreiter Verlag begins to enjoy success in the toy market. The share of the company's turnover attributed to the toy segment grows so significantly that, in 2004, the company issues its first "Voggy's Kinderwelt" (Kids' world) catalogue. The idea is that this new product line aimed at children and the toy industry should develop in parallel to the Verlag's core business of publishing music books.

In addition to Nürnberg, Voggy is presented at the trade fair for children's books in Bologna. Then Voggy goes international. The first English language Voggy sets are presented at the Book Fair in Frankfurt, this is so successful that the instrument sets are then presented at the NAMM show in California, at the Music Fair in St. Petersburg, and at the Music China in Shanghai.



Voggenreiter at the Music China in Shanghai

## Voggy isn't everything

Although the entry into the toy market obviously has a significant effect on the company, the song book product line also continues to be updated and expanded. In 2003 the "Johnny Guitar Watson Songbuch" is published and Herbert Grönemeyer, who published his songbook "4630 Bochum" with Ernst Voggenreiter in the eighties, follows with the songbooks to accompany his hit albums "12" and "Mensch".

## 2003

Music stars like Johnny Watson and Herbert Grönemeyer publish their songbooks with the Voggenreiter Verlag.



Voggy is not the only thing to be presented at the Music China. For their first trip to Asia the Voggenreiter brothers also pack the English language versions of their music books. They hope to persuade their Chinese partners to publish licensed editions of these.

And they succeed. The first publications to appear a short time later under licence to their Chinese partners are “1000 Tips for Keyboard”, “Easy Rock Bass” and, naturally, one of Peter Bursch’s books: “Rock Guitar”. These first publications are followed over the next years by numerous licenced Chinese editions.



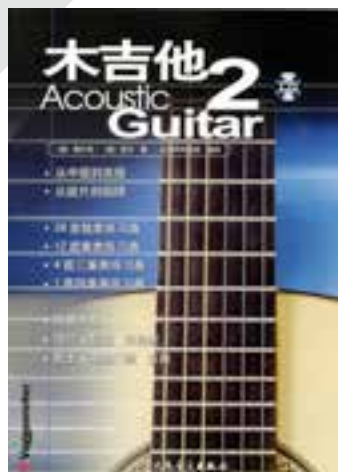
Saxophone  
师自通  
中音萨

克里斯·达韦 (Chris Stills)

管初学指南  
识、练习与测试



2004



2006



2008



2012



## Big quantities for big customers

2005 turned out to be a very eventful year for the Voggenreiter Verlag. For the first time Voggenreiter products are presented in TV shopping shows on QVC and Homeshopping, and the first Voggenreiter electric guitars and ukulele sets are sold using this format.

Following the successful launch into the toy business the company wins its first European contract with a major discounter.



The idea comes to Ralph as he studies for his Media MBA. His first assignment is to answer the big question: “How can we double the Voggenreiter Verlag’s turnover within five years?”

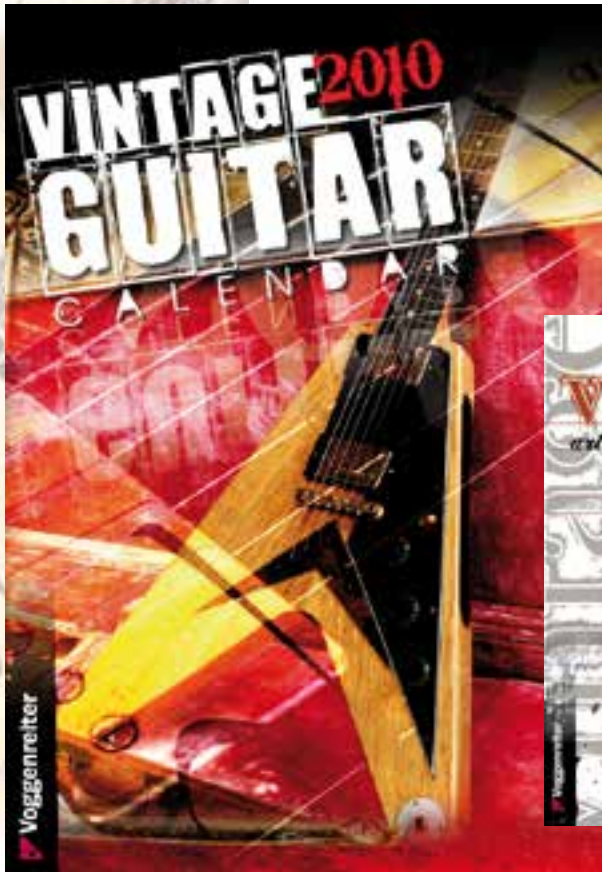
The necessary books and instruments are available, and due to Weltbild the Verlag has already gathered experience in dealing with large volumes. The ambitious idea of selling instrument sets to one of the biggest discounters in Europe is successful and Voggenreiter delivers the goods in previously unknown quantities. The “assignment” is completed with distinction! Voggenreiter Verlag has indeed doubled its turnover, but has only taken one year to do so. Between 2006 and 2008 the discounter model is extended to other parts of the European market.

