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An Ode to Cake in Munich

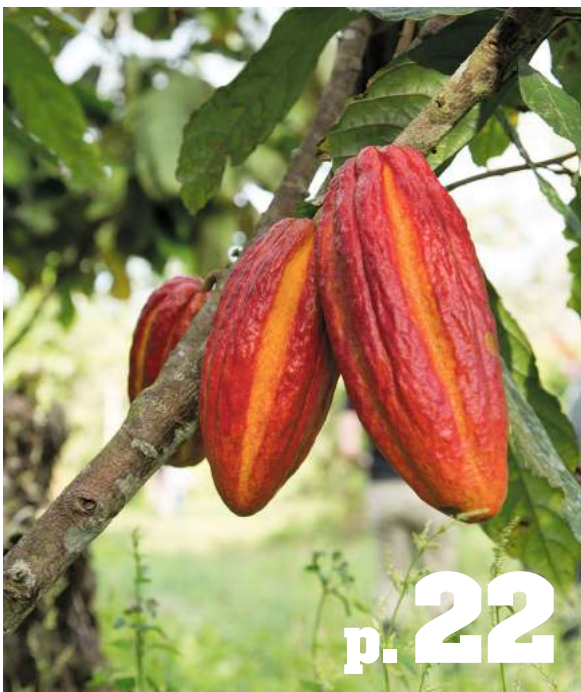
Mona Asuka combines two passions: playing the piano and baking. The professional musician shares a recipe for a summer strawberry cake with us.



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Hamburg's Got Groove

We met piano jazz band Rymden at the Elbphilharmonie, the iconic concert house that is as appreciated for its acoustics as it is for its not-only-classical programme.



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The Jack of All Trades

Dieter Meier became famous with his band Yello — but the multitalented Swiss man is a fantastic artist, actor, and entrepreneur too. His latest passion? Chocolate!



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Zurich's Bad Boy Bard

Young musician Faber gained quick fame with the lyrical songs from his debut album. We spoke to the Zurich talent while he was working on his second LP.

Companion 16

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for 25hours Hotels

The Music Issue

WOMEN MAKE NOISE



The music scene is a domain in which women have too often been on the passive side of things: as muses or as groupies. We believe it is time to change that antiquated image — because if we take a look around, we see significant female players who are making noise, and, in doing so, changing the game. That's why in this edition of COMPANION we focus on the Berlin music world, profiling women who make the industry so captivating: DJs, singers, event organisers, writers, and activists.

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Frankfurt by Ear

Frankfurt is known for its international vibe — which exists not only due to the pulsating city's global bank district, but also thanks to its multicultural inhabitants. That's what we learn on this issue's city walk, thanks to Dasitu Kajela-Röttger and her husband, Michael Röttger. The music entrepreneurs show us Frankfurt's diverse and lively Afro music scene.

➤ [District Tour, p. 9](#)



Find Your Woodstock

Be it a musical weekend trip with the family, melodious evenings at a winery, or experiencing the jazz stars of tomorrow perform live — COMPANION presents the best festivals close to cities in Germany, Austria, Switzerland, and France, so that everyone can find the one that suits them best.

➤ [Activity Map, p. 24](#)

Industry Insights

COMPANION spoke straight to two real luminaries of the music industry: Warner Chappell Music's senior creative director Natascha Augustin and multi-thinker Tim Renner.

➤ [Talking Business, p. 12](#)

Music Everywhere

A choir in Berlin for people who can't sing, techno yoga in Vienna, or an original jazz club in Paris? We put together exciting bits and pieces from our cities, all related to music.

➤ [Bits & Pieces, p. 4](#)

Maison Kitsuné

Founded in Paris and Tokyo, Maison Kitsuné has its nose in music like it does in fashion. We met co-founder Gildas Loaëc in the French capital to learn more about the cult label.

➤ [Fashion & Style, p. 28](#)

Summer of Sound

Viennese writer and artist Stefanie Sargnagel reveals her take on summer, music, and nature. Her cartoon takes us out of the city. Wait — really?

➤ [Column, p. 30](#)



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Editor's Note

COMPANION is here! During the production of this edition, we thought that after the cold months it's high time to go outside, scatter good vibes, and once again turn up the bass. Summer, sun, and sound — that is everything we love in the warm season. So our 16th issue has become a music edition, with everything that goes with that. Like festivals! Our project manager and music guru, Silvia Silko, has put together the most exciting and unusual events from Germany, Austria, Switzerland, and France so that everyone can find their own Woodstock. At the same time, our varied map shows that festivals do not always have to be of the excessive type.

Together with the music journalist Laura Aha, Silvia has portrayed the most exciting women in the Berlin music scene, in a real power special. In a male-dominated industry, it's good to show that even the present is female. And the future as well.

Of course, we still allow men to speak, like the Zurich-based musician Faber, for example, who conquered the hearts of fans and critics alike with the lyrical songs from his debut album, 'Sei ein Faber im Wind' (Be a Faber in the Wind), which both charmed and infatuated listeners. Another Zurich musician from the old school is represented in this COMPANION: Yello legend Dieter Meier, who is a real all-round talent. In addition to music, he is an artist, actor, and, especially, a gastronomic entrepreneur: with wine and restaurant businesses, he has recently put his nose into the production of chocolate, which is made via a completely new process.

Mona Asuka knows there are parallels between the world of music and cuisine too. In her free time, the Munich-based pianist bakes almost as professionally and passionately as she taps the keys. For us, she has revealed the recipe for a strawberry cake, which tastes so delicious that we sang when we sampled.

Anyway, music — that's just in everything, in every pore of a city. On our summery district tour for this issue, the Röttger family showed us that the rhythm of Frankfurt, for example, can sometimes sound African. On the other hand, our columnist, Stefanie Sargnagel, takes us out of the city and into nature — but alas, just take a look yourself.

Friends of Friends

The online magazine Friends of Friends has been portraying inspiring personalities since 2009, forming a creative and international community along the way. Over the years, we have also built a lively network of talented people in the 25hours Hotels cities of Hamburg, Berlin, Frankfurt, Munich, Düsseldorf, Cologne, Vienna, Zurich, and Paris. Some of them have contributed to this 16th issue of COMPANION, which dives into the world music. The result? Read on to find out more.

friendsoffriends.com



Contributors

Benjamin Barlow



Benjamin moved from his native New Zealand to Berlin five years ago to work as an English-language editor, writer, and proofreader, and has been a member of the COMPANION family for a good two years. If he's not finishing off our texts, you'll find him at his favourite restaurant chain, Risa Chicken — or simply listening to music, where the list of his current crushes is long. Not quite as long, though, as the many road trips the Spotify junkie has taken through his New Zealand homeland. His recommendations? Having the sweetheart on board, guitar music for a perfect soundtrack, and sun!

benjamin-barlow.com

Stefanie Sargnagel



'Noise, coffeehouse chatter, the sigh when you kiss someone' — if you ask Stefanie about her favourite sounds, the answer is as picturesque and tongue-in-cheek as the illustration she created for this issue. Speaking of music, the writer, cartoonist, and high-end influencer likes many genres, like indie music, gangster rap, or, on her next Balkan road trip, the local radio station — but only when it comes to travels. After all, the Viennese artist appreciates her hometown especially for its laziness. And, by the way, also for its laconism and black humour.

instagram.com/sargnagelstefe

Laura Aha



The popular and the sacred: Laura lists both in her biography — because she studied church and pop music. Aware that contrasting approaches creates the most exciting topics, the music journalist writes for magazines such as Groove and Musikexpress about electro-services, or she explores the mental health issues of musicians. On top, Laura deals with feminist topics and is an expert on the Berlin electro scene. How nice that she shares her knowledge with us: For 'The Present is Female', she introduces Berlin-based women in the scene who are currently shaking up the music game.

instagram.com/laura_iaaha

Łukasz Gołędzinowski



Someone who likes to look closely is Łukasz. In his everyday life, there are ample forms, colours, and details for inspiration. The Warsaw-based illustrator and graphic designer, however, prefers to play with dynamics: his objects are constantly in motion. It's perfect that for this issue, he, among others, highlighted a selection of his favourite festivals — because these are as diverse as his creations. Urgent impulses to plan your own festival summer after viewing his selections are to be expected. How good that COMPANION's festival map holds recommendations for everyone.

cargocollective.com/lukaszgolędzinowski

Listen up!

TEXT MANUEL ALMEIDA VERGARA
ILLUSTRATION ŁUKASZ GOŁĘDZINOWSKI



For a while now, distinguished cultural radio shows and highbrow political broadcasters have not been the only places to go for something good to listen to. COMPANION presents the cleverest, loveliest, and weirdest podcasts being recorded today.

1. Who Run the World?

Constance Barnicoat was the first female mountain climber to reach the highest peak. Anna Fischer-Dückelmann was the first woman to address the issues of female sexuality and contraception. Halide Edib Adivar symbolically represents all the women who participated in the Turkish War of Independence. The women that journalist Susan Stone introduces once a month have one thing in common: they are dead. Which is, of course, a shame. 'The Dead Ladies Show' is a celebration of feminine strength and uncompromising perseverance. Men can listen too, and so they should. There's a lot to learn.

↳ [deadladieshow.com](#)

2. My Father's Fantasies

Nobody ever wants to know what their parents do behind closed doors. Jamie Morton has taken this idea and turned it into an incredibly successful podcast. That's because Jamie's dad has written a rather terrible erotic novel. So terrible that Jamie and two friends read a chapter aloud in each episode of the podcast.

↳ [mydadwroteaporno.com](#)

3. Let's Have It All Out

The things that life actually revolves around but nobody wants to talk about – they're what Anna Sale is raising as much awareness for as possible. 'Death, Sex and Money' is the title of her podcast. In each episode, Anna hosts interviews and explores what makes these topics so difficult, and why everybody is still interested in them despite their taboo nature.

↳ [wnycstudios.org/shows/deathsexmoney](#)

4. The Most Important Meal of the Day

This podcast actually has nothing to do with perfectly presented scrambled eggs and freshly squeezed orange juice. 'The Breakfast Club' is much more about hip-hop, gossip, and politics. A rather successful combination, apparently. The three hosts not only have hundreds of thousands of listeners tuning in to each episode, but their guests have also included important public figures, such as Hillary Clinton and Bernie Sanders.

↳ [thebreakfastclub.ihart.com](#)

5. The Beautiful Game

At some point, the kitchen table simply became too small. To begin with, the first episodes of 'The Football Ramble' were recorded at host Luke Moore's home, although he and his co-hosts quickly moved the operation to a professional studio. The whole time, they have been gaining more and more subscribers with their offbeat perspective on the world's most popular sport. One or two world-class players are surely among them.

↳ [radiotakhanov.com/footballramble](#)

6. Welcome to Free Thought

While traditional radio broadcasters share current news stories, 'Welcome to Night Vale' prefers to focus on mystery and fiction. Conspiracy theories and spooky stories from the fictional desert town of Night Vale are presented in the style of a local radio programme. The show's style sits somewhere between satire and dark humour.

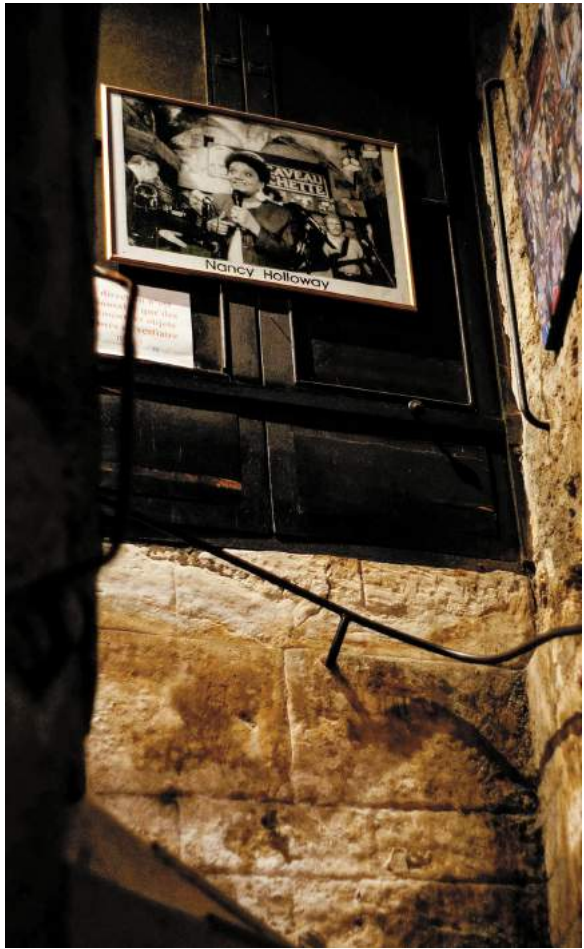
↳ [welcometonightvale.com](#)

7. Tastes Like History

Where does chutney come from? When was pizza invented? Who was the first person to cook a schnitzel? In 'A Taste of The Past', historian Linda Pelaccio explores the history behind excellent dishes. However, her podcast doesn't only involve her taking a look into the pots of Roman housewives and at the dinner plates of ancient Mesopotamia – Linda also engages with current topics in the world of food.

↳ [heritageradionetwork.org/series/a-taste-of-the-past](#)

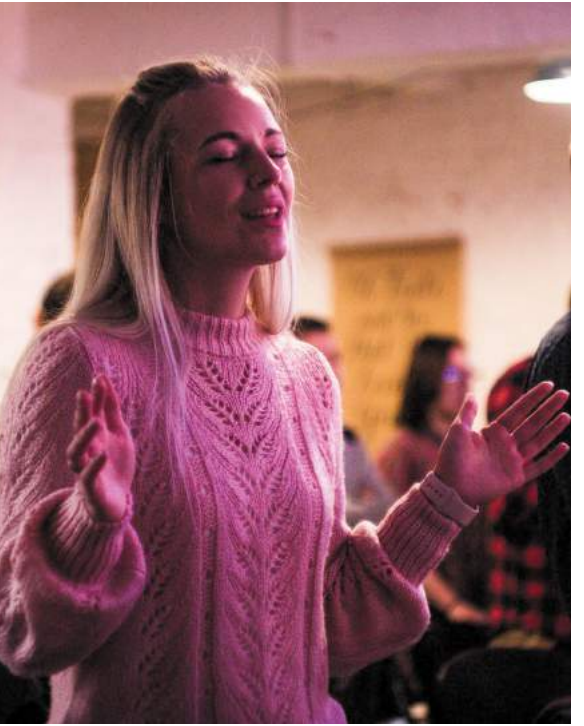
WATCH YOUR STEP!



PARIS ART & ENTERTAINMENT

Head down a few steps and you'll find yourself in the midst of an authentic piece of Parisian history: Le Caveau de la Huchette has been around since 1946, making the Latin Quarter venue the oldest jazz cellar in Europe. Despite having been in operation for decades, the shop has lost none of its charm. Even Hollywood is clued in on this. Parts of the Oscar-winning 'La La Land' were filmed in the dimly lit basement on rue de la Huchette. Before you descend the steps, take a look at the diverse range of acts on the schedule.

