

decoder

The **Decoder Ensemble**, founded in 2011 in Hamburg, sees itself as a “band” for contemporary music and is among the most innovative representatives of the international new music scene. The six-member formation, consisting of electronic and acoustic instruments, is characterized by a highly energetic, distinctive sound that stands out from the sound of traditional chamber music.

The six performers / instrumentalists / composers of the ensemble are not only specialists in contemporary music, but also possess a burning curiosity that drives them to constantly explore new forms of expression that transcend genre boundaries. With a seamless fusion of instrumental music, multimedia elements, staging, and physical performance, they create a new and captivating entity of performative art. At the heart of their creative process lies intense collaborations with other groundbreaking artists from a variety of fields.

The Ensemble performs regularly at German and International festivals. Recently Decoder has presented large scale-premieres at renowned venues such as the Festspielhaus Dresden-Hellerau and the Centre Pompidou Paris. Since 2017 Decoder is the Ensemble in Residence of the “Unterdeck” concert series at the Elbphilharmonie Hamburg. Two portrait CDs of Decoder have been released in collaboration with Deutschlandfunk, demonstrating the wide stylistic range of the ensemble’s work. From 2022-2024 Decoder is one of the featured Young Ensembles from the ULYSSES Network project.



members

Leopold Hurt	(e-)zither, conducting, composition
Andrej Koroliov	piano, keyboards, composition
Carola Schaal	clarinet
Sonja Lena Schmid	violoncello
Alexander Schubert	electronics, sound projection, composition
Jonathan Shapiro	drums, percussion

contact

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PAST PROJECTS (selection)

2012

Debut-Concert, Markthalle Hamburg / Club "Übel & Gefährlich", Hamburg / Festival "Hamburger Klangwerkstage", Kampnagel Hamburg / "E-Festival", Tunis (Tunisia) / Concert for the "Bach-Preis der Stadt Hamburg", Club Terrace Hill

2013

Festival "Klub Katarakt", Kampnagel Hamburg / Festival "What's Next", Brussels (BEL) / Festival "blurred edges", Opera stabile Hamburg / Festival "Klang", Copenhagen (DNK) / Festival "aDevantgarde" Munich / Berlin, Haus der Kulturen der Welt / „Reeperbahn-Festival“ Hamburg, Nocht-Speicher / Kampnagel Hamburg, Program „blind spot“ / Festival "Klangwerkstatt Berlin", Club Berghain, Program „blind spot“ / Festival "Greatest Hits" Hamburg

2014

Festival "Klub Katarakt", Kampnagel Hamburg / „Unerhörte Musik“, BKA Theater Berlin / „Unerhörtes Brandenburg“, Theater Brandenburg an der Havel / Musikfest der KGNM, Alte Feuerwache Köln / „Internationale Ferienkurse für Neue Musik“ Darmstadt / "Reverb" Festival, London (GB) / Frappant Hamburg, Program „into the wild“ / HfBK Hamburg, Program „Die gelehrigen Körper“

2015

Michael Maierhof: *EXIT G* (Music Theater, WP), Opera stabile Hamburg / Jagoda Szmytka: *LOST* (Music Theater, WP), Festival Warsaw Autumn (PL) / Festival „Klangwerkstatt Berlin“, Berghain / Festival „Greatest Hits“, Kampnagel Hamburg

2016

„Caravaggio – Decoder“, Resonanzraum Hamburg / Carreau du Temple, Paris (F) / Festival „Big Bang“, Kampnagel Hamburg / Concert for the re-opening of the Kunsthalle Hamburg / Bach-Preis City of Hamburg, Opera stabile Hamburg / Portrait Concert Alexander Schubert, Kampnagel

2017

Festival „Schönes Wochenende“, Düsseldorf / Festival „Big Bang“, Kampnagel Hamburg / Festival Blurred Edges Hamburg / Festival „Big Data Weekend“ Hamburg / Composer's Forum Mittersil (A) / Festival Warsaw Autumn (P) / Elbphilharmonie Hamburg



2018

Elbphilharmonie Hamburg / Festival Pyramidale Berlin / Bayerische Akademie der Schönen Künste München / „Kammer Musik Neu“, Dresden-Hellerau / Resonanzraum Hamburg („Never Sleeps“) / Festival Musica Strasbourg (F) / Festival Ultima, Oslo (NOR) / Klang Festival Kopenhagen (DNK) / Kunstfestspiele Herrenhausen / Festival Blurred Edges / Festival Spor Aarhus (DNK)