Under the tradename “VOLT by Voggenreiter” acoustic guitars, treble recorders, percussion instruments, harmonicas and xylophones are the first instruments delivered. In later campaigns the discounters increase the Voggenreiter portfolio to include guitar stands, trumpets, clarinets, saxophones, drum sets and a PA system. The cooperation with the discounter ends in 2009 after four successful years.

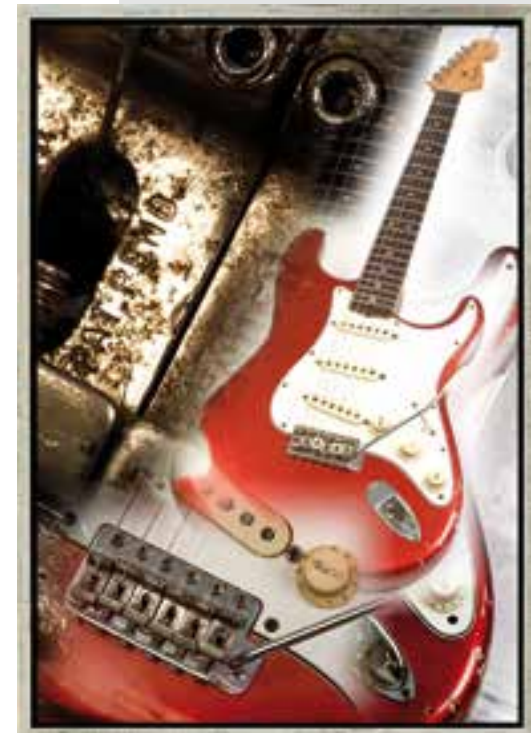


### Art for the big ones

All this work for little people doesn't mean that Voggenreiter forgets to develop new ideas for the big ones, too. In 2007 a cooperation with Thomas Weilbier, the well-known vintage guitar specialist from Hamburg, leads to the publication of the first "Vintage Guitars calendar". In this and following years, vintage guitars belonging to various celebrities are presented in art developed by Ka and Chris Brackmann.



Canvas editions



Framed edition with shadow gap border

## Always with a CD

Simultaneously work continues on a new series of music books. The brief for this new product series is “Always for beginners, Always with a CD, and Always low priced”, as the target group are young people being introduced to music. The new series “Basics” covering 22 titles is published in 2007. The series proves ideal for licencing and in addition to the English edition licences are sold in France, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Brazil and China.

As a follow-up to the “Blues Harp Songbook” (2006) Dieter Kropp’s “Blues Harp Schule” including a CD and a DVD is published as a further addition to the music book selection. Thanks to its success four more harmonica books by Dieter are published in the following years.

In 2009 the first “Komplettkurse” (complete courses) are issued in licence to an English publisher. This superior quality series with a hardcover ring binding and a CD at a reasonable price covers 8 titles and is still a bestseller in Voggenreiter Verlag’s portfolio today.

“Basics” books



Dieter Kropp and his Blues Harp teaching books



The “Komplett-Kurse” series



## Op kölsch!

Cologne carnival is renowned throughout the World and has its own rich collection of songs in dialect. In 2009 Voggenreiter publishes the “Rote kölsche Liederbuch” (Red Songbook from Cologne) in cooperation with the Früh brewery, which also buys part of the first edition for themselves and their customers. In addition to all the carnival hits the book contains the best Düsseldorf jokes in honour of the legendary rivalry between the two cities.

Ralph and Charles still have the habit of checking the bookstore at Cologne airport when they pass through and, yes, at last look the little red book was still available for purchase.