↳ [Le Caveau de la Huchette](#) [caveaudelahuchette.fr](#)

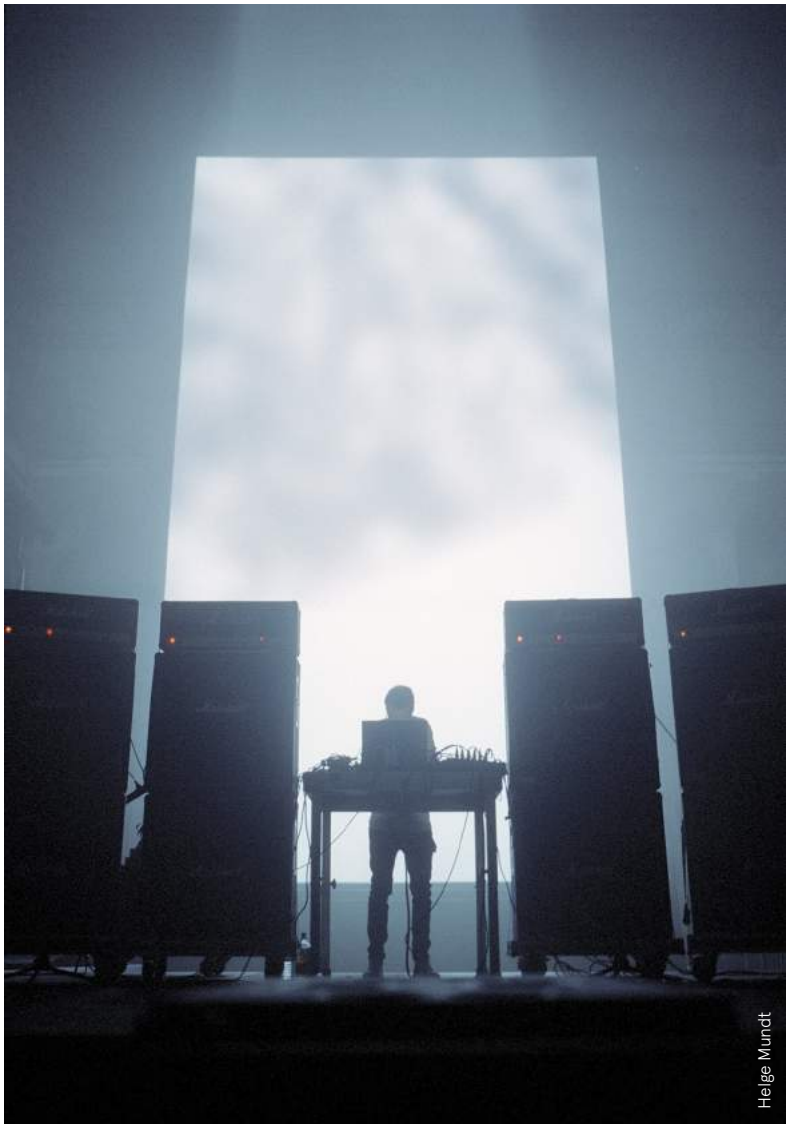


The Main Thing: Be Off-Key

BERLIN ART & ENTERTAINMENT

An off-key note to your right, and a pitiful screech to your left; too loud in front of you, and too quiet in the back. What may seem like unsalvageable chaos to any other choir is exactly what gives this Berlin-based group its character. The name tells you all you need to know. The 'Ich-kann-nicht-singen-Chor' (I Can't Sing Choir) welcomes anybody and everybody who wants to warble with passion — no nerves necessary, no talent required. For what participants come to realise under the direction of choir leader Michael Betzner-Brandt is that the opposite of its name is true: 'Everyone can sing' is the real premise here. And if you can sing but really don't want to, you should at least have a listen. Find the latest dates for the group's workshops and performances on its website.

↳ [Chor Kreativ](#) [chorkreativ.de](#)



nothing's like it used to be

SUN SALUTATIONS & EPIC BEATS

VIENNA HOSPITALITY & RETREAT

It doesn't always have to be flute music or the deep sound of a gong. Leni Lindström prefers to practise her asanas with some slick techno beats in the background. Since 2018, she has offered yoga classes in Austria with the help of a DJ friend from Salzburg, creating a space in which participants learn to unwind not only with proper breathing, but also thanks to an elaborate sound concept. The 60-minute classes, accompanied by music that's intended to both relax and motivate, are always held at special locations, including some in Vienna. Move into the warrior pose with the next beat, the cobra with the one after, and then the downward-facing dog before winding down to some casual electro sounds — perfect for all yogis that think an *ohnumm* is just not enough. The class schedule can be found on the website.

↳ [Techno Yoga](#) [technoyoga.at](#)



Dude, Let's Hit the Opera

BERLIN ART & ENTERTAINMENT

'Hagen might puke.' If you see a sentence like this in an ad for an opera, you can be quite sure that you're far removed from 'La Traviata', 'Carmen', and 'The Magic Flute'. 'Drachenhertz' (Dragon Heart) is a thoroughly modern opera. It's one about honour, loyalty, and betrayal in the clique surrounding Günni, Fred, and Hagen, who terrorise one or the other sleepy German town with their scams and outrageous dares. It is thus incredibly fitting that the opera, which features music by Wolfgang Böhrer and a libretto by Peter Lund, is not performed at a time-honoured opera house on a swanky boulevard, but instead in Neukölln, where the raw urban pulse of the German capital beats harder. It goes without saying that after the performances, which will be held in June and July, it wouldn't be the best idea to go for a fancy meal at a Michelin-starred restaurant. There are, however, plenty of places to get a Döner kebab and some Ayran close to the Neuköllner Oper.

↳ [Neuköllner Oper](#) [neukoellneroper.de](#)



the sounds of the city

PARIS FOOD & DRINK

Your first stop in Paris should always be Du Pain et des Idées on rue Yves Toudic, where you'll find the city's best baguettes. Stocking up on a few extra supplies isn't a bad idea either — then you can spend the day wandering around Canal Saint-Martin. The gentle babbling of the passing canal, the chatter of locals sitting on *les terrasses* and squinting happily into the sun, the low hum of big-city traffic — on the narrow bank of the canal, all of this blends into the unique soundscape of the City of Light. And who knows? Perhaps a street musician will drop by with their guitar for a few hours.

↘ Du pain et des Idées [dupainetdesidees.com](#)

O P E N Y O U R E A R S

BASEL ART & ENTERTAINMENT

The ticking of a Swiss watch? The hum of a passing tram? Or the thumping of a small techno club in the city? There are differing opinions about what modern Basel sounds like today. The city's sound has a multifaceted past too. The special exhibition 'Klangbilder – Basler Musikalien des 16. Jahrhunderts' (Soundscapes – Music in Basel in the 16th Century) is on view at the Musikmuseum until next year. The individual exhibits, which range from historical transcripts of old song lyrics to valuable sheet music, are not intended to provide an insight into an elitist cultural landscape, but rather to document the musical lives of the ordinary citizens who forged their musical identity somewhere between Parisian chansons and Polish lute songs.

↘ Soundscapes [hmb.ch/museum-musik](#)



Official Freak Show



HAMBURG ART & ENTERTAINMENT

A guy with a flowing 80s haircut plays tennis against a bleating llama. A woman in a blue sequined dress fondles a brick and passes it to a diver. Laid-back synthesiser beats transform into quaint funfair music accompanied by maniacal laughter. The teaser video alone shows that the Forward Festival is producing a monument to itself after five successful years. Under the motto 'The Odd One Out', its organisers are pulling everything unusual, strange, or different out of the bag for the 2019 festival. As such, the event, with its programme of art and culture, 'can't be forced into social norms', and instead encourages its attendees to 'celebrate and embrace their own oddness'. And because weirdos can be found everywhere, the Forward Festival now also has several spin-off events. In Hamburg, the official festival will take place from 4 to 5 July 2019 at the Millerntor-Stadion. This year, there will also be events held in Munich, Zurich, and Vienna, and some smaller ones in Berlin.

↘ Forward Festival [forward-festival.com](#)

WITH THE POWER OF SOUND



ZURICH HOSPITALITY & RETREAT

It has nothing to do with sitting on a Freudian couch for hours on end. With her sound therapy and workshops, Christina Elmer Römer sees herself in the role of a space opener and bridge builder. In a shamanic weekend of silence in the mountains, participants are without any words and surrounded by impressive alpine nature, finding themselves in the 'Shamanic Gong Night', where deep, transformative tones are intended to cleanse and renew, and 'chanting meditation' unites people's voices into a single flow of energy. Christina wants to connect the body and soul anyway, both at treatments in her Zurich studio and at the workshops in nature. 'Where bridges form, it is easier to get rid of ballast,' she says. And finally we are only happy when we are free from the burden of the stress and the loud noise of everyday life.

↘ Sound Therapy [brueckenbauerin.com](#)

A Concert for Workhorses

WORLDWIDE ART & ENTERTAINMENT

'Woolly hats and scarves are now being traded for sunglasses and water wings,' state Johannes, Jakob, Kristoffer, Niels, and Florian on their website. This summer, which is hopefully coming sooner rather than later, will involve more than just pools and sun loungers for the five lads. Revolverheld will need to really get to work between now and September. That's the duration of the band's open-air tour, during which they will be sharing their radio-friendly yet never-boring sound, somewhere between rock and pop. The band members still seem to have plenty of energy after their indoor tour, which recently ended: 'We're really up for it again and hope to see all of you again somewhere at some point in the coming months.' You can find out the where and when on the Revolverheld website, where the tour dates are displayed.

↘ Revolverheld on Tour [revolverheld.de](#)



A Slice of Nostalgia

VIENNA ART & ENTERTAINMENT

Background sounds in lifts are a divisive matter. There isn't much besides annoying elevator music and awkward silence — unless you find yourself at Praterstrasse 70 in Vienna, that is. At the heart of Supersense, a pretty shop which specialises in nostalgic finds and analogue treasures, there is a renovated lift that has been turned into the ideal sound space. Here you can record a song, a poem, a declaration of love, or a message for a friend — up to 90 seconds long — and have it reproduced on vinyl! This concept is preceded by a long tradition. The very first Voice-O-Graph was presented in 1910, and the compact recording booths became especially popular during World War II, as soldiers would use them to send messages to their loved ones back home. Not much has changed in the lovingly designed Record Elevator, in terms of aesthetics, at least. The price today, though, is a little bit higher than the 35 cents originally charged per recording in 1947. A one-sided vinyl costs 20 euros.

↘ The Record Elevator [the.supersense.com](#)



PARIS ART & ENTERTAINMENT

Does it always have to be a miniature Eiffel Tower? There's so much more that you can take home from Paris, either for yourself or your loved ones. If you're on the lookout for some musical souvenirs, like rare records or old vinyls, then you'll be best off having a rummage around the 11th arrondissement. Eccentric little record boutiques and larger music shops line the streets here. Le Silence de la Rue (The Silence of the Street) on rue Faidherbe specialises entirely in French treasures, while at Heartbeat Vinyl on rue Godefroy-Cavaignac you can find sounds from all over the big, wide world — from afrobeat to hip-hop. The rare rarities are to be found on the shelves at Benito's on rue Saint Sébastien.

↘ Le Silence de la Rue [facebook.com/lesilencedelarue](#)
↘ Heartbeat Vinyl [heartbeatvinyl.com](#)
↘ Benito's Record Shop [betinos.com](#)

LIFE & SOUL OF THE PARTY

DÜSSELDORF ART & ENTERTAINMENT

With Kraftwerk and Die Toten Hosen, Düsseldorf produced two great music legends. That achievement aside, the city is certainly home to some harsher sounds than the serenity of the sophisticated Königsallee and the beautiful banks of the Rhine river might let on. At the hardy Club Stone im Ratinger Hof, for example (right where the legendary, musicians' pub of the same name used to be), speakers blast grunge and punk, and guests can take to the stage at Karaoke Till Death. Speaking of karaoke, this can often get a little louder in Düsseldorf, which is home to the largest Japanese community in Germany. So it's not improbable that a true professional will be sitting on the bar stool next to you at Gilson Karaoke. And because sometimes there is such thing as too much noise, Beuys Bar offers a much more subdued atmosphere, unless you go on one of their hip-hop nights. The drinks list there will be music to your ears, in any case.

↘ Gilson Karaoke [facebook.com/gilsonkaraoke](#)
↘ Stone im Ratinger Hof [facebook.com/stoneimratingerhof](#)
↘ Beuys Bar [beuys-bar.com](#)



ART OFF THE BEATEN TRACK

MUNICH ART & ENTERTAINMENT

Maximilianstrasse and the Viktualienmarkt? That's all well and good. Yet Munich has a lot more to offer than regal architecture and ornate squares. On the abandoned premises of the former Grossviehhalle cattle stockyard, things look a lot different now. Since 2015, Bahnwärter Thiel has presented a fresh, colourful programme amid graffitied shipping containers and decommissioned train carriages. As such, the cultural institution offers a stage for independent artists at the heart of a city famous for its renowned theatre and long-standing opera houses. A performative reading today, an off-theatre production tomorrow, and a banging club night the day after — Munich can be such a vibrant place!

↘ Bahnwärter Thiel [bahnwaerterthiel.de](#)



True Emotions

DUISBURG OUTDOOR & ACTIVITY

It will be a moving summer — that much is for sure. 'Get ready for some big emotions,' say the organisers of Kiesgrube. The event series hosts monthly happenings each year from April to September which feature a cleverly curated selection of acts — including driving beats and celestial sounds from DJs like Benny Rodrigues, Seth Troxler, and Rooz Lee. The new venue in Villenpark Rheinperle, surrounded by 6,000 square metres of Mediterranean parkland, should also aid the release of endorphins. It's convenient that the park in Duisburg is located in the heart of the Rhine metropolitan region. This means that visitors from Essen, Düsseldorf, Wuppertal, Dortmund, and Cologne can all embark on the roller coaster of emotions very quickly.

↘ Kiesgrube [kiesgrube.net](#)



HAMBURG'S GOT GROOVE

TEXT **CHLOE STEAD** — PHOTOGRAPHY **ROBERT RIEGER**

Hamburg's iconic Elbphilharmonie is just as famous for its insane acoustics as it is for its programme, which weaves traditional classical music together with rock bands, festivals, and jazz — like the Scandinavian piano band Rymden, for example. On the occasion of their concert, we met the jazz trio in the so-called 'Elphi', where we delved into the history of the concert hall and considered, among other questions, whether jazz is the classical music of the 21st century.

It's an uncharacteristically warm afternoon in February and the observation deck at Hamburg's Elbphilharmonie is teeming with visitors. Open to the general public, the plaza—which boasts a 360-degree view onto Germany's second-largest city—has drawn over half a million guests since it opened in November 2016. Both of tonight's performances—the avant-garde musician Laurie Anderson in the Recital Hall and jazz supergroup Rymden in the Grand Hall—have already sold out.

Surveying the scene, it's hard to imagine that the Herzog & de Meuron-designed concert hall was once mired in controversy. But back in 2010, as the scheduled opening date was delayed and costs ballooned from the planned 186 million to an estimated 323 million euros (the final price tag was an eye-watering 798 million), public support for the project dipped to an all-time low. It wasn't just the city's financial mismanagement that irritated locals; for many, the Elbphilharmonie had become a symbol of elitism — a place funded by taxpayers for the benefit of a wealthy few. Fast-forward nine years and all signs of dissent have disappeared. Not only has the building's design been widely celebrated by the press, but it has also proven to be a commercial success.

The outcome can't be attributed to the building alone. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Christoph Lieben-Seutter, the Elbphilharmonie's programme includes a melange of genres, from singer-songwriters and rock bands to pop acts and traditional folk musicians. The Elbphilharmonie has also reached out to other groups in Hamburg who might have otherwise given the concert hall a wide berth; they organised a festival of Syrian music in 2017, and since 2016 have acted as a venue for the citywide Reeperbahn Festival, a mecca for young indie music fans.

This approach is increasingly being implemented in venues across Europe: 'You'll find many a concert house with the same policy, from Mûpa Budapest to the Philharmonie de Paris, from the Barbican in London to BOZAR in Brussels,' says Tom Schulz, a spokesperson for the Elbphilharmonie. 'People of all ages have grown up with a broad variety of music from many different genres and, more often than not, different cultures. There's a level of excellence in all of these art forms that needs to be cherished and displayed. Jazz, for instance, could be considered as the classical music of the 20th century.'

The Elbphilharmonie is now on its third edition of jazz at the Phil, which brings together legendary musicians from all over Europe, Africa, and the US who — in typical Elbphilharmonie fashion — mix styles ranging from contemporary hard pop and rock to electronic and bossa nova. Tonight's performers, the Scandinavian piano trio Rymden — consisting of Bugge Wesseltoft from Norway and Dan Berglund and Magnus Öström from Sweden — are perfect examples of the programme's spirit. Full of crashing drums and electronic reverb, their debut album, 'Reflections and Odysseys', reflects clear influences from outside the jazz canon. Heard live, its tracks oscillate between ambient soundscapes reminiscent of prog rockers Pink Floyd and the stirring melancholia of a Hollywood movie soundtrack.

Although they've only released one album together, to play in such a prestigious concert hall as the Elbphilharmonie is by no means a new experience for the band. Individually — Bugge as a soloist and Trio and Magnus as members of the Esbjörn Svensson Trio (e.s.t.) — the musicians have been pushing boundaries in the European jazz world since the early 90s. "When I first went to Stockholm to study, the jazz scene was very much about American jazz," explains Magnus, referring to the influence of bebop, a subgenre of jazz developed in the mid-40s which is characterised by its fast tempo and rapid chord changes. "It felt like after e.s.t. — although it was not only us; it was [more like a movement] — people started to look into it;

own stuff more, and tried to see what they could do from their own perspectives.'

