

# YOUNG JAZZ TALENT AWARD

## HISTORY

Jazz is an essential part of musical culture. During its more than 100-year history, jazz has continually spawned new styles and become a globally dominant form of pop music, which it continues to significantly shape, among other things. Jazz musicians are characterized not only by their high virtuosity in mastering their instruments but also by a special talent for improvisation. Since the 1960s, an independent jazz culture of international importance has developed in Germany, with prominent artists such as Albert Mangelsdorff, Klaus Doldinger, and Till Brönner.

Promoting young jazz talent in German-speaking countries is a particular concern of the initiators of the YOUNG **JAZZ** TALENT AWARD. The Ringbeck Foundation launched the award in 2022: Young, not yet established jazz musicians between the ages of 16 and 23 are to receive special support in their career development. Each year, a selected instrument/element of jazz takes center stage.

In 2022, the focus was on the drums... **„DRUMS ONLY“**. The winner was Merlin Hellenkamp. He studied at the Folkwang University of the Arts in Essen-Werner – Bachelor's program „Jazz Performing Artist Drums“ with lessons from Prof. Thomas Alkier and Sperie Karas. At 18, he was the youngest of four nominated drummers and proved himself to be an exceptional talent among the younger drummers in North Rhine-Westphalia.

In 2023, the piano, one of the most important, style-defining instruments in jazz and pop music, took center stage... **„PIANO ONLY“**. 22-year-old Paul Küppers won the majority of the jury votes. In 2023, Paul was in his sixth semester at the HfMT (University of Music and Dance) in Cologne – Bachelor's program „Music“. Jazz/Pop“ with lessons from Prof. Hubert Nuss and Prof. Niels Klein. He is the bandleader of the group PKIII and has performed as a sideman with, among others, the Frederik Hesse Quintet and the fusion band M.E.I.N.E.R.

In 2024, four young singers competed in the competition... **„VOCALS ONLY“**. The enchanting 24-year-old Eva Swiderski won the majority of the jury's votes thanks to her confident, experimental, and technically excellent singing, combined with excellent interaction with the band; her stage presence was outstanding. The pieces she performed with great confidence included *Insomnia*, an experimental composition of her own, *Prelude to a Kiss* by Duke Ellington, and *Weaver of Dreams* by Victor Young. Her fall tour with her ensemble EVA through four renowned German jazz clubs in Düsseldorf, Bielefeld, Cologne, and Oldenburg was a great success. In 2024, Eva was in her eighth semester at the HfMT (University of Music and Dance Cologne) – Bachelor's degree program in „Music. Jazz/Pop“, majoring in Jazz Vocals, with lessons from Prof. Anette von Eichel and Susanne Schneider.

The conceptual framework of the YOUNG **JAZZ** TALENT AWARD was jointly developed by Jürgen Ringbeck, board member of the „Ringbeck Foundation,“ and Peter Weiss, the spiritus rector of the Düsseldorf jazz scene and former musical director of the „Jazz Schmiede . Düsseldorf.“ Special thanks for their support in implementing this project go to the professors responsible for the nominations, the jury members, the „Jazz Schmiede Düsseldorf,“ and the other participating German jazz clubs.

## YOUNG JAZZ TALENT AWARD . 2025

### »GUITARS ONLY«

**In 2025, the competition will focus on the guitar as another dominant element of jazz... „GUITARS ONLY.“ The competition among the nominated guitarists will take place on May 10, 2025, starting at 8:30 p.m. at the „Jazz Schmiede . Düsseldorf.“**

### THE COMPETITION PROCESS IN 2025

To simplify the selection process while ensuring high-quality candidates, the pre-selection was initially limited to jazz guitarists studying in North Rhine-Westphalia. Hanno Busch, Professor of Jazz Guitar at the Cologne University of Music and Dance, and Frank Sichmann, Lecturer of Jazz Guitar at the Folkwang University of the Arts in Essen, each of whom were renowned instructors in the region, proposed suitable candidates who, as they met all the necessary requirements, were able to apply to participate in the competition. Four candidates were nominated.

And these are the jazz guitarists nominated for the YOUNG **JAZZ** TALENT AWARD 2025:

- **Irina Alekseeva**
- **Mathis Everding**
- **Liam Möller**
- **Jan Schrüllkamp**

Further information about the nominees <https://jazztalentaward.de/en/nominees-2025>

### THE 2025 COMPETITION

The presentations, the selection of the winner, and the award ceremony will take place on May 10, 2025, starting at 8:30 p.m., at a public event at the “Jazz Schmiede” in Düsseldorf. Each candidate will play three self-selected pieces of music with their accompanying band – Tobias Weindorf on piano/keyboard, Caris Hermes on bass, and Roland Höppner on drums.

The winner will be selected by a competent jury and the audience, and the award ceremony will follow on the same evening.

## THE JURY

- **Ella Zirina** . jazz guitarist and composer from Latvia
- **Philipp van Endert** . guitarist, composer, and assistant professor for jazz and electric guitar at the Institute for Music and Media at the Düsseldorf University of Music
- **Peter Weiss** . initiator and organizer of the YOUNG **JAZZ** TALENT AWARD . Jazz drummer
- Jürgen Ringbeck . initiator and organizer of the YOUNG **JAZZ** TALENT AWARD . Jazz enthusiast
- the audience at the „Jazz Schmiede Düsseldorf“ on the evening of the competition

Further information <https://jazztalentaward.de/en/#>

The YOUNG **JAZZ** TALENT AWARD 2025 is again endowed with €5,000. A concert tour with their own band in four renowned German jazz clubs will be organized for the winner in September 2025. The prize money will be used to realize this tour – for fees, travel expenses, hotel stays, etc. Peter Baumgärtner is responsible for organizing the tour.

## TOUR LOCATIONS

- >>> Jazz Schmiede . Düsseldorf
- >>> Bunker Ulmenwall . Bielefeld
- >>> Loft . Köln
- >>> Jazzclub Alluvium . Oldenburg

*The event dates and times will be announced shortly.*

<https://jazztalentaward.de/en/#>

## Kontakt

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