# Chapter 12

## Das Digitale Age

### Vision for the future

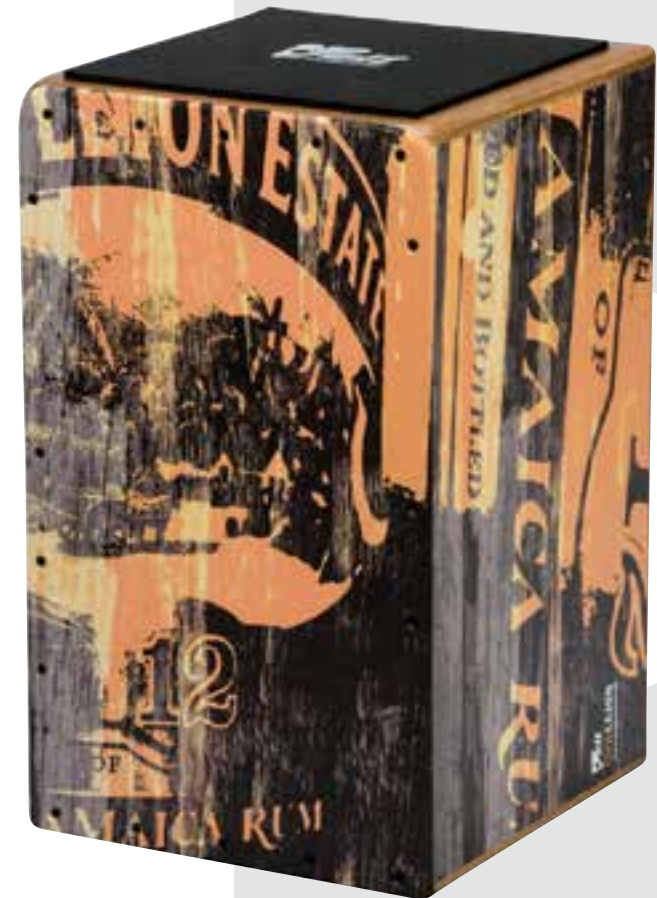
#### Voggenreiter does more than music books

The first VOLT Cool Cajons are produced in Spain in 2010. Their attraction is their modern and unusual design. Another impressive result of the cooperation with Ka and Chris Brackmann.

The musical instrument segment continues to develop rapidly and the products have a recognized position in both the music and the toy industry.

What started out as a dream at the turn of the millennium has become reality. The family tradition of taking risks for what you believe in led to the idea of producing instruments, and this risk certainly paid off. Voggenreiter instruments can now be found in nearly all music shops, in toy shops, online, and as part of the range of big retail chains.

VOLT Cajon "Jamaica Rum"





## Online together!

In 2015 a video is uploaded onto YouTube which is revolutionary in more than one way. A young but very talented percussionist from Marburg agrees to make some video clips demonstrating the Voggenreiter Verlag's percussion instruments.

She accompanies AC/DC's "Hells Bells" on a xylophone, goes swimming with a Ukulele to demonstrate its water-resistance, and tests the VOLT Cajons. The percussionist's name is Sina and it doesn't take long for her to become a YouTube Star with the name of Sina-Drums.

Voggenreiter's own YouTube channel and Facebook page are also used to publish numerous demos and tutorials featuring the Verlag's authors including Peter Bursch, PiTTi Hecht and Thorsten Skringer.



Voggenreiter Verlag



Voggenreiter Verlag  
Kindermusikinstrumente

Percussion-Tutorial mit PiTTiHecht bei YouTube



Video of Sina on YouTube



## Music for the very little ones

While business with the discounters was booming “Voggy’s Kinderwelt” (Kid’s World) was quietly establishing itself in toy shops. But not only older children should be given the opportunity to enjoy the world of music. Toddlers and pre-school children should also be provided with their first instruments and musical toys.

So in 2006 the idea ripened to complement the existing range of music sets with items for the 0-3 year olds. At a music trade fair in England Ralph Voggenreiter got into a conversation with the well-known percussionist PiTTi Hecht, who was working on a stand there representing musical instruments from the Israeli company Halilit.

Wolfgang Lücke and Ralph Voggenreiter at a music trade fair in Birmingham



What he saw excited Ralph and soon afterwards the series “Musik für Kleine” (Music for little ones) is launched for babies and toddlers from 3 months. Voggenreiter Verlag obtains the exclusive distribution rights for Halilit in the German-speaking world.



## Made in Germany

It is only a matter of time before Voggenreiter starts to produce their own instruments in Germany. In 2015 in Voigtland (south eastern Germany) the first small percussion instruments and musical toys are produced for the new product line “Musik für Kleine – Premium” for children aged 12+ months. Particular care is taken that only natural wood from Germany is used to make the premium quality products.

The product line deliberately provides an alternative to the company’s successfully established ABS resin product line for younger children.

This premium line is very popular in other European countries and continues to be expanded.

For example, one of the Verlag’s long term partners has the exclusive distribution rights for the “Made in Germany” premium products in Italy.