The result of this shift was that musicians such as Dan, Magnus, and Bugge started to tap into their Scandinavian roots and mine different genres for influences. 'Our generation was inspired by other types of music than bebop,' says Bugge. 'We were inspired by rock elements and lots of different things, and that came to the surface. We went to clubs and played with DJs; there was a very fresh energy. When I look back, I think it changed the perspective of European jazz.'

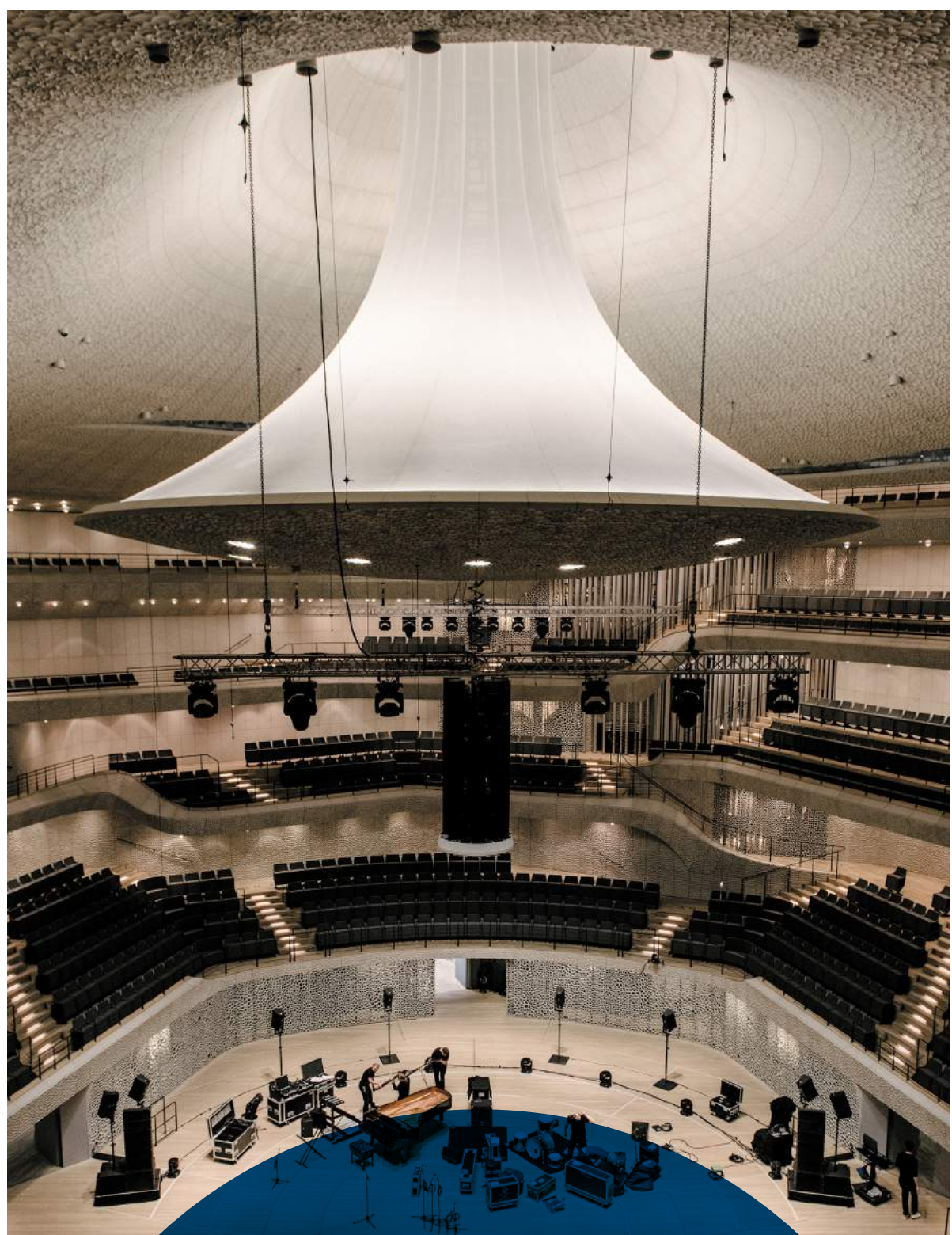
After years of moving in the same music circles, they've finally decided to come together — in part because they wanted to experience what a trio was like. 'I think it's about the energy flow,' explains Magnus, 'because it's small enough to turn fast together and the energy goes around. It doesn't go back-and-forth as you do in a duo. The more people you have, the longer it takes to turn the ship.' This shared direction shines through both on and off stage; the trio is constantly cracking jokes, clearly delighted to have the opportunity to work together.

It's also reflected in their mutual stance against genre snobbery. 'I'm kind of tired with [the idea that] the jazz people play the jazz club and the rock people play rock clubs, because I see more and more audiences who listen to all kinds of music,' says Bugge. 'I think it's great that they can have a variety of genres and music in a place like the Elbphilharmonie.'

That being said, for the members of Rymden, jazz remains their greatest love. 'It's one of the very few art forms I know where the audience is being exposed to something [that's] being created in front of them,' explains Magnus. 'You have the chance to go on stage and just try to create something, and you do the best you can. Sometimes it really goes down the drain, but other times it works; you get the audience with you and then it's this fantastic thing.'

Dan agrees: 'For me, improvisation is really important, otherwise I would play something else.' To illustrate his band mate's point, Bugge sticks out his arm and pulls back his sleeve. 'Do you know how to tell we're jazz musicians?' he asks with mock earnestness. 'No watches!'

- ↳ elbphilharmonie.de
- ↳ rymden-music.com



The Jazz Acoustics

Listen to the
playlist on:

25hours-hotels.com/en/
companion/journal/
the-jazz-acoustics

Playlist

- 1 Homegrown**
Rymden (Bugge Wesseltoft, Dan Berglund, Magnus Öström)
- 2 Splendor Riot**
Julian Lage
- 3 Sudovian Dance**
Marcin Wasilewski Trio with Joakim Milder
- 4 Knee-Deep in the North Sea**
Portico Quartet
- 5 Slings**
Nell Cowley Trio
- 6 London Ut**
ADHD
- 7 Quiet Fire**
Mammal Hands
- 8 Fletcher Moss Park**
Matthew Halsall
- 9 Songs For My Brother**
Avishai Cohen
- 10 From Gagarin's Point of View**
Esbjörn Svensson Trio

A photograph of a wooden bowl containing a blue netted ball and a wooden spoon, with a large green plant in the background.



TEXT **MANUEL ALMEIDA VERGARA** – PHOTOS **MAYA RÖTTGER**

Dasitu Kajaola-Röttger and her husband, Michael Röttger, are a real dream team, both privately and professionally. They met and fell in love in 1985, at an African festival in their chosen home of Frankfurt am Main. At the time, Dasitu was organising an evening of Ethiopian Oromo culture, and Michael had just returned from a long trip to Africa and was enthusiastic about the music. Later, he also managed to convince Dasitu to become his accomplice in professional matters as well. Dasitu was already working in the intercultural field anyway, and she thought combining that with musical culture would be the perfect match. 'I was only able to really spark her interest in West African music culture as time went on, though,' says Michael, laughing.

A year later, they founded Afroton, a wholesale music shop selling West African and world instruments. On top of that, their team also offers workshops, arranges occasional concerts, and they are part of a multiday event each year: the Africa Alive film festival. In doing so, they are making an important contribution to cultural understanding. 'In Frankfurt, there are several different large African communities,' explains Dasu. 'However, apart from a few exceptions, their lives follow separate paths.' With the festival and various other projects, the couple is

also striving to promote pan-African and international concepts and initiatives in Frankfurt. Through this work, Dasitu was able to not only discover her new German home but also to strengthen her relationship to Ethiopia — her family's homeland, which she couldn't visit in the years of the civil war between 1974 and 1991. 'People are very interested to experience the sounds of different cultures together with all the locals from Frankfurt,' says Dasitu.

This was very early in a time when the number of intercultural couples and families was increasing — people just like Dasitu and Michael. 'Many of the children had never visited their African parent's home country. For these young generations especially, we are able to show something about the diversity of these cultures through music,' says Michael, who has visited Dasitu's home country of Ethiopia with his little ones in tow. Of course, the pair are going to keep their eye on the task for their district tour with COMPANION. They take us to locations in Frankfurt where you can experience Africa and its many different countries and cultures. In keeping with the familial nature of the story, they are accompanied by their daughter, photographer Maya Röttger.



①
Afroton

The family-run business of Dasitu, Michael and Ibsa Gidada, Dasitu's son, is a small melting pot of cultures. In the store rooms and retail space of their business, Afroton, you can find djembes, the traditional drum of West Africa, stacked together alongside singing bowls and balafons, small maracas, and larger percussion instruments: 'Instruments of the World', as promised by the business's slogan. The showroom is open to the public, and large drums and small chimes, ornately decorated didgeridoos, and modern handpans can be bought by private buyers, from professional musicians and music therapists to laypersons. Mostly, though, Afroton sells to music shops and via online stores in Germany and Europe. The team is just as diverse as the product range. 'We have had people from very different cultures and religions working together for decades now,' says Michael. 'We always try to show tolerance to one another and pull together to move Afroton forward.' A larger space also serves as a concert venue for around 100 guests — with the right culinary offerings, of course.

➤ afroton.de



②

CDs am Goethe-Haus

'There is a really strong tradition of jazz and world music here,' says Michael, in reference to the record shop CDs am Goethe-Haus, which is located close to the birthplace of the great writer Goethe, at the heart of Frankfurt's city centre. It's one of the city's final bastions, a place where there is still a selection of music that is generally classed as 'world music.' Michael and Dasitu recommend the cellar of the elegantly decorated shop, which features sturdy wooden shelves and olive-green walls. Here they have all sorts of jazz and a selection of African music — which Michael and Dasitu, however, best enjoy outside.

➤ cdsamgoethehaus.de



③

Brotfabrik

A musical evening can be enjoyed, for instance, at the Brotfabrik, a cultural project situated outside of the city centre, in the district of Hausen. Curious first-time visitors may not find it so easy to locate the 1,500-square-metre venue. But the search will pay off! Eleven art and cultural projects share the space in the historical brick building, and concerts and readings by renowned performers are just as much a part of the schedule as performances by smaller groups and associations. 'No other place in Frankfurt offers a stage to so many different cultures,' says Dasitu. So it's only logical that every year the concerts of the Africa Alive film festival are held at the Brotfabrik. Cooperating and building something together — that's what Michael and Dasitu love to do anyway.

➤ brotfabrik.de

- 1 **Afroton**
Rüsselsheimer Strasse 22
- 2 **Rebstockpark**
- 3 **Brotfabrik**
Bachmannstrasse 2-4
- 4 **African Queen**
Stuttgarter Strasse 21
- 5 **CDs am Goethe-Haus**
Am Salzhaus 1
- 6 **Weltkulturen Bibliothek**
Schaumainkai 35
- 7 **Mainufer/Schaumainkai**



④

Schaumainkai

It's a similar story with Schaumainkai: even without any action going on, Michael and Dasitu like to sit on the banks of the Main and squint into the sun, watching the boats go sailing by. In doing so, they often think about their passion and livelihood: music. 'During the Museumsuferfest, the Frankfurter Bühne [stage] was there for decades, close to the Eiserner Steg,' explains Michael. 'Different cultural groups from the Rhine-Main region were represented there.' That in itself is rather remarkable because the rest of the festival has become an extremely commercial affair. 'The park at the Weltkulturen Museum is an especially excellent place to escape all of the hustle and bustle,' says Michael. 'With nice workshops and guided tours, the museums in general still provide a great programme.'

➤ museumsuferfest.de



⑤

African Queen

'If we have a special occasion, we often go back to Almaz Yohannes,' says Dasitu. And that's not only because the owner of African Queen serves her guests excellent, authentic Eritrean food, and neither is it just because she sometimes manages to conjure up an elaborate buffet for Afroton events. Mainly it's for the reason that she always garnishes her dishes — such as *Fit-Fit*, a vegetarian stew made from light injera bread and a tomato sauce with authentic Eritrean butter, and *Tzebbi-Begie*, strips of mutton in a spicy sauce — with a good portion of love. Michael says, 'No matter how unfamiliar the guests are, each one is taught about how this special dining culture works.' That reminds him a lot of Dasitu's Ethiopian homeland, not only because of the smells

and tastes, but because the food culture is very similar. In a comfortable space, guests sit on stools that are upholstered with thick cowhide and eat from a large platter, ideally with their hands. 'It's a wonderful way to eat together and communicate,' says Dasitu, and it's the perfect start to the evening, which Michael and Dasitu like to continue in a musical fashion.

➤ african-queen-restaurant.de

FRANKFURT OFFERS A STAGE TO SO MANY CULTURES

⑥

**Weltkulturen Museum
and Library**

At the Weltkulturen Museum (Museum of World Cultures), which is also situated on Schaumainkai, Michael and Dasitu have already done a fair few things together, of course. In the 90s, they spent three years organising an event schedule for the museum's park. Once again, it was not only the beautiful villa with its rustic wooden flooring that made it so special for Michael and Dasitu; rather, it was the people. 'You can do research and take crafts courses for musical instruments there, as well as a lot of other things, all carried out by people who are passionate about their jobs. They also willingly offer up their extensive knowledge to those wandering aimlessly and marvelling at the stacks,' says Michael, laughing. And there is actually a lot to marvel at here. In the heavy red leather armchairs in the in-house library, you can peruse through books about ethnology, art, and culture, and a diverse range of exhibitions are staged on the light-filled upper levels. As of October, they will also have the Weltbevögend exhibition, which documents how migration shapes different cultural disciplines, from art to artisanal crafts, and from language to lifestyle. And music, of course.

➤ weltkulturenmuseum.de



⑦

Rebstockpark

With a fantastic view of the Frankfurt skyline, the wide and open fields of Rebstockpark are the perfect place to enjoy music and the outdoors during summer. 'The park made it to our list because it has become a hotspot for African culture due to two festivals in the summer,' says Dasitu. Each year, the Afro Karibik Festival is held here in August, and the Afrikanische Kulturfest Frankfurt takes place here too — the event this June will already be its 14th iteration. During the festival, there will be music, dancing, and other performances, and handicrafts and food, of course. But Michael and Dasitu also like to come to the park when the stage and bazaar aren't there. 'We are simply drawn to the place that invokes so many memories of the lovely events in summer,' says Dasitu.

➤ afrikanisches-kulturfest.de

➤ afro-karibik.de



TALKING BUSINESS

When in Doubt, Anarchy

TEXT SILVIA SILKO

Tim Renner is a legend in the music and culture business. As a manager at Universal, he discovered bands such as Rammstein, and from 2014 to 2016, he was Berlin's state secretary for cultural affairs, initiating a digitalisation offensive. Aside from having worked as a music journalist and radio host, and founding his own media startup, Motor Entertainment, he also lectures at the Popakademie Baden-Württemberg and writes books on the industry. In short, it's hard to think of anyone with a better grasp on the present and future of pop culture. A conversation about youthful anarchism, the vastness of the unregulated internet, and what's next for the music industry.



Martin Becker

COMPANION: Across your various contributions to culture and music, your main interest seems to revolve around ensuring the freedom of the unruly youth and their subcultures.

Tim Renner: Absolutely! Because what's at the core of pop music? Revolt! The efforts of the youth to find their own language, their own code. The previous generation shouldn't be able to understand it, as this would also constitute an attack on their fundamental values. The anarchistic element must absolutely be preserved, because it encourages originality. That, however, is currently more difficult than ever.

In what respect?

Firstly, you have a generation that was raised on pop music — my generation. That means that we can adapt to the codes of our children incredibly quickly. We do have the internet too, after all. That means I can absorb each micro trend and every movement just as quickly as the kids these days can. I'm so on the ball when it comes to cloud rap that my daughters can't keep up. *[laughs]* That's what makes it such a virulent struggle, one that's very hard to manage.

Do you think that the ubiquitous nature of pop culture has positive effects?

Certainly. The dissemination of pop culture throughout society means that anarchistic moments crop up everywhere.

But there are some rules that need to be followed.