2019

Elbphilharmonie Hamburg with Sarah Nemtsov “Light by Light” and Seidl-Kötter “Schnittmuster”/ Trugschluss / aDevantgarde Festival / Blurred Edges Festival Hamburg / SinusTon Festival / soundsofmusic Festival Groningen (NL)

2020

Elbphilharmonie Hamburg with Michal Beil “Nothing is Real” and Popebama “Fight Songs”/ Ponte Kammermusikfestival Ulm

2021

Elbphilharmonie Hamburg 10th Anniversary Decoder / Kultursommer Hamburg / Klangzeit Münster / Trond Reinholdtsen’s “The Followers of Ø”, Dresden-Hellerau / Sarah Nemtsov’s “Roses for my Funeral”, Deutschlandfunk, Forum Neue Musik

2022

Alexander Schubert’s “Anima” at Centre Pompidou (FR) and Kampnagel / Sarah Nemtsov’s “Roses for my Funeral” at Les Amplitudes (CH) / Heinrich Horwitz’ “Dreams” at Musik Installation Nürnberg / Andrej Koroliov’s “Unzeitiger Gast at Resonanzraum Hamburg

2023

Leopold Hurt’s Dissociated Press at Elbphilharmonie Hamburg and Ultraschall Festival / Alexander Schubert’s “Anima” at PACT Zollverein / impuls Akademie Graz (AU) / 51st PAN Music Festival Seoul (KR) / Laura Bowler’s “Advert” Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival (GB) / NuMu Baden (CH)

Music Theater and Performance:

Michael Maierhof: *EXIT G*, Opera stabile Hamburg 2015

Jagoda Szmytka: *LOST*, Warsaw Autumn Festival (PL) 2015

Brigitta Muntendorf: *#AsPresentAsPossible*, Elbphilharmonie Hamburg, Festival „Kammer Musik Neu“ Dresden-Hellerau 2017/18

Simon Steen-Andersen: *The Way Sounds Go* Elbphilharmonie Hamburg, Spor Festival, Aarhus (DNK), Kunstfestspiele Herrenhausen 2018

Alexander Schubert: *Control* Ultima Oslo Contemporary Music Festival 2018

Entities – with Heinrich Horwitz (Stage Direction, Choreography, Performance) Elbphilharmonie Hamburg 2018

Fight Songs – with Erin Rogers & Dennis Sullivan („Popebama“ New York) Elbphilharmonie Hamburg 2020

Alexander Schubert: *GENESIS* Elbphilharmonie Hamburg 2020

Trond Reinholdtsen: *The Followers of ø* (mit The Norwegian Opra) Festspielhaus Dresden-Hellerau 2021

Alexander Schubert: *ANIMA™* Centre Pompidou (Paris), IRCAM, Kampnagel Hamburg, PACT (Zeche Zollverein Essen) 2022/23

Laura Bowler: *Advert* Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival, 2023



BIOGRAPHIES

Leopold Hurt

(E-)Zither, Conducting, Composition



Leopold Hurt (born 1979 in Regensburg/Germany) studied composition with Manfred Stahnke at the Academy of Music Hamburg and zither / historical performance practice at the Richard-Strauss-Conservatory Munich.

His oeuvre ranges from instrumental to vocal music with a particular focus on works featuring the zither and/or electronics. As an instrumentalist, he has appeared with such orchestras as the German Broadcasting Corporation, the Orchestra di Roma and the Hamburg Philharmonic.

Leopold Hurt has received several awards for his compositions, including the “Stuttgart Composition Prize” and the “Bach Prize Scholarship” of the City of Hamburg. As a cultural ambassador of Bavaria, he lived in 2003/04 at the “Cité Internationale des Arts” in Paris and during 2009/10 at the International House of Arts “Villa Concordia” Bamberg. In 2014 a portrait CD with his works was published by WERGO / Contemporary Music Series.