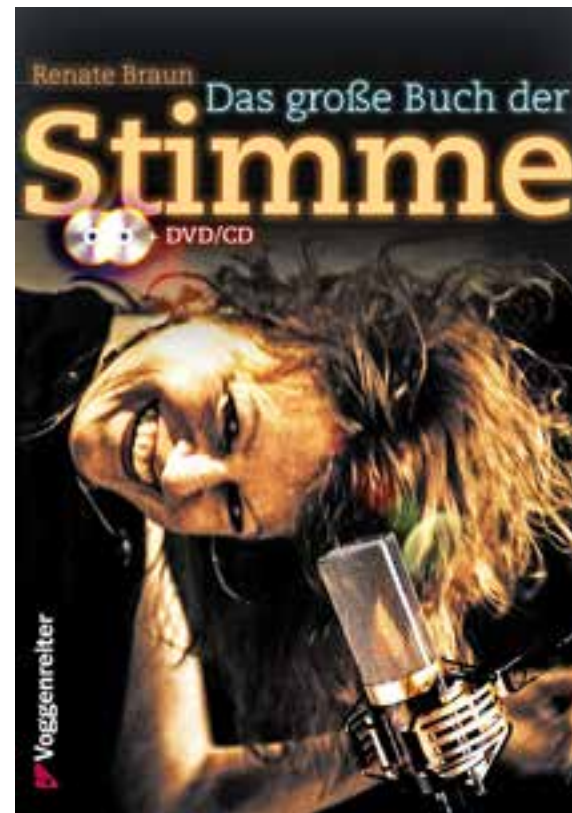


### Books in the digital age

The Verlag's traditional music book business is also still successful and continues to attract interest with new and revised publications. Of course, the digital reality means that Ralph and Charles can only dream of the kind of turnover enjoyed by the earlier Voggenreiter generations, but there are still enough friends of the printed music score to keep happy with the Verlag's wide selection of music publications.



These include introductory music courses such as "Ukulele total KIDS", "Das große Buch für Akkordeon", and "Modern E-Drums", song books for guitar and other instruments, and the successful series "Der Komplettkurs" (The complete course). The more discerning customers are served with the premium collection "Das große Buch..." (The big book of) with editions for saxophone, e-drums, voice and accordion presented in a high quality ring binding and with a hardcover.



6+



- Kunststoff-Blockflöte mit interaktiver Musik-Software
- Plastic recorder plus interactive music software
- Flauta de bisei de plástico com software de aprendizagem musical
- Flûte en plastique avec un App de musique interactif
- Flauta de bisei de plástico com software de aprendizagem musical



### Voggy goes digital

But a Voggenreiter doesn't ignore trends, they use them to maintain and develop business. It is clear that the digital age means hard times for print media, so the company has joined the band wagon: Interactive Music-Apps.

As early as 2011 the Voggenreiter brothers started to venture into the digital world with the "Basic" series of music books. These first efforts were a kind of E-Book with buttons to press for music samples. In December 2017 things start to move. Classplash, a team of

app developers with first successes under their belt, contact the Voggenreiters. The brothers' interest is aroused and they invite the company's manager, Rui Duarte, to come and visit. Rui's presentation is a great success and results in the joint development of a concept for an app to be sold in combination with a musical instrument.

Two sibling-pairs at one stand: The Voggenreiter brothers and Rui Duarte with his brother Carlos



Learning an instrument easily, and making music on your own, when and where you want whether at the PC or using a smartphone or tablet, thus becomes possible.

At the Nürnberg Toy Fair in 2018 Voggenreiter Verlag and Rui Duarte present the innovative music apps for the first time. The Voggy brothers are not alone with their enthusiasm for this educationally valuable development: the apps collect numerous awards, including one from Microsoft for “Best Educational App”. Riding on the crest of this wave the apps are presented at the Music Fair in Frankfurt in the same year.

In the following months the first two app packages “Flute Master” for the recorder and “Rhythmic Village” for percussion are presented to distributors and partners in Germany and abroad. The first big customers decide to introduce the apps into their ranges. They are followed by numerous smaller customers, In Autumn 2018 two further app packages are released: “Hello Music” for Maracas and “Baby-Composer” with a xylophone.

Customer feedback makes it clear to the Voggenreiter brothers that their decision to launch this innovative product range is right. With the apps they prove that they obviously still have their finger firmly on the market’s pulse – and enough motivation to keep pushing the product.

Since mid 2018 the Verlag has been working intensively on the acquisition of exclusive licencing partners to distribute the apps worldwide.



## Fit for the future

With its innovative digital learning methods the Voggenreiter Verlag is fit for the future.

