

## **NDR BIGBAND**

### **The band of soloists**

The NDR Bigband has existed as a jazz orchestra for more than 40 years. Created from the roots of an ensemble purely for radio, it has developed since the 1970s into a band which not only has an extensive jazz repertoire, but also sets its own trends, extends genre boundaries, performs with world stars and brings these to concerts in all corners of North Germany.

The NDR Bigband lives on its strong personalities with a distinctive biography, their own strengths, likes and dislikes. Each individual musician is a master of his field – and no two are the same. But there is one thing on which they all agree: what counts is the sound, the groove, the melody – the music. For them, the band burns with body and soul – and that can be felt whenever it is on stage.

As a public law radio ensemble, the work of the NDR Bigband moves between various priorities: it is important, on the one hand, to nurture the musical legacy from one hundred years of the history of jazz and, on the other hand, to keep its finger on the pulse, as far as musical developments are concerned.

Regardless of whether concentrated wind power or gentle sounds are in demand, fiddly Latin-American rhythms or stamping beats. There is hardly a style, hardly a crossover interface, which the band has not already explored and made its own – quite apart from the programmes that are composed specifically for the band time and time again.

Since autumn 2016, it has a new principal conductor in the person of the Norwegian saxophonist, composer and band leader Geir Lysne. He stands for an unequivocal drive for musical further development and has, in equal measure, the energy to promote this with the highest standards and the ability to give the musicians – with his friendly and composed manner – the necessary space to shape this path as a joint process. Geir Lysne is following Jörg Achim Keller, who will continue to support the NDR Bigband as the principal guest conductor.

Numerous invitations to festivals and abroad and more than 60 record releases in recent years tell their own story. With an average of around 20 projects every year, the timing is tight and precise: on one day a rehearsal, on the next recordings for a CD production, then on a concert tour and subsequently on to the next programme with fresh ears.

Anyone who makes music at this level knows how important it is to get the next generation enthusiastic about jazz at an early age and to support them with their development. This is why, as well as family concerts being a fixed part of the repertoire, the NDR Bigband also develops its own programmes for children. Direct interaction with young musicians is also important to the band. So it visits school big bands throughout North Germany every year to perform a joint concert with them – as a guest in the school auditorium or sports hall. Furthermore, the NDR Bigband organises youth competitions and works together with the Jazz Department of the Hamburg School of Music and Theatre.