



# **KRONBERG ACADEMY SUSTAINABILITY REPORT 2024/2025**

# Foreword

Dear reader,

Eventful and challenging, 2024 is now behind us, yet the Kronberg Academy Foundation still faces a number of new and ongoing tasks. Our aim is to do everything in our power to help address the challenges posed to us by the profound transformation of nature and society.

To this end, we conduct precise analyses and assessments of our own impact on the environment, in ecological, social and economic contexts. Systematic measures are then derived from these evaluations to enable us to fulfil our mission statement in setting an example for the young generations striving for musical excellence both in Kronberg and across the world.

In 2021, the Foundation became one of the first institutions in the field of arts and culture to begin introducing a certified sustainability management system. This combines the established sustainability reporting framework of the German Sustainability Code for Higher Education Institutions (Hochschul DNK) and the requirements for certified environmental management systems specified in international standard ISO 14001:2015. As a result, our activities are kinder to the environment and take sustainability criteria into account – in both the planning and implementation of our events, as well as in our training programmes.

Our processes of evaluation and analysis have allowed us to recognise that, as a cultural organisation, we have only a limited capacity to contribute to sustainable development by avoiding environmentally harmful behaviour, and that our greatest potential impact lies elsewhere. The facilities at our site are state-of-the-art. Since we solely use certified green electricity, our environmental impact can, at best, only be further reduced through especially smart use of our technology. Our buildings are located directly adjacent to Kronberg's train station, meaning that our employees and visitors can reach us very easily using green public transport methods. However, it is not technology that gives us the greatest leverage, but our role as a training establishment. We are able to prepare young artists for navigating the climatic and social shifts they will face in their careers over the coming decades, and help them to become prominent role models in this respect. Art itself can act as a powerful tool here, one that provides orientation, inspires change and gives hope.

Musical excellence, therefore, is not the only objective of our training at Kronberg Academy. We also aim to foster an attitude of responsibility towards music, people and the planet – entirely in keeping with the philosophy of the great cellist and humanist Pablo Casals (1876-1973), the namesake of our Casals Forum.

It is for this reason that we refined the focus, syllabus and range of our study programmes during 2024 and the first half of 2025. Incorporating a commitment to sustainable actions into students' contracts was no mere formality. We are raising awareness of sustainability, encouraging our students to do good for others through music and, in the process, offering them opportunities for personal growth. Concerts for people whose access to classical

performances is difficult or non-existent are just one example of how we approach this, as are the talks we host on how music affects the human brain.

The Foundation will always remain true to its principles. It actively reaches out to the “Kronberg Family”, its sponsors and supporters in particular, as well as other social stakeholders to explain its approach and solicit support. This requires supremely qualified and motivated employees. For this reason, one of our principal aims is to be an attractive, sustainable employer for our team in surroundings that are entirely new, both in terms of their construction and in how they are organised.

We are ever grateful to our capable and highly committed staff, as well as our body of volunteers, for the progress they achieved during an eventful period of great upheaval. Taking the step towards operating an integrated training and events centre at the highest level has put us all to the test, and shall continue to do so. We will never lose sight of our task to ensure that music lives on and remains authentic for future generations.

It is therefore only logical that we should document our many different working relationships, tangible progress and ambitions in this report. In so doing, we are making a further contribution to the guiding principle we share: “...Music in the service of humanity.”

Kronberg, August 2025

On behalf of the Board of the Kronberg Academy Foundation

Raimund Trenkler

# 1. CONTEXT

## **“... MUSIC IN THE SERVICE OF HUMANITY”: OUR WAY TOWARDS A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE**

The Kronberg Academy Foundation is committed to ensuring that music lives on and remains authentic for future generations. And we are increasingly taking social and ecological change into account in all that we do. How could we train young musicians – and thus conscientious ambassadors for international exchange – without addressing the urgent problems we face in the present and the future? We want to provide them with the tools needed to act in good conscience and offer guidance to music enthusiasts.

In this 21st century, nature and society are undergoing radical transformation. A number of systemically important issues are on a critical trajectory. This unique atmosphere of challenges posed by the pandemic (some divisive and anti-democratic), of developing military aggression and of the effects of climate change has prompted the Foundation’s wish to set a lasting counterpoint of reconciliation.

Kronberg Academy strives to act with minimum environmental impact and to take ecological sustainability criteria into account in both its academic training and when planning and implementing events. Moreover, we shall find ways to translate contributions to balancing the interests of society as a whole, the influence of music on human health and support for democracy and human rights into our musical context, thus making them a logical component of our own teaching activities. So that music can gain in importance, and influence us towards interactions that set the bar for people and our planet alike.

“... Music in the service of humanity” is the far-reaching philosophy of the great cellist and champion of peace Pablo Casals. This philosophy posits that art, humanity and respect for nature are inextricably linked in the triad of music, people and planet earth. Guided by this principle, we live by our mission statement of “Responsibility towards music, people and the planet.” Consequently, many aspects of modern sustainability standards have influenced everyday life at the Foundation “intuitively” and as a matter of course for some years now. We are setting visible examples through the Casals Forum – Europe’s first concert hall with an integrated study centre to be capable of operating with reduced CO<sub>2</sub> thanks to an ice battery. This is where we fulfil our responsibilities in musical training and concert life, and where our mission statement truly comes to life.

For us, sustainable development is therefore both an outlook and a driving force. It stems from a knowledge of the values we live by, and from the motivation this gives us to act accordingly.

Against this backdrop, after going some way down the structured path and actively examining our sustainable development, we asked ourselves how best to balance the interaction between intuitive understanding of values and fact-based actions and reports.

Our path is increasingly determined by clearly defined, verifiable processes. By developing our environmental management system further in line with standard ISO 14001:2015, we are making our progress in environmental protection transparent. Complying with the complex requirements of given standards or data points is not the only motivating factor for us, however. It is vital that we put our words into practice and achieve real improvements in the sustainability issues that are most important to us.

The material significance of these issues is therefore key. We have issued a declaration in accordance with the German Sustainability Code (DNK) that is based on fact. At the same time, as a comparatively small organisation that relies heavily on volunteers, we are convinced that we can create more efficient added value through practical action and voluntary reporting, informed by existing and future reporting formats.

It is crucial to Kronberg Academy that our actions should continue to make our attitudes clearly recognisable.

By publishing this Sustainability Report, we aim to highlight our progress and demonstrate the contributions we are making to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the global 2030 Agenda. We have a direct influence on important goals here, including “Quality Education”, “Gender Equality”, “Reduced Inequalities”, “Sustainable Cities and Communities”, “Climate Action” and, last but not least, “Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions”.