The international marketing of the company's own instruments and sets, the development of further apps, and their translation into different languages for distribution in other countries are just some of the challenges facing Voggenreiter Verlag.

New high-end percussion instruments are in development to target



the segment of professional musicians. Here again innovation and new ways of working are demanded.

The sibling publishers and their team certainly will have enough to do in the years to come.

With this in mind the first steps have been taken. In May 2017 the Voggenreiter Verlag moved from its HQ in the Viktoriastraße 25 in Bonn-Bad Godesberg after more than 40 years. The new office is in the company's logistics centre in Wachtberg-Villip. The synergy effects resulting from the consolidation of the business at one location make contract fulfilment easier and faster. A further advantage is that the team have access to leading edge technology for their product and project development.

And the next generation of Voggenreiter managers are already in the starting blocks ready to support their elders. Ralph and Charles' children can often be met working alongside their dads at the office or at trade fair stands.

Those carrying most responsibility for the success of the company are of course our authors. They deliver the ideas and provide us with the challenge of creative implementation. What would a publishing house be without them?

We, Ralph and Charles Voggenreiter, would like to take this opportunity to thank all our authors for all the years of cooperation and friendship.

The company HQ until 2017 at Viktoriastraße 25



The medium “book” has changed almost beyond recognition in the last 100 years. From hardcover volumes full of words to colourful animations on the tablet.

The Voggenreiter Verlag is proud to have maintained the traditional values and ideas of its founders Ludwig and Heinrich Voggenreiter. The focus of the company’s activities remains on children and young adults and on the desire to introduce these to the joys of music and music-making. To achieve this Ralph and Charles have learnt the lesson taught by their father of being willing to adapt according to the tides of time.

This is why the Voggenreiter portfolio is just as interesting for traditional customers as it is for digital natives. Having read this chronicle, we hope that you can understand that the Verlag and the family have always been, and will remain, good for a surprise. One hundred possible books have been combined into one. Who knows how many chapters are still to come? The story is still a long way from completion. . . .

Ralph and Charles Voggenreiter and their team look forward to an exciting future!





with Horst Ehmke, Elisabeth Volkmann, Alfred Bielek



Reinhard Mey



Luis Trenker



Ehepaar Millowitsch



Peter and Marita Bursch



Lutz Wentscher (Tonger)



Götz Alsmann



Moshe Zur (Halilit)



Joe Vasco, Michael Lefferts



Cerno Jobatay and PiTi Hecht



Toto and Thundherstruck



Michael Sanmann



Jutta Baumann (Thomann)



Lars Warmbrunn (Just Music)



Susanne Bauer (Musikhaus Schlaile)



Jan Wappler (Musik Produktiv)



Christian Bartels (Musik Jellinghaus)



Frank Wunderlich, Wolfgang Lücke,  
Gerald Dellmann (Musik Media), Uwe Prüssner (GEWA)



Joe Satriani



Fred Otto, the king of studs



Nippi Noya



Rüdiger and Heidi Helbig



Abi von Reininghaus



Thilo Kramny (PPV)



Jon Hammond



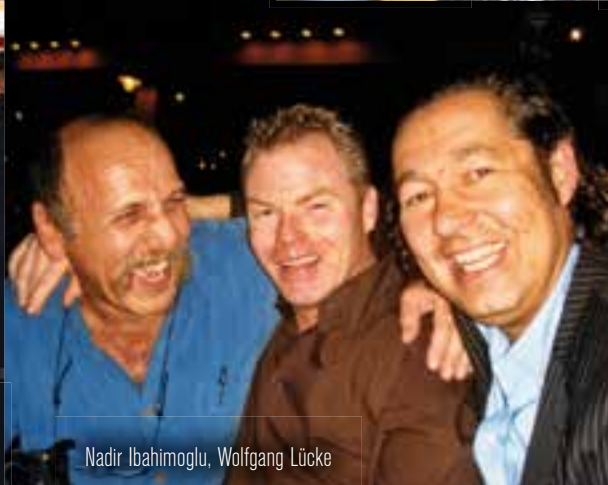
Gunther Matejka



Bobby Kimball (Toto)



Chris Hauke (PPV/Guitar),  
Christof Scheffler (Schalloch)



Nadir Ibahimoglu, Wolfgang Lücke



Ka and Chris Brackmann



The sales-legend Roadstar Rolf Trautz



100 Jahre **Many thanks to our employees**



for the last 100 years!

Thank you for your work on this book:

Almut Oberhollenzer

Ines Oberhollenzer

Design: Ka Brackmann

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