# The Berlin Times

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DIE WELT

# EVER IN THE MAKING

## The people moving the city

Berlin Partner

# EDITORIAL

### Mockery and merit

"The more of a Berliner you become, the more you mock and complain about Berlin." The words of Theodor Fontane (not from Berlin, by the way), written in 1894. As true then as it is today, mockery and contempt are part of the city's DNA.

But isn't there enough to gripe at? The eternal airport-in-waiting, chaos at the refugee camps, the sorry state of Berlin's public schools and more of the same from the city streets.

Enough, already. Berlin is a work in progress. In this fourth edition of **The Berlin Times**, you'll read about the numerous things that do work in this city, written by people who praise the day they arrived here, as well as by the born-and-bred Berliners, who may actually have something to complain about.

It's easy to find fault with this city, but spare a moment to consider how far we've come. Berlin suffered more than any other German city from the effects of World War II. It was destroyed, divided, walled and became ground zero for the Cold War. All its big industries scurried off to West Germany.

Our city is now again on the rise, and many of those joining this resurgence cannot be found in newspaper headlines. So here are some of these silent heroes – from native Berliners to those fresh off the boat – who demonstrate how diverse and multicultural, how colorful and tolerant our city truly is.

**Detlef Prinz**
Publisher

# The place to be

*By Michael Müller*

I am a Berliner, since my birth in 1964. It's my city; my roots are here, a place where history lives all around us. When Berlin was still divided, I had the luck to grow up in its Western half, where anyone could become happy on his or her own accord, where one could live free, where democracy flourished.

Dreaming. Experimenting. Failing. Starting anew. Anything was possible in West Berlin, for the city itself was searching for its future. Berlin provided for any number of different lifestyles, which is why so many people were attracted to West Berlin, and now to unified Berlin. Diversity is what makes the city tick.

Even when the Wall fell and Berlin again seemed to be a "normal" city, it still didn't want to grow up. It was still dreaming and experimenting. And celebrating. Berlin grew to become a colorful city – Love Parade, Christopher Street Day, the Carnival of Cultures.

But the city managed to do more than just party. It found its future. Berlin is growing together. Berlin is hip and Berlin "starts up." The Founding Years are back. Berlin has since grown up and is now holding its own among large cities like Paris, London and New York.

In its center, where walls crumbled during and after the war, the city has reinvented itself with ambitious buildings for living and working alongside surviving historical structures and ruins. Much as changed. Every second Berliner was not born here. And it's as important as ever to offer people a good life in their old neighborhoods. The city is growing, but it must remain affordable, for without the famous Berliner mix, the city will lose its charm. We must remain a home for everyone.

DPA/CHRISTENSEN

*Mayor of Berlin: Michael Müller*

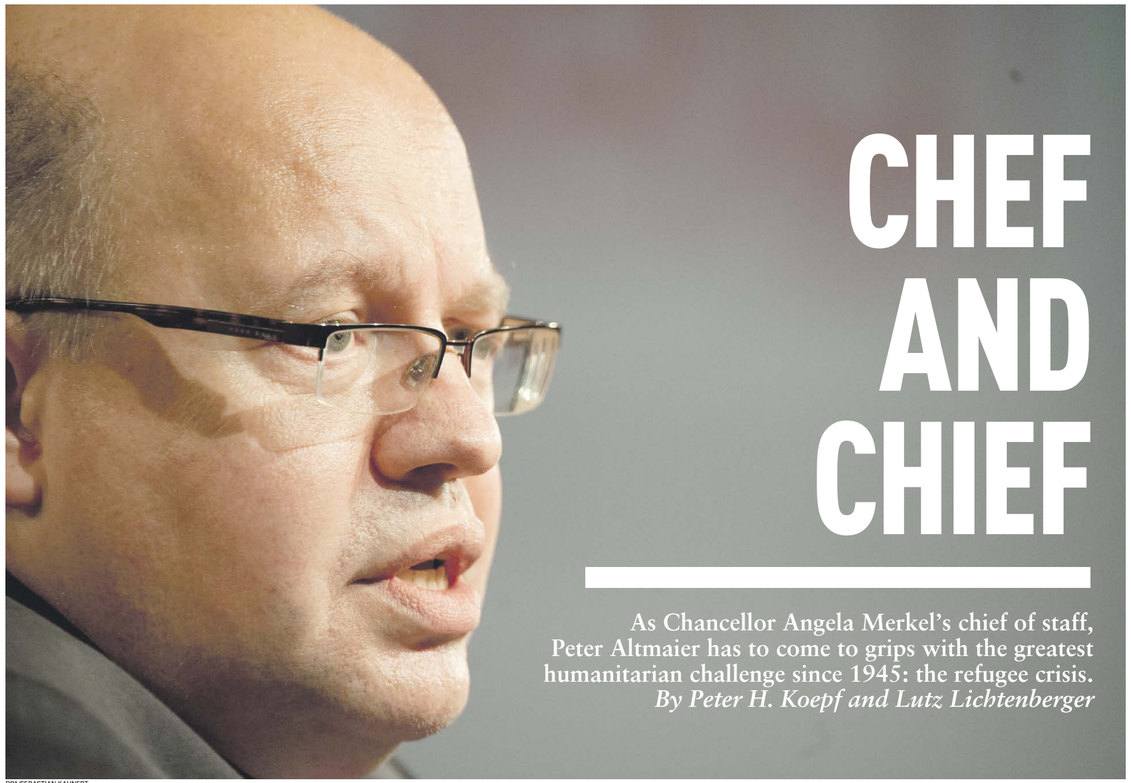
Young people with ideas – from London, Tel Aviv and Milan – come to Berlin to turn their ideas into companies. "Creative young Brits are quitting London for affordable Berlin," wrote *The Guardian* last year, with legitimate concern. "More and more burnt-out Londoners are embracing the laid-back cool – and much lower cost of living – of the German capital."

