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## jazzahead! 2023 a resounding success!

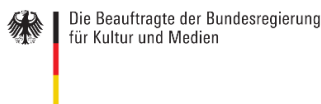
- **Next year's partner country is the Netherlands**
- **jazzahead! 2024 will take place from 11 to 14 April.**

The 17<sup>th</sup> edition of jazzahead! at MESSE BREMEN came to an end at the weekend with a ceremony officially marking the handover to next year's partner country. For three days and nights, Bremen once again became the world metropolis of jazz. Germany, as this year's partner country provided many concert highlights, especially via the programme of Commissioned Works. The total number of registered trade participants was around 2,800, an increase from last year. A total of 428 musicians played in the festival programme of 36 showcase concerts plus the big CLUBNIGHT at venues right across the city on the Friday evening. (That total increases further if one also includes the musicians involved at the German Jazz Prize which was awarded on the first evening of jazzahead!). The concerts at the 30 CLUBNIGHT venues on the Friday evening attracted a total of around 5,500 visitors.

Sybille Kornitschky, who runs jazzahead! for MESSE BREMEN spoke of her satisfaction with the way this year's jazzahead! has gone: "The main reason to feel good about this year's jazzahead! is that the participants clearly enjoyed it. Compared to last year, there was a marked change in the mood – it was almost euphoric," Kornitschky continued. "The feedback we have received has been sensational. Last year, people were mainly relieved that an event like this could take place at all in the aftermath of Corona. But this time, I saw happy expressions on so many faces, and to an extent that I have rarely seen before – people were showing their genuine appreciation for the concerts, and above all they said they were just happy that they could work properly again!" It was also noticeable that many young people were taking part – many attendees were with us for the first time."

The CEO of MESSE BREMEN - and the inventor of jazzahead! - Hans Peter Schneider was also extremely happy with the outcome of this year's event: "We are pleased that we were once again able to offer a very buoyant jazz industry a platform for doing business worldwide – negotiating and finding ways to match supply and demand were very much the focus in Halls 6 and 7 of MESSE BREMEN." A total of 51 nations were represented on the 5,000m<sup>2</sup> of floor area. A total of 1,366 main and co-exhibitors were registered – an increase of more than 100 compared with last year. The host country alone accounted for 872 participants, with France (166), the Netherlands (163), Belgium (90), UK (89), Denmark (85), Italy (77), Switzerland (76) and Spain (67) also strongly represented. The USA was also well represented with 77 participants. Some countries were represented for the first time; these include Greece (20), Romania (14) and even Chile (9).

The jazzahead! 2023 trade fair and festival were officially opened on Thursday by trumpeter Till Brönner, one of the genuine stars of German jazz and by Bremen's mayor Dr. Andreas Bovenschulte, among others. Claudia Roth, Minister of State for Culture and Media of the Federal Republic of Germany, visited the event on the Saturday and gave a speech which was full of praise for what jazzahead! achieves. Uli Beckerhoff and Peter Schulze were marking their last year in their roles as joint Artistic Directors; Götz Bühler has now taken up his position as Artistic Advisor.



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Bühler comments: "For me, this jazzahead! was another notch higher in terms of both intensity and inspiration. It felt like a family occasion, but it was also demonstrably more international than ever. There were such great meetings, fabulous musicians and some wonderful music! I am looking forward to my new tasks as Artistic Advisor working alongside Sybille Kornitschky. It is an honour and a great pleasure for me to have a hand, working as a duo with Sybille, in determining the future shape of an event which is so pivotal for the worldwide jazz scene."

Among the highlights of this year's jazzahead! with Germany as Partner Country were four performances involving German-born bandleaders living abroad, who had formed ensembles in the countries where they live especially for the occasion, and who gave official premiere performances at jazzahead! These bands will continue to stay together. In fact, the German-Dutch project "Tree House" led by drummer Felix Schlarman is already scheduled to go on tour shortly. Indeed "Tree House" already gives a glimpse of next year's jazzahead!, which will take place from 11 to 14 April 2024. That is because the Netherlands will be next year's partner country. "They totally deserve this," says Kornitschky, "It's no accident that our juries have been consistently choosing several Dutch acts each year for many years now."

The ceremonial handover to next year's partner country took place on Saturday evening at the Kulturzentrum Schlachthof, where German Minister of State for Culture Claudia Roth symbolically presented the Dutch Ambassador for International Cultural Cooperation at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Dewi van de Weerd, with a sailcloth bag, in order to mark the formal launch of the preparations for next year's big event.

Among the important organisations involved in next years partner country programme are Buma Cultuur and the Performing Arts Fund NL. Bas Pauw (Performing Arts Fund NL) and Mark van Schaick (Buma Cultuur) comment as follows:

"The Netherlands as main partner country during jazzahead! 2024 offers an excellent opportunity to showcase the quality and diversity of the Dutch jazz scene. The steady presence of Dutch bands in the jazzahead! showcase program has demonstrated how exciting and versatile contemporary Dutch jazz is.

Being partner country in Jazzahead! 2024 offers the opportunity to show even more what is happening in jazz in the Netherlands. Buma Cultuur and the Performing Arts Fund NL are looking forward to working together with new artistic advisor Götz Bühler and his colleagues at jazzahead!, in making this a successful presentation, highlighting the importance of jazz today and the power of music crossing borders."



Die Beauftragte der Bundesregierung  
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