## 2. MILESTONES IN 2024 AND 2025

Sustainable development at Kronberg Academy is an ongoing process. To date, our management system has been audited by five internal evaluations and four external certification processes.

Both the internal evaluations and external audits regularly provided new measures to consider. Even the most recent external certification processes, and the experiences of our facility management team in dealing with the new concert hall systems, have inspired additional measures.

### What we have achieved so far:

- Introduction of environmental management system: 31.03.2021
- Initial discussions and inspections of individual departments: April 2021
- Objective review of all the Academy's departments/operations/processes in the form of an initial comprehensive, site-specific and process-specific environmental audit. The most important direct and indirect environmental aspects were identified in this process and subsequently documented in an Excel document, which is now extensive:  
03-05.05.2021
- This was followed by an initial materiality assessment clustering the most significant environmental aspects and identifying the six most important target areas (Material Topics).
- "Sustainability Management" folder created on the Academy's server. Risks and opportunities were then identified, measures determined and the lines of responsibility for achieving these were assigned. Resources necessary for this were approved.
- Context of the Academy – i.e. its purpose, its "raison d'être" or function – determined at the same time.
- Environmental policy formulated.
- Document filing system developed based on the structure laid down in ISO 14001:2015. Corresponding guidelines set out.
- This and the resulting structure created for tasks/processes and organisation, as well as a definition of scope, form the start of environmental management activities.
- Environment team established (including directors of the Academy and of each department) with regular monthly meetings.
- Internal audit and subsequent report: 04-12.11.2021
- Management assessment (review): 22.12.2021
- In the aforementioned processes, aspects of sustainability and criteria with an increasingly social focus were gradually compiled and woven into the processes and structure of the management system.
- Spring 2022: 2021 Sustainability Report published by the Kronberg Academy Foundation with a declaration of compliance pursuant to the German Sustainability Code (DNK) for higher education.

- From 2022 onwards, in spite of the pandemic and the challenges connected with relocating to the Casals Forum, we learnt a great deal and were able to refine our management system in almost all areas to which the standard applies.
  - At the height of the energy crisis, we secured a green electricity supply to power the Casals Forum in line with recognised green power criteria. During previous years, the limitations of the construction project meant that we were not yet able to make energy savings. Until we took over full and final responsibility for operating the facility management system, we were likewise unable to record any key indicators for this system. However, our work on a concept for the subsequent phase began at an early stage.
  - In 2025, the situation is very different: new measurement systems allow us to identify noticeably higher consumption at various points and to target reductions here.
  - 2025 began with a successful fourth audit of the management system in compliance with international environmental standard ISO 14001:2015, conducted by Berlin-based certification firm GUTcert, an evaluation of the sustainability reports in accordance with the specifications of the DNK (German Sustainability Code) and a review of our website in line with the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the UN 2030 Agenda.
  - Our Material Topics were also subject to a review in early 2025, and our objectives were adjusted for relocating to and operating the Casals Forum.
  - The fourth external management evaluation/audit was conducted by our certification firm GUTcert on 11 and 12 March 2025 – this was a “recertification” and the findings were good.
  - The second sustainability report was published online in spring 2024.
  - From five years of experience, we now know that a central intranet portal and regular meetings create structure and safeguard knowledge – even when staff members change or situations prove difficult. A sustainability (**reporting**) system alone is not effective. Impetus is needed from the management system in line with the principle **Plan-Do-Check-Act**. Certain things were very important to us from the start: there should be no greenwashing and this should not be a one-off project. Rather, we should implement a lasting system that is audited annually by independent experts.
- This is why, to date, a structured sustainability management system that complies with ISO or EMAS (EU Eco-Management and Audit Scheme) is an exception to the rule in the cultural world. Many concert houses (ourselves included) struggle with day-to-day business, pressure to cut costs and a shortage of skilled personnel. The time, experience and financial means to build long-term structures are often lacking. This makes it even more crucial for us to showcase functioning models and share them openly with others.

### 3. OUR MISSION STATEMENT

For Kronberg Academy, sustainability has grown over time to become a key feature of our training strategy: “... Music in the service of humanity.” The Foundation is guided by the principle of responsibility towards music, people and the planet. This is based on the

philosophy and approach of the great cellist and passionate campaigner for peace, Pablo Casals. In his appeal made before the UN on 24 October 1958, Casals urged musicians across the world to put "...the purity of their art at the service of humanity". We see a direct correlation and material contribution here to the UN's call for "Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions", which is met by the Foundation. The artists, whether tutors, students or alumni, the staff and board members, and the sponsors and supporters of the Academy follow this guiding principle out of conviction, and in so doing see themselves as members of a community of shared values. At the same time, they also constitute the Foundation's most important stakeholders, alongside its neighbours and relevant authorities.

An academy not only imparts knowledge and skills but also values, for example in its expectations of excellence from the world's best upcoming musicians. Throughout its history, Kronberg Academy has dedicated itself to preserving and nurturing a thing of great value, a living thing, for the future and for all humankind: namely classical music. This is why it provides a framework in which musical values are handed down from generation to generation. For more than 30 years, a steadily growing community of artists has thus evolved that follows Pablo Casals's principle for a way of life in which we think sustainably and always ask what we can do for humanity.

Now, as we confront the epochal change that is overtaking nature and society in the 21st century, Kronberg Academy must determine the role it can play. As an events organiser and training institute, how can it "live" in a more environmentally friendly way and convey the values that befits this? This set of values must today, undoubtedly, include fostering global social connections, totally irrespective of the given sociological or political disposition prevalent in the societies our students call home.

Comprehensive musical knowledge and skill are likewise independent of these backgrounds. This is a knowledge of music theory that is valid the world over, of the history of music, of interpretation and of the technique relevant to a particular instrument. Such knowledge should now not only benefit from the ability to master one's own instrument and a given work, but also be bolstered by the capacity to grapple with issues of sustainability and aspects of global society, the music industry and the events sector. This is why we believe it to be the duty of the leading institutions who train the world's elite young musicians to convey these values and this knowledge, and to increase awareness of them. In turn, our graduates should pass on and develop the approach to sustainability and music instilled by the Academy in their endeavours as global figures. Five years of sustainability management have taught us that we have greater leverage to achieve a positive impact for our students and society through our role as an academy than from changes to our comparatively small, direct and indirect environmental footprint.

# 4. STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES AND FOCUS AREAS

## Overarching objectives

The aims of the Kronberg Academy Foundation are to maintain its excellent standard, increase its profile using an innovative, holistic and sustainable concept, and to become so structurally and economically strong that it can continue to develop in future, including independently of its founder, Raimund Trenkler. The Foundation is thus striving to be institutionally and financially independent. However, this also requires a unified vision that takes into account the profound change occurring in nature and society in the 21st century, and that, as far as possible, gives relevant stature to music in this process of societal transformation.

