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Once again, Bremen in April is set to be the world's jazz capital

The acts for the showcases have been confirmed: 40 concerts across four categories from Thursday 28 April to Saturday 30 April

In April, the Hanseatic City of Bremen is once again set to be the world's jazz capital for a few weeks - with all that goes with that: the stars, the concerts, interaction with others from the industry, and the joy of being together again. The organizers are extremely confident that this year's jazzahead! at MESSE BREMEN can take place as planned, and that means it will be a hybrid event which can be experienced live and in person - and also online. In 2020 jazzahead! could not take place at all because of the Corona pandemic; last year it was only online. The strap-line for this year is "Together again!" - at last together with Canada, because the country was due to be featured in both of the two prior years. "We are now particularly looking forward to this Canadian selection; we have been waiting for it for so long now", says Sybille Kornitschky, who runs jazzahead! for MESSE BREMEN.

The programmes for the opening and the gala concerts - the former on Thursday 14 April, with Erin Costello, and the latter on Friday 29 April, with Laila Biali and Malika Tirolien - have already been announced, and now the showcase acts are also confirmed. As usual, they are organized into four sections, and will take place in parallel with the trade fair, from Thursday 28 April until Saturday 30 April, in various locations. The selection is the result of a rigorous decision-making process by four top-class juries - one jury for each of the four categories: Canadian, European, German, and artists from overseas.

The **Canadian Night** kicks off on **Thursday, 28 April** with eight contributions from this year's partner country Canada, including the François Bourassa Quartet and Larnell Lewis, the drummer from Snarky Puppy. Also performing are the Itamar Erez Quartet, Marianne Trudel + John Hollenbeck, Audrey Ochoa, Silvervest, Steph Richards and Carrier, Lambert, Edwards. "We will finally be able to show what Canadian jazz has to offer, with artists coming directly from our network of clubs and festivals, but also from overseas in the United States and Europe," says jury member Peter Burton.

On **Friday 29 April**, the programme continues with the **European Jazz Meeting**. There are four contributions from Spain, including the Alba Careta Group, Antonio Lizana, CONSTANTINI and the Daniel García Trio. There will also be four contributions from France, some with international line-ups. Among others, there will be a performance by saxophonist/composer Pierre Bertrand. Together with Swedish trumpeter Anders Bergcrantz, he will present his latest project "Colors", which has been very well received in France. The Antoine Boyer & Yeore Kim Quartet, LEON PHAL and Naïssam Jalal & Rhythms of Resistance (FR/Syria) will also be performing. The European block also has Fergus McCreadie (GB), IKARUS (CH), Jazz Forum Talents (PL), J.D.Hive (AT), the Katherine Windfeld Big Band (DK), the Modern Art Orchestra (HU), the Teis Semey Quintet (NL/DK) and Tijn Wybenga & AM.OK (NL). A total of 16 concerts are scheduled to take place during the European Jazz Meeting.



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There will be another eight concerts on **Saturday 30 April** at the **German Jazz Expo**, and further eight at the **Overseas Night** on the same day.

The German block includes the Clara Haberkamp Trio, the Fuchsthone Orchestra, the Jens Düppe Quartet, the Keno Harriehausen Quartet, Linntett (Kira Linn's jazz sextet), the Vincent Meissner Trio, JO and Berlin drummer/producer Magro. As an annually recurring theme, the German Jazz Expo is a mainstay of jazzahead! "What's striking this year is the wide stylistic range of bands from the piano trio of Vincent Meissner to the hip hop of Magro or from small big bands like Kira Linn's Linntett to the big Fuchsthone Orchestra," says Peter Schulze: "And there are many musicians and especially female musicians who have never appeared at jazzahead! before, and that makes us particularly happy."

The Overseas Night programme includes the Australian trio Brekky Boy and no fewer than three Brazilian groups: Quartabê, Caixa Cubo and the Chico Pinheiro Quartet (Brazil/USA), who (also following a jury decision) will take the place of Sandro Haick and Michael Pipoquinha who had been scheduled originally. Also taking part are the Melissa Aldana Quartet, 'Tobias Meinhart - The Painter' (both from the USA), Ofer Mizrahi (Israel) and Sofia Rei (USA/Argentina).

"I think that we will have many great artists with us again," says Ulrich Beckerhoff, Artistic Director of jazzahead! 2022 together with Peter Schulze. He names the Swiss quintet "IKARUS", which "combines the voices of two vocalists with a rhythm section capable of delivering a fantastic groove in a very innovative way", or Antonio Lizana from Spain, a singer and saxophonist with stunning expressiveness and emotionality. "His combination of Spanish music and jazz improvisations radiates a power and a joie de vivre that wows audiences all over the world," says Beckerhoff. And he defines what is special about the Spanish as follows: "All in all, Spanish folk music, flamenco, is a very rhythmic music, always with a connection to dance and also very emotional in the vocals - and this makes it an ideal match for the improvisations and singing of blues and jazz," says Ulrich Beckerhoff: "This combination is therefore very often found in bands from the Iberian peninsula and thus gives the music a unique colour." Also represented several times this year is France, and each time with clearly audible cross-cultural influences. "Paris is one of the most important centres in Europe for jazz and world music," says Beckerhoff, "the musical influences there, above all from the African continent, are very considerable, but also from France's former and current overseas territories."

The 14-member Dutch ensemble Tijn Wybenga & AM.OK, which draws on various musical styles - not only jazz, but also electronic, classical and pop - represents a different style of playing. "These are surprising compositions played by musicians of international class," says Beckerhoff: "Compelling!"

Who can attend or watch the concerts? The 40 showcase concerts can be experienced live on site by registered professional participants, "and they will also be streamed simultaneously on our event platform," says Sybille Kornitschky. In view of the pandemic situation, it is currently still unclear whether visitor tickets can be made available for the showcases on site, and if they can, how many. "Unfortunately, we'll have to wait and see and follow the guidelines that apply at that time," Kornitschky continues: "It is what we would like, of course." What is certain, however, is that online tickets for these concerts will be offered. More information on this will follow shortly.

The jazzahead! trade fair at MESSE BREMEN will take place from 28 April to 1 May. The accompanying cultural festival will already be starting earlier, on 14 April 2022.

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