Of course. Earlier, we had a ten-year rule for the lifetime of a trend. It's clear to see how a trend is created within those first five years, in reaction to what has come before it. Over the following two years, it reveals itself to its intended audience and then it achieves its commercial breakthrough. For three years after that, it will be milked for everything it has, until nobody wants to hear about or see it anymore. That's when the next movement comes in, in response to the former trend that has now become mainstream. Nowadays, trends don't have as much time to develop and the milking process is more intensive and begins earlier. This allows pop culture brands to quickly present anarchistic elements as well polished. But that's a balancing act too, of course.

The European Parliament recently reached a decision about copyright reforms, about regulating content on internet platforms. They voted in favour of Article 13, meaning that YouTube and similar platforms will be forced to prevent users from uploading copyright-protected material. You're opposed to this because you think it jeopardises grassroots subcultures and independent artists?

Exactly. The reform that the European Parliament voted for works in the favour of the non-digital user industry — I see that as fatal. This leaves us with the unmoving dinosaurs of the industry, to the detriment of the new breed of independent artists, musicians, and writers. What I actually think is urgently needed is a set of laws that consider creative artists and protect all the freelancers and pioneers. That would do the trick — rather than just making the old-school giants even more powerful.

If you look at the political discourse surrounding internet regulation, you still always get the feeling that nobody really knows what should actually be done to deal with this colossal issue.

For me, the main problem is the fact that politicians engage with the subject of the internet with a certain degree of abstraction. There is a huge difference between understanding something on an emotional level and only conceiving of it rationally. If I myself had little experience with social media, didn't use it much, didn't know what happens on these platforms, there is still a lot I can read up on about the issue. But I will never have real access to it, nor will I be in a position to press the right buttons.

What is your prognosis for the music business? How will we deal with music in the future?

I think there will be a greater need for individuals to personally get involved in the music business. Earlier on, as a music lover, I always tried to impress people with a good playlist. Today, I can achieve that better with my own special mix. It's becoming more and more about adopting music for yourself. This trend is also playing out in China, the market that is currently showing the most rapid growth. There, the WeSing app is on a path to success. It's a karaoke service that many Chinese people

‘There will be a greater need for individuals to personally get involved in the music business.’

have on their phones. After all, karaoke is another opportunity to adopt music for yourself rather than just observe it.

Is there anybody on the pop scene that you are impressed by at the moment?

There are a few people — Billie Eilish comes to mind. She's already entered the mainstream, but she's very authentic; she makes very well-produced music and she takes pop in a completely new direction. The whole thing actually still seems like a subculture, though Universal is behind it — a giant label. If they have staged the authenticity entirely, you have to say, 'Hats off! Well done!' Or maybe they were intelligent enough to give her and her brother, a great producer who has influenced Eilish's sound, the artistic freedom to do what they want. This brings us back to the heart of this discussion: regulation and the facilitation of youthful anarchy.

motor.de
rennerleonhard.com

Generating a Genre

TEXT ANNA DOROTHEA KER

Natascha Augustin, senior creative director at Warner Chappell Music, is the cool-headed industry leader who's responsible for propelling Germany's hottest hip-hop and rap acts to the peak of international acclaim — though her humility prevents her from taking any of the credit. Having pioneered 'Deutschrap' (German rap) right from the beginning, her knack for navigating the ever-shifting tides of taste in popular music has stood not only Warner Chappell but also the entire industry in ever-stronger stead. Natascha took a moment out of her nonstop schedule to share with COMPANION how she discovers new talent, what she likes about the new wave of female German rappers, and her outlook for the future of the genre.



COMPANION: You've been lauded for establishing 'Deutschrap' on the global stage. What first got you interested in the genre, and how did you come to be its spokesperson?

Natascha Augustin: I didn't come to Deutschrap through music, per se, but instead through the people behind it. It all started with a deal with Farid Bang and his label, Banger Musik. I like the energy and the self-made mentality in the scene, and the biographies of the artists. We made Deutschrap a priority at Warner Chappell very early on, and were there from the beginning [of the industry]. I've since gained a reputation for being respectful and loyal, and for being really into the genre.

What even is Deutschrap exactly?

The term was invented 20 years ago by the editor in chief of the hip-hop newspaper Juice as a label to describe emerging German hip-hop artists like Fanta 4.

For those not in the music business, the art of pushing bands to the top of the charts can seem like some sort of mysterious alchemy. How do you push a song to the top of the charts?

The days when commercial songs took over the top of charts are over. Today this process happens directly from rapper to fan through social media. A newer generation of German rappers has been ignored by the industry over the last few years, so its protagonists have made a virtue out of necessity and taken their promo completely into their own hands. This creates a very intense fan bond in addition to credibility, which results in a huge number of followers. We're there to support and push where help is needed, connect producers and rappers, organise features, get testimonial deals, and so on.

How did you manage to establish an entire genre so successfully?

The genre really did establish itself completely of its own accord, independent of the industry. Rap is the world's dominant popular music.

What does a typical day in your role as senior creative director at Warner Chappell look like?

No two days are the same. I travel a lot to meet artists, songwriters, managers... We constantly organise songwriter sessions that I attend. In general, I listen to a lot of music and consider how I can support our artists in their careers.

Where do you discover new talent?

Through my excellent network, I get to know interesting artists and songwriters at an early stage [in their careers]. The days when you discovered a newcomer group on a demo tape or in an entertainment establishment are long gone. Now, lawyers often offer lucrative deals in an unglamorous way.

Who are some of the most inspiring women in Deutschrap right now?

I'm inspired by all women who don't try to imitate male behaviour, and have an attitude. I think Nura [formerly a member of SXTN] is particularly great because she uses her reach to talk about issues like racism or homophobia.

What's your take on the perception of Deutschrap internationally?

Well, the incredibly high streaming rates in Germany — as the third-largest music market in the world — speak for themselves. [The group] 187 Strassenbande and rapper Capital Bra have reached over one billion streams. Streaming has made success visible, which is why local artists are also interesting to songwriters from abroad. We constantly get requests from international producers who want to work with German rappers, and we also organise features for international rappers, like Olexesh for Boogie Wit Da Hoodie or Summer Cem for Post Malone.

What's been your experience as a woman in a male-dominated industry that is said to be pretty macho?

Problems with sexism, as with racism, are not a rap phenomenon but a fundamental issue within



the music industry. There has been a lot of discussion about this recently. Personally, I approach the people with whom I work with a lot of respect, and receive it back in return. In any case, I'm optimistic about the future. There's a new generation of women coming up, both in the industry and on the artists' side. Great rappers like Eunique, Nura, Juju and Haiyti — to name a few — are female role models who will change the tonality of rap.

Given how the way in which people consume music is quickly and radically evolving, what are some of the biggest challenges Warner Chappell faces to stay relevant?

As a music publisher, we have always focused on the song. We support our artists in the composition of their music. The sales channels may change, but the song and its creation will always remain important.

What are some of the trends in Deutschrap on your radar at the moment?

Rap is becoming even more mainstream — as Bausa has demonstrated. Rap will spread to older generations, as radio stations can no longer shut themselves off from rap. The aesthetics of urban sound will massively influence the composition of pop music. We're still far from having reached the pinnacle.

warnerchappell.com

BALLADS

TEXT ANNA DOROTHEA KER

It's hard to believe that Julian Pollina — better known as Faber — is just 26 years old. Given the grit of the Swiss singer-songwriter's voice and lyrics, you'd be forgiven for assuming he'd seen at least two decades more. Sung in German, his 2017 debut album, 'Sei ein Faber im Wind' (Be a Faber in the Wind) leaves no subject unscathed in its wake. Its tracks set salacious wordplay to soaring melodies, recalling the husky snarls of Jacques Brel or the warbles of Balkan folk music — it is a new brand of melancholic dance music that's captured the world-weary hearts of Faber's generation. Ahead of his second album's release, in late 2019, Faber emerged from the recording studio to speak with COMPANION about the blurred lines between fact and fiction, being bored in Zurich, and why he wouldn't get along with Kanye.

COMPANION: Hey Faber, what are you listening to at the moment?

Faber: I'm pretty much only listening to music as a form distraction right now — and to unwind. That, or antisocial Italian trap tracks. I'm looking forward to the upcoming Lana Del Rey album too.

Since your first album was released, in 2017, you shot to fame pretty rapidly. What has that experience been like?

[laughs] I don't really feel all that famous, but I get the sense that my concerts are getting better. I'm noticing that my music touches people, which I'm really happy about. The downside of fame is the pressure it puts on you. I feel like I'm under constant scrutiny on a certain level, which isn't so great. But I'm trying to make sure that my personal life stays unaffected by it all. It's important to me that the private stays private.

What are your strategies for that?

I haven't been so successful in it so far, actually. Even on nights out, when I think I can switch off, I can't. I'm beginning to realise that's not a real method for escapism. [laughs]

You grew up in an artistic family with a musical father, the Italian singer-songwriter Pippo Pollina, but weren't so interested in the traditional musical education you received at a young age. What got you hooked again?

I didn't enjoy going to school, but I wasn't interested in working either. I somehow discovered that there was a gap in the music market [in Zurich] — this was around 2010. No one was playing at weddings and big parties. I managed to start earning a lot of money in a short amount of time doing that. And I came to realise there was nothing I wanted to do more than perform live. I finished school in 2013 and then started doing it full-time. I wasn't afraid at all going into it, which, looking back, was pretty naive. I just thought, 'If I enjoy doing it, and if I do it often enough, I'll keep getting better, and at some point someone will notice that, and then it'll take off.'

And it did. What was the journey like from that point up until your first album?

It was definitely a long process, around about four years. I was playing live a lot in the meantime — because that's what I love doing the most, and also

A BRAND

because that's what brings in the cash. It was also a lot of fun, and it taught me a whole lot. The first album ended up being pretty much a live recording as a result. We said to ourselves, 'Let's just go into the studio and record, playing as we always do.' We all just got in sync. There was hardly any post-production involved. It was a lot of fun — raw and real, not totally perfect, but the energy was good, and I think that's exactly what makes it so strong.

How did you come to settle on Faber as your artist name?

I wanted to keep a certain distance from my real name — between my private life and my persona — as a form of protection. The name comes from a combination of influences — there's the book 'Homo Faber' by Swiss author Max Frisch, and then there's one of the greatest Italian singer-songwriters, Fabrizio De André, whose nickname was also Faber. I thought it would be nice to bring these influences together. It's not a very fashionable name, which means it will never go out of fashion either. It's neutral and short and hopefully easy to remember. Those were the kinds of

factors that led me to adopt it. And once I'd made the decision, that was it. I never looked back.

You and your music have been given a host of different labels: singer-songwriter, world music, acoustic, or indie pop...

[laughs] I think that all fits quite well, actually — I wouldn't deny any of those labels. They're all alright. I think the best approach is to go with what people say. Each of those descriptions touches on a part of who I am, but somehow none of them tell the whole story. But I'm not that bothered by it. I think that genres aren't all that clearly defined these days. Everyone's allowed to do everything, and no one listens to just one genre anyway. That's not how it works. Everything's all mixed in.

Your influences transcend genres and epochs — from Jacques Brel to Kanye West. Which five musicians, dead or alive, would you like to invite to a dinner party?

Well, that depends on whether or not you want to enjoy the evening. [laughs] To be honest, I'd rather not spend time with musicians. I don't think that would make for the nicest time. I like Kanye a lot, but I would

never want to hang out with him. That just wouldn't work. How could you even have a conversation with him?

What's it like to be a young artist living in Zurich?

It was very, very boring for a long time, very uniform, and even now it's not substantially better, but that's finally starting to change. Slowly more and more people are bringing in new energy. But I find Switzerland very conservative in general.

Yet it's still your home. Surely there are some advantages to living there?

There are no advantages. [laughs] It's damn expensive, people aren't friendly, the weather's bad 90 percent of the time, it's impossible to find an apartment — there isn't a single reason to be here. It's only because I grew up here and because my friends and family are here that I still am too.

You have the chance to escape this summer, when you'll be touring Germany and Austria. What's been your favourite experience so far?

So there's this little festival near Basel called Mondsucht, and it's run completely without power,

OF A BOY



Stefan Bräunlich

even for the musicians — it's all acoustic. There are around 1,000 people, and the atmosphere is amazing — with tents and candlelight and mirrored installations. I always enjoy playing in Vienna too. The city is beautiful, and its people are lovely.

What do you always have with you while you're touring?

The most important thing is fresh laundry. And good friends. Everything else can be picked up along the way. [laughs]

Some of your songs — like 'In Paris brennen Autos' (Cars are Burning in Paris) — touch on political topics, and you've recently started campaigning for water as a human right with Viva con Agua. How do you see your agency to advocate for political change?

I definitely think it's important to use the platform you have to make a difference. Especially in such difficult times, it's important to speak up. Even just with what's going on in Europe at the moment, artists have a responsibility to take a stand for what they believe in. Honestly, I can't see how it's going to get better in the next few decades. Sadly.

On the topic of politics, you've received a lot of criticism for your use of words like Nutte (slut) and Hure (whore) to describe women in your songs. In the wake of #MeToo, what's your take on sexism in pop music, and your own responsibility within it?

My position hasn't changed. That's to say, I'm for complete equality. In a lot of areas, there's still a lot we need to learn — that goes for everyone, women as well as men, of all ages. Yes, I use a lot of crass language in my songs, and I've realised that it doesn't come across well with everyone. My songs that contain sexist language use those kinds of words to shed light on the issue of sexism. I don't want to validate sexism in any way, but instead provide a critique that reveals the way in which people behave. I've been partially successful in that goal, but some people haven't understood my intention and think that I'm some kind of disgusting old man.

There's a lot of wordplay running through your lyrics — 'Mit mir bist du allein' / Lass mich nicht los' / Lass mich nicht auf dich los' (With me you're alone / Don't let me go / Don't let me go at you). What story did you want to tell with this song?

It's about two people who like and love and want each other, but this intensity also gives them the power to destroy the other person. That's the tension between 'Don't let me go / Don't let me go at you.' They can't live with each other, but they can't live without each other either.

That song, 'Lass mich nicht los' (Don't Let Me Go), is accompanied by a dramatic and beautifully shot video depicting scenes of a tense and dark relationship that raises more questions than it answers with its ominous ending. For you, what role should a video play in enhancing a song?

In the best case, it should offer another perspective on the story. I think it's intriguing when it does more than just accompany the song. It should shed light on

another aspect of it. But that's really difficult to achieve. I'd like to get better at it in future.

Many of your songs have a sad undertone to them. Do you write music for sad people?

It's always very melancholic, that's true. But it's equally true to say it's music to dance to. I find this combination interesting. It's not so prevalent in Swiss culture, but in Eastern Europe — the Balkans — people often have parties where sad music is played. This idea of a sad party — that's what intrigues me. It should contain an element of surprise, and sometimes veer into the political.

From where do you take inspiration when writing your lyrics?

From my own life, unfortunately. I've experienced years that have been less than happy. I also think it's pretty standard to draw upon your own life, as it's what preoccupies you, both personally and in terms of your place in society.

On the other hand, you've been known to say that the line between truth and fiction should sometimes stay blurred.

That's very important to me. That happens all the time in songwriting, of course. People lie, make things up. Listeners don't need to know what's true and what isn't. Then the magic ends up being lost. A good story shouldn't be spoiled by the truth. That's what keeps things interesting.

Do you find it therapeutic to work through things that have happened in your life with your lyrics?

Yeah, maybe a little. It's true that when I haven't felt great, or when something has gone wrong, I've managed to process it with my music, let go of some of the anger. It works just as well as, say, going to the gym — that goes for writing as well as playing. It's been six months since the last [live show] now, and they've been a long six months. I've come to realise how much playing live gives me, both physically and psychologically, and when I don't do it, I notice a gaping hole in my life. At one point in the last year, I thought, 'It's finally nice to do nothing and just relax for once.' But in the end it wasn't at all relaxing. It was just sad. I can't wait to play live again.

What exactly is it about playing live that you love the most?

The best thing about it is that you give everything, you put all of yourself into it, and in turn you get so much back. You can be feeling half dead, having not slept for three days, but because there's so much energy coming back at you from the crowd, with so many emotions, it picks you right up again. You experience this intimate moment of energy exchange that feels so good.

You're currently working on your second album, which is due out in late 2019. What can we expect?

