

## **Biography DIETER ILG**

Bassist Dieter Ilg is regarded today as one of a handful of European musicians who make their unmistakable musical style a valuable contribution to the projects they work on.

Whether it is as a internationally well-respected sideman or as band leader of his own ensembles: Ilg always combines the quality of the bass as a musical foundation with a graceful ease and expression that is rarely heard on a technically difficult instrument such as the double bass.

It is sometimes assumed that there are two kinds of bass players: those who "groove" and accompany (serving mainly as a rhythmic presence) or those who - freeing themselves of the serving role - strive to explore their artistic heights as a soloist (displaying their versatility as virtuoso improvisers). Unlike many Dieter Ilg combines the two ends of this spectrum.

**His versatile, individual, passionate and tasteful voice has become a valuable contribution to the international jazz arena.**

At the age of six Dieter Ilg – then an experienced recorder player (in kindergarten) - learned to play the violin and the viola before deciding to play the double bass at the age of thirteen.

After four years of lessons at the music school in his home town Offenburg Ilg went on searching for new teachers. He studied with Norbert Brenner ( solo double bass player of the *SWR Orchestra Baden-Baden*) and later on attended Jazz courses in Burghausen, Remscheid and Tübingen, working with a wide variety of instructors and professionals.

From 1981 until 1985 Ilg refined his practical skills as well as his theoretical knowledge with **Prof. Wolfgang Stert at the *Musikhochschule Freiburg***. Winning the Fulbright scholarship then enabled him to study at the *Manhattan School of Music* in New York City (1986/1987).

At this time he was already skilled enough to understand the art of musical structure as it was conveyed to him by such masters as **Eddie Gomez, Ron McClure, Rufus Reid, Adelhard Roidinger and Miroslav Vitous**. It was also then that he made his further experiences on the stage as a member of the Joe Viera Sextett (1981 - 1984) as well as with his first trio-project, co-founded with Klaus Ignatzek. Not before long he had built up a busy schedule performing with such players as Bobby Watson or **David Liebman**.

It was Liebman who significantly influenced Ilg's decision to stay on in New York for a while when he invited him to join the John Coltrane Memorial Concert in NYC in January 1987. The future began to look exciting.

Seizing the moment Ilg founded his first Trio with guitarist John Schröder and drummer Wolfgang Haffner shortly after returning from New York. He also became a **member of the Randy Brecker Quintet (1987-89)**. Suddenly things were on a roll and he was awarded with the **Baden-Württemberg Jazz Prize in 1988**. The press said:

**The brilliance and expression of his tone, the originality in the concept of his ensemble and his individual approach to harmony are fascinating.**

Regular performances with the **WDR Big Band** (recordings with Bob Brookmeyer, John Abercrombie, Danny Gottlieb, Charlie Mariano, Peter Erskine, Nguyen Le, Vince Mendoza and others), frequent tours in Europe (for example a tour of Spain with Bennie Wallace ) and a new line up to his own trio - this time including pianist Marc Copland - is what followed. These collaborations resulted in the production of three CD's featuring drummers Bill Stewart, Ralph Penland and Jeff Hirshfield.

The 90's were a time of musical friction as well as for making decisions.

Daily business on one hand went well:

Since 1991 Ilg had toured with Germany's renowned Jazz formation, the **Mangelsdorff/Dauner Quintet**. The Goethe Institute sent him round the world playing with Christof Lauer and the working relationship with Copland had resulted in evermore interesting facets of sound. Ilg ventured into worldmusic and jazz-rock with the French-Vietnamese guitarist **Nguyên Lê** and drummer **Danny Gottlieb**, also the list of performances as a sideman kept growing longer and longer.

The only thing missing was the kind of recognizable and characteristic project that comes straight from the heart.

In searching for music that represented his roots Ilg finally found what he had been looking for in his work on **Folk Songs (1997)**, **Fieldwork (1998)** and **LIVEILG (2001)**.

The idea was a simple and obvious one: where else - other than your own native country - would you discover your cultural origins?

Ilg began exploring and arranging old German folk songs with his musical companions **Wolfgang Muthspiel** on guitar, **Steve Argüelles** on drums and - to begin with - Benoit Delbecq on piano.

The project was a huge success and toured for four years - so much so that in the end even the musicians themselves nearly got bored with songs like *Im Märzen der Bauer* and *Winter Ade*.