It's a boon that Paris, London and New York can still not compete with Berlin in terms of affordable housing, cheap living expenses and open spaces to create the new and the innovative. But people – visitors, new residents and native Berliners – love the city for its countless clubs and bars that have earned it global renown; for its depth of culture, both high and low; for its museums; and for its galleries, which match Paris in number: 350.

The magnetism of the city benefits all Berliners. Unemployment figures have been halved over the last ten years. The city is again investing in its infrastructure, above all as a location for science and technology. Tourism and the economy are booming. The famous "Berliner Luft" has a prettier scent than in 1990. And Berlin as a sporting metropolis has transfixed many Europeans.

Berlin is moving ahead; it's captured the imagination of people all over the world. For this reason Berlin is more than ever the place for experiments, commercial as much as cultural. The city is a place of longing. As it always has, today's Berlin lets its residents live their lives, but now their dreams are more than just longing, they're coming true. Anyone, no matter where they're from, can design their own lives in Berlin. The effect is that Berlin is constantly changing, but always remains true to itself. Even in Berlin, not everything works out on the first try, but if we've got anything, we've got perseverance. We don't quit, which is why Berlin is a city ever in the making.





DPA/SEBASTIAN KAHNERT

# CHEF AND CHIEF

**As Chancellor Angela Merkel's chief of staff, Peter Altmaier has to come to grips with the greatest humanitarian challenge since 1945: the refugee crisis.**
***By Peter H. Koepf and Lutz Lichtenberger***

Alongside his political career, Peter Altmaier is known as an avid bicycle rider, gardener and cook. As such, he expects the newly founded, anti-refugee party Alternative for Germany (AfD), which gained a big following in the wake of the migration crisis, to soon go sour among voters. As he has said in both interviews and public speeches, it will collapse "like a soufflé coming out of the oven into a draft."

As a chef and as chief of staff for Chancellor Angela Merkel – his official title is head of the federal chancellery and federal minister for special tasks, one of the most important cabinet posts in Germany – Altmaier knows that a soufflé works only when made from the right ingredients and eventually rises above its vessel's protective walls, exposing its true self. In terms of migration policy the AfD fails on both counts. The older, stability-minded parties have recipes for overcoming the problems in the long term while regaining voters in the process. Altmaier believes this, and his faith is rock-solid.

That's why the 57-year-old trained lawyer (specializing in European law) preaches day after day how proud he is of the "wave of helpfulness" that has overcome Germans, and that "we stand by our principles," despite rising protests and strong voter turnout for the populist party. "There is no shame in acting on the humanitarian imperative, as we have done," he says; Germany indeed has a "geostrategic responsibility." Had the refugees been left stranded in Greece, Hungary and Serbia, "old conflicts would have resurfaced." Stability is under threat across the region, he warns. With its pledge to help the refugees, the German government had one thing squarely in view: "Buying time."

Altmaier admits that the German government was too late in perceiving the dimensions of "the greatest humanitarian challenge since 1945," as so many people streamed into Europe and so many states sealed themselves off. The latter has disappointed this staunch European, who spent his political apprenticeship in the European Commission and in 1993 took charge of a commission on social security for Europe's migrant workers. His response to anyone working to dismantle the EU: "Nothing would be better without this Europe, and much would be worse."

> "Altmaier is at once Merkel's sword and shield."

Altmaier is a pragmatist. On stage at the Munich Security Conference in February, he repeatedly leaned over toward Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu to lavish praise upon his country. By taking in 2.5 million refugees from Syria, Turkey had acted in a manner that "demonstrates a commitment to humanitarian values beyond that of many European states," he said. The applause for Turkey – in light of the country's human rights violations, persecution of Kurds and restrictive press laws – provoked criticism.

Then the EU clinched a deal with Ankara: For every unregistered migrant it takes back from Greece, Turkey can allow one recognized refugee to enter the EU. That, he said, would put the people traffickers out of business. And, "for the refugees, Turkey is a secure country." That raised another outcry – this time not from the far right, which doesn't want any more refugees in Germany, but from the left. "Illegal mass deportations," they said, violate basic European values.

Altmaier is at once Merkel's sword and shield, especially on the refugee issue. Since Oct. 6 of last year he has been the government's point man for the "political coordination of all aspects of the current refugee situation." If he manages to fix this crisis from inside the government's engine room, he may be headed for even higher office.