## Our key sustainability objectives are:

1. **To convey our mission statement – founded on music, people and the planet – to our students and all stakeholders in the Kronberg Family, both through our actions and our training programme.**
2. **To strengthen the profile of the Kronberg Academy Foundation as a responsible and attractive employer.**
3. **To minimise the environmental impact of the Kronberg Academy Foundation and continue resolutely along the environmental management path we have chosen.**

## Core focus areas

The triad of **MUSIC, PEOPLE and the PLANET** shapes Kronberg Academy's self-image. It determines the material significance of our Foundation's existence. These core fields of activity form a framework for our structured, sustainable development within defined Material Topics, the objectives, concepts, measures and results of which are presented separately in this report.

### 4.1. Focus area: Music

#### Kronberg Academy as a training institute

Kronberg Academy is both a training institute and a concert venue. It offers the best of the world's highly talented young violinists, violists and cellists tailor-made study programmes that are adjusted – in terms of content and scheduling – to their specific individual needs. Collaboration with Frankfurt University of Music and Performing Arts enables them to study for a Bachelor's or a Master's degree. Exceptional young pianists also form part of the Academy through the Sir András Schiff Performance Programme for Young Pianists, which focuses on chamber music.

Kronberg Academy established this excellence-driven training programme in 2007, thus embarking on a new path. Its five specially designed study programmes are aimed at exceptionally talented young players who want to pursue artistic training at the very highest

level in harmony with a professional career on the stage. Kronberg Academy collaborates with renowned musicians who regularly teach their own classes at the institute or give masterclasses as visiting professors.

Members of the Artistic Council and noted conductors alike are actively involved in the training pathways of all students, creating a vibrant environment where teaching, residing and living come together in one place. Our graduates aspire to supreme musical standards and develop into responsible, open-minded, independent artistic figures.

Our institution collaborates with international concert halls, such as those in Berlin, New York, London and Tokyo. It further organises the Kronberg Academy Festival every two years and coordinates regular meetings of its alumni. As an educational institute, we want to train exceptional young musicians to become artists fully conscious of their responsibility towards music, but also of that towards people and the planet. It is important to us that they leave Kronberg Academy with this mindset. We want to give them the best musical support, but at the same time we also seek to motivate them to do just what Pablo Casals urged them to: to employ their artistry in the cause of peace among humankind – and the conservation of nature.

We hope to motivate them to look for ways to achieve this, and to use what influence they may have as artists to work towards those ends, directly or indirectly, for example by using music to focus attention on socially important topics or by acting as multipliers. This is one area where we, as Kronberg Academy, want to contribute to achieving the global Sustainability Development Goals.

For this purpose, we are increasingly incorporating the consequences of environmental change into our own risk analyses and then into our study operations. In doing so, we can assess the effects of climate change both with specific regard to the Academy and to the international music world in general. We support students by imparting knowledge of the subject area in as many facets as possible – above all those concerning social and environmental sustainability – and discussing it with them.

Furthermore, we are jointly developing very specific artistic projects that dovetail with this issue. Discussions around, as well as the impact of events on, sustainable lifestyles have become a fixed component of our training, and we take into account any changes which are having a growing influence on artists' job profiles as a result. Aspects of sustainability have thereby become a subject of discussion within the study programmes as well as part of the curriculum.

### **The Casals Forum: operating in a new dimension**

Until September 2022, administrative activities and tuition were traditionally performed in rented premises in Kronberg, which each had a historic character. In building the Casals Forum, which likewise opened in the 2022 winter semester, the Kronberg Academy Foundation has given all its tasks a shared home and a future. And it is the philosophy of Pablo Casals, the great cellist and passionate champion of peace who believed that art, humanity and respect for nature are inextricably linked, that has become the guiding

principle for all training and musical activities that take place in Europe's first carbon-neutral concert hall and study centre.

This tremendous progress for the Foundation centres on the premise of enabling music to gain in importance and influence us towards interactions that are meaningful for people and our planet alike. However, on commencing operations in our Casals Forum, the aspect of facility management gained major significance for us within environmental sustainability management, and has thus become an important additional part of our management work, which had to be integrated into the development agenda along with its process steps.

## **4.2. Focus area: People**

### **Cradle-to-cradle, or natural musical permaculture**

One of the central principles of Kronberg Academy is the sustainable training cycle – what one might call a “cradle-to-cradle approach”, or natural “musical permaculture”. Young people are introduced to music, trained as artists and later return as alumni to share their knowledge with subsequent cohorts. This is how musical skills, values and attitudes are passed down and developed through the generations. In this sense, Kronberg Academy contributes directly to the global Sustainability Development Goals, particularly to those of ‘Quality Education’ and ‘Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions’.

Sustainability and “musical permaculture” assimilate the musicians into an understanding of nature (nature's design). **According to this idea, people will only be able to survive in the long term if they work in harmony with nature's cycles and resources and not against them – and it is likewise the only way that musicians will be able to pursue this wonderful career.** Both terms therefore describe the systemic relationship between living beings and the natural environment in music making.

### **The Kronberg Family**

The focus area of “People” encompasses the entire “Kronberg Family”: the Kronberg Academy Foundation would be inconceivable without highly motivated and highly committed employees. In addition, generous sponsors from both private and public spheres are the cornerstones of the Foundation's architecture. We want to develop our work further through targeted measures in strategic organisational areas, such as personnel, health, mobility and CPD management, achieving ecological and socially acceptable solutions as part of a gradual and continuous improvement process.

## **4.3. Focus area: Planet Earth**

### **Environmental aspects**

The “Planet Earth” focus area comprises Kronberg Academy's responsibility to the environment and climate. When we look at the global situation, one thing is clear: global warming has reached critical levels and, even though our direct carbon footprint is comparatively small, we should take consistent action within the scope of our capabilities.

Constructing the Casals Forum was an important step forward: it was built on a former car park, sits harmoniously within its environment and employs wooden interior fittings and innovative technologies to aid the acoustics and energy efficiency – with the sophisticated building architecture also contributing to this. During the construction phase a stream was even uncovered, allowing a little piece of nature to be regained.

Although Kronberg Academy strives to lead by example in the cultural world, our system is not yet perfect. A large number of sensors are still missing as a result of problems following the new build, meaning that to date we are only able to obtain a piecemeal overview of the full carbon footprint. In addition, we are already bordering on the attainable energy efficiency limits. The modern new air conditioning system allows virtually no room for further technological improvements at present.

