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Press release

Into the Unimoersum: moers festival presents this year's programme

Silence as the theme for 2025 - Highlights, country focuses, innovations, and special projects

Moers. The federally funded moers festival, one of Germany's most significant international festivals for jazz, avant-garde, and experimental music, has today unveiled the programme for its 54th edition, taking place from 6th to 9th June 2025. This year, the festival is centred around the theme of "Silence" and will feature both internationally renowned artists and new discoveries from the fields of jazz, improvisation, and avant-garde music. In addition to musical highlights, the festival will also offer various genre-crossing performances and creative projects, with artists from a wide range of fields including electronic music, early music, and contemporary music.

At a spectacular press conference, this year's programme was presented to the media from over 30 meters in height. "We want to adopt new listening and viewing perspectives, experience different forms of silence, and relearn how to sharpen our ears," summarises festival director Tim Isfort the idea behind the unique press conference. "Of course, this is just a preview of the upcoming festival, which will also focus on perception, new sounds, and experiments from the Moers sound lab," he reveals. "For this reason, not only did we, but also the journalists present, take a new perspective together with us from great heights. This was made possible by brave individuals who continue to support cultural sponsorship, even in times of cultural uncertainty. We are very pleased that Gerken Arbeitsbühnenvermietung is a new supporter of ours and has made this special shift in perspective possible. Thanks to Gerken, there will be even more opportunities to explore new perspectives at the festival." The design and stage set of the festival will also address the theme of silence. In response to social and musical developments, the festival's yearly changing tagline for 2025 will be "Jazz festival for music, togetherness, free spirit, and sound peace."

Musical Highlights

Several musical highlights have already been announced, including the exceptional and internationally acclaimed duo Vijay Iyer and Wadada Leo Smith, Koshiro Hino, Ellen Arkbro, Caspar Brötzmann, The Sleep of Reason Produces Monsters, Will Northlich aka Blipvert, and Hayden Chisholm's *Kinetic Chain*. Other acts such as Holy Scum, Kalia Vandever, Nduduzo & Omagugu Makhathini, Maya Dunietz, Led Bib, Spinifex Maxximus, Tan Shouxin, Willi Kellers The Circle, and Angelica Sanchez complete the line-up. The Bundesjazzorchester (Bujazzo) will also perform in Moers over Whitsun, presenting selected works from persecuted composers during the Nazi era.

As part of a new collaboration with the Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival (hcmf//), the UK's largest international festival for new and experimental music, special concerts will be presented in Moers over Whitsun. The three-year project is funded by GVL (the German collective society for performing artists and producers), PPL (Phonographic Performance Limited), and the Goethe-Institut London. Throughout the collaboration, each festival curates concerts during the festival of its respective partner. The concerts in Moers will expand the festival programme and enrich its musical diversity. Further details on these special concerts will be announced in the coming weeks.

Into the Unimoersum!

The concerts will take place on two main stages, but the entire programme extends across four additional stages, all located within the free-to-access festival market. In addition, numerous venues throughout the city centre of Moers—known as *moersify*—will also host events, including the Evangelical Church, Bollwerk 107, Die Röhre, the Barbara Buchhandlung (Bookstore), and Café Mondrian. During Whitsun, the entire city will transform into a vast festival grounds, inviting not only festival fans but also those who are undecided or curious to attend concerts. Not only are the concerts at the festival market free of charge, but all *moersify* concerts can also be attended without a festival ticket.

250 Artists from 20 Nations - Loud, Wild, Bold, Eccentric, and Silent

Another surprise awaits in the theme of the festival: Silence. A small word with profound meaning, around which the moers festival will revolve artistically, culturally, and socially. "For the 54th edition of the moers festival, we have chosen the extraordinary theme of Silence in these loud and crisis-ridden times. We have asked all the artists to engage with this theme and have also commissioned new works from selected composers. I am very proud of what has come out of this," says Isfort. "Around 250 artists from 20 nations will come to Moers over Whitsun and, as always, will make the area around the festival hall a very special place, with loud, wild, bold, eccentric performances, but also silent and quiet moments that balance experiment, musical daring, and improvisation." The commissioned compositions were given to composer and sound designer Will Northlich-Redmond, Japanese multi-instrumentalist Koshiro Hino, and Israeli musician and sound artist Maya Dunietz.

The Beginning: A Musical Boundary-Pushing Experience from the 16th Century

The festival will kick off on Friday, June 6th, with a spectacular 8-hour concert by Multiple Voices. Terry Wey and Ulfried Staber will take on the vocal and mental challenge of performing Thomas Tallis' 40-voice *Spem in Alium* with just two voices. "The two musicians, who will present Thomas Tallis' work in a unique performance, will lead the audience through a sonic, vocal, and temporal wormhole over the course of eight hours, repeatedly thrusting us back into the 16th century," explains the festival director. "An extraordinary festival opening and an absolute boundary-pushing experience that should not be missed." At the same time, the first small focus on Chinese improvised music, Ying Yang Hexa Cosmos, will also begin on Friday.

Country Focus: China and Rwanda

In Chinese cultural history, various musical aesthetic concepts of silence have emerged since 1976, which are understood not so much as a counterpoint to noise but rather as the ambivalent balancing of a harmonious middle - silence takes centre stage in modern music. For this reason, the moers festival 2025 is turning its attention to China and its improvisation scene: The festival offers a small glimpse into the exciting and often hidden music scene of a country that unites tradition with rapid technological development. "In cities like Beijing and Shanghai, innovative sounds ranging from electronic music to free jazz and experimental sounds are emerging - despite censorship and control," says Isfort. But the counterpoint to silence, namely noise and drone music, can also be found among Chinese musicians, leading to exciting encounters. Among those performing in Moers are Mamer, Lao Dan & Li Daiguo, Zhu Wenbo & Zhao Cong, and Sun Yizhou. A total of ten artists from China will be guests at this year's festival, performing around 15 concerts. These artists will also collaborate with other festival acts - for example, Su dance110 will perform alongside Ende der Liebe, a special concert experience unique to the moers festival.