I'm working on it at the moment and hope that it'll all go smoothly. In terms of lyrics, in any case, the common thread running through my past songs will continue. It won't get any less painful. It'll stay highly political and at the same time very personal. There's no topic that's off the table. [laughs]

MONA'S CAKE REPERTOIRE

TEXT CELINA PLAG – PHOTOS CONNY MIRBACH



Mona Asuka combines two passions: playing the piano and baking. The Munich-born professional musician tells COMPANION why the two disciplines are in fact quite similar — and she also shares her recipe for the perfect summer cake.

I've been playing the piano for longer than I've been able to talk. As far as speaking is concerned, I was a late bloomer. At the age of two, I still couldn't form sentences, but I was looking for ways to express myself. That's how I discovered the piano. Back then, I used to accompany my older sister to piano lessons — she's a pianist now as well — and I quickly realised that she got a great deal of attention when she was playing. I also wanted to copy everything that she did. So I climbed up onto the piano stool and set to work. Shortly afterwards, I performed on stage for the first time. I won my first competition at age four, and I haven't stopped since then.

I never actively planned to become a professional musician. I was once asked at day care what I would like to be when I grew up. My answer? A bunny! I was already a pianist



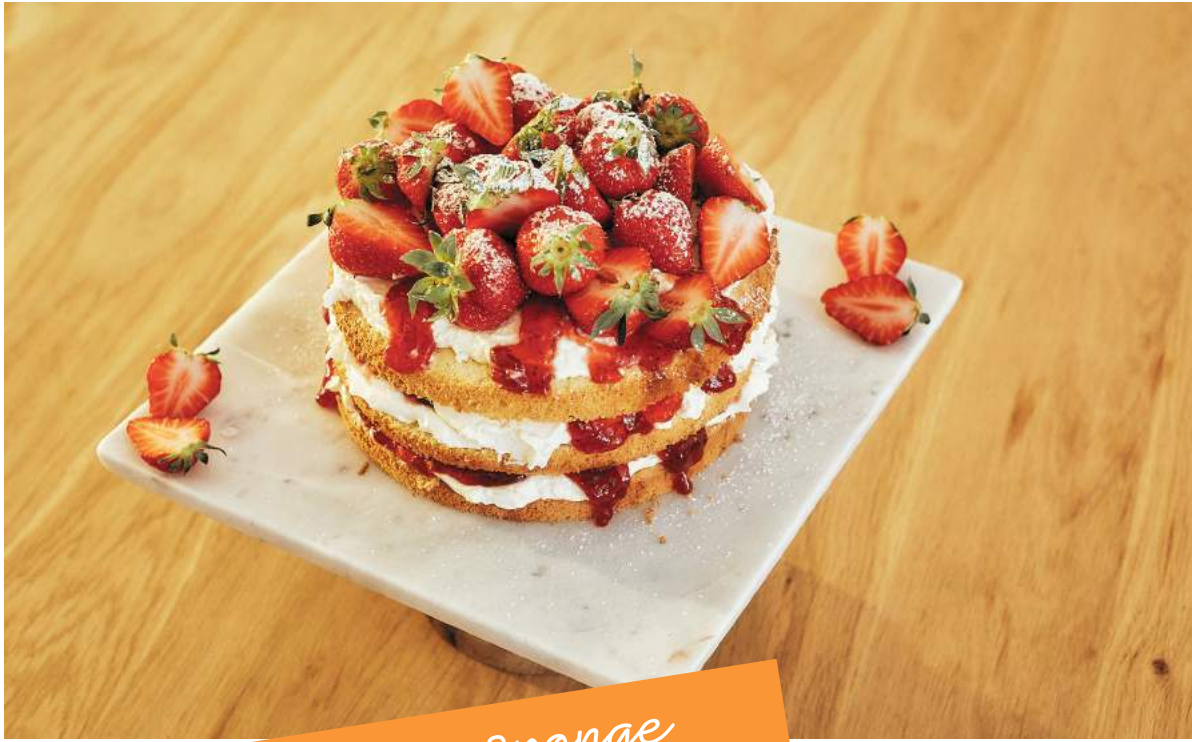
by then — but I don't see myself as a child prodigy. Alongside talent, there is a lot of hard work involved. And a good education. I first studied at the Mozarteum University in Salzburg and later in Würzburg, before returning to my home city of Munich. I travel a lot as part of my job. I play all over Europe and Asia — as I'm half Japanese, I also often perform in my second native country — and I recently performed in Australia for the first time.

After having been travelling, I always enjoy returning to Munich. It's like a sleepy village; everything seems more relaxed here. And my tiny flat is my sanctuary. It's here that I practise on my grand piano, sometimes for three hours a day, sometimes eight. I only play classical music; I particularly like Schubert, Mozart, Beethoven, and Bach. Music from the Viennese classical, Romantic, and Baroque periods.

When I'm not practising, I'm an avid baker. I usually bake on a daily basis. I find it incredibly relaxing. One day I'd like to open my own café selling cakes, preferably in Japan; people there are crazy about fine confectionery. I have even thought of a name already: Mona's Cake Paradise.

I have always had a sweet tooth and have been experimenting with ingredients since I was a child. My two passions — playing the piano and baking — actually have a lot in common. First, they are both very tactile activities, and I seem to enjoy working with my hands. With both of them, you also have to stick to basic rules to produce results. Unlike cooking, you have to pay attention to specific mixture ratios when baking cakes. For example, how much baking powder or how many eggs I need for a certain quantity of flour. In a piece of piano music, of course, it's the notes that have been devised by a composer to which you have to pay attention.

Aside from that, both disciplines share a certain freedom. How do I want to decorate the cake, how much sugar do I like to use? I also have my own style when playing the piano; I can really indulge myself. It's only through interpretation that something individual, something creative emerges. Whether it's playing the piano or baking — they are not things that I do just for myself. At a concert, I am only happy if I can see that my music is making the audience happy. That becomes a precious moment which gives me a great deal of satisfaction. For this reason, every concert is special; I enjoy playing for 30 people just as much as I enjoy performing in front of 3,000.



Strawberry Sponge Cake à la Mona

That's the same kind of joy that I feel when I bake. A cake just for me? I could eat three slices and then I'd be full! I prefer conjuring up things for other people. Presenting someone with a homemade gift, that's the best feeling. That's why I never buy presents for my friends — instead, I give them a cake. I always put a lot of thought into which sort of cake would be right for each person. I've also come up with something special for COMPANION which is perfect for the summer — a fresh, fruity strawberry sponge cake, which is easy to make too. And it's adaptable — feel free to interpret it as you wish.

monaasuka.com

Ingredients for the Batter	
6	eggs (room temperature)
200g	sugar
200g	flour
100ml	milk
60g	cream
1 tsp	vanilla extract

Ingredients for the Cream Filling	
300g	mascarpone
200g	cream
40g	sugar
200g	strawberry jam
500g	fresh strawberries

Preparation

First, preheat the oven to 170 degrees Celsius, with upper and lower heat, and line an 18-centimetre-diameter springform cake tin with baking paper. If you don't have a large cake tin, simply divide the batter and cream filling between two small tins. Separate the eggs and set the yolks aside for later. Using a hand or electric mixer, beat together the egg whites and half of the sugar. As soon as the texture starts to become firmer, add the remaining sugar and beat until stiff.

Add the yolks and vanilla extract to the egg white mixture and mix on a low setting. Sift the flour and carefully mix it in with a whisk. Melt the butter and milk over a bain-marie and gradually incorporate it into the mixture a little at a time. Be careful: if you do this too quickly, the mixture may spill.

Transfer the mixture to the tin(s) and bake at 170 degrees, with upper and lower heat, for 45 to 50 minutes. If you are using two tins, reduce the baking time to approximately 30 minutes. Allow the cake to cool and then cut it into two or three layers. For the filling, use the mixer to briskly beat the mascarpone until smooth and then add the cream and sugar. Stir until a firm but creamy consistency is reached.

Spread some of the cream onto the first cake layer and drizzle the jam over it — this is easier to spread when slightly warmed — then place the next layer on top of it and continue to stack until the final layer is in place. To decorate the cake, arrange the fresh strawberries on the top layer. If you don't like strawberries, you can use other fruit instead. They are less likely to slip if a little jam or cream is spread on the top of the cake first. Allow the finished cake to rest in the fridge for around an hour — and then enjoy it fresh.

The Present is Female

TEXT SILVIA SILKO & LAURA AHA

The music scene is a domain in which women have traditionally been on the passive side of things: as muses, as fans in front of the stage, or as groupies. Does that sound a little antiquated? Indeed it is! There have long been amazing women involved in front of, behind, or next to the stage. It's time for gender balance to be introduced to festival lineups, for the gender pay gap to close in creative industries, and for women to take executive positions at major labels and established music magazines. Does this sound like a somewhat utopian fantasy? Hardly! If we take a look around the scene, we see significant female players who are making noise, creating new spaces, and, in doing so, changing the game. That's why this edition of COMPANION is focused on the music world in Berlin, profiling women who make the industry so captivating: DJs, singers, event organisers, writers, and activists.

Hoe__Mies: The Freedom to Party

A series of parties as a social statement: Lucia Luciano and Gizem Adiyaman organise events that serve as alternatives to the male-dominated hip-hop scene. Parties for women, the queer community, people of colour. Not only are they successful in realising this aim, but they're also polarising opinions. COMPANION speaks to them about vibes, scepticism, and R. Kelly.

COMPANION: What drove you to start your own party series?

Lucia Luciano: When we were out partying, we often didn't like the atmosphere. We simply noticed that there was something missing on the hip-hop scene for us. As a woman, you can't enjoy nightlife as you may want to. Wearing the wrong clothes can be a direct invitation to be misunderstood. We found that annoying. Gizem Adiyaman: Exactly. When you go out, you should be able to let your hair down. You should be able to express yourself however you want — without any restrictions or fear.

So you're using your events to create a safe space within the city's nightlife?

Lucia: We are always working to create safe spaces, but of course we cannot make any guarantees. The decisive factor is always having a certain amount of consideration for the people around you. At Hoe__Mies parties, you look after one another and make sure that everybody feels comfortable. It works really well. The vibe is totally enjoyable.

You started out with your project around two years ago. Did you receive a lot of backlash?

Lucia: In our circles, we always had support and primarily positive feedback after the events. Gizem: Of course whenever something new is started, there are always sceptical comments. At the beginning, we were told that we would have to book some male DJs sooner or later, otherwise nobody would come to our events. That turned out to be wrong. [laughs]

Absolutely. You guys are unbelievably successful at the moment — and currently on tour as a support band for Bilderbuch. How did that come about?

Gizem: I was playing an event in Vienna, and Maurice [the lead singer of Bilderbuch] also happened to be there. He really liked my set and contacted me. Before that, I didn't really know Bilderbuch that well, but on their invitation I played at their after party. And at some point came the invitation to join them on tour. Lucia: That was very different to playing at a club. We have to host and engage with the crowd in a very different way. But it works and is a lot of fun.

So Hoe__Mies has been more than just a side project for a while now?

Gizem: We both work more or less full-time on the Hoe__Mies project. Lucia: It's not just about the DJing and the parties. We've now also become a platform for other female artists. Sometimes we are even contacted by bookers who want recommendations from us about female or queer DJs they can book for their events. We also have more projects planned for Hoe__Mies this year. So it's still all going on here.

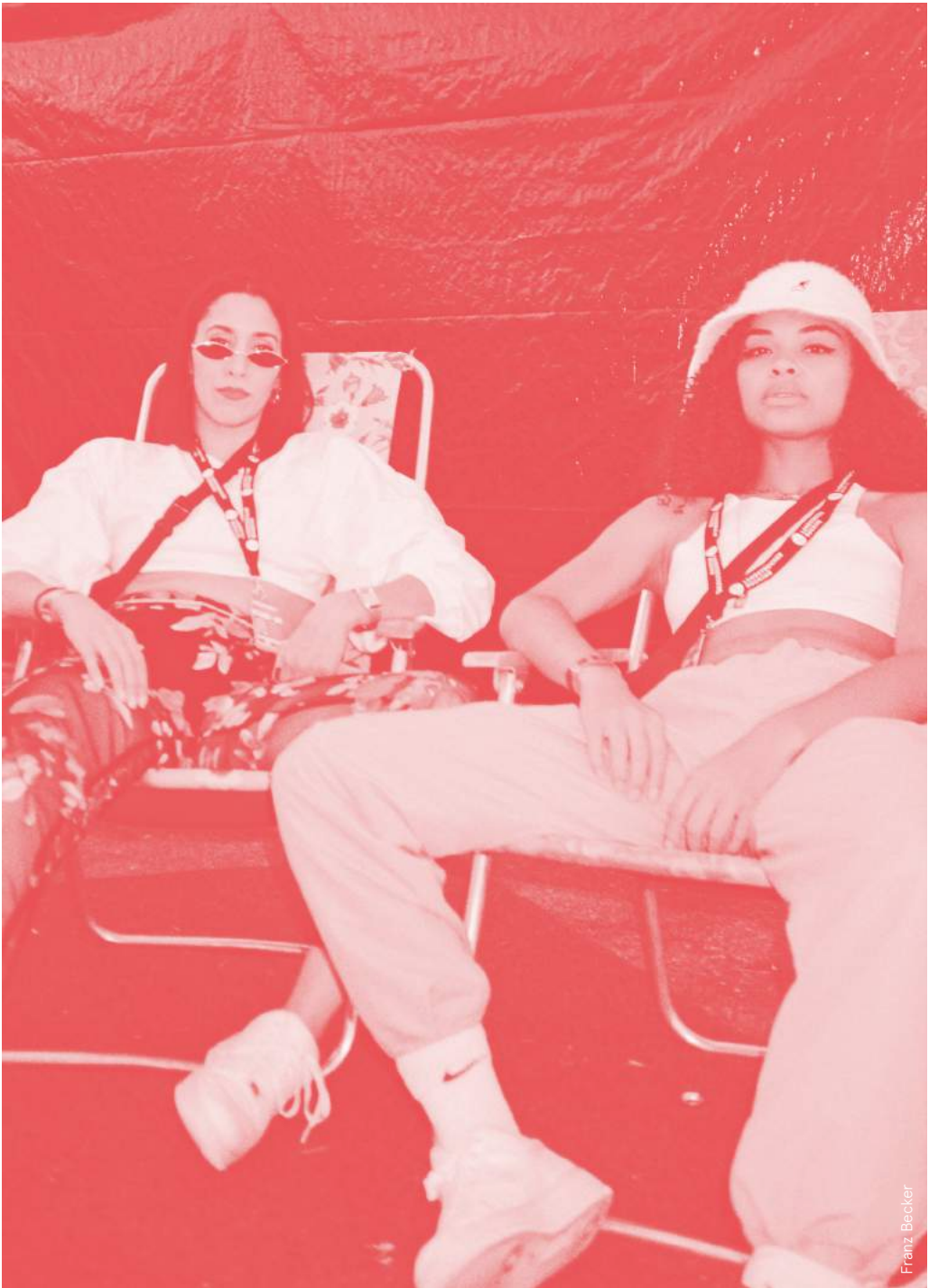
Unfortunately, female artists still do not seem to have proportionate visibility.

Gizem: Absolutely. But it's more about the fact that the entire infrastructure in the business and scene is male dominated. Lucia: In our public playlists, we make sure to present primarily female and queer artists.

In addition to music, you also raise your voices for other things that are important to you. Together with journalist Salwa Houmsi, you fought for the immediate cancellation of gigs scheduled in Germany by R. Kelly, who was facing allegations of sexual abuse.

Lucia: We stand up for what's important to us. Black women deal with different forms of oppression in their lives, and are often not visible — we wanted to show solidarity with these women who were and are R. Kelly's [alleged] victims. Gizem: You can also notice that things are happening in the business in that respect. Previously, musicians enjoyed a certain amount of immunity. That's changing now; people are more conscious of these matters. However, a petition can't do everything. We have to go further. (Silvia Silko)

➤ [instagram.com/hoe__mies](https://www.instagram.com/hoe__mies)



Frank Becker

Gosh Magazine: Brave New Music Journalism



Nick Heilmann/Wolner

The print market is suffering. For many years now, people have predicted its slow but certain demise, and a particularly heavy blow was dealt to the field of pop culture in 2018. In Germany, Intro closed down completely after 25 years of operation, and Groove and Spex are no longer published in print, but are now trying out an exclusively online service. It's not the most opportune time to bring a new printed music magazine onto the market, one might think.