Following Germany's federal elections in the fall of next year, the political sea change that began in the 1990s may reach its completion. That was when Altmaier and other young, center-leaning Christian Democrats established contact with the pragmatic wing of the Green party, a generally leftist grouping. At first it seemed nothing more than an informal gathering over dinner at an Italian restaurant in Bonn, then still the German capital. But conservative grandees promptly branded the gathering – with more than a touch of disapproval – the "Pizza Connection." Given the political climate of the time, it's hard to deny that the meeting had a subversive air.

Its influence only grew as time passed. The CDU and Greens entered a dialogue, overcame prejudices and discovered common ground. The Pizza Connection's young lawmakers from both sides of the aisle rose through the ranks, gained influential posts and began putting their stamp on their respective parties. The first successful CDU-Green coalitions were formed at the state level – an absolute novelty in German politics.

With the backing of Peter Altmaier, the Pizza Connection's top dog, who as environment minister in 2011 began overseeing Germany's exit from nuclear power – the Greens' original *raison d'être* – Chancellor Merkel has shifted her conservative Christian Democrats even further toward the center of Germany's political spectrum. It is an open secret in Berlin that a CDU-Green coalition could become reality in 2017. And, after the Merkel era, an ideal successor and leader for this new age would be waiting.

*Peter H. Koepf is editor-in-chief of The German Times and The Atlantic Times, Lutz Lichtenberger is a staff writer.*

# IT TAKES A CITY

Without the help of countless Berlin volunteers, the city would not have been able to shelter tens of thousands of refugees | *By Markus Bickel*

If he had known what awaited him in Germany, says Ahmed Badawi, he would never have come. Badawi, a Syrian, is sitting on a sofa in Tempelhof's Hangar 4 with his pregnant wife and four children. It took him an hour and a half this morning to accompany his two daughters to school. Because he arrived in Berlin last autumn, two months earlier than his family, he must continue living apart from them – far from Tempelhof in Berlin's eastern district of Marzahn. All his attempts to convince city administrators to house them together have thus far failed. "In Syria there were bombs and fighting, but at least I was with my family in one place," says the 39-year-old.

Badawi's story could stand for all the troubles facing the Berlin bureaucracy, which became a laughing-stock across Germany, particularly in the early months of last year's mass arrivals of refugees. Even as the government in Bavaria turned its rhetorical guns on Chancellor Angela Merkel and her open-border policy, aid organizations and the administration in southern Germany provided exemplary humanitarian care for tens of thousands of people. Munich became the capital of Merkel's culture of hospitality. The German capital, however, earned itself quite a different image, despite the efforts of thousands of volunteers. Administrative failures and inhumane conditions at the very doors of the responsible authority, the state office of health and social affairs (LaGeSo), led to weeks of public outrage, and finally to the replacement of its director, Franz Allert, in late 2015. Refugees waiting in line to see an official had been sleeping on the winter streets outside the LaGeSo offices. Clashes erupted between asylum-seekers and police. A November article in the *New York Times,* "Migrants Arriving in Germany Face a Chaotic Reception in Berlin," described mismanagement of the refugee crisis by Germany's grand coalition government. In early December the news site *Spiegel Online* called Berlin a "failed city."

Four months later things have calmed down – and not just because Berlin's daily flow of new asylum-seekers, which reached as high as 1,000 last autumn, had slowed to the comparative trickle of 50 per day. In the first three months of this year, around 12,000 refugees arrived in Berlin. In 2015 the total was 79,000 – 54,000 of whom remained. Berlin's city authorities, notoriously overworked, were far from prepared for the flood tide of people. Yet LaGeSo now has a new director, Sebastian Muschter, and along with him, more competence and new employees.

> "In the first three months of this year, around 12,000 refugees arrived in Berlin."

Berlin Social Affairs Senator Mario Czaja has also introduced emergency measures to ease the overwhelming workload. And a further office has been opened to reduce pressure on the central registration point in Moabit. Heated tents have been put up outside registries to make waiting more bearable. The distribution of allowances and other aid has been accelerated, and the introduction of electronic health cards has made it easier for refugees to go to a doctor or hospital.

Long-needed renovations to the hangars at the former Tempelhof Airport are now also going forward. Tradesmen are perched on high ladders installing lights while walls and sanitary facilities are being put in place. The blue mobile toilets at Berlin's biggest emergency accommodation may soon be a thing of the past. The tents of the early weeks of the flood of refugees have all but disappeared, and the wobbly portable construction-site offices are being replaced one after the next by more stable portable housing units. All this makes life a little less difficult for the approximately 1,500 people living here as of mid-April.

The biggest problem, however, is that it still takes far too long for people to be moved from their temporary accommodations, says Maria Kipp of Tamaja, the organization operating the Tempelhof shelter. While other states have been able to find more permanent places for refugees to live, Berlin still houses thousands at its reception camps. As families are given priority, single men end up paying the highest price, says Kipp. "Their long waiting times are a source of severe psychological pressure," she adds.