The "Africa" series continues, this time with a small but fascinating insight into the exciting music scene of Rwanda, adding the East African landlocked country to the list of country focuses. A highlight is *URWEREKA*, an extraordinary project that shapes Rwanda's art scene through four

unique artists: Bobo Elvis, Binghi, Manzi Mbaya, and Natacha "Miziguruka" Muziramakenga. Bobo Elvis, a virtuoso hip-hop and bone-breaking dancer, has gained international attention with projects like *Neptune Frost*. His movements are a transformative process that challenges the boundaries of space and time. Binghi, a master of physical expression, blends traditional and modern dance forms into a language that speaks beyond words. Manzi Mbaya, choreographer and dance teacher, merges past, present, and future into a kaleidoscopic dance in his works. Miziguruka blurs the lines between music and dance, leading us into a world where movements influence reality. Together, they transcend the boundaries of dance and music with *URWEREKA*, creating a new dimension of artistic experience. All of these artists will also perform in various configurations and concerts throughout the festival.

In keeping with the festival's tradition, the musicians from China and Rwanda are also invited to collaborate with other festival artists, develop new ideas together, improvise, and exchange musically. Special slots have been allocated on various stages for creative, spontaneous, and improvised encounters, which can be filled with free improvisation sessions.

Everything New, Everything the Same

In 2025, the festival grounds will be more concentrated and take place at a single location: The Festival Hall will once again be the heart of the event, and in the freely accessible festival village with a market (in front of the hall), visitors will find a variety of culinary, artistic, and musical offerings. In the adjacent camping area of the outdoor swimming pool, an open-air stage will be set up, along with the highly successful workshop meadow from previous years, "Where the Wild Children Live". Thanks to the spatial concentration of the festival grounds, there will be shorter distances, resulting in an improved overall experience for visitors.

The new ticketing model, introduced in February and already well received, enables more inclusive participation in the festival. Following the "Pay What You Want" principle, visitors can choose their ticket price from five fixed price categories. For €40, €80, €120, €160, or €300, the ticket grants access to four days of festival fun and camping (in the designated camping area at Solimare). Only the ticket for Silent Heroes (€300) offers additional benefits: guaranteed seating in the festival hall, a secret concert over Whitsun, backstage access with catering, and the annual festival t-shirt. A new concept for the popular camper and motorhome parking spots will also be announced in the coming weeks.

... and Much More

In addition to a festival village where everything happens side by side in equal measure, where the spirit of Hanns Dieter Hüsch lingers, where different perspectives are taken, and where wild "moers sound" fills multiple stages while silence constantly surrounds everyone, the audience and visitors will also encounter a 16-meter-high Kasper walking through the festival market with a giant fly swatter: In the musical survival battle "Der Kasper schlägt die Fliegen tot" (The Kasper Kills the Flies), brought to Moers by Snuff Puppets and Stefanie Oberhoff, a giant Kasper aims to put an end to the buzzing flies - a gigantic dance of death for resistance, diversity, and solidarity, which will be seen for the first time in North Rhine-Westphalia.

The discussions series will also continue, in which various speakers engage in conversations on societal, political, or musical topics. "Silence" is, of course, also a central theme in this year's discussions, and will be explored by experts from various fields.

Another exciting feature on the festival market is the fundraising campaign launched by moers festival in collaboration with the company Gerken: For just five euros, brave moon travelers can ride the giant Gerken stage up to 60 meters high, take a selfie, or enjoy the festival view and the city. The proceeds from the joint fundraising campaign "Mit Gerken bis zum Mond (und zurück)" (With Gerken to the Moon and Back) will be donated 100% to Klartext für Kinder e.V., an

organization working to combat child poverty in Moers and the surrounding area.

Each year, exceptional and creative compositions by children and young people surprise audiences in Moers. What started under the name "composer kids!" is now called "... plötzlich still im Unimoersum!?" (... suddenly silence in the Unimoersum!?). In line with the festival's theme of Silence, the participating children and young people are asked what silence means to them and how it can be expressed musically or artistically. Together with professional musicians, they will create a piece, which will then be presented to the festival audience on Sunday, June 8, 2025. The project is guided by Lukas Döhler and Leticia Carrera, who once performed as composer kids themselves; the conductor is Leh-Qiao Liao, founder and artistic director of the INprogRES Ensemble, a young new music group with whom he has performed at moers festival and the Cantiere Internazionale d'Arte Festival in Montepulciano.

The full program and more information can be found online at:

www.moers-festival.de/en/program/

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About the moers festival

The internationally renowned moers festival has taken place every Whitsun since 1972 and has been organised by Moers Kultur GmbH since 2005. Over the past five decades, the festival has repeatedly opened up and expanded from a pure new jazz festival; in 2025 it will bear the subtitle 'Jazzfestival für Musik / Miteinander / Freysinn und: Klangfriede!'. Other formats, institutions and series such as the moers sessions, the improviser in residence (since 2008), the discussions (since 2017), changing youth projects (since 2018) or hybrid formats (@the same time or the VR moersland, since 2021) expand the festival cosmos.