Not Jödis Hagemeyer and Sophie Overvien, however. Their new publication, Gosh Magazine, was first published at the beginning of 2019. 'I don't believe the print media industry is dying out. It's just that the demands of the market are changing,' explains Jödis. 'Of course you can simply go online to find out information about bands or tour dates. However, good articles and stories are always better on paper.' Jödis is a freelance journalist living in Berlin. Sophie works as a graphic designer and lives in Düsseldorf. The two have been friends since school, bonding over their shared love for techno clubs.

Gosh is a magazine devoted to the relationship between pop and design. It centres on the mutual influences of aesthetics, design, and music. 'We didn't want to engage with either the subject of design or the subject of music too strongly. Design magazines are often overly intellectual, and music magazines can be too nerdy,' Sophie explains. 'I think that we have managed to do a good job.' The two have been working on turning their shared project into a reality for a long time, and there were lessons learned on the bureaucratic front in particular. 'It's astounding how complicated it can be to record creative processes on paper. In any case, it was something of an adventure to get a barcode for our magazine,' Jödis explains, laughing.

She and Sophie are in agreement on the topic of gender equality: gender should have stopped being a consideration a long time ago. 'For instance, we had a male artist on the cover of our first edition. We have worshipped Ross From Friends for years, and were delighted to get him on board for our magazine. He made it to the cover because we like his music — not because we thought it would sell well. It could just as well have been a woman.'

The magazine was financed by crowdfunding campaigns, so the project is completely independent — it's the two partners themselves who set the rules. 'We actually planned to publish twice a year. But we'll have to see how that works out time-wise,' explains Sophie. Jödis adds, 'We don't want it to take over our lives completely. That can really burn you out! If we manage to get a second edition out this year, that's cool. If it comes later, that's fine too. But there will definitely be more editions, and we are looking forward to that.' (Silvia Silko)

➤ [gosh-magazine.com](https://www.gosh-magazine.com)

Perel: Hits Hits Hits!

A blonde female bodybuilder poses in a glittery bikini and bridal veil, in front of an industrial wasteland with a hammer in her hand. Annegret Fiedler, aka Perel, who is sitting next to her in the dust wearing a bright red jumpsuit, sings: 'Soll der Teufel mich doch holen, es ist längst zu spät!' (Let the devil take me, it's already too late). At the same time, she stares manically into the camera, giving a look that Nina Hagen would be proud of. The video for the song 'Gold und Silber' (gold and silver), for which Perel lent her vocals to the New York post-punk artist Curses, looks like an absurd scene from a David Lynch film. At the same time, it perfectly illustrates how difficult it is to determine what the musician from Saxony actually does.

That's because Perel is a DJ, producer, singer, and performer — usually all at once. She likes to take to the microphone during her DJ sets to improvise, sing, and whisper ecstatically over pumping electronic beats. 'I can understand people who ask, "What on earth is she doing up there?"' she says in an interview. However, she has always found strict pigeonholing and labels to be boring. 'If I describe myself as just a DJ, that ignores about 70 percent of what I do as a musician.'

When she was growing up in the Ore Mountains, the trained vocalist tried everything from church choirs to punk bands, wrote her own songs, and, at some point, realised that she didn't need a band to create her sound — thanks to digital production software. 'If, like me, you have been involved in different bands and projects for a long time, it can be very liberating,' Perel says of her epiphany. That was in 2008.

Perel wanted to make it as a professional musician. In 2010, she moved to Berlin and sent demos to countless label, but never got a response. Just when she thought she had completely failed, she wrote the two songs that would change her life: 'Die Dimension' (The Dimension) and 'Alles' (Everything). She sings melancholy lyrics in German over a dark mix of minimal wave, industrial, and 80s synth pop. The deep timbre of her voice has already earned her the nickname 'Techno-Knef' (Referring to the famous German singer Hildegard Knef). 'Both songs are snapshots, written and produced at a time when I was suffering from deep-seated fears about my future. Fears relating to the overall global situation, but also those relating to my personal situation.'

She certainly had few concerns about her career afterwards. The electro-punk label DFA Records, launched by James Murphy of LCD Soundsystem, released her debut album, 'Hermetica', in 2018 — the New York label's first German signing ever. Perel made it onto 'Best Album of the Year' charts, and was considered to be one of the year's best newcomers. 'DFA definitely opened the doors to another world, one in which I'm lucky enough to be able to tour all over the world and get to know inspirational people and locations.'

Last year, she played around 100 gigs across the world. In her DJ sets, she mixes contemporary house and techno with old classics — so perhaps it's no coincidence that she chose the slogan 'Hits Hits Hits' for her merch T-shirts. And why did she recently move from Berlin, the techno capital, to Amsterdam? 'I thought it was time for something new.' So we can certainly expect a few things from Perel over the coming years. (Laura Aha)

➤ [soundcloud.com/perel-music](https://www.soundcloud.com/perel-music)



Zorana Markic

Katinka Brundiers: Move Never Boring Jayda G: Move to the Front!

Katinka Brundiers came to Berlin in the mid-90s, and recently moved to the edge of the city with her family. A few more trees than people. We liked that,' she says. However, with her Zwergstadt project, she is in the middle of it all summer long anyway. Katinka and her crew make their way to festivals like Lollapalooza to make sure that the little festivalgoers are entertained. 'We are kind of like a mobile retreat for children.' Katinka started Zwergstadt five years ago, and it seems to have struck the right chord ever since.

The project began at a time when the music scene had already changed. CD sales had not been bringing in the big money for a long time, and the public were more keen on events and experiences. The result: festivals became increasingly popular, and their diversity grew. As such, there were suddenly new demands that hadn't been there before. Where should the kids go when you want to go to a festival as a family? In front of the stage with Mum and Dad to watch the bands? That would get boring in the long run! At A Summer's Tale, for instance, visitors can look forward to not only a well curated lineup, but also to wine seminars, various workshops, readings – and entertainment for children that is just as good as the schedule for adults.

It was only when I became a mother myself that I realised that this kind of thing didn't exist. And to start a business myself, to be my own boss — I'd wanted that for a long time anyway.' Katinka already had the experience of straddling different careers. She worked as a social educator and in Berlin's music scene on the side. She gained experience in booking and PR, and organised events. 'It was always a good balance. The two fields have a surprising amount of overlap, such as a focus on communication. At the same time, however, there are also big differences, because everything moves very quickly in PR. In my social education work with families, that's very different — there it's all about slow breathing, understanding, and patience.'

With Zwergstadt, Katinka was able to bring both of her career specialties together perfectly — and her personal development and changes to her private life were also reflected in it. 'At some point, I was just no longer interested in nightlife, neither privately nor professionally. Of course, that comes with age — when you enter into different phases of your life — and for me it was when I became a mother.' That doesn't have to mean that you just have to stay home, though. With Zwergstadt, Katinka is a strong representative for a new way of parenting. Her project invites parents to continue indulging in old preferences. But that doesn't mean that having a child doesn't change you: 'It is definitely a new phase of life, with many new concepts and a different everyday routine,' she says. However, Katinka doesn't understand the general assumption that becoming a parent means putting an end to certain activities. Enjoying music and having fun at festivals work best with your loved ones in any case — even if you might have different tastes. 'Our oldest son loved David Guetta at the last Lollapalooza. That's not really my kind of thing now. But it's nice to see children get excited about music and concerts.'

Katinka is currently working full-time on Zwergstadt. Her team, all of whom have a background in education, is constantly growing due to its success. Does Katinka sometimes miss her other jobs? 'Not yet. The work before and at the events is also exciting, creative, and varied. But who knows what the future will bring?' Clearly there are a few new ideas swimming around in Katinka's head, just waiting to be put into action. Anything less would be boring. (Silvia Silko)

➤ [zwergstadt.de](https://www.zwergstadt.de)



Farah Noori

Jayda G's earliest musical memory is seeing her father sat among stacks of CDs in their living room, recording mixtapes for long road trips. In her home country of Canada, car journeys can easily take several days. In the car, they listened to her father's favourite disco, soul, and R & B classics while mountains and forests passed by outside. It's therefore no wonder that she later studied environmental and resource management — and became a DJ. 'The connection between music and the environment is the essence of what I grew up with,' answers Jayda G when asked how these two areas fit together.

From there, it was a logical step to address the subject of climate change in her debut album 'Significant Changes', released in March 2019, with house beats you can dance to. 'I produced the album at the same time as I was completing my studies, where I was dealing with the health impacts of chemicals on orcas by the coast of Vancouver.' That's why on the ambient track 'Orca's Reprise' you can hear whale song, and in 'Misty Knows What's Up', she samples the biologist Misty McDuffee, who has spoken in court about protecting marine life. Is the escapist dance floor the right place for political statements? 'You can't run away from the environment,' says Jayda G. 'If people are in a positive state of mind and more open to these issues when confronted with them, they might resonate better.'

But Jayda G doesn't want to preach; instead, she primarily wants to bring positive energy back to the club scene, which often takes itself too seriously. In 2016, she moved from Vancouver to Berlin, and has played somewhere in Europe almost every weekend ever since. During her DJ sets — where she mixes Grace Jones with Diana Ross, and disco and tropical beats with soulful house bangers — Jayda G will be the one dancing the most and singing along to each chorus the loudest. With her hymn of empowerment 'Move to the Front', she encourages women to come to the front during her sets and break through the wall of 'fist-pumping bros', which is how she jokingly describes the homogenous groups of men on the dance floor.

As a woman of colour in a male-dominated DJ business, Jayda G knows that she needs to set an example. As such, the best kind of validation for her is when women and people of colour feel empowered and represented by what she's doing. 'Once, after a set, a woman said to me, "Seeing you up there being yourself gave me the power to be myself." That was the biggest compliment I could receive.'

➤ [soundcloud.com/jaydagmusic](https://www.soundcloud.com/jaydagmusic)
➤ [ninjatune.net](https://www.ninjatune.net)



Noah Heilmann



MADANII: Provocation in Balance

For her band, Madanii, Dena Zarrin writes about the dark hair on her arms and about the razors she removes it with to fit in. In her latest music video, she is shown bound, facing the camera, and surrounded by soft pastel tones and gentle pink. Her Iranian heritage, her own identity, bondage fantasies and aesthetics — Madanii brings all of this together. Understated, intensive, and hypnotic. In doing so, Madanii challenges the audience — and draws attention to their own viewing habits and prejudices.

The duo Madanii, which consists of Dena and producer Lucas Herweg, met at the Popakademie in Mannheim. With this project, Dena found an opportunity to capture her world through art. She deals with her youth and childhood in the countryside as a child with a migration background. She questions norms and discrepancies, and does so in a wonderfully melodious way. Trap, R & B, avant-garde pop — though Madanii needs no labels, in any aspect of life. In an interview with COMPANION, front woman and songwriter Dena reveals why.

COMPANION: Your look — both on stage and in videos — is sometimes rather extreme. Where do you draw your inspiration from?

Dena Zarrin: I like to playfully blur the lines between things that seem antithetical: foreigner/ German, Orient/Occident, free expression/modesty, fiction/authenticity.

What kind of reaction do you want to elicit from your viewers?

All of the concepts referred to are associated with stereotypes and trigger something within the viewer. In addition to aesthetic appeal, I am most interested in creating moments of discomfort, which people would ideally engage with in a retrospective and reflective way.

That seems to have been successful in your video for the song 'Holes/Mvnia'. When you think of bondage, you tend to think of latex and leather. Instead, Madanii draws its viewers into a beguiling world of glitter and pale pink.

We wanted to play with expectations in an active way. After all, what is normal? However, we also wanted to create a sense of the surreal, which is why we chose this colour palette. In terms of content, it's about showing that we are all bound in certain kinds of corsets — society encompasses all of us. During the course of the video, I loosen the knots — a process of liberation.



No Shade: Collaborate, Not Compete



There's a lot more behind the expression 'to throw shade' than a simple insult. 'Shade' is a slang word that originated in the queer Latino scene and was first made known to the public in the documentary 'Paris Is Burning', released in 1990. In the film, director Jennie Livingston profiled the New York drag scene of the 1980s, where the subculture of vogue balls allowed for the recognition that society had otherwise denied it. It seems to be no coincidence that the Berlin-based DJ and artist collective No Shade references this. Founded around two years ago, its 17 members aim to increase the visibility of women and non-binary people in the DJ business.

"The initiative was taken due to a clear gap and need for it in the local scene in Berlin," explains No Shade member Ves Holsteter, referring to the homogenous DJ scene that, even in a city as diverse as Berlin, is still mainly dominated by white cis men. "Our philosophy is to provide an opportunity and a platform, contribute to even out the balance, and bring different identities together through collaboration." In concrete terms, that means that No Shade sees itself as a mentoring programme for aspiring DJs. That's why the line-up of each of their regularly scheduled parties supplements well-known headliners with two slots reserved for newcomers. To prepare the emerging DJs for the task as well as possible, No Shade offers a monthlong training programme, where experienced mentor DJs offer guidance with live hardware and software, and also pass on personal wisdom during private DJ sessions.

However, Ves is not under the illusion that the many excellent and diverse DJs will get rid of the homogenous all-male lineups on their own. "A 50/50 quota shouldn't really be necessary, because the DJs and quality are already there. Yet people tend to stay in their own box. So until the industry opens its eyes, maybe it could use a push in the right direction." No Shade wants to give the industry precisely this push. It is also especially important to the collective to ensure that the artists' performances are given more than just immaterial recognition. The DJ gigs that newcomers book are all paid. Ves hopes that the public and the industry will be more prepared to pay female and queer artists better — the gender pay gap doesn't stop at the party scene, unfortunately. Above all, Ves also hopes to see an increase in diversity among booking agents, managers, and journalists, and "More collabs than competing". In other words, no shade. (Laura Aha)

➤ noshade.eu



Gurr: Showpiece Punk

Two women known for tightly plucking their strings still appear to be a sensation. Andreyra Casablanca and Laura Lee are always mentioned when female rock comes up. Terms like 'new wave riot grrrls' quickly put them into the early 90s and grunge categories. The Berlin duo's sound is in truth even more diverse: catchy pop refrains, bold and playful lyrics, and completely unpretentious punk are brought together — and anyone who has seen the pair live will know that Gurr is essentially just great fun. COMPANION sounded the band out in an interview with Andreyra.

COMPANION: Gurr was founded in 2012, and your first EP came out three years later — so you've been around for a while. What's been your biggest insight into the music industry so far?

Andreyra Casablanca: I think you're always learning about it, but right now I'd definitely say it's to follow your gut, otherwise you won't be happy. Everyone has to find their own place and therefore ask themselves what they want to achieve and how they're going to get there.

You're often listed as a showpiece guitar girl band. Does that ever annoy you?

Never. In Germany, it seems that women in rock music is still a 'new' concept to the industry and press. That won't be the case after us.

Women still appear to have it more difficult than men when it comes to starting a career in the music industry. Do you agree?

Some parts of the industry feel like a boys' club — from people in the business to concert goers and their comments. We neither put up with it nor feel intimidated by it. We just want to be surrounded by great people, whatever their gender.

Your EP 'She Says' has just been released. The record is more cheerful and dreamier than your previous sounds.

We've recorded and written more than we've released, and we've grown a lot since our first record as well, of course. Musically, we are now in a place where everything sounds somewhat calmer. All of our new songs make sense for us.

Gurr has been pretty successful. What's next?

We're playing a lot of festivals over the summer and hope to be able to work on new music in the autumn and winter. The last few months have been really intense. You always have to make sure you don't lose yourself, and remember who you are — personally and artistically. (Silvia Silko)

➤ gurrband.com

Sparkle Sober

Want to celebrate all night long but wake up completely fresh? Yes, it's possible. The sparkling wines of Berlin-based Kolonne Null promise 100 percent fun and taste — with zero alcohol.

Non-alcoholic sparkling wine by Kolonne Null, €11.90

➤ kolonnenull.com



Storage for Sound

This Californian pool-blue box brings colour into your home while also providing a chic answer to a messy apartment and a perfect treasure chest for your most precious vinyls.

Vinyl Case by GPO, €59.00

via ➤ urbanoutfitters.com

DJ and Designer

Larry Tee, a New York DJ and music producer based in Berlin, started making clothes for Missy Elliot, Rihanna, and Katy Perry. Thanks to his own unisex label Tzuij, everyone can wear his freaky clubwear.

