

# 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.

## Mitglieder

Leopold Hurt	(E-)Zither, Conducting, Composition
Andrej Koroliov	Piano, Keyboard, Composition
Sonja Lena Schmid	Violoncello
Alexander Schubert	Elektronics, Sound Direction, Composition
Jonathan Shapiro	Drums, Percussion



## Decoder Ensemble GbR

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## **AGENDA (highlights since 2018)**

### **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)

### **2024**

„Substitutes“ Elbphilharmonie Hamburg / Laura Bowler „Advert“: New Music Dublin (IR), Time of Music Viitasaari (FI) Ultima Oslo (NW) / Porträt Alexander Schubert, Festival Mixtur Barcelona (SP)

### **2025**

Project „Future Recognition“, Elbphilharmonie Hamburg / „Eternal Dawn“, Musica Strasbourg & Kampnagel Hamburg



## BIOGRAPHIEN

### Leopold Hurt

(E-)Zither, Conduction, Composition



Leopold Hurt studied composition in Hamburg and zither / historical performance practice in Munich.

His oeuvre ranges the whole spectrum of instrumental, vocal music, and electro-acoustic music with many works including a special focus on the Zither. As soloist, he has been featured with 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 "Cit  Internationale des Arts" in Paris and during 2009/10 at the International House of Arts "Villa Concordia" Bamberg. A portrait CD with his works was published by WERGO / Edition Contemporary Music series. Hurt teaches instrumentation and ensemble performance at the Academy for Music and Theater in Hamburg.

### Andrej Koroliov

Piano, Keyboards, Composition



Andrej Koroliov was born in Hamburg in 1982. He studied piano, composition, and music theory at the Hochschule f r 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 F rderpreis 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.

### Sonja Lena Schmid

Violoncello



Sonja Lena Schmid is internationally active as a cellist and performer and has received numerous awards. She studied cello and chamber music in Hamburg, L beck, 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-B  Competition 2022.

## Alexander Schubert

Sound Direction, 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 and founding member of the Decoder Ensemble. As a percussionist, he frequently performs as a guest with such ensembles as the Meitar Ensemble, 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.