

DEUTSCHER JAZZ PREIS

Press release

GERMAN JAZZ PRIZE 2026

Aki Takase to receive German Jazz Prize for Lifetime Achievement – a defining voice of contemporary jazz

Line-up for the award ceremony expands: three additional live acts announced

Berlin, April 15 2026

In 2026, the German Jazz Prize honours one of the defining figures of contemporary jazz: **Aki Takase** will receive the German Jazz Prize for **Lifetime Achievement**. For decades, the Japanese jazz musician has stood for a distinctive musical language that moves between composition and improvisation, across cultural contexts and aesthetic traditions.

A decisive step in her artistic development was her move from Osaka to Berlin in the late 1980s. There, she became part of a scene in which improvisation, collaboration and artistic exchange are central: an environment that continues to shape her work to this day.

Takase's music is often clearly structured while remaining open to the unexpected. Many of her projects emerge through dialogue with other musicians in long-term artistic collaborations. The focus lies less on fixed forms than on shared processes of development.

She also repeatedly engages with the history of jazz, for example with composers such as Duke Ellington or Thelonious Monk. She revisits their music, reinterprets it and continuously develops her own sonic language.

With this award, the jury of the German Jazz Prize honors an artist who understands jazz not as a rigid or inflexible genre, but as an open practice that is constantly

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evolving. Her influence is particularly evident in her participatory way of working and in the many musical connections that have emerged from it.

“I am very proud to receive the award, the ‘German Jazz Prize – Lifetime Achievement’. Even though I may be approaching the final stage of my career, I sincerely hope that my husband Alexander and I will be able to continue our musical activities for as long as possible and to ‘Take the AA Train’ in good health.”

— Aki Takase, recipient of the German Jazz Prize for Lifetime Achievement

Live Acts of the Award Ceremony

Adeolu will take the stage with an ensemble that brings together international perspectives. The line-up includes Gugulethu Duma (vocals), Liz Kosack (keys), Keisuke Matsuno (guitar), Luca Curcio (bass), and bandleader Lukas Akintaya (drums), who is nominated in the Drums/Percussion category.

The collective **hilde**, nominated as Live Act of the Year, combines voice, strings and trombone to create a chamber music–influenced sound. Julia Brüssel (violin), Marie Daniels (voice), Maria Trautmann (trombone) and Emily Wittbrodt (cello, nominated in the Strings category) develop a musical language that closely interweaves composition and improvisation.

Singer and composer **ganavya**, whose album *Nilam* is nominated in the International Album of the Year category, moves between jazz, spiritual traditions and global influences.

With the **Moses Yoofee Trio**, nominated for Debut Album of the Year, a young formation is represented that reflects current developments in European jazz. The trio, consisting of Moses Yoofee Vester (piano), Noah Fürbringer (drums) and Roman Klobe (bass, nominated in the Strings category), represents a generation that deliberately keeps stylistic boundaries open.

Award Ceremony as part of jazzahead!

The German Jazz Prize ceremony will take place on 25 April 2026 at the Congress Centrum Bremen and is part of the 20th anniversary of jazzahead!. As an international meeting point for the jazz scene, the event brings together musicians, curators, journalists, funding institutions and industry professionals from Germany and abroad, creating a context in which current developments in jazz become visible.

The evening will be hosted by Thelma Buabeng and Götz Bühler. Tickets are available via the official ticket partner rausgegangen.de. The award

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ceremony will also be streamed live on bremenzwei.de as well as centrally on ARD Jazz as part of ARD Kultur.

Further information on the award ceremony can be found at www.deutscher-jazzpreis.de.

GERMAN JAZZ PRIZE

Since 2021, the German Jazz Prize has been honoring outstanding artistic achievements in the national and international jazz scenes. The main sponsor of the prize is Germany's Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media.

The sixth award ceremony will take place on April 25, 2026, at the Congress Centrum Bremen (CCB).

Please use **#Jazzpreis26** and **#DeutscherJazzpreis** on social media.

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All press releases, press photos and further information can be found in the press section of the German Jazz Prize website.

[Press page of the German Jazz Prize](#)

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Note: The German Jazz Prize of the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media has no organisational or content-related connection to the "Neuer Deutscher Jazzpreis" awarded by IG Jazz Rhein-Neckar e.V.

About Initiative Musik

Initiative Musik is the central funding institution of the Federal Government and the music industry for Germany's music sector. It strengthens the presentation and dissemination of music from Germany both nationally and internationally. The main sponsor is Germany's Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media, thereby making a key contribution to strengthening the music industry in Germany.

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