Multi Color Metallic Jacket by Tzuij, €325.00

➤ shop.tzuij.com



For the Love of Movement

No matter if you feel like dancing, going wild, or just having an easy day, the Skimmies Slipshorts by Jockey are soft, convenient, and comfortable, especially in the summer, when their second-skin sensation is perfect under short dresses and skirts — and it also keeps you safe from undesired insights when riding your bicycle.

Skimmies® Short Length Slipshort in white, black, and nude, €14.95

➤ jockey.de



Portable Beats

Urbanears just launched their first completely portable loudspeaker, which gives off good vibes no matter where you go. And guess what! This outdoor essential even comes in bold colours and with a hip design.

Rålis by Urbanears, €199.00

➤ urbanears.com



Rock 'n' Roll Socks

If your child is already a fan of the Rolling Stones — or at least you are — now there is a great way to show some fandom: wear socks emblazoned with the iconic lip logo and feel the rhythm on your feet.

Rolling Stones Socks Box Set, €39.95

➤ happysocks.com

Reading Versus Hearing

Summer holidays are for reading! Put your nose into Damon Krukowski's book about ways of hearing and learn something new while hanging around the pool or beach.

'Ways of hearing' by Damon Krukowski, €18.00

via ➤ doyoureadme.com



Office Groupie

Would you rather spend some time daydreaming about your favourite musician than working on those boring papers? We feel you! At least now you can pimp them up!

Guitar Paper Clip by Raeder, €3.95 for 15 pieces

➤ raeder-onlineshop.de



Ode to Sustainability

Cologne-based brand Funktion Schnitt (meaning 'function cut') is a true ode to sustainable materials and high-quality clothing production. Their cleanly styled wardrobe contains designs for both men and women.

Iconic Tencel T-Shirt by Funktion Schnitt, €59.90

➤ funktionschnitt.de



Musical Education

Dexterity, tactfulness, and logical thinking: there are so many skills you can acquire through learning an instrument — the earlier in life the better! Why not start with a playful approach?

Synthesizer by Djeco, €49.00

via ➤ smallable.com

After Surf Party

After a long day of surfing, sitting around a bonfire at the beach while listening to some guitar tunes and the quiet crashing of the ocean waves never felt more cosy than in this pair of pants by Roberto Ricci. Of course the former Italian pro surfer knew what he was doing when he decided to design a fashion brand!

Epipi Fleece Jumper Lady by Roberto Ricci Designs, €155.00

➤ robertoriccidesigns.com



Optimistic Festival Shades

Hide your tired festival eyes behind stylish shades with 'The Optimiste' model, which is the product of a collaboration with Swiss eyewear brand Viu and Hamburg's fashion go-to Closed.

The Optimiste by Viu x Closed, €175.00

➤ shopviu.com



Tasting Dieter Meier

The Restaurateur
Those who visit Zurich, Berlin, or Frankfurt should not miss one of Dieter’s Ojo de Agua restaurant branches, where he serves, among other delicacies, mouth-watering beef from his own farm in Argentina. In Berlin, he now also runs Torbar, where there is always a nice vibe.
➤ ojodeagua.de
➤ torbar-berlin.de

The Farmer
Will you soon be in Argentina by any chance? Wonderful! Nowhere else can you experience Dieter’s culinary world so closely. Watch the grass-fed cows or visit the vineyards in Mendoza, where the organic winery is open to visitors all year round. Of course, there is also a restaurant overseeing the surrounding nature.
➤ ojodeagua.ch/en/winery/visit-us

The Winemaker
They are called Puro, Malo, and Ojo Negro, and they are real champions: these award-winning wines from Ojo de Agua are of course not only available in Argentina, but can also be conveniently ordered online.
➤ globalwine.ch
➤ weinwolf.de

The Chocolatier
With Oro de Cacao, Dieter has brought a chocolate onto the market that, thanks to modern techniques, takes up the traditional cold processing of unroasted cocoa beans, as was customary in Mayan culture. Zurich now has its own chocolate boutique.
➤ chocolatdietermeier.ch
➤ orodecacao.com

The Designer
Of course, Dieter’s family is very creative too! With enSole, his wife and daughters run a sustainable fashion label with various branches in Zurich. From time to time, he designs prints for them. EnSole even has a café.
➤ ensole.com

The Jack of All Trades



TEXT CELINA PLAG

Dieter Meier is someone who, without exaggeration, can be described as a music legend. With the band Yello, the Swiss native became world famous in the 80s together with his colleague Boris Blank. Heard their hits like ‘Oh Yeah’ and ‘The Race’? Experimental and electronic, and a little gaga, the tunes get under your skin thanks to Dieter’s deep voice. Yello still perform today.

But music is by no means Dieter’s only mode of expression: Dieter, probably the best dressed rebel of Zurich, who even earned his living as a professional gambler for a while, started working as a performance and conceptual artist in the late 60s. In 1972, he took part in Documenta 5 in Kassel, for which he installed a metal plaque at the main

station with the inscription, ‘Dieter Meier will stand on this plaque on 23 March 1994 from 3pm to 4pm’ — a promise he later kept.

As a creative entrepreneur and investor, Dieter has his fingers everywhere in the game. His greatest passions, however, are the worlds of culinary delights and nature, and, following from that, his farm in Argentina, where he cultivates wine, breeds cattle, and spends a lot of time. He serves up products from his second home in his restaurants — of course this jack-of-all-trades is also a restaurateur. And he has also just set up a chocolate factory. Somewhere between his many projects, Dieter took a moment to answer some questions for COMPANION.

‘I try to do right by what nature offers us.’

COMPANION: Dieter Meier, why do people need music?
Dieter Meier: Music plays in our subconscious. A world without music is inconceivable.
You gained worldwide fame with the band Yello, but you’re actually a true jack-of-all-trades. Among other things, you rear cattle in Argentina and produce wine, and you operate your own restaurant chain, Ojo de Agua, in various cities. Do you find there are parallels between the restaurant business and the music business?
Everything has to be in harmony, and authentic.
What makes a good restaurateur? And what about a good artist?
A restaurateur has empathy and loves their guests. An artist is a lone wolf on the search for themselves. Success is a by-product.
What does a good meal actually sound like?
A good meal sounds like nature. I’m not a fan of excessive seasoning. A carrot or potato cooked al dente exudes the aromas that nature gave it.
Last year, you also opened Torbar in Berlin. What do you like about the German capital? And your hometown of Zurich?
Berlin is the most open city in Europe, and has an inspiring cosmopolitan flair. Snobbery is frowned upon. I love to visit Zurich ‘à la recherche du temps perdu’ [in search of lost time]. When I walk through the city, I am catapulted into memories of my childhood.
With Oro de Cacao, you make chocolate now too. A professor of aroma research showed me his cold extraction methods and I was instantly captivated. The aromas aren’t given off into the oven, like with the

usual heat torture that conventional methods involve, but instead go into the chocolate.
Can you explain the difference in taste?
Conventional chocolate is packed with sugar and additives, and dark chocolate is usually far too bitter. We produce a dark 85 percent cocoa chocolate without any bitterness, which means that you can fully experience all of the complexity of the cocoa bean aromas.
How has the chocolate been received so far?
Excellent. We won a gold medal for our milk chocolate at the leading chocolate summit in San Francisco.
So, you invested around 28 million Swiss francs in your new chocolate factory. Is success more easily calculable with this kind of entrepreneurial project than the art business?
Art means finding yourself; white chocolate has to delight consumers.
With all of your entrepreneurial projects, do you still need art?
Definitely. As soon as the factory is in operation, I will finally have the time to prepare a film.
Where does your passion for cattle farming, wine production, and chocolate come from?
I try to do right by what nature offers us.
Do you have to understand anything about these things to be successful? Does the same go for music?
For my industrial and agricultural projects, I rely on

experts, who have all now become friends too. Like many things in my life, music came about by chance. With my so-called experimental films on the big screen at the cinema, I provided a live accompaniment myself using various tones and my own voice; it was very anarchistic and, to my surprise, led me to music.
It seems like everything you touch turns to gold. Does that drive you?
It goes without saying that many of the things I’ve done were total commercial flops. But nobody could take those experiences away from me, because they helped me to understand myself better. You learn more from a flop than you do from a hit.
Dieter Meier — you are also a brand. How would you describe your USP?
As a ‘non-practising atheist’, I try to follow the guidance of the wandering preacher from Nazareth, who says, ‘Be like children.’
What is still missing from the Dieter Meier cosmos?
Things simply come to me somehow; it feels like I am watching a movie play out.
Your family is also creative. Your wife runs the sustainable label enSole with the help of your daughters. Do you ever work together?
I will actually sometimes design a silk scarf completely irresponsibly, anarchically, and driven by sheer insignificance.
You described the German press as ‘post-modern aristocrats’. How do you see yourself?
As a child full of wonder, on a lifelong search for myself.

➤ dietermeier.com



Find Your Own

Woodstock

Festivals Around Our Cities

TEXT **SILVIA SILKO**
ILLUSTRATION **ŁUKASZ GOŁĘDZINOWSKI**

Be it a musical weekend trip with the family, melodious evenings at a winery, or experiencing the jazz stars of tomorrow perform live — COMPANION presents the best festivals close to our cities.

- MONTREUX

Setting the Tone Worldwide

1

You're a jazz fan who's missing the Montreux Jazz Festival? Impossible! It's the second-largest event of its kind in the world. As such, the greats and newcomers of the scene — and the pop world — come together here. However, the secret star of the festival is Lake Geneva, which is next to the festival venue. Its shores exude a delightful atmosphere and allow exclusive concerts to be held — and that includes on the water. A word of advice: secure your tickets for individual concerts as early as possible, because the first dates are already sold out.

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Montreux Jazz Festival, 28 June–13 July
↳ [montreuxjazzfestival.com](#)
- FRAUENFELD

The Finest Rap

2

There are a few things you could reasonably expect from Europe's largest hip-hop festival. Last year, grand master Eminem took to the stage, and this year Cardi B and Travis Scott will be headlining. Other than that, the Frauenfeld open-air festival sees everybody of note in all facets of the rap scene. Although up to 150,000 festival-goers are expected each year, you still don't feel like you're at a mass event. The mood is overwhelmingly relaxed and a skilled organisational team keeps fans happy.

.....

Openair Frauenfeld, 11–13 July
↳ [openair-frauenfeld.ch](#)
- REES

The Classic

3

For over 30 years now, the Haldern Pop Festival has served as the place to be for all those who care about good acoustic music. The event organisers have ensured there will be moments that give you goosebumps, thanks to the carefully selected lineup, which mainly consists of the guitar pop and indie folk acts. The rural setting will take care of the rest. So if you want to take a dip in the nearby lake, enjoy some smoked salmon from the stud farm around the corner, or savour a cold beer on the market square together with local villagers, this festival is the one for you.

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Haldern Pop Festival, 8–10 August
↳ [haldernpop.com](#)
- LUHMÜHLEN

Anything but Passive

4

The Elbenwald Festival is a weekend event with a difference. Music is important, of course, but it should be offered as part of a holistic experience for the whole family. At Elbenwald, visitors are invited to get involved. If you want to offer a seminar or a workshop, this is the place to do it. By the time the Quidditch match kicks off, in any case, everyone will have been called up. If you'd rather sit back and relax, never fear — just standing there dreamily listening to bands like Schandmaul, is also allowed.

.....

Elbenwald Festival, Luhmühlen, 8–10 August
↳ [elbenwald.de](#)
- ELTVILLE

Music with Wine Pairing

5

If you're a top-class musician with a winery in the family, you're pretty much guaranteed to host the most tasteful festival in your home wine region. Since 2014, singer-songwriter Gisbert zu Knyphausen has been organising Heimspiel Knyphausen, to which he invites artists that he himself would like to see perform live. To complete the Rhenish-Hessian experience, boat trips along the Rhine are organised, and each year there is 'Knippie' — a limited-edition wine produced for the festival at the winery itself.

.....

Heimspiel Knyphausen, Eltville, 26–28 July
↳ [heimspiel-knyphausen.de](#)
- PARIS

Future Perspectives

6

The We Love Green Festival does exactly what it says on the tin: offer an environmentally friendly festival for a clean future. However, it is not only in this regard that it considers the next generation. In selecting its acts, the booking team prioritises a feel-good mood for newcomers. The festival is held at a practical venue, close to the edge of Paris. So if you want to embrace the green spirit from the get-go, you can easily reach the festival by bicycle or public transport.

.....

We Love Green Festival, Paris, 1–2 June
↳ [welovegreen.fr](#)
- CAEN

Noble Pleasures

7

If you find it hard to choose between rock, pop, and electro, you will feel right at home here. For ten years, the Beauregard Festival has attracted a colourful mixture of excellent musical acts to Normandy. This year, nu metal legends Limp Bizkit will be playing a set, as will the wonderful Cat Power. To top it all off, the whole thing is held at the Château de Beauregard. As such, its 70,000 visitors can look forward to the delights of a noble setting. And just in case you still needed convincing: the festival also has the best that the local region has to offer — sparkling ciders and awe-inspiring landscapes.

.....

Beauregard Festival, Caen, Normandy, 4–7 July
↳ [festivalbeauregard.com](#)
- VIENNA

Fresh Air and Free Admission

8

Vienna is known globally for its high quality of life. Perhaps that has something to do with Donauinselfest. The event, held on a small island on the Danube, provides top-class musical entertainment every year — without putting a strain on your wallet. National and international stars take to the stage. Up to three million visitors come together over three days to make the fantastic event what it is. As such, Vienna transforms into a very different place over one weekend in June.

.....

Donauinselfest, Vienna, 21–23 June
↳ [donauinselfest.at](#)
- LUSTENAU

By and for the Youth

9

The locals in Lustenau, Austria, know a thing about how early music education works. Each year, the local culture and youth association works together with hoards of volunteers to put on the three-day Szene Openair Festival. And it works rather well: great bands, a festival crèche, and a wonderful atmosphere every year for the last 30 years or so. In addition to Lewis Capaldi and Capital Bra, this year's special guest is Otto Waalkes. So there can be no complaints about a lack of musical diversity.

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Szene Openair, 1–3 August
↳ [szeneopenair.at](#)



THE RHYTHM OF THE CITY

IN COLLABORATION WITH MINI

Whispering traffic lights, humming engines, bell-ringing cyclists, clattering heels, hammering construction sites, the rustling of leaves in the wind: in urban areas, the very special rhythm of a city, which unfolds as a cosmopolitan symphony in its total sum of sounds, can be experienced in a new and different light everywhere. MINI invites you to find your own individual big city melody: drive straight through the bustling centre, discover new territory across town, or leave the city walls behind altogether. Grab a car and enjoy the boundless freedom to spontaneously and flexibly explore all corners of your surroundings. The path is the destination and only you decide where you're headed — or rather, in

which direction you're drifting. Whether three, five, or split doors, with friends or alone, for a short distance or weekend trip, the iconic go-kart feeling awaits you in all MINI models. In fact, it has for the past sixty years: rooted in our heritage, our mission is to deliver cars and mobility solutions that heighten the quality of city life for customers of today and tomorrow. Become an urban explorer with ease on your travels too. During a stay at 25hours Hotels, navigating the unknown city becomes an adventurous experience thanks to in-house MINI cars.

Celebrate sixty years of MINI with us: mini.de/60





CREATING A CULT LABEL

TEXT ANNA POLONYI

It all started off with a modest music label and a few pairs of jeans. Since Maison Kitsuné’s origins in 2002, the purveyor of cool has spiralled out into a cult fashion brand and music label with coffee shops in Paris and Tokyo. How did it all come to be? Co-founder Gildas Loaëc shared with COMPANION how he seeks out the eclectic and the classic to stay fresh in these fast-moving industries.

At some point, all creatives face the same question: how do I make other people care about what I do? How can I communicate my excitement about my music, carpentry, needlework, or watercolours to others? While some artists may be content to produce their work in isolation, leaving matters of audience and exposure to posterity, many struggle with such prosaic issues at various stages in their career. ‘If you have an idea and execute it, that’s still only half the work,’ says Gildas Loaëc, autodidact and talent hunter. Gildas was the artistic director of French electronic duo Daft Punk during their early years, and in 2002 co-founded what would come to be the Kitsuné empire together with Japanese architect Masaya Kuroki. Since then, its three branches – Maison Kitsuné, the fashion brand; Kitsuné Musique, the music label; and Café Kitsuné, the coffee shops – have garnered a cult following the world over.

‘Then you have to imagine how people are going to access it, or how you will move people with whatever it is that you have made. What is the story that you are going to put around it so that it touches people, so that they discover it and want to talk about it later with their friends?’