What is true of the rest of Berlin is also true of Tempelhof, Maria Kipp confirms: without the tremendous help from countless volunteers, it would never have been possible to compensate for some of the administration's failures and to offer refugees hope for the future. This becomes clear when walking across the spacious hangar. The bins of donated clothing are filled to the brim while noticeboards feature offers for German language lessons from the volunteer organization GermanNow.

*Markus Bickel was Middle East correspondent for the* Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung *from 2012 to 2015. He is now working as an author and journalist in Berlin.*

ZIMMER

*The writing is on the wall: The lines are blurred, but right in the middle is a "Thank you, Germany," at Tempelhof 's Hangar 4.*

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PICTURES: PARWEZ

*Together, for now: Ahmed Badawi and his family in Tempelhof.*

## Set them free

### The Child Friendly Space helps kids forget war

Adnan balances barefoot on the low beam; there are colorful mats underneath. "Come on, jump!" the friendly caregiver calls out to the four-year-old boy. Bravely, Adnan jumps head first through the red hoop the big man is holding up, does a somersault and comes to a stop at the edge of the mat. "Again!" Adnan shouts, delighted.

Running, jumping, making things, singing, painting – Adnan and his friends can do all that and more at the Child Friendly Space in Hangar 4 of the former Tempelhof Airport. There are board games, paints, picture books, a toy kitchen and a whole fleet of rideable toy cars – all provided by the Ikea Foundation and Save the Children. Save the Children has been organizing childcare services at Berlin's biggest refugee shelter since the end of 2015. The Child Friendly Space is a place to relax and feel at home for the most vulnerable of Berlin's newest members, who now find themselves thousands of miles from their countries of birth. It is open from 9 a.m. until late afternoon.

In this bright space, where some days more than 50 children play, German is the common language – not least to help kids learn the primary language of their new home, says Vicky Germain of Save the Children. Most of those here speak Farsi or Arabic, but Germain has witnessed many children develop "their very own way of communicating" beyond their various cultural backgrounds. It makes them feel proud, she says.

Strengthening the self-confidence of the children and helping them return to a sense of normality in their daily routines are the goals of both Save the Children and Tamaja, the organization operating the refugee shelter. These are small but important steps for children to come to terms with the loss of their old homes, friends and relatives, not to mention the hardships of the journey to get here. It is a balancing act that continues day after day. *MB*

## Our house

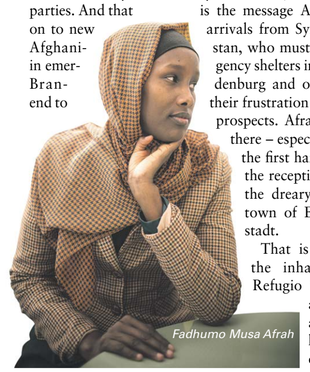
### Neukölln's Refugio Sharehouse is home to both Germans and new arrivals

Fadhumo Musa Afrah shakes her head emphatically. "No, we are not refugees," says the tall, 26-year-old Somali. "Just call us new arrivals."

The only thing that sets her apart from the Germans living around her, she says, is that she arrived in Berlin later. She adds that it does not do her justice, after living here for two years, to reduce her status to that of someone who up and left Somalia to seek her fortune in Europe.

Afrah means what she says. She is a trained social worker and regards herself as an ambassador of Refugio Sharehouse in the melting pot of Berlin's district of Neukölln. The house is financed by the city mission and has housed 20 Germans and 20 others on its five floors since last June. The café on the ground floor is open to people from outside, and every Friday groups invite refugees from other parts of town to come and dance.

A community of solidarity has arisen, benefitting all parties. And that is the message Afrah passes on to new arrivals from Syria, Iraq or Afghanistan, who must wait it out in emergency shelters in Berlin and Brandenburg and often see no end to their frustration and lack of prospects. Afrah has been there – especially during the first hard weeks in the reception camp in the dreary provincial town of Eisenhüttenstadt.



Fadhumo Musa Afrah

That is something the inhabitants of Refugio Sharehouse are keen to avoid. "We help each other so that each person can make progress with the abilities and talents he or she has," says Sven Lager, who, together with his wife, developed the idea for this house of many cultures while in South Africa. He lived there with his family, while working as a writer, until two years ago, when they were drawn back to Berlin. Sven Lager and his wife now live in the five-story house just a block away from busy Kottbusser Damm.

The secret of Refugio is to create a feeling of community both for refugees and locals – a principle that underpins its success. Sven Lager has received enquiries, even from outside Germany, for ways of spreading the Sharehouse concept. Lager, 51, says the reasons are obvious: "Barely a year after the refugee crisis began, we have reached a new level – we're after long-term integration, not just emergency aid." The Sharehouse is a blueprint for such progress.