At last the German press caught attention and Dieter Ilg was recognized in his home country as the instrumental master that he was ( **Star of the Year, 1998, Münchner Abendkurier** )

Still - even at this point labeled as a newcomer - he already brought new talent under way teaching at the *Musikhochschule Freiburg* (1995 - 1997, 2001ff).

It was European cuisine amongst other things and a woman that prevented him from locating in the USA permanently.

He developed a passion for culinary pleasures of a certain standard, which now has become a personal character trade. He gained a reputation as a chef and gourmet, his recommendations for restaurants were highly esteemed and a "dinner at Dieter Ilg's" achieved cult status.

When this became known to the magazine *Jazzthing* it offered him a regular column.

Remaining faithful to his home soil Ilg organized new projects as for example with **Charlie Mariano**. In 1998 he had already produced the album "**Savannah Samurai**" with the charismatic saxophonist - this was followed by a number of tours with Charlie's band. Out of this relationship grew their magnificent duo, which remained an impressive combination until the end (Charlie Mariano died in June 2009). "Wondrous music full of depth and poetry" (*Jazzdimensions*).

In 2001 Dieter Ilg founded his label *fullfat* which allowed him to release numerous albums independently - escaping the politics of major and minor companies.

Check out: [www.fullfat.de](http://www.fullfat.de). In the year of 2006 the men from Badia received **Reinhold Schneider Preis**, the cultural award of his residence city Freiburg.

Since 2006 up until 2011 "**Germany's Bass no1**" had been heard regularly with **Till Brönner's** live band. From 2008 the "art of minimalism" reached its high point: **the double bass solo album BASS (fullfat 07)** was received with great enthusiasm by press and audience alike. A limited vinyl edition was released in Sommer 2009 by SDS. In the same year variations on *Giuseppe Verdi's OTELLO* were recorded and released in March 2010: Dieter Ilg - *OTELLO (fullfat 09)*.

Following its release the album was promoted with a number of concerts and later taken all over Germany's most renowned music halls on a **JazzToday tour** with 16 concerts.

In 2010/2011 Dieter Ilg was part of star-baritone **Thomas Quasthoff's** jazz, blues and soul project. They recorded "Tell it like it is" for Deutsche

Grammophon. Another award came up: ECHO Jazz Winner 2011 as best bassist national for the recording of *OTELLO. 2011/2012* was a good year for the trio with invitations to wellknown festivals like Klavierfestspiele Ruhr, Ludwigsburger Schlossfestspiele or a tour in Indonesia for "german cultural export bureau", the renowned Goethe-Institut.

Since 2011 Dieter Ilg started also to work for ACT Music Rec. (9522-2) presenting "*OTELLO live at Schloss Elmau*". The bassplayers latest project is dedicated to Richard Wagners Bühnenweihfestspiel "**Parsifal**" having his trio playing concerts and tours all over Germany, Austria and Switzerland and recording an album for ACT Music Rec. (9544-2).

In 2013 **Till Brönner** and **Dieter Ilg** decided to explore a new duo constellation, festivals and tours are spread over the whole year of 2014 too. Another event is a quintet, formed by Till Brönner and classical trumpet star Sergei Nakariakov with concerts in 2013 and upcoming in 2015.

The renowned bassist also played concerts in 2013 and 2014 with finnish piano player Iiro Rantala and polish violinist Adam Baldych at Montmartre Jazzfestival in Copenhagen and the Jazzfestivals in Gdansk.

**WINNER of the EchoJazz 2014** as best bassist national for his recording of "**Parsifal**".

End of january 2015 Dieter Ilg started his new program with arrangements for his trio on music pieces from Ludwig van Beethoven with ACT-CD-release of "*Mein Beethoven*" (9582-2). After a successful premiere and release tour in february 2015 there were a bunch of festival concerts and tours to play in Germany, Switzerland, Austria, South Korea and Japan.

Beginning of november 2015 he was involved in Nils Landgren´s newest recording "*Some Other Time*" (ACT) with Janis Siegel, Jan Lundgren and Wolfgang Haffner plus members of Bochum Symphonic Orchestra playing the arrangements of Vince Mendoza. Concerts with Nils Landgren Allstars and premiere concert with members of the Berliner Philharmoniker did happen in january 2016.

**WINNER of the EchoJazz 2016** as best bassist national for his recording of **“Mein Beethoven”**.

Dieter Ilg stays on top of things.