

Christian Lillinger

(Drummer, composer, performer, curator, producer, and founder of PLAIST)

CHRISTIAN LILLINGER

1984 Lübben, Germany. Lives and works in Berlin.

CHRISTIAN LILLINGER (*1984, Lübben/GERMANY) is a drummer, composer, curator, producer, and founder of PLAIST. His work expands the boundaries of contemporary improvised and composed music through complex rhythmic architectures and innovative ensemble concepts. His artistic practice is characterized by high structural density, dynamic precision, and a distinctive approach to sound, form, and collective interaction. Lillinger develops unique temporal and textural frameworks that blur the lines between composition and improvisation.

He studied at the Hochschule für Musik Carl Maria von Weber in Dresden (2000–2004) with Günter Baby Sommer and Michael Griener, and subsequently completed at the Hochschule für Musik und Theater “Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy” Leipzig, where he studied among others with Richie Beirach. Since 2003, he has been based in Berlin, where he has become a central figure in the European contemporary music scenes.

Lillinger is the initiator and co-founder of ensembles such as GRUND, Open Form for Society,

Stemeseder Lillinger, DELL LILLINGER WESTERGAARD and Amok Amor, and his label PLAIST has become an influential platform for experimental music and cross-disciplinary projects.

He has collaborated extensively with artists such as Christopher Dell, Jonas Westergaard, Elias Stemeseder, Peter Evans, and Petter Eldh. His work has been presented at major international festivals and venues all over the world.

AWARDS AND HONORS (selection):

2023 – Awarded the Instant Award in Improvised Music

2022 – Punkt.Vrt.Plastik awarded the German Jazz Prize 2022 in the category Band of the Year

2019 – Founder and creator of the studio project OPEN FORM FOR SOCIETY, awarded the Preis der Deutschen Schallplattenkritik (German Record Critics’ Award)

2017 – Awarded the SWR Jazzpreis

2000 – Winner of the International Improvisation Competition, Leipzig

TEACHNG:

Since 2025, Guest Professor of Drums and Ensemble at the University of Music Franz Liszt Weimar (DE).

Conducted workshops and masterclasses in:

McGill University Montreal, Canada

International Jazz Platform Lodz, Poland

creative_jazz_clinic_Velenje, Slovenia

SEO- BO Foundation Seoul, Korea

Sibelius-Akademie Helsinki, Finland

Hochschule für Musik Basel, Switzerland

Zürcher Hochschule der Künste ZHdK, Switzerland

ArtEZ Academy of Music | ArtEZ in Arnheim, Netherlands

HKB- Musik Bern, Switzerland

Rytmisk Musikkonservatorium Copenhagen, Denmark

Hochschule für Musik und Tanz Köln, Germany

Hochschule für Musik, Theater und Medien Hannover, Germany

Hochschule für Musik Saarbrücken, Germany

JIB Berlin, Germany

HMDK Staatliche Hochschule für Musik und Darstellende Kunst Stuttgart, Germany

Musikhochschule „Carl Maria von Weber“ Dresden, Germany

CONCERT AND RESIDENCIES (selection)

2025

Stemeseder—Lillinger: Antumbra, Ssumic Festival, Seoul, KR

Stemeseder—Lillinger: Antumbra, CAM Calouste Gulbenkian, Lisbon, PT

Stemeseder—Lillinger: Umbra, Bezau Beatz Festival, Bezau, AT

Die Anhörung (Part I) (Stemeseder—Lillinger with Lea von Witzingerode), Gallery Weekend, Berlin, DE

2024

Artist in Residence, Cologne Jazzweek, Cologne, DE

Artist in Residence, Unerhört Festival, Zurich, CH

Opening of the Month of Contemporary Music, Berlin, DE

Intersecting Encounters, Kühlhaus Berlin, DE

SDLW, Sprengel Museum, Hanover, DE

Stemeseder—Lillinger: Antumbra, A L'Arme Festival, Berlin, DE

Stemeseder—Lillinger: Antumbra, Moers Festival, Moers, DE

Solo concert, DOOM Festival, Tokyo, JP

Stemeseder—Lillinger: Umbra, Casa Universitaria del Libro UNAM, Mexico City, MX

2023

"Artist in Residence," Schwere Reiter, Munich, DE

Curator of the PLAIST 23 Festival, Munich, DE

Recipient of the Instant Award in Improvised Music 2023

Composition work (various projects)

Awarded the German Jazz Prize 2022 in the category Band of the Year for Punkt.Vrt.Plastik

Stemeseder—Lillinger: Penumbra, Seitwärts Avantgarde Festival, Hanover, DE

Stemeseder—Lillinger: Penumbra, Bezau Beatz Festival, Bezau, AT

World premiere of Axiom I by Dell Lillinger Westergaard feat. Klangforum Wien at the Wittener Tage für neue Kammermusik 2023

"Artist in Residence," Villa Waldberta, Munich, DE

Curator of the DLW Soirée, Salle Cortot, Paris, FR

"Artist in Residence," Schwere Reiter, Munich, DE

2022

DLW: Grammar II, Arc en rêve — Centre d'Architecture, Bordeaux, FR

DLW: Beats, Contrapunkt — New Art Music, St. Gallen, CH

2021

Performance at the Neue Nationalgalerie, Berlin, with Stefanovich Dell Lillinger Westergaard on the occasion of the Alexander Calder exhibition

SDLW, Philharmonie Cologne, DE

Performance of ChamberWorks by Daniel Libeskind at the AEDES Architecture Forum, Berlin, DE

DLW & Tamara Stefanovich: SDLW, Klangspuren Festival, Schwaz, AT

2020

DLW & Tamara Stefanovich: SDLW, Philharmonie, Cologne, DE

DLW: Grammar II, Haus am Waldsee, Berlin, DE

2019

Founded and realized the studio project Open Form for Society, awarded the Preis der Deutschen Schallplattenkritik (German Record Critics' Award)

World premiere of Open Form for Society at the Donaueschingen Festival for New Music and the Berliner Festspiele

2018

Founded his own label PLAIST, dedicated exclusively to avant-garde and contemporary music.