Tackling the second phase in a meaningful way – especially after Germany has admitted hundreds of thousands of refugees over the last year – will require a new language and the ability to meet one another as equals, Sven Lager says, just as he and Afrah meet. At the end of the talk, the self-appointed ambassador of the Sharehouse hurries off to an appointment at the Bundestag. Lager also stresses that the many refugee support initiatives offering their services on the Sharehouse café noticeboard will have to coordinate better amongst themselves. "Otherwise, too many people will just burn out." *MB*

Sven Lager

# We need immigrants

With people come ideas

*By Klaus Engel*

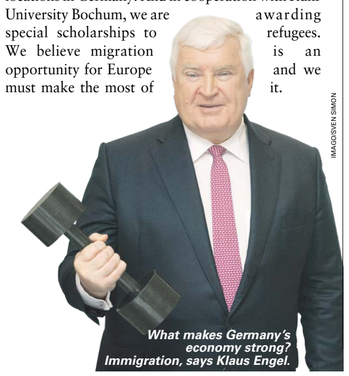
Now that the Balkan route has been closed to migrants and a deal has been struck with Turkey for the return of refugees, the number of new arrivals has fallen considerably. But that has given Europe little more than some much needed breathing room. The reasons for millions of people to leave their homes have not changed. Europe must use this breathing room to develop some effective concepts, both for allowing regulated immigration and for a fair distribution of refugees within Europe. Germany has a special role to play – just as it has in all Europe's crises in recent decades.

Germany has become the world's most desired destination for refugees seeking a new home; even the United States is less popular. Who would have thought that our country would step out from under the shadow of its past, successfully reunify and become the dream destination for many people all around the globe.

The primary factor leading many refugees to want to come here is Germany's promise of freedom. It is a great pity that even here, the tone of public debate has become sharper, and radical views are attracting great attention – and votes. Yet for Germany's export-oriented economy, it is clear that this country must not be allowed to abandon its international outlook.

There are solid arguments in favor of immigration. Due to its strong economic position and healthy finances, Germany is objectively a country that can bear the cost of immigration. At the same time, immigration is a worthwhile investment that, according to all experts, is certain to pay off in the future. Germany needs more workers, both skilled and unskilled. The economy benefits from more pluralism in society. It is variety alone that mobilizes our country's economic, creative and innovative potential, creating greater productivity and more innovation in the economy. After all, with people come ideas.

Our experience at Evonik has shown, in practice, that innovation can only develop optimally and turn out marketable products when every talent and differing view are included in interdisciplinary and intercultural teams. That is why Evonik has become actively engaged in the question of refugees and immigration. We are helping build and supply refugee camps in northern Iraq. We have set up a special fund of one million euros to provide immediate support for integration initiatives in and around our locations in Germany. And in cooperation with Ruhr University Bochum, we are awarding special scholarships to refugees. We believe migration is an opportunity for Europe and we must make the most of it.



IMAGO/SVEN SIMON

*What makes Germany's economy strong? Immigration, says Klaus Engel.*

# The value of values

Turning our backs on our humanist principles would be opting out of democracy | *By Sasha Marianna Salzmann*

When I came to Germany in the mid-1990s, my status was "contingent refugee." The conditions for my migration were hardly comparable with those under which people have fled to Europe in recent years to escape war and destruction. Yet my story remains an example of how seriously we must take participation. I had access to education, including a language course, and my path to self-realization was not obstructed by the question of whether or not I was of any direct benefit to Germany.

If I had been denied this access, I would very likely not be writing plays now, nor would the Goethe Institute be sending me around the world as a German artist. I would probably be selling drugs in Berlin parks. And then I'd be accused of criminal activity and deported back to Russia, where I'd be sent to prison or a labor camp – as a Jew, a lesbian, a political activist.

When you deny people the right to education, culture and work, you cannot claim they enjoy humane conditions. Nor can you talk of integration or emancipation. Why is there now a different rule for those who wait at the borders of Europe, or

> "You cannot calculate asylum."

of Germany, in reception camps, or in my shared apartment in Kreuzberg, for decisions that will determine the course of their lives?

The question of whether or how refugees benefit a country is wholly separate from the right to asylum. One cannot calculate asylum – not even from a standpoint of historical responsibility. Yet in the case of European Jews, the Holocaust has often been invoked as grounds for asylum. But what of the historical responsibility towards the Roma? Last year's changes to the asylum laws and the notion of "safe countries of origin" mean that these people no longer qualify for asylum.

The right to asylum is an individual human right. If we defend the democratic values we think are inseparable from the German identity, then we must ask: How do we benefit the refugees? In what way can we be of use to them? How can we help them evolve in relative safety, with access to education, work, accommodation and healthcare?

Working to help those who have fled their homes is working for the society of which we are all part. There would be no society without those who have fled. There can be no return to nation-states based on blood and soil. One cannot put a price on empathy. Respect is a fundamental premise wherever there is democracy. Turning our backs on our humanist principles would be opting out of democracy. For Jews like me – although I hope this is true for everyone – the mere idea awakens alarming memories.