A positive picture can be seen in the development of our environmental performance in Kronberg. Prior to relocating to our new premises, our sphere of impact was primarily restricted to the travel arrangements of artists, students and audience members and to the management of events, but an entire new world has been opened up with the Casals Forum. We are now able to record and evaluate our use of resources in detail, and therefore make step by step reductions. By doing this, we are creating the foundations for continuous learning and for ongoing improvement in our environmental actions.

What is more, after four years of working on this project, we have also learned that, compared with manufacturing companies, the environmental damage caused by our operations is minor. Nevertheless, we are keen to exploit opportunities even where we have limited direct impact – for example in audience travel. Thanks to excellent public transport connections and the alignment of our concert timings with travel timetables, we are facilitating eco-friendly travel to our events.

We are particularly proud of the progress we have made in energy and resource management. Our buildings are powered with green energy and cooled using innovative “ice battery” technology – two measures that significantly improve our carbon footprint. In addition, we collect rainwater in large cisterns for watering our green areas, underlining our commitment to the careful use of resources.

It is clear that, even though our environmental footprint is small, we are consistently exploiting opportunities to achieve a sustainable impact – and to lead by example within the cultural sphere.

## **5. OUR STAKEHOLDERS**

The Foundation’s key stakeholder groups were identified as part of the materiality and context analysis performed in accordance with the German Sustainability Code and ISO 14001:2015, using a dialogue process that comprised several sessions.

The Board of the Kronberg Academy Foundation, staff members, volunteers, tutors and students were all involved in determining our Material Topics, as were the Foundation’s sponsors and patrons. As part of our context-driven curriculum, we regularly engage in deep

Kronberg Academy 2024/2025 Sustainability Report, updated August 2025

dialogue with our students, which is based on preparatory discussions between staff and tutors.

Furthermore, we liaise closely with artists, alumni, supporters, neighbours and authorities. This ongoing dialogue enables us to communicate our approach and the progress we make in a transparent way, as well as helping us to secure the sustainable future of the Foundation. We expect these exchanges, particularly the dialogue with external stakeholders, to provide additional ideas that will help us to more sharply define our Material Topics.

## **MATERIALITY PROCESS**

### **2021 Materiality Analysis**

The established triad of MUSIC, PEOPLE and the PLANET shapes the material significance of our Foundation's existence. These three fields of activity form a framework for the six Material Topics, which are mapped out in our materiality analysis and presented in this report by means of objectives, concepts, measures and results. The basis for this was participatory stakeholder engagement, which is subject to continuous updating and is described in more detail below.

In previous years, we have regularly examined our materiality and re-specified our objectives in a review. Ongoing exchange with our stakeholder groups gives us certainty that we have set the right course for our future development and that we are implementing the resulting measures effectively.

In 2021, we engaged in participatory dialogue – supported by an external sustainability advisor – to identify and evaluate our Materiality Topics as part of our strategy process. Here, we drew on the mission statement at the heart of daily life in the Foundation and combined it with a critical evaluation of existing processes as well as an openness to innovation as a driving force for lasting success. The Board of the Kronberg Academy Foundation, staff members, volunteers and tutors were involved in the dialogue process to determine these topics.

## **6. MATERIAL TOPICS**

Taking the style of a consolidated management approach, we have formulated a brief description of the most important development steps for the following six Material Topics.

Since our new premises have become fully operational and our concert schedule has become significantly busier, we have likewise broadened our analytical framework to incorporate the requirements of new stakeholders. The material aspects of our operations  
Kronberg Academy 2024/2025 Sustainability Report, updated August 2025

were re-evaluated in light of this. Every department – from administration, event management and communications to study programmes and facility management – identified relevant topics and, where applicable, re-assessed them.

The following Material Topics were identified in 2024/25 and confirmed in the 2025 Review:

1. Foundation culture and mission statement
2. Employees/employee satisfaction
3. Communications
4. Organisation/processes
5. Travel logistics (CO<sub>2</sub> consumption)
6. Other stakeholders

## **7.1 Foundation culture and teaching**

The Foundation deems it of material importance to work on a structured development of the organisational culture, focusing on the areas of “Corporate Identity” (CI) and “Education/Teaching”.

### **7.1.1 Corporate Identity**

Within the sphere of CI and based on our vision, the goal is to formulate objectives, measures, risk/opportunity assessments and time plans, in which responsibilities are assigned, to formulate specific guiding principles that enable consistency across both internal and external communications. This process is being implemented and has yielded initial results since 2022. A clear allocation of responsibilities within departments and further development of the governance structure are linked to this.

#### **Guiding principles for sustainability**

The philosophy of Pablo Casals, for whom art, humanity and respect for nature were inextricably linked, is the guide that we follow in all our educational and musical activities. Bringing people together through active understanding, humanity and tolerance is therefore a central feature of our training concept. Kronberg Academy acknowledges its responsibility towards music, people and the planet. As a community of shared values, we work together with our artists, sponsors, staff and audiences to make social and environmental sustainability one of the most important foundations underpinning our actions, alongside artistic sustainability. We encourage our students to embrace these principles and – starting with their application – to actively support them and make every effort to implement them.

### **7.1.2. Teaching**

With regard to teaching, our aim is to train young soloists to become artistic figures who think and act sustainably, who organise their lives as artists in line with these principles and who act as multipliers for them. In a significant step, a new co-curriculum was developed to integrate content on environmental and social sustainability into our study programmes.

Both internal and external management system audits to assess process health in the achievement of targets have been taking place annually since November 2021.

#### **7.1.2.1 Overarching objectives and concepts**

Several overarching objectives were defined and set out in writing as a result of the audit.

##### **Mission:**

Students should leave Kronberg Academy as leading musical figures who will carry our social and environmental values out into the world (multipliers).

Artistic excellence is not the only objective of our training, which also aims to convey values. Sustainability is firmly embedded in the syllabus, with concerts in social institutions, reflections on music and social impact, and discourse on issues we will face in the future forming part of everyday life. “Our students are more than talented musicians – they are the leading figures of the future in the world of classical music.”

##### **Strategic goals:**

- During their studies, all students should perform in at least one social concert.
- The development of character and complementary soft skills through additional modules, for example in self-management or moderation, aims to set the artists apart as individuals in a highly competitive environment.

##### **Operational goals:**

- Collaboration with medical/social institutions for concert formats
- Coaching and seminars offered on a wide range of topics
- Increasing awareness of sustainability
- Setting an example for sustainable management and social justice

#### **7.1.2.2 Measures within the study programmes**

##### **Onboarding with Casals**

At the start of the academic year, students are familiarised with the values and mission of Kronberg Academy as part of an onboarding process. This includes watching a short film about Pablo Casals. It is important to us that we should explain key structures and processes within the Foundation, such as the principle of solidarity and the aims of the study programmes, right at the very beginning so that we can give students a familiar framework in which to categorise the processes.