Creating stories is precisely what Gildas excels at. He does not once use the word ‘branding’, though he likes to pepper his French with other buzzwords borrowed from English, like ‘organic’. The company he co-founded, Maison Kitsuné, embodies the kind of attention to detail that has defined most of Gildas’s career.

Maison Kitsuné’s headquarters are tucked away in a quiet side street off of the Grands Boulevards, one of the French capital’s main arteries and a landmark of leisure and luxury, with its wide sidewalks; slick, uniform facades; and

wrap-around balconies. Gildas’s office is a modest room cluttered with canvases and memorabilia he swears he is trying to get rid of. On the coffee table, a glittery plastic effigy of a shitting Japanese dog. Leaning against the table, a concert poster for a fictitious event that never happened.

Mixing the eclectic with the traditional, and the unconventional with the established, seems to be Gildas’s specialty, and it’s equally what makes Maison Kitsuné stand out as a brand, ensuring its longevity. Born and raised in the westernmost tip of France, literally called ‘the end of the earth’ (Finistère), Gildas is surprisingly shy for someone heading a company of 80-plus employees. Giving interviews is clearly not his favourite part of the job, as he cringes whenever asked a question and rarely finishes a sentence. The only time he stops shifting around in his chair is when he talks about his passion for music — as a high schooler, when he spent most of his time going to raves and producing a fanzine, and then as a 19 year old, when he opened a vinyl record store in Paris and started hanging out with DJs and skaters.

If you ask Gildas, most of his successes so far can be chalked up to serendipitous encounters: his record store is where he met the two French DJs who would later become Daft Punk and his business partner, Masaya Kuroki. ‘The idea — and perhaps it’s selfish in some ways — was just to have fun and do what we like to do with our days anyway: fashion, music, and style,’ Gildas says. Founded in 2002,

Maison Kitsuné started off as a music label with a few pairs of jeans, cardigans, and shirts. As time passed, the brand grew to include a wider collection of clothing as well as DJ nights, online streaming, and cafés in both Paris and Tokyo. With its line of preppy blazers, shirts, and knitwear, the fashion label plays off of the classic Parisian look: elegant minimalism and neutral basics. But for Gildas, it’s important not to rest too heavily on any laurels.

‘We play on references from the late 60s and early 70s. We like to take a film or a reference but then make it relevant to today. We’re not into doing strict replicas, but somehow giving things a twist so they stay fresh,’ Gildas says of the general aesthetic guidelines for the brand. Staying fresh is one of his obsessions. The 46-year-old father of two never bothered going to university, because he didn’t have the patience for it. In a market where French fashion is dominated by large, established groups and smaller brands are often founded by business school graduates, this makes him stand out considerably.

‘I have a clear opinion on many things without anyone telling me what I should think,’ he says. ‘I think I’m able to define fairly fast what makes something good — that is, what makes sense and what can move a lot of people.’ While his co-founder Masaya heads up business operations in Asia, Gildas’s intuition has led him to seek out young musicians like the Australian band Parcels, collaborate with street artists like Andre, and develop a line of Kitsuné cafés. One

‘To do things well, you need to do one at a time.’

of them is in the Palais Royal, fronted by a summer terrace that leads into the palace grounds. Gildas likes to take visitors in through an unassuming backdoor to watch their astonishment as they discover the royal pomp on the other side.

‘The Palais Royal [has] the most beautiful gardens in Paris. And it is said that Paris is the most beautiful city in the world, so here we are in the most beautiful gardens in the world,’ he says, barely concealing his glee.

This seems to be the secret to Maison Kitsuné’s success as a whole: taking risks, but also mixing the traditional with the new, and, in doing so, appealing to a wider audience. ‘If there’s one thing I had to pick that we’re proud of, it’s that through our various activities, we’ve been able to touch a very diverse range of people. Without trying too hard, we speak to people between the ages of 15 and 65, whether they’re streaming our music or buying clothes at a chic department store or getting a coffee.’

It’s clear when speaking to Gildas that music is not a marketing add-on to promote clothing; neither are the fashion items a spin-off of the music, and the cafes are also their own beast. ‘To do things well, you need to do things one at a time,’ Gildas offers in a way of advice. ‘I learn about new things every day.’ Given his wide range of interests, this hardly comes as a surprise.

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➤ maisonkitsune.com

This article first appeared as a collaboration of Friends of Friends and USM.



Find the Rhythm of Paris

Moncoeur Belleville
Parisian sunsets are best enjoyed on a terrace, aperitif in hand. One of the best spots to take in the last rays to the tune of (free) open-air concerts is Moncoeur Belleville, a hip restaurant and bar offering sweeping views over the city.
➤ moncoeurbelleville.com/en

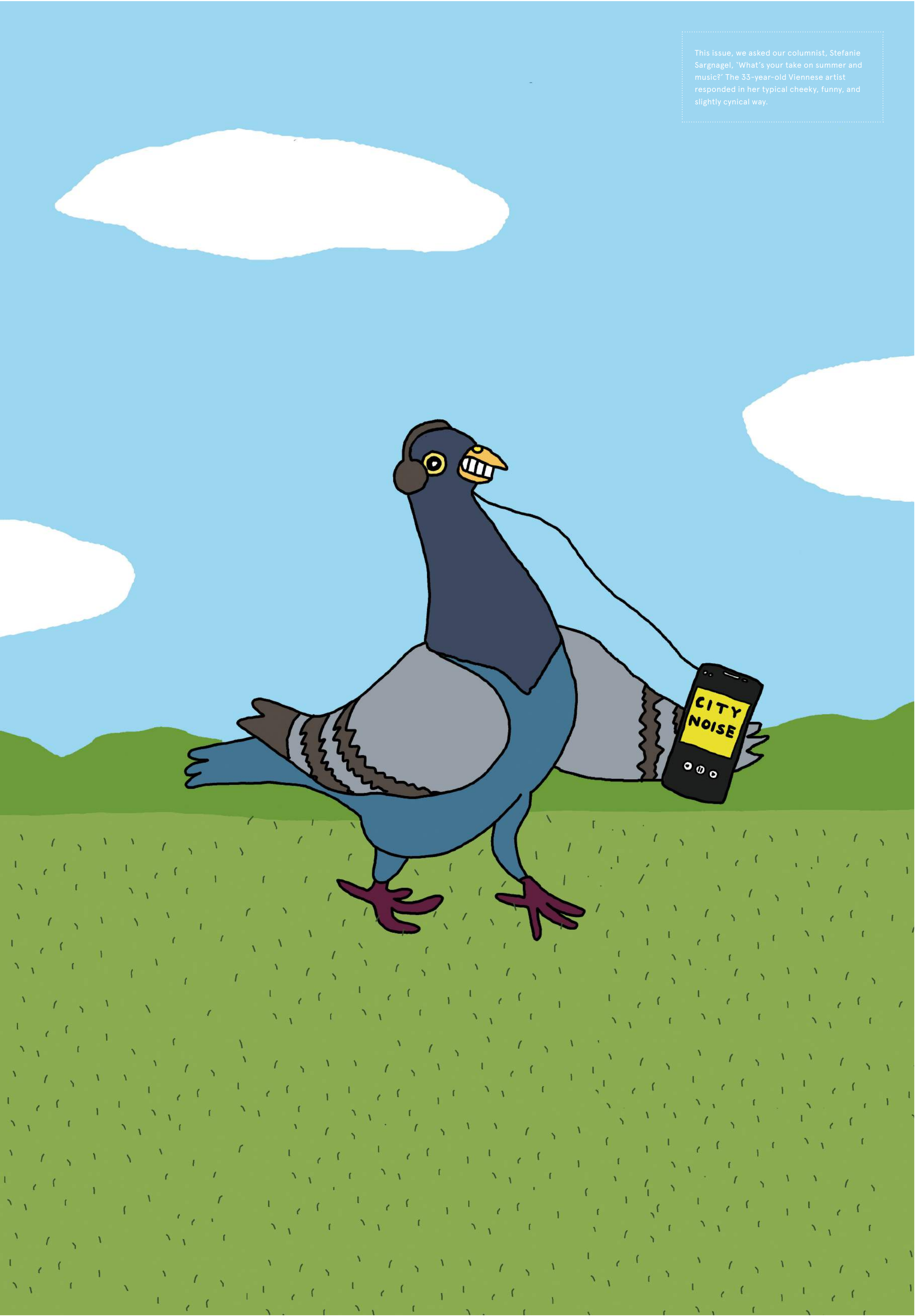
Opéra de Paris – Palais Garnier
For an opulent night out, it’s hard to beat the splendour of Palais Garnier, which blends elements of Baroque, Palladio, and Renaissance architecture. The programme, which supplements the classics (Mozart, Verdi) with more experimental contemporary pieces, ensures there’s something on offer for all tastes.
➤ operadeparis.fr/en/visits/palais-garnier

Père Lachaise
Some clichés were made to be embraced. Like pilgrimages to lay roses on the grave of an idol. At Paris’s most prestigious (and greenest) cemetery, Père Lachaise, you’ll find the graves of Frédéric Chopin, Édith Piaf, and Jim Morrison — to name just a few.
➤ en.parisinfo.com/paris-museum-monument/71470/Cimetiere-du-Pere-Lachaise

L’Entrée des Artistes
Soul, disco, jazz, gospel — at the cult Pigalle cocktail bar L’Entrée des Artistes (The Artists’ Entrance), the soundtrack is taken as seriously as the well-shaken drinks. A top-notch lineup of DJs spinning an eclectic mix of tracks sets an upbeat tone for the night.
➤ lentreedesartistespigalle.com

Silencio
Ready to let loose a little? From Tuesday through Saturday from 11pm, David Lynch’s cult members’ club, Silencio, opens its doors to the public for club nights dedicated to hip-hop, electro, and disco. Rub shoulders with the who’s who of Paris as you get down on the dance floor.
➤ silencio-club.com





This issue, we asked our columnist, Stefanie Sargnagel, "What's your take on summer and music?" The 33-year-old Viennese artist responded in her typical cheeky, funny, and slightly cynical way.

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VIENNA, AUSTRIA 25hours Hotel at MuseumsQuartier Lerchenfelder Strasse 1-3 Donaufest 21-23 June ↳ donaufest.at	Neukölln Oper e.V. Karl-Marx-Strasse 131/133 Season schedule on website ↳ neukoellneroper.de
LUSTENAU, AUSTRIA Szene Open Air 1-3 August ↳ szeneopenair.at	Ojo de Agua Ludwigkirchstrasse 10a Monday-Sunday 11:00-23:00 ↳ ojodeagua.de
COLOGNE, GERMANY 25hours Hotel The Circle Im Klapperhof 22-24 25hours Hotel The Trip Niddastrasse 58 African Queen Restaurant Stuttgarter Strasse 21 Monday-Saturday 11:00-00:00 Sunday 12:00-00:00 ↳ african-queen-restaurant.de	Chor Kreativ Urania Berlin e. V. An der Urania 17 Schedule on website ↳ chorkreativ.de
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MY 25HOURS

‘Music is intrinsic to this location’



TEXT MANUEL ALMEIDA VERGARA

Does Vienna have more to offer than just Mozart and Falco? Indeed it does! At the 25hours Hotel at MuseumsQuartier, young local artists are introduced to the Austrian capital on a regular basis. And not just any artists, of course. Time and again, Kathi Kallauch has shown her knack for scoping out special talent and unusual sounds with her selections for the Live at 25 event series, which is held in various forms at most 25hours Hotels. No wonder, really, as she’s a passionate musician herself, and also has a proven flair for optical pleasures.

COMPANION: Kathi, is the venue important to you when it comes to your own gigs? After all, it’s ultimately about the acoustic experience.

Kathi Kallauch: I am simply an aesthete, which is why I ended up at the 25hours Hotels in the first place. In 2014, I held a release concert for my first EP at [25hours Hotel at MuseumsQuartier] Vienna. I enquired there simply because I love the creative atmosphere. Ultimately, it has an effect on how you feel during your performance. If you stand in the 25hours Hotel at MuseumsQuartier in Vienna and look around the magnificent space, which has extremely fitting decor with trumpets and tubas hanging from the ceiling, then you can’t help but notice that music is intrinsic to this location.

How does the 25hours Hotel at MuseumsQuartier sound to you?

It’s not a huge concert hall, but rather an intimate location where people can also enjoy a drink and have a little chat. As such, it’s the perfect venue for unplugged gigs. However, I think a bit of electronica is perfect for the 25hours Hotel too. I’ve experienced at least one moment where I had goosebumps during each of our nights — be it from artists singing in their local dialects, singer-songwriters, or music in the hip-hop, soul, or indie genres.

Is the diversity here characteristic of the music scene in Vienna?

Like many other major cities, Vienna certainly has a broad spectrum of artists. There has been a lot more going on in recent years especially. For a long time, it was difficult and frustrating to make music in Austria.

Why is that?

There’s a kind of monopoly held by radio broadcasters here, unlike many other countries. If you want to make it, you need to get them to play your music. These broadcasters used to have a relatively low number of Austrian musicians on their roster. But thanks to successful bands like Bilderbuch and Wanda, Austria has developed an enhanced awareness of its own musical identity. In saying that, there’s still a lack of venues for newer bands. That’s another reason why our event is so important.

Does it function as a kind of springboard, then?

Live at 25 has developed into a small-scale industry meetup which attracts a large number of people, from musicians to managers and producers, because they all know that new talent can be discovered here. The very first act, who performed here in 2015, was presented as Johannes Sumpich, and was a completely unknown, introverted guy. Today he is famous worldwide as ‘Josh’. It’s very encouraging to see that we often have a great feeling for talent.

Not in a position to pop down to the 25hours Hotel at MuseumsQuartier in Vienna? Never fear! Every event will be streamed live at facebook.com/liveim25 or bit.ly/liveim25. You can find more information on the Live at 25 event series at the respective 25hours Hotel.

The City at Their Feet

TEXT MANUEL ALMEIDA VERGARA

Ntz, ntz, ntz, ntz, ntz — that’s not really Niklas Schneider’s or Keshav Purushotham’s thing. That’s why their band, Monkey Tunes, doesn’t use flat techno tones, but rather lots of deep hip-hop beats. Not only that — they also play at night in a bar that is otherwise largely dominated by lounge music. ‘I don’t know whether that was a courageous choice,’ says Niklas. ‘In any case, it is extremely well received there.’

By there, he means Monkey Bar, on the eighth floor of the 25hours Hotel The Circle in Cologne. The band was formed specifically to play at this venue, where Keshav used to be in charge of booking the DJs. Instrumentalist Fritz Dinter joined the duo too. ‘Playing there now as a band is a really big deal,’ he says. The gig is ultimately not intended to have the character of a classic concert, where the artist performs a song, the audience applauds, and they move on to the next song. Placing your instruments on the stage and churning out your tracklist, like you might at a normal concert, is simply not an option in a bar, and most definitely not at Monkey Bar.

‘You have to capture the mood of the place and stay flexible with your set,’ says Keshav. If guests would rather lounge around in their armchairs and have a little chat, then

the band has to tone it down a bit, but as soon as the first people start dancing, they quickly respond with a livelier beat. ‘We do a lot of instrumental music, but also with rap acapella,’ Niklas explains. ‘Lots of old-school stuff by Notorious B.I.G. and Tupac, but always mixed with more modern artists like Anderson .Paak.’

The sound that Niklas and Keshav manage to draw out of their drums, keyboard, bass, and guitar is magnificently suited to the urban setting, practically on the rooftops of Cologne — which is what makes Monkey Bar so special. Keshav says, ‘Standing up there as a band with the city at your feet something really special.’ And the city down below? Does Monkey Tunes’ sound actually fit best to Cologne? ‘Of course, there’s a lot of electronic music here, and a real club culture,’ says Niklas. ‘But there is also a hip-hop scene, which is populated by many people in our circles.’ Other than at Monkey Bar, Niklas and Keshav also play in a band called Keshavara. What kind of music do they make? Definitely nothing like *ntz, ntz, ntz*.

monkeybarkoeln.de

Niklas Schneider and Keshav Purushotham play as a team at Monkey Bar in Cologne, and their band, Monkey Tunes, was in fact formed specifically for the hotspot at 25hours Hotel The Circle. Their musical menu, however, features nothing that you would usually hear on a night out. Their sound often takes a look back, yet is still clearly moving forward.



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