Andrej Koroliov

Piano, Keyboards, Composition



Andrej Koroliov was born in Hamburg in 1982. He studied piano, composition, and music theory at the Hochschule für Musik und Theater Hamburg under Prof. Marian Migdal, Peter Michael Hamel, and Dr. Manfred Stahnke. His works have been performed by renowned musicians and performers at festivals such as the Klang Festival in Copenhagen, Warsaw Autumn, IGNM Bern, the International Summer Courses for New Music in Darmstadt, the Deutsche Oper Berlin, and at the Elbphilharmonie in Hamburg.

Since 2011, he has been a founding member of the Decoder Ensemble, which has become one of the most innovative and stylistically influential ensembles in the experimental music scene. He has been honored with scholarships and awards, including the Bach Förderpreis from the City of Hamburg and the Kompositionspreis from the Bavarian Academy of Fine Arts. In 2020, he received the artistic residency from the German government at the Villa Massimo in Rome.

Carola Schaal

Clarinets



The clarinetist and performer Carola Schaal was born in Tübingen. She studied in Darmstadt, Düsseldorf, and Hamburg. In 2009, she completed her master's degree at the Hochschule für Musik und Theater Hamburg Hamburg. Since 2017, she has been furthering her education in the fields of performance and dance. Carola explores and develops her body through rock climbing and recently took up sewing. She lives without medication, with borderline personality disorder, and has overcome alcohol addiction.

Her current interests include waiting voluntarily as a political statement, street art, new music, societal traumas, music theater, performance art, immersive theater, film, and contemporary literature and poetry. She creates at the intersection of music, instrument, and body. Since 2018, she has had a close collaboration and friendship with choreographer, actor, and dramaturge Heinrich Horwitz, which is expressed in the continually evolving solo project 'Bonny Crude.'

Sonja Lena Schmid

Cello



Sonja Lena Schmid is internationally active as a cellist and performer and has received numerous awards. She studied cello and chamber music in Hamburg, Lübeck, Amsterdam, and The Hague.

As a member of the Decoder Ensemble, she performs at major festivals for contemporary music and realizes international productions, including in the field of music theater. Sonja Lena Schmid is passionate about interdisciplinary work, such as in the formats 'Rauschen' and 'Concerts at Threatened Locations,' which she co-founded with Anne von Twardowski and the Hamburg Monument Preservation Society.

Since 2019, she has held a professorship for ensemble and digital performance at the State University of Music Trossingen's Center for Music Design Performance. In her role as artistic director, she has overseen projects such as 'Hohenkarpfen XXI,' 'Museum for a Future Past' with the Ensemble Recherche, and the D-Bü Competition 2022.

Alexander Schubert

Sound, Light, Electronics, Composition



Alexander Schubert (1979) studied bioinformatics, multimedia composition. He's a professor at the Musikhochschule Hamburg.

Schubert's interest explores the border between the acoustic and electronic world. In music composition, immersive installation and staged pieces he examines the interplay between the digital and the analogue. He creates pieces that realize test settings or interaction spaces that question modes of perception and representation. Continuing topics in this field are authenticity and virtuality. The influence and framing of digital media on aesthetic views and communication is researched in a post-digital perspective. Recent research topics in his works were virtual reality, artificial intelligence and online-mediated artworks.

Schubert is a founding member of ensembles such as "Decoder". His works have been performed more than 900 times in the last few years by numerous ensembles in over 40 countries.

Jonathan Shapiro

Drums, Percussion



Dr. Jonathan Shapiro is a percussionist, performer and composer based in northern Germany. He is the percussionist for the Decoder Ensemble and RADAR ensemble. As a percussionist, he frequently performs as a guest with such ensembles as MusikFabrik, Ensemble Resonanz, Zafraan Ensemble, and Ensemble Garage.

As a Performer he has worked with directors and choreographers such as Heinrich Horwitz, Bob McGrath, Stephanie Thiersch, Patricia Carolin Mai and taken part in productions at the Ruhrtriennale, Tanz im August, Theater der Welt, Hellerau European Center for the Arts, and Centre Pompidou.

Jonathan holds degrees from the Interlochen Arts Academy (HS), Manhattan School of Music (BM), SUNY Stony Brook (MM, DMA) and the Musikhochschule Lübeck (Advanced Studies). Jonathan is an endorser for Black Swamp Percussion, Vic Firth Sticks, Mike Balter Mallets, and Zildjian Cymbals.