##### **Social events organised by and with students**

Alongside musical excellence, a key aim of our training programme is to provide young musicians with an awareness of their social responsibility. They should learn how they can achieve much good with their music – for people unable to afford regular concert visits, who have previously had no access to classical music or those whose health prevents them from sharing in concert life. In short, for all those to whom music would otherwise be out of reach.

A number of collaborations with charitable partners are already in place for events with audiences, in which between twelve and 20 students can take part each year. Participation became compulsory for the 2023 intake onwards. These endeavours focus on increased awareness when dealing with given target groups, as well as designing appropriate programmes and providing an impetus for students to carry out similar projects themselves.

*People with dementia:* Students experience how they can stimulate and motivate dementia patients through their music. Four conversation concerts, run in cooperation with Goethe University Frankfurt, have already taken place – at least two further dates are currently scheduled per year. Evaluation meetings will be held to discuss this.

*Conversation concert for patients at Klinik Hohe Mark:* In this initiative, people suffering from addiction experience chamber music at first hand. Some concert dates have been scheduled with the Klinik Hohe Mark (a specialist hospital for people with mental disorders/addiction in Oberursel/Frankfurt) whilst others are being planned. Prior to these events, students receive coaching on music therapy and music psychology from specialists and experts at the clinic. The objective is to create moving moments for patients to enable them to access their own emotions. For the students, it will offer a direct experience of the psychological effect that music can have.

*Collaboration with the Child Protection Association:* A familiarisation phase is already underway in which students are getting to know primary school pupils, interactive concerts have taken place at the Orangerie in Frankfurt and a final concert has been held in the Casals Forum. The aim of this project is to bring disadvantaged children into contact with classical music. Here, the focus is on interaction with approachable artists and with music, and for the students it likewise entails learning about and gaining experience with aspects of musical education.

### **Workshops/seminars/coaching**

A variety of tuition formats are used to prepare students for central aspects of their future careers and personal development – covering topics that extend beyond pure musical training but that are increasingly important for professional musicians. These include moderation coaching, advice on interviews and self-presentation as well as background knowledge on the cultural sector and how to position and market oneself.

The music psychology seminar led by neuroscientist Professor Stefan Kölsch is also particularly valuable. Entitled “A journey through the emotional world of music – how brain activity and emotions are altered by sound,” it teaches students the impact that music has on both themselves and on others. Our training is complemented by a seminar on self-help techniques to assist with pain, muscle tension and poor posture.

Looking forward, in 2025/2026 we intend to test discussion formats on social and environmental sustainability and pilot them with the students.

### **Sustainability curriculum**

A sustainability curriculum that was first envisaged in 2021 and compiled in 2023 has now been a contractual part of the study programmes and masterclasses since 2024. We have already organised a range of concerts with a link to social sustainability and continue to do so.

In connection with the legacy of Pablo Casals, Kronberg Academy sees its main task in creating awareness among musicians, from youngsters to maestros, of their responsibility towards natural cycles. The ultimate aim is for future generations to shape their artistic lives in harmony with this outlook.

To this end, the Kronberg campus of the Casals Forum offers a “sustainable music academy environment.” It combines ecological considerations with social sustainability and creates spaces for people to come together, where students can exchange ideas. Sustainability is thus becoming an integral part of the teaching content and complements the musical training.

## **7.2 Compliance and legal regulations**

### **7.2.1 Overarching objectives and concepts**

The Foundation deems it of material importance to work on a structured development of compliance. This is subdivided into the relevant areas of occupational safety and health protection as well as contract and employment law, public law, foundation law and also “binding commitments” that affect the Foundation.

Overarching objectives in the area of occupational safety and health protection are to ensure, maintain and improve the safety, wellbeing and health of employees. When the legal handover of responsibility for systems in the new Casals Forum buildings was completed in late 2023, a major new additional subpackage of binding commitments was passed on to the Foundation as its owner, operator and events organiser.

The aim of compliance management is to guarantee that the Foundation’s actions correspond to the current legislative framework, its own statutes and contractual obligations to partners, as well as any self-imposed regulations or commitments it has entered into. The Board of the Foundation has a non-delegable responsibility for compliance with all regulations. As such, it is of particular importance to the Foundation that core values such as dependability, credibility, honesty and integrity should govern our actions. The Kronberg Academy Foundation exemplifies these values, for example through a communications culture characterised by openness.

A programme of measures for reaching the given objectives was specified in 2021 and led to the development of an internal index of legal provisions covering the regulations that apply to us. This is continuously updated with the help of the “umwelt-online” legal compliance software. Four external management audits to assess the progress took place in 2022, 2023, 2024 and 2025.

## **7.2.2 Measures and results**

### **7.2.2.1 Board responsibility for reporting and implementation obligations regarding EMS/SMS implementation**

Throughout the whole of 2024, the Board worked closely with all parties involved to agree the sustainability topics, and particularly with the sustainability advisor Matthias Friebel and the environment team. Its members provided a motivating presence at many of the team meetings, especially as the workload grew. Numerous suggestions and measures were approved, and in 2024/2025 the Board itself launched or took responsibility for further initiatives, particularly where construction decisions were concerned. A key example of this is the advanced planning and feasibility study for the new student residence building, which will be constructed to German Sustainable Building Council (DGNB) platinum standard.

There have been no changes to the fundamental strategic goals, the policies of the Foundation or the associated processes. However, individual departments – or rather the environment team as a whole – have continually set specific new objectives that now need to be followed and implemented.

### **7.2.2.2 Development of and compliance with binding commitments**

We have evaluated all the relevant recommendations and advice from the 2024 audit and initiated each of the associated processes. A full risk analysis was carried out for this purpose.

On the basis of indications from the recertification audit and from the internal audit, we are currently able to assume that we are satisfying all legal requirements.

### **7.2.2.3 Internal audits in 2024/2025**

The internal audits completed with all departments in February 2025 ultimately revealed a remarkably encouraging picture given the challenging situation that preceded it. The only conclusion that can be drawn from this is that the work carried out in previous years, combined with the regular environment team meetings and above all the external audits, had a formative, inspirational effect and, in the end, led to many permanent improvements.

### **7.2.2.4 Sustainability management system**

Upon introduction of the sustainability management system, an accessible sustainability management handbook was compiled on a separate server for all staff, and a document system was established, which regulates and records the internal processes. This handbook underwent extensive revision from late 2024 to March 2025, as it had to be adapted to the new procedural situation in the Casals Forum.

