

Jo Junghanss: Bio (English)

The press described the music of jazz pianist and composer Jo Junghanss as “powerful, innovative and expressive with explosive tension.” Jo premiered his compositions on stages like Weill Recital Hall, Carnegie Hall or at Birdland Jazzclub NYC. He performed on international stages such as the the Kennedy Center or Jazz at Lincoln Center in the U.S. In Europe he has performed at international Jazzfestivals and stages such as Schloss Elmau and collaborated with orchestras such as the Munich radio orchestra.

Winner of the international “Generations” jazz competition in Switzerland, Jo recorded as sideman and bandleader with multiple ensembles and shared the stage with jazz greats such as John Riley, Dick Oatts or John Patitucci. Jazz piano legend Richie Beirach called his album *Eight pieces for piano trio* „a great collection of his original and unique pieces“.

Brought up within the canon of European classical music in Germany, he discovered an early calling as improviser and jazz musician, initially self-taught. Jo later followed professional training as jazz pianist under the guidance of Leonid Czizhik and as *Meisterschüler* of Richie Beirach. He holds a bachelor’s degree as a double-major in classical and jazz performance and graduated with honors from the Musikhochschule Leipzig, Germany.

As Fulbright grantee Jo relocated to New York City where he was active as performer and educator and deepened his musical language across styles. Jo studied jazz composition with Jim McNeely as well as classical composition with Marc Stambaugh and Nils Vigeland. He studied jazz piano and improvisation with Kenny Barron, Jason Moran, Dave Liebman, Phil Markowitz and Garry Dial. He earned both a Doctor of Musical Arts and a Master’s degree from Manhattan School of Music in New York.

As a composer, Jo has written for both classical and jazz musicians and among his works are pieces for electronics and fixed media, film scores, as well as big and small band works. His commissioned works include *Negative Space Imaginations*, written for jazz legend Dave Liebman. Later works include *Five Notes - Five Elements*, a tone poem for symphony orchestra, big band and percussion, which was premiered by more than 90 musicians at the Manhattan School of Music.

With a passion for social activism and a strong belief in the power of music to transform lives, Jo launched the social entrepreneurship project „Music Works,“ in 2010 in West Africa. Focused on teaching improvisation to high school students in a rural community in Ghana, Jo regularly traveled to Africa. “Music Works” was selected by the Davis Foundation as a “Davis Project for Peace” and has received additional funding from the Goethe Institut, the German Foreign Service and private donors.

With an interest in the intersection of arts and business management, Jo joined the Berlin office of the Boston Consulting Group in 2012. As a consultant he worked on business strategy, finance, change management and organization. As a member of the firm’s arts and culture core team he advised major cultural institutions. In 2017 Jo was appointed director at Conservatorium Maastricht in the Netherlands, where he currently serves.