*Playwright and dramatist Sasha Marianna Salzmann is writer-in-residence at the Maxim Gorki Theater in Berlin.*

ESRA ROTHOFF

*Sasha Marianna Salzmann was born in Moscow. In 1995 her family emigrated to Germany.*



# CUTTING IN

The Carnival of Cultures is the epitome of Berlin's multicultural tolerance. Francesco Campitelli and his tarantella group are there every year to perform southern Italy's wildest dance | *By Klaus Grimberg*

The tarantula is one of the world's most remarkable spiders. German even has a saying for when a person suddenly jumps up and waves their arms and legs – they say he is "stung by a tarantula." Nobody seems to worry much that tarantulas actually bite instead of sting. But no one doubts that a tarantula bite can be very painful.

The creatures originate from southern Italy, as does Francesco Campitelli. The spider with the powerful bite has become a feature of his life – even in Berlin, where he has lived since the mid-1980s. The tarantula is believed to have given rise to the tarantella – a fast, impulsive folk dance from Italy's south. According to popular legend, the wild movements set to racing music are meant to help victims of the supposedly poisonous spider bite rid their bodies of the venom.

> "In order to survive, every local culture has to interact with the external world."

"As kids we were fascinated when people in the villages got together with their accordions and bagpipes to dance the tarantella," he remembers. For a long time, the tarantella was shunned as a barbaric peasant dance. But Francesco never forgot the fast rhythm and anarchic freedom of its twists and turns. At some stage he started offering tarantella courses in Berlin. And once a year he shows off his cultural origins to the whole city – at the Carnival of Cultures.

"There are a lot of people like me in Berlin – we've been living here for decades, but we have our roots in a different culture," says Francesco, who is now 57. The grand pageant of the Carnival of Cultures gives all these people the opportunity to parade themselves as a part of the multicultural metropolis.

"It has nothing to do with folklore," says Francesco emphatically. It's about an attitude towards life. When many cultural movements coexist in a city, parallel and contrasting impulses can meld into something surprising and unique.

Francesco has joined in the carnival nearly every year since 2002. Each time he gathers together people who love the tarantella as much as he does. But for Francesco and his fellow dancers, it is about more than "just" the dance and the music. When designing its float for the parade, the group incorporates the carnival's motto for that year, each time forging renewed links to the people and traditions of southern Italy.

They were particularly successful with their 2011 float. With the title "Tanz auf dem Vulkan!" (Dance on the Volcano!), its theme was the mountains of garbage in southern Italy that the Mafia was "disposing of" with complete disregard to the environment or the local population. The group danced in protest, ridding themselves of tarantula poison as well as the shackles of society while goading the crowds to join in on the spectacle. The carnival jury was euphoric – praising the imagination put into the float, the cultural references to Italy and the dancers' lusty performance – and awarded the tarantella group first prize.

"Isolation kills cultures" is this year's motto. "As the world has grown increasingly global, it is far more difficult to define culture as a local phenomenon. In order to survive, every local culture must interact with the larger, external world. More than ever before, culture is now a matter of encounter and exchange," Francesco explains in his plan for this year's float.

The people in southern Italy are ahead of those in other regions, says Francesco. Refugee boats have been arriving there since the mid-1990s. "The awareness that their world was no longer isolated, but indeed had cultural appeal for people fleeing impossible conditions, stirred a recollection and rediscovery of their own cultural roots," says Francesco. This also helps to explain how the old "tarantella culture" began to enjoy huge renewed popularity.

The dancers on this year's float will wear warnings like those found on packs of cigarettes – "Isolation kills," "Isolation switches off your brain," and "Isolation can harm your children." But how can you fight isolation better than to dance the tarantella? It is all about forming a circle, breaking out of it, then finding your way back to it at the end – community and individuality. The tarantella is like the opposite of a waltz or a cha-cha-cha, which is precisely why it works so well in Berlin.

Francesco and his team will build their float on the weekends leading up to the big parade, which takes place on Pentacost, May 15. They are making a big papier-mâché tree, with a crown that looks like it is made of many different hands. The hands are stronger than the barbed wire, which envelops and holds captive the symbols of understanding, culture and religion depicted on the truck. And the tarantella dancers will do all they can on the streets of Kreuzberg to break through these wires of isolation and intolerance.

Hundreds of thousands of people between Hermannplatz, Südstern and Mehringdamm will be cheering on groups of Berliners with roots all around the globe, representatives of a dazzling, open-minded metropolis. This is the moment Francesco looks forward to every year. The hard work and preparations are forgotten in an instant. "It is an indescribable feeling to be out in the street in front of so many people," he says. "The energy flows directly from the dancers to the audience and back again." The five or six hours go by in a whirl, as if you'd been stung by a tarantula.

PARVEZ

*Francesco Campitelli*

*Klaus Grimberg is a freelance writer based in Berlin.*

DPA/RAINER JENSEN

*Berlin's Carnival of Cultures parade comprises 82 dance groups with over 5,300 participants.*

# NEW KIDS ON THE BLOCK

Ten years ago Rütli School was a symbol of failed immigration. What has changed? | *Von Anna Klöpper*

*Higher learning: Osman Tekin and his students.*

PICTURES: PARWEZ

A few months ago at the youth club opposite the school, they were thinking about putting on a play. The school itself is infamous across Germany. People are still talking about it. The play addresses gentrification, displacement and the skyrocketing rents in a Berlin neighborhood that just ten years ago housed only those who could afford nothing better. At a rehearsal for the play, one of the school pupils said to the youth club supervisor Osman Tekin, "You're one of those students." It should be noted that "student" is not exactly a compliment among the Turkish and Arab youth of this Berlin neighborhood.