As a result of this, we concluded that our entire documentation structure is once more in urgent need of reworking and, above all, needs to be simplified. The Academy is a highly specialised training college with a small administrative team, not an industrial operation with thousands of employees.

Also in 2024/early 2025, we re-examined the extent to which the desired goals, measures, opportunities and risks for 2025 and 2026 can be implemented or achieved, and used a traffic light system corresponding to the Deming Cycle method to assess this. The first step

was to create a comprehensive list of all facts and data, so that we can increasingly navigate our way based on evaluations of these.

As a result of construction continuing into autumn/winter 2023, and specifically owing to a number of unresolved aspects in the approval and handover of the building, we were only able to compile very limited (Scope 1) key performance indicators for our own new building. To date, it has initially only been possible to implement the differentiated recording and measurement system for energy and water consumption – which is rightly demanded by all environmental and sustainability standards – in a rudimentary fashion. Nevertheless, our Facility Management team is in the process of initiating, or rather implementing, the technical foundations required for this, both with regard to the essential measurement technology that must be installed as well as the equally necessary hardware and software. This will assist us in developing our carbon accounting framework.

### **7.2.2.5 Sustainability curriculum**

A sustainability curriculum that was first envisaged in 2021 and compiled in 2023 has now been a contractual part of the study programmes and masterclasses since 2024. Since then, we have organised a whole range of concerts with a link to social sustainability, and continue to do so.

In implementing the objectives outlined above, the Kronberg Academy Foundation is contributing to calls from the United Nations Global Compact to “Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development,” by adhering to ethical guidelines in all areas of the Foundation and any relevant operational activities. These take effect all along the entire value chain in our training and events operations. We put the pursuit of equal gender opportunities into daily practice in all areas of the Foundation and our teaching.

## **7.3 Communications**

### **7.3.1 Overarching objectives and concepts**

The entire arts and events sector worldwide continues to grapple with the topic of sustainability – albeit at varying levels of speed and intensity. As an institution that depends on financial support and subsidies, the Foundation began preparing its statutes and mission statement accordingly at an early stage. Thanks to our approach, our activities and also the new buildings in our park-like surroundings, we are now perfectly suited to act as a flagship in this global development of the education, concert and events market.

The Foundation deems it of material importance to work on a structured development of compliance in the area of internal and external communications. This is subdivided into the relevant areas of “services”, such as catering, media service providers, printing houses, photographers and events technology, and “consumption of materials and use of resources.” Measures for achieving these objectives have already been set out and either partially implemented or planned.

Particular attention is paid to the manner in which corporate identity is communicated, both internally and externally. At the same time, consumption of resources must always be minimised and attention should be paid to the origin of products. Gradually, preference is being given to collaboration with service providers who act in a sustainable, environmentally conscious way. Here, we feel it is important that the majority of suppliers and service providers come from the local region. We have begun consistently evaluating our purchasing processes and adjusting them where necessary. Our aim is to collect data on further area-specific topics of environmental management and develop more key figures or, specifically, to determine performance indicators that will allow us to identify improvements.

Another pertinent goal is to boost both internal and external communications with regard to sustainability topics. Specific contributions to our intranet pages and yearbook support this, as does regularly publishing sustainability reports on our website, which create transparency and credibility. The DNK Sustainability Report serves the needs of experts whilst clear and concise contributions in specialist publications (from houses such as Haufe) reach a wider audience. We thus use a variety of formats to appropriately inform our target groups of the progress we make.

### **7.3.2 Measures and results**

#### **Services**

Our supplier relationships have undergone review, with site visits carried out to see selected partners. Many responded positively to this, as it provided visible acknowledgement of their efforts. Numerous projects were initiated from 2023 onwards, particularly in relation to events. It was not possible to implement all of them, however – for instance certain hotel and catering initiatives did not happen – as the preparatory work required to do so was lacking. We were forced to realise that the organisation and costs involved were often disproportionate to any potential environmental gain. Furthermore, the Covid pandemic is still having an impact. Some suppliers, hotels in particular, have ongoing struggles with financial and staff-related consequences, and are therefore unable to prioritise sustainability topics at present.

Indirect CO<sub>2</sub> emissions provide a good example here. We have begun recording the indirect CO<sub>2</sub> emissions caused by or attributed to Kronberg Academy (Scope 2 and 3) using a variety of methods. This relates, for instance, to travel to and from the Academy by students, tutors, artists and concertgoers.

Kronberg's train station offers an ideal solution for environmentally friendly train travel to the Academy, and we show consideration for this by aligning our concert start times with the train timetable. However, the number of people who travel by train varies greatly depending on the event. Visitors from the wider Rhine-Main region often use this option, whilst our regular, predominantly older, attendees from the local area prefer to travel by car, particularly in inclement weather. Suboptimal bus services in the surrounding area likewise work in favour of independent travel by car.

We do not see it as our duty to educate audiences in matters of environmental protection. However, we do wish to support, advertise and communicate these aims – whilst at the same time giving our visitors the freedom to make their own travel choices. Until recently, one contribution to this was the option to combine any concert ticket with a ticket for the Rhine-Main public transport network.

Introduction of the "Deutschlandticket" travel pass has overtaken this model, however, as most of those who travel by train already have this national travel pass. For this reason, we will not continue to offer the costly "Concert ticket + train ticket" option in future.

#### **Further minimising resource consumption**

Work in this area is continuous but has not always met with equal success, as we first had to become acquainted with the new sources of consumption in the Casals Forum. A relevant aspect that certainly helps with conserving resources is the fact that the majority of the service providers and suppliers come from the local region, meaning that transport routes are generally short. Our purchasing processes are subject to continual review and are adapted where necessary. In reality, however, we have a somewhat low number of suppliers.

### **Event catering**

Our new caterers were chosen in early 2023 on the basis of their ability to provide sustainable catering. However, we later encountered serious problems during implementation, which resulted in a last-minute change. On undertaking some market research, it became clear that this is another area where, as a result of upheavals caused by the pandemic, there is practically no professional environmental management - or even sustainability management - in the sector at present.

Nevertheless, we wanted our caterer to pay greater attention to topics of sustainability, such as food origins, human rights considerations, fairtrade goods, carbon footprint etc, and draw on the guidelines for sustainable event management issued by the German Environment Agency. By selecting a professional catering company from Frankfurt, we finally achieved this in 2024.

### **Social sustainability in event management**

This is, equally, a topic on which there is an ever stronger focus within the Foundation. However, there is sometimes a lack of support for this from our suppliers, as providing this information involves considerable time and effort.

### **7.3.3 Contribution to the UN Global Compact**

Our open communication of the Foundation's Material Topics ensures that our stance on the most pressing social issues of our time remains transparent. This not only provides orientation for all members of the Kronberg Family, for our sponsors and supporters it is also an important element in documenting how our work is full of integrity and takes a values-based approach to use of the funds provided to us.