As of July 2022, PLAIST has released 11 productions, including Klavierstück VI by Karlheinz Stockhausen, Über die Linie by Wolfgang Rihm, Boulez Materialism by DBLW, and Beats (DLW).
Founded the ensemble Stefanovich Dell Lillinger Westergaard (SDLW).

As of March 2025, Christian Lillinger can be heard on approximately 125 recordings, including 28 under his own name.
(See discography for details.)

Ausgewählte Diskographie:

- „second reason“ by Christian Lillingers Grund (clean feed)
- GRUND by Christian Lillinger (Pirouet)
- “C O R” (PLAIST) by Christian Lillingers Grund (PLAIST)
- „Amok Amor“ by AMOK AMOR (boomslang)
- „grünen“ by GRÜNEN (clean feed)
- „Boulez Materialism“ by DBLW (PLAIST)
- „Open form for society“ by Christian Lillingers Open Form for Society (PLAIST)
- „Meinl Session“ by Christian Lillinger (PLAIST)
- Open form for society Live“ by Christian Lillinger (PLAIST)
- „Punkt.Vrt.Plastik“ by PUNKT.VRT.PLASTIK (intakt-records)
- „Zurich Concert LIVE“ by PUNKT.VRT.PLASTIK (intakt-records)
- „Grammar II“ by Dell-Lillinger-Westergaard (PLAIST)
- „Beats“ Dell-Lillinger-Westergaard (PLAIST)
- „Supermodern Vol. I & II“ by Dell-Lillinger-Westergaard feat. Bob Degen (HGBSBlue)
- „Monuments“ by Dell-Lillinger-Westergaard & Mat Maneri (ENW)
- Petter Eldh presents Koma Saxo (WeJazz)
- „Konus“ (PLAIST) by Christian Lillinger (PLAIST)
- „Blind“ by Jameszoo (Brainfeeder)
- „SDLW“ by Stefanovich-Dell-Lillinger-Westergaard (BASILLE MUSIQU)/ PLAIST)
- „Penumbra“ by Stemeseder Lillinger (PLAIST)
- „UMBRa“ by Stemeseder Lillinger + Peter Evans + Russell Hall + DoYeon Kim + Brandon Seabrook (intakt-records)
- „ANTUMBRA“ by Stemeseder Lillinger (PLAIST)
- Peter Eldh & Koma Saxo (we jazz)
- „Extended Beats“ by DELL LILLINGER WESTERGAARD (BASILLE MUSIQU) plus Klangforum Wien, Tamara Stefanovich, Martin Adámek, Johannes Brecht (BASILLE MUSIQU)
- Umbra II Stemeseder Lillinger feat. Peter Evans & Russell Hall (intakt-records)
- Umbra III by Stemeseder Lillinger feat. Craig Taborn (intakt-records)
- Penumbra II Stemeseder Lillinger (PLAIST)

International Festivals & Venues (Selection):

Donaueschinger Musiktage, North Sea Jazz, Jazzfest Berlin, Roulette New York, Saalfelden Jazzfestival, Stockholm Jazzfestival, Ljubljana Jazzfestival, Jazz em Agosto Lissabon, Jazzfestival Birmingham, Kopenhagen Jazzfestival, Jazzfestival Oslo, Festival Helsinki, Moldejazz, Neue Nationalgalerie Berlin, Arc en Rêve Bordeaux, Philharmonie Berlin, Elbphilharmonie Hamburg, Philharmonie Köln, Philharmonie Luxemburg, Unerhört Festival, Deutsches Jazzfest Frankfurt, Klangspuren Schwaz, Moers Festival, Paris Jazzfestival, Resonanz Raum Hamburg, Jazzbaltica, Caracas Jazzfest, Moldejazz, Jazzfest Vancouver, Oslo Jazzfest, Musikbiennale Zagreb, Alte Oper Frankfurt, Tage der Neuen Musik Braunschweig, Doek Festival Amsterdam, MusikTriennale Köln, u.v.a.

Performed in:

Burkina Faso, Nigeria, Egypt, Cameroon, South Africa, Japan, Korea, Venezuela, the United States (USA), Canada, England, Finland, the Czech Republic, France, Serbia, Poland, Estonia, Lithuania, Turkey, Austria, Switzerland, Spain, Hungary, Slovenia, Croatia, Romania, the Netherlands, Italy, Norway, Sweden, Moldova, Mexico, Denmark, Brazil, Chile, Argentina, Russia, Netherlands, Luxembourg, Israel, Belgium, Portugal, and the Philippines

Collaborations with:

Craig Taborn, Klangforum Wien, Ensemble Resonanz, Miroslav Vitous, John Tchicai, David Liebmann, Mat Maneri, Joe Lovano, Tim Lefebvre, Peter Evans, Joachim Kühn, Richie Beirach, Joe Sanders, György Kurtág jr., Tamara Stefanovich, Beat Furrer, Moritz von Oswald, Cory Smythe, Joe Sanders, Kurt Rosenwinkel, Wadada Leo Smith, Barre Phillips, Ralph Alessi, Alexander von Schlippenbach, Thomas Stanko, Louis Sclavis, Rolf Kühn, Peter Brötzmann, Bob Degen, Christof Lauer, Evan Parker, Ernst-Ludwig Petrowsky, William Parker, u.a.