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Change is on the way...

Götz Bühler to join the jazzahead! leadership team

Ulrich Beckerhoff and Peter Schulze will be retiring after jazzahead! 2023

A Change is Gonna Come...After this April's jazzahead!, Ulrich Beckerhoff and Peter Schulze, Artistic Directors of the world's biggest jazz industry gathering, will leave the team, it is announced today.

After seventeen years, both of them are very much of the same mind: they now want to make the way clear for the next generation. A successor has already been appointed: Hamburg music journalist, author and radio/TV presenter Götz Bühler. He was the unanimous choice of the entire management. Beckerhoff was Artistic Director from the very first edition of jazzahead! in 2006, and Schulze, having been involved from the beginning as an advisor, joined the team officially in 2013. Bühler and Sybille Kornitschky will form a new dual leadership team, starting with the preparations for next year's event.

"It's clearly now time to pass the baton on," says Beckerhoff. "We've done a lot in the past to get things going, but now it is right that other and younger people should be taking over." The jazz scene as a whole is once again in a phase of radical change, a new generation is taking over, Beckerhoff continues. And Schulze adds: "It has been a great time, seventeen wonderful years. But you should always quit when you're ahead." Schulze comments that it is good that the team have found in Götz Bühler "someone to whom all three of us on the management team are keen to offer an unreserved and undisputed welcome."

It was Hans Peter Schneider, Managing Director of M3B GmbH, who, alongside the two Artistic Directors, brought jazzahead! into being in 2006. He comments: "I would like to offer my wholehearted thanks to both of them. With jazzahead! we have created a successful event which is unique worldwide and constitutes an integral and indispensable part of the jazz world. And in Götz Bühler, who has known jazzahead! for several years, we have found the right successor. I am very much looking forward to our work together."

It has always been one of the great strengths of jazz that it is permanently changing, says Beckerhoff: "And that won't stop, even if our generation won't be so involved with it." Schulze adds, "We are looking forward to the change with great confidence." Both Beckerhoff and Schulze were born in 1947; their successor Götz Bühler is 21 years younger than them. The jazzahead! trade fair and festival are far from unknown territory to Bühler. He has been present in various functions right from the beginning, for example in his roles as editor of the magazine Jazz thing, as label manager working with artists such as Kellylee Evans or Ed Motta, or as presenter of the digital jazzahead! in 2021 and the German Jazz Prize last year. Since 2020, he has been Head of Content for the 'Jazzed' app for Germany.

Die Beauftragte der Bundesregierung
für Kultur und Medien

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"For me personally this is, of course, a huge honour," says Bühler. In New York, where he was representing Jazzahead! in January this year alongside Peter Schulze, he could witness at first hand quite how highly valued Jazzahead! is abroad: "To experience international perceptions of Jazzahead! for myself, and to hear such positive sentiments being expressed gave a very good feeling," he remarks. "I am immensely looking forward to taking on this task."

And what of future directions for jazz and for Jazzahead! ? "Jazz is opening up all the time anyway," Bühler notes. "We see all kinds of influences from electronic pop music and hip hop, to various kinds of roots music, 'new music' and neo-classical". Jazzahead! clearly needs to reflect this range, and to some extent it already does." At Winter Jazzfest in New York, he was reminded of how wide the range of music related to jazz is. Bühler continues: "The fascination of this music isn't coming to an end any time soon, quite the opposite. It's getting bigger and stronger." He also underlined the importance of opening up to a younger audience, of making it clear to young people what an opportunity Jazzahead! can represent: "Jazzahead! is the door which can open up the whole international jazz scene for them!"

Ulrich Beckerhoff and Peter Schulze, as well as Götz Bühler, are available to answer questions, and for interviews.

Further information jazzahead.de/en/

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Image can be downloaded from the following link:

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