The Foundation reports on aspects of sustainability that fall within the established sustainability reporting framework of the German Sustainability Code (DNK) and submits a declaration derived from the requirements of the Eco Management Audit Scheme (EMAS) as well as statements relating to our audited management system as specified in international standard ISO 14001:2015. As a foundation and private college, sustainable development is so fundamentally important to us because the purpose of our organisation, to train top-class young musicians in classical music, is directly linked to many of the United Nations Sustainability Development Goals (SDGs) and the global 2030 Agenda, as described in the other Material Topics.

## **7.4 Organisation/processes**

#### **7.4.1 Overarching objectives and concepts**

The Foundation deems work on a structured progression of the organisational and process framework to be of material importance. The development of initial objectives and measures was planned and implemented up to the end of 2022. This focused on both an assessment of existing structures that should be developed further in order to increase efficiency, as well as on reducing the adverse impacts that arise from our operations. Universally speaking, we wish to minimise the consumption of resources, pay heed to the provenance of products and give preference to regional suppliers where the services are comparable. In the area of IT, we have endeavoured to gain a better overview of the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions that result from server and hardware use. It has increasingly become apparent that data centres are likely to cause considerably higher CO<sub>2</sub> emissions than the use of environmentally-harmful paper products, for example – but at the same time we are not yet able to supply reliable data relating to our emissions here. Detailed measurement would only be possible using significantly more expensive, independent data structures, which is not practical for an organisation of our size.

#### **7.4.2 Measures and results**

Using the existing, internal evaluation matrix for the desired objectives and measures, a new medium-term structure was drafted and put in place for transforming the Kronberg Academy Foundation into a sustainable organisation.

The main objective in the long-term is to make Kronberg Academy an attractive, sustainable employer. A new assessment carried out by the audit team last year increased the importance of the relevant economic, environmental and social effects of the “Organisation/processes” topic by a significant margin.

In light of this, a new organisational structure was designed in a multi-phase process and has now been implemented.

## **7.5 Environmental impact of travel logistics and events**

#### **7.5.1 Overarching objectives and concepts**

The Kronberg Academy Foundation deems reducing the environmental impact of travel logistics and events to be of material importance. Objectives and measures to help achieve this goal have already been determined. We want to increase environmental sustainability in the key areas of “study programmes” and “concert events”. Our aim is to achieve gradual improvements through reduced consumption of resources, responsible selection of materials and forging partnerships with suppliers who trade in an eco-conscious, sustainable manner.

World-class, international artists are the lifeblood of Kronberg Academy – something that cannot readily be made more regional. Artists therefore often have to travel long distances, which unfortunately comes with a corresponding carbon footprint. Wherever possible, short haul flights should be avoided or reduced, and rail travel should be given preference.

We consciously refrain from carbon offsetting, as we do not believe this to be a sustainable approach. Our preference is to invest directly in efficient technology and processes that have a lasting impact.

Thanks to the excellent transport connections with the train station on our doorstep, some employees and concertgoers already travel to us using public transport. We encourage providers supplying local transfer services for artists to forego vehicles with combustion engines and instead use electric or hydrogen vehicles. This objective has likewise already been achieved, in two stages: at first, in 2021, with luxury electric cars, and since autumn 2022 with somewhat smaller EVs.

We have begun recording, evaluating and minimising the consumption of resources in the context of events. Data will now be collected for further area-specific topics relating to environmental management, developing a time series of key figures over several years and, specifically, determining performance indicators to allow us to identify improvements. This will primarily relate to our relocation to the Casals Forum.

## **7.5.2 Measures and results**

### **Changes to the management system**

No substantial changes were made to the environmental management system itself. From the outset, the combined sustainability management system was constructed such that it could be smoothly transferred to the new setting. The changes result from the fact that Kronberg Academy is now no longer a tenant, but a property owner responsible for the premises. This brings many new possibilities, but likewise comes with constraints and entails numerous different processes.

In late January/early February 2025, we reached a target attainment level that gives cause for satisfaction in spite of the restrictive construction problems. The management system withstood the challenges of the last few years, which can be attributed to the fact that it has already been largely accepted by all employees and other stakeholders who are involved to a greater or lesser extent.

### **Resulting risks and opportunities**

Since the Academy is only able to identify, or is only the cause of, very minor environmental risks, such risks tend to be evaluated in an indirect capacity (Scope 2 and 3). Furthermore, there was – and is – a risk that, by introducing a sustainability management system that not only complies with criteria of the German Sustainability Code (DNK) for higher education but also the requirements of ISO 14001:2015, we have entered completely uncharted territory in the artist training landscape.

In doing so, it was crucial to fulfil the myriad expectations of our different stakeholders whilst at the same time staying true to our own values. The fact that the Academy has built such a globally unique reputation over the past 30 years made this an especially important responsibility.

Concurrent with this, we came to realise that the greatest sustainability advances we can make as an institute of higher education lie in developing the training we offer – entirely in keeping with our guiding principle of “Responsibility towards music, people and the planet”. It is our task to not only further the instrumental mastery of the best young musicians, but also to prepare them as artists to deal with the climate and social changes we will face in the coming years.

What will the impact of different travel conditions and modern event management be? How will the concert market adapt? And above all: what role can music play in this context?

We, ourselves, are currently learning all of this daily as an institution, and thus those who study with us learn it, too.

### **Environmental performance**

Development in major environmental aspects can be seen as encouraging. Until we relocated to the new buildings, aspects on which we had only an indirect influence consisted of matters relating to artists’, students’ and concert guests’ travel and transport. Printed products and the hosting of our website also fell into this category. Compared with a manufacturing company, these activities placed a very insignificant burden on the environment.

### **Casals Forum**

Upon moving into our own buildings, the situation has changed dramatically: in addition to the impacts cited above, we now generate energy and water consumption, and we operate an expensive, modern air conditioning system. And with the new opportunities provided by the space we now occupy, a new sphere of business and activity has emerged, one which is growing and has led to the introduction of various new processes.

### **Innovative ice storage technology**

Whilst constructing the Casals Forum, a large underground thermal energy store was created, which stores ambient heat and thus enables an efficient heating and cooling supply. The centrepiece of this technology is a 360 m<sup>3</sup> water tank in the cellar of the study centre. It cools the auditorium in summer and heats it in winter – without the need for a conventional air-conditioning system.

The ice battery was a one-off, high initial investment, but it is designed to last for decades and will significantly reduce environmental pollution. Once the predictable teething problems had been overcome, it was possible to optimise the complex control system such that it now operates reliably and helps us to meet our CO<sub>2</sub> reduction targets.