Tekin is 30 years old. He was born in Lebanon, grew up right here on Weserstraße and went on to study social work. In his eyes the biggest problem is "this categorizing, this pigeonholing – it creates borders, it divides."

Most of those living in the neighborhood are immigrants or the children of immigrants; few have jobs. But at the same time, hipster cafés and boutiques selling handmade, organic cotton children's wear are starting to line up along Weserstraße, down Reuterstraße and to encroach on the tanning salons and betting parlors of Kottbusser Damm. Tourists here are looking for the rundown Berlin promised in their guidebooks. Young middle-class families occupy the playgrounds; students have been living here for quite some time.

In fact, a territorial war is being fought here in the north of Neukölln. It is about no less a matter than to whom the neighborhood now belongs. Osman Tekin, with his dark, carefully trimmed beard and Jack Wolfskin jacket, is at home in both worlds that appear to coexist here peacefully. Tekin is "among the older," as he puts it, of eight children. In 1989 the family fled the civil war in Lebanon and for more than 20 years had the status of "tolerated" in Germany – no right of residence, no permission to work. Osman Tekin is the first in his family to have earned a degree.

> "A territorial war is being fought here in the north of Neukölln."

Osman Tekin graduated from "the Rütli," as young people in the neighborhood call the infamous school right across the road from the youth club. Ten years ago, on March 30, 2006, the teachers at Rütli wrote an open letter, citing the students' "callous disregard for others," and their "complete rejection of the lessons." The desperate letter caused an uproar. The school was even discussed in parliament; it became a symbol of everything that had supposedly gone wrong with immigration. "Multiculturalism has failed," said the district mayor, Heinz Buschkowsky.

Today, the Rütli School has one of the lowest dropout rates in Berlin. Two-thirds of the roughly 70 young people who come each week to see Osman Tekin at the youth club want to finish school. And there is another development at the primary school, which reflects the development of the whole neighborhood – the population is changing. About half the pupils in the primary school are not children of immigrants. In the secondary school, the figure is still close to 90 percent.

"Everyone is looking at those who are coming in – but few people ask what happens to those who have to move away," Tekin says. He talks about some ten young people who over the past two years had to move away with their families because their apartment in the neighborhood had become too expensive. Then, he says, they often stop coming to the club.

*Osman Tekin*

No one imagined that someone like Osman Tekin would finish school and get a job.

Subsequently, a lot of good things were done in Neukölln; education reform abolishing Hauptschule – vocational schools – was implemented here three years earlier than in the rest of Berlin. It envisioned Rütli School combined with a neighboring junior high school and primary school, forming one big campus. Since 2011 a university-track upper school has also been in the mix. Where once pupils were sorted and alienated – good pupils here, Rütli kids there – now everyone learns together. And better.

It's half past four and school is out. Around ten boys and girls are waiting outside the club. The bigger boys shake hands with Tekin; the smaller ones twirl around his legs to get his attention. But Tekin says he has to talk to two of the big boys first. What's up? "Problems," is all he ventures to say. Tekin has the young people's trust; they look up to him. He's a bit like a big brother, he admits. Brother, student – Tekin is both. At the youth club, at least, there are no pigeonholes.

*Anna Klöpper reports on education for* taz, *a Berlin daily.*



# Higher calling

War rags to musical riches. Syrian countertenor Dani Alor was discovered in a Berlin refugee shelter
*By Benjamin Walter*

Frank Alva Buecheler was standing in the subway when his phone rang. He was in a hurry, but the caller insisted: "You have to listen to this!" And then he heard the thing that couldn't wait – Rosina's cavatina "Una voce poco fa" from Rossini's Barber of Seville, sung by a young Syrian countertenor in a refugee shelter in Berlin-Mitte. This voice, this "wonderful timbre," immediately echoed in the theater director's heart: "I'll be there in ten minutes."

Buecheler would probably never even have heard the voice of Dani Alor had he not volunteered to help the refugees sheltered at the former St. Hedwig's hospital near his home. The 23-year-old Alor was one of those admitted to the shelter in early 2015, after stints at the reception camp in Eisenhüttenstadt and Berlin's state office of health and social affairs (LaGeSo). At some stage, he began to sing again.

It's Saturday morning and Dani Alor is sitting in the basement office of Buecheler's newly founded talent agency, Freeartus (Artists & Refugees United for Freedom), sipping a glass of water and talking about his life in Syria. As a child he sang in a church choir, and later – as a gifted young boy – he had a private teacher. As a young man, he studied violin and voice for two semesters before making his way to Europe. That much he is prepared to tell.

PRIVATE

*Getting the band together: the young Syrian countertenor Dani Alor and his friends, drummer Ali Hasan and oud player Ala Zaitouna.*

"We had a simple life," he says. His mother is a primary school teacher and his father was in the army until retiring, before the revolution. They are still waiting in Damascus. Like Alor, however, his brother and two sisters have been in the West for some time. Did he see fighting? Buildings destroyed? Dani Alor just nods, his eyed open wide.

He does not want to talk about his journey to Germany. Buecheler suspects that the appearance-conscious young man is ashamed to think back to the times he wore dirty clothes.

Dani Alor claims he would have come to Europe at some point anyway, regardless of the civil war in Syria, "because classical music is not very popular in the Arab world." It seems to have been mere chance that brought him to Germany for asylum, but he says he's happy in Berlin. Of course, there are the cultural differences – Germans follow their heads, Syrians their hearts – but he adds that he will make every effort to understand the way Germans think.

Every morning he goes to classes to learn German; in the afternoon he sings. Sometimes he goes shopping with his friend Nour Alghounaimi, who is the same age as he. His friend interprets for him, and speaks almost accent-free German after only a year.

Dani Alor has assembled a refugees' choir in Tempelhof along with Alaa Zaitouna, who plays the oud (a kind of lute), and the drummer Ali Hasan, who came to Germany on foot. A dozen young people practice songs from the old German canon – "Die Gedanken sind frei" (Thoughts are free) and "Der Mond ist aufgegangen" (The moon has risen) – singing them in both German and Arabic while accompanied by the oud and drum.

Alor is booking more and more public performances – at theaters, conferences and company parties. The high point so far was his invitation to sing on the MDR TV Christmas special with Kim Fischer. Before Alor even left the stage, the German countertenor Jochen Kowalski predicted the young Syrian would soon be a global star.

# WE COULD BE HEROES

This is how we do it. A night out in Berlin | *By Nina Schick*

The first thing you need to know about a night out in Berlin is that it starts late, so take it easy. Peak too early and it's over before it began, before you've even had a chance to dip your little toe into the spectacular Berlin *Szene*.

Pace yourself. I had to learn the hard way when I first arrived. Like many newbies to the city, I made the rookie error of plunging straight into the deep end with London-style gusto. My pounding hangover the next day was a reminder of my mistake.

> "Before you know it, you've found the unicorn in the beer garden, and you're riding it."

While a night out in London more or less ends at 11 p.m. with people clutching their kebabs and trying to locate the night bus home, Berliners don't deign to exit a club before midnight, unless they're just leaving the party from the night (or the week) before.

Luckily, this time I had my partner in crime – a long-time Berlin resident – to initiate me into the way things are done properly.

Things kicked off with a visit to the local Späti – an institution of the German capital. It's a convenience store of sorts, with the usual necessities like snacks, toothpaste and chewing gum, along with the best and most diverse selection of beers you've ever seen in your entire life crammed into such a small space. It's the stuff legends are made of. This one was particularly impressive, with three transparent fridges stacked floor to ceiling with tremendous sliding doors and speakers pumping out electronic tunes. Cowed by the selection, I finally picked a minimalist option simply called "Bier" before ambling out to the pavement, where a German skill that continues to astound me was on rampant display. For those who don't know, Germans don't need bottle openers – they can open their beer bottles with anything, from little pieces of paper to table corners and toothpicks. It's like they've been trained in some kind of compulsory beer-bottle opening society as children.

As we polished off our beers outdoors in the warm Berlin night, a slew of hipsters strolled by (cue loads of beards and man buns, low-cut vests and fixie bikes), and some kind of game plan started to come together.

A club-slash-bar-slash-beer garden, where a friend of a friend of a friend was DJing (everyone in Berlin knows a DJ, and a fashion blogger for that matter), would be the first stop of the night. Rumor had it they had a unicorn in their garden. That's right, a freaking unicorn. We were sold. Of course, Berlin is known for being fabulously cool and underground. Yuppies need not apply. Fetish clubs are everywhere. You can party from Friday to Tuesday without ever going home. Barely surprising, then, is that everyone loves to complain about how gentrification is driving up rents, and how EasyJet and RyanAir are ruining Europe's best-kept secret by importing electro-loving idiots who would otherwise be fist-pumping at a David Guetta rave.

The point is: Almost anywhere you go, you see dejected "weekend tourists" failing to make the cut. I, however, was determined to be initiated into the world's most hallowed nightlife cult. And I did my homework, reading every single blog on how to maximize my chances. And yes, there is actually a sub-genre of such literature on the Internet. Google it if you don't believe me; that's how badly people want to get in.

Advice varied: "Whatever you do, wear a scarf," some wrote (Germans do seem to love scarves, no matter the season). "Dress up or dress down" (and the choice is apparently polarized between a latex-bodysuit adorned with chains, or Chuck Taylors and jeans). "Don't smile too much" (I mastered a nonchalant scowl I hoped would give me a mild aura of unapproachability). "Approach the door in mixed groups no larger than three," and however you answer "How large is your group?", do it in German! This, apparently, is a clever ruse employed by doormen to weed out aforementioned electro-loving weekend tourists.

I got lucky, though. By association to my Berliner friends who A) could answer all questions at the door in perfect German, and B) oozed that certain *je ne sais quoi* Berlin attitude that simply saturates the capital