

**Press Release, Cologne 28 June 2022**

**New Artistic Director at Stadtgarten Köln**

Reiner Michalke hands over to Kornelia Vossebein

An era comes to an end: Forty-four years after the foundation of the Initiative Kölner Jazz Haus (IKJH) and after 36 years as Head Curator of the concert programme at Stadtgarten Köln, the 'European Centre for Jazz and Contemporary Music', Reiner Michalke passes the baton to his successor Kornelia Vossebein, who will take over as Artistic Director of this internationally renowned venue as of 1 July 2022.

In 1978, Reiner Michalke, who studied economics and bass, co-founded the IKJH with other Cologne musicians. The aim was to create a venue at the Stadtgarten parklands for that creative Cologne jazz scene which had largely been neglected in the city's cultural life up to that point. After a five-year cultural and political struggle, the IKJH was allowed to build the Stadtgarten venue in 1983. Owing to the financial support of the state of North Rhine-Westphalia, the concert venue could open on 4 September 1986 with Reiner Michalke as its Artistic Director. Nowadays, approx. 400 concerts per annum are held on its three stages. In 2017, the Stadtgarten was upgraded to the status of 'European Centre for Jazz and Contemporary Music' by the State of NRW and the City of Cologne and has been receiving secure funding ever since.

Reiner Michalke has always been more than just a concert planner. From the beginning, it was vital for him to experiment with other presentation forms for contemporary music. This was clearly evident at the Jazz Haus Festivals since 1978 which brought out all the potential of the Cologne scene on stage. It was also clear with festivals such as 'Post This & Neo That' which he implemented together with Matthias von Welck at the Kölner Philharmonie (Cologne Philharmonic) between 1989 and 1996, or the Musiktriennale Köln with its jazz programme curated by Michalke in cooperation with the Kölner Philharmonie from 1993 to 2007. From 2006 to 2016, he was Artistic Director of the Moers Festival, and since 2018 he has been Artistic Director of the Monheim Triennale. Michalke was a founding member of both the 'Europe Jazz Network' and the 'Bundeskonferenz Jazz' which often drove the launch of important cultural policy initiatives. 'Applause', the venue programme prize of the federal government, the establishment of Off-Cologne (Verband Mittelständischer Kulturwirtschafts-Betriebe e.V.), Kulturnetz Köln and the Kölner Jazzkonferenz can all be traced back to his

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Das Europäische Zentrum für  
Jazz und Aktuelle Musik  
wird unterstützt durch:



Ministerium für  
Kultur und Wissenschaft  
des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen



**NICA** artist  
development

initiative. Michalke is also a member of the music advisory board of the Goethe-Institut.

"On 1 July 2022, Reiner Michalke will say goodbye as Artistic Director of the Stadtgarten Köln," says Ulla Oster, chairperson of the Board of IKJH. "Fearless, persistent, adventurous and visionary, he has opened doors for jazz and contemporary, improvised music. He has sought out, shown and paved the way for new possibilities, and he probably won't stop in the years to come. We are glad that with Kornelia Vossebein we have found the right successor for Reiner Michalke. With her competence, experience, passion and openness, she will continue to actively steer the Stadtgarten forward."

Kornelia Vossebein, who studied literature and linguistics, was Managing Director at the Bunker Ulmenwall in Bielefeld from 2001 onwards. Back then she already cooperated closely with Stadtgarten Köln as part of the 'Gemeinschaft unabhängiger Spielstätten' (Community of Independent Venues). In 2009, she became Managing Director at the venue Zeche Carl in Essen, before taking on the management of 'NICA artist development' in 2020, the excellence promotion programme of the state of NRW for jazz and contemporary music, which is organised and run by the Stadtgarten. Vossebein is a member of the steering group of the federal government's venue programme award 'Applaus' and spokesperson for the 'Bundeskonferenz Jazz'. As Artistic Director, Vossebein wants to strengthen the position and importance of curators in order to establish the Stadtgarten even more as one of the venues for unique music productions. An additional focus of her work will be to further intensify international networking activities at Stadtgarten Köln.

For further information please click [here](#)

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