Thanks to the contract we concluded for the supply of certified green energy, we are able to prove our carbon neutral status without additional compensation measures.

### **Biodiversity**

Kronberg Academy has only limited means with which to support biodiversity. The roof of the Academy is covered with a substrate layer and planted with suitable dry habitat plants.

The selection of plants and the quality of the work were judged to be successful and professional by experts from Germany's Nature and Biodiversity Conservation Union (NABU) and biologists at Goethe University Frankfurt.

Pockets of sand (sandariums) were incorporated to create homes for wild bees, however these unfortunately had to be later removed to make way for necessary roof repairs.

### **CO<sub>2</sub> emissions**

As previously mentioned, the delayed legal, or rather technical, acceptance and handover procedure meant that we were only recently able to begin monitoring and measuring classical key figures to Scope 1 in the new buildings. We hope that this will provide us with a more valid data foundation in 2025. The situation here is different for the Scope 2 and Scope 3 emissions, as we were able to generate figures for these for the first time. However, we will only find out what they ultimately mean when the first comparisons can take place in 2025/26.

Key figures for determining the CO<sub>2</sub> that resulted from event-related travel management are largely available for 2022. However, since collecting these figures involved considerable effort and the results reveal only very limited scope for action, we have decided to stop collecting this data for the time being.

Collecting data on the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions that result from audience members travelling to and from concerts provided an interesting learning curve. As became apparent, the workload involved in collecting the data was substantial, the figures were reasonably valid, but the findings were sobering: we were able to make little to no difference to travel behaviour excepting through the underutilised, and for us expensive, offer of travelling to concerts by train for free. Moreover, it emerged that most journeys were taken with the new *Deutschlandticket* travel pass. The team consequently decided to carry out no further data collection in this area for the time being.

### **7.5.3 Contribution to sustainability goals**

We substantiate our further commitment to protecting our environment by means of qualitative and quantitative objectives, or rather environmental guidelines, which we implement within our certified environmental management system pursuant to the requirements of ISO 14001:2015. These are directly connected to the UN Sustainable Development Goals ratified in the 2030 Agenda (Sustainable Cities and Communities, Climate Action, Life on Land).

## **7.6 Stakeholder involvement**

### **7.6.1 Overarching objectives and concepts**

The Foundation deems it to be of material importance to manage and foster relationships with its employees, sponsors and social stakeholder groups in a structured manner. Objectives and measures to help achieve this goal have already been determined. The long-term direction of the Academy needs to be aligned with the demands and expectations of stakeholders, and should fulfil them to the greatest possible extent without foregoing its own approach. Its fundamental profile should therefore be maintained and supported.

The Foundation will always remain true to its principles. It actively reaches out to the Kronberg Family, particularly its sponsors and supporters as well as other social stakeholders, to explain its approach and solicit support. In general, we are keen to obtain any type of support that is consistent with our values, to ensure the long-term viability of the Foundation. All reporting and implementation obligations connected with putting a suitable environment and sustainability management system into practice fall within the responsibility of the Board of the Kronberg Academy Foundation.

### **7.6.2 Measures and results**

#### **Personnel**

Our employees are highly qualified and motivated. Over the years, they have developed a special degree of identification with Kronberg Academy, as well as with the concept of sustainability and the management system.

The upheaval of relocation, the long construction period, the enormous dynamic growth of the past few years and the long-term obligations connected with building and maintaining the new premises have led to the development of new structures and demands placed on staff members. The high levels of strain this caused resulted in staff turnover. This is why minimising personnel changes is one of our most important concerns in this area. In furtherance of this, we incorporated the key objective of “Making Kronberg Academy an attractive, sustainable employer” into our internal evaluation matrix.

For example, as one of many compensation measures, the Academy offers its employees work bikes. In contrast to the cramped office spaces tolerated for decades in the Rezeptur, now that construction work on the Academy buildings is largely completed we have created an extremely professional, appealing and comfortable working environment. The rooms are arranged around a green courtyard, planted with mature trees, that invites employees to

relax. All desks are adjustable in height, and the entire stock of computer equipment has been updated. In addition, the lighting meets the latest working standards. However, even here, the growth in staff numbers has already created new bottlenecks, which we hope to alleviate with a planned extension.

### **Expectations of interested parties**

We first identified and specified the interested parties that are most important to us in 2021. These include our sponsors, the students and teaching body, the Artistic Council, the Kronberg community, political institutions in Hesse and at federal level, the German Council for Sustainable Development and its code (DNK), the staff and local residents, and last but not least our concert visitors. These groups see our sustainability work in a predominantly favourable light.

However, where feedback was initially plentiful, we sense that it has strongly decreased since 2024. Enquiries about our sustainability reports have come exclusively from degree students, usually in connection with dissertations or theses, or from journalists. As a result of this, we decided to continue with the DNK sustainability reporting standard for institutes of higher education as verifiable evidence of our sustainability work, as was planned for in the system. This is currently being updated.

To date, only few readers have shown an interest in this ambitious Sustainability Report on our website, which initially complied as far as possible with the GRI criteria. We have consequently decided to make the present, shorter report featuring the latest information, which corresponds precisely to our operating environment, available online for the present time. This will also allow us to be able to adjust and report on the latest data and developments with far greater flexibility, now and in the future.

It is our goal that improved measurements will progressively enable us to record hard data throughout 2025, which we will then be able to report on in 2025/26. However, it is also clear to us that we are an institute of higher education, not a resource-consuming, manufacturing operation. Our primary environmental load under Scope 1 comes from the electricity required for air conditioning in the buildings. And we are already working with two very environmentally friendly systems here: ice thermal storage technology and green electricity.

### **7.6.3 Our contribution to our environment**

We foster good relationships with our students and alumni, sponsors, neighbours, institutions, authorities and all other interested parties, and communicate how Kronberg Academy is shouldering its environmental and social responsibilities in a transparent manner. We incorporate topics of sustainability into our public events and strive to make them accessible to people through music.

We respect the rights of our staff members and volunteers, provide quality education, support gender equality, offer decent work and ensure fewer inequalities in our working environment.

The executives and teaching staff act as role models in every respect: they exemplify environmentally and socially conscious behaviour. At the same time, they motivate their colleagues and students to develop their own ideas of how to avoid both detrimental environmental impacts and all forms of discrimination.

For us, sustainability is a collective task. Only when we think of music, people and the planet in harmony can we assume responsibility and shape the future. That is why we invite everybody to join us on this path – whether as student, artist, patron, neighbour or concertgoer. Together, we can show how music builds bridges and unlocks power, with an impact that reaches far beyond the stage.