



## **jazzahead!: Large ensembles and female empowerment**

### **Showcase applications for Bremen's 2020 jazz trade fair reach new record level**

Thursday, 9 January 2020. The two main themes which emerge from the application round for the 40 showcase slots at jazzahead! 2020, which will run from Thursday 23 to Sunday 26 April at MESSE BREMEN are: an impressive selection of large ensembles and for the very first time, a very substantial number of bands led by women. In the 40 short showcase concerts, the artists selected will be performing for an audience largely consisting of festival programmers, bookers and record label representatives. So the trade fair is not just an important platform for networking, it is also an event where bands are booked on the spot, and contracts are agreed.

„jazzahead! has repeatedly proved that it can be the launchpad both for up-and-coming and for established artists from all over the world into the markets of Germany and Europe, and also for bands from our continent into the wider world,“ says Sybille Kornitschky who runs jazzahead! for MESSE BREMEN. This is the reason why there has been such a rush to apply for slots in the showcases. This year, the four international juries have had a heavier workload than ever: their task has been to listen to, rank and discuss a total of 816 applications from 50 countries (2019: 764). „jazzahead!, the world's largest jazz trade fair has, in its 15 years of existence, become the most important gathering of the entire worldwide jazz industry,“ says Kornitschky.

### **21 of 40 bands dominated by women**

Eight showcase slots are reserved for musicians from the 2020 partner country, Canada. A further eight ensembles will be performing at the German Jazz Expo, another eight at the Overseas Night. And 16 bands will participate in the European Jazz Meeting. Of this entire complement of 40 groups, 21 are led and dominated by women. „This shows with absolute clarity that jazz music is no longer exclusively dominated by men,“ emphasizes Ulrich Beckerhoff, one of the two artistic directors of jazzahead! alongside Peter Schulze.

At the European Jazz Meeting, women play an important role in no fewer than eleven out of the sixteen bands. Among these, Peter Schulze singles out the ten-piece ensemble led by pianist and composer Luzia von Wyl from Switzerland. „Among the others, I am also looking forward to hearing the charismatic voices of Torun Eriksen from Norway, Julia Biel from the UK and Macha Gharibian from France,“ he adds.

In the other showcase sections, listeners can also expect a highly contrasted offering. Beckerhoff refers for example to the Canadian duo Silvervest. With their chamber music





ethos, they create music of quite astonishing variety. And with the combination of pianist Marianne Trudel and drummer John Hollenbeck, Bremen audiences will be hearing two of the most important musicians from today's international jazz scene.

Among the German groups, Beckerhoff highlights bassist, composer and arranger Hendrika Entzian's Big Band which received the WDR Jazz Prize. The pianist Johanna Summer impresses "as a soloist with great emotionality and immense ingenuity".

The Brazilian guitarist and singer Badi Assad, who can be heard at Overseas Night, has a worldwide following; her music always has tremendous vitality, instrumental virtuosity and emotional range, comments Beckerhoff. As a further example of the wide-ranging showcase programme, he mentions Nigerian trumpeter Etuk Ubong. Beckerhoff was impressed with Ubong's way of embodying the tradition of African rhythms, a vital element in the emergence of jazz in America.

**Audio samples on [www.jazzahead.de/en](http://www.jazzahead.de/en)**

Links to all of the bands can be found in the showcase overview (see further press release). From the end of January, more details and audio samples from all the bands will be available on the jazzahead! website. For industry participants, attendance at the showcase concerts is included in the registration fee. For visitors, concert tickets and tickets for the other events at jazzahead! are available at [www.jazzahead.de/en](http://www.jazzahead.de/en) and at [Nordwest-Ticket](http://Nordwest-Ticket).

More information: [www.jazzahead.de/en](http://www.jazzahead.de/en)

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#### **About jazzahead!**

jazzahead!, launched in 2006, is the largest jazz trade fair in the world. And whereas it has been growing in size every year, this meeting place for the worldwide jazz industry is also the "family gathering" for jazz; it has never lost its original spirit of fellowship and fun. The 40 showcase concerts during the trade fair, and the jazzahead! Cultural Festival are also aimed at the wider public. Since 2011, this festival, co-created with some 60 cooperation partners, presents the cultural scene of a partner country – there is a different one every year – plus bands from all over the world. These bands perform at the CLUBNIGHT in 30 venues in Bremen. Since 2015, jazzahead! has been funded by the Federal Government's Commissioner for Culture and the Media. In 2019, jazzahead! was awarded European Culture Brand of the Year. The next jazzahead! takes place from April 23-25, 2020.

#### **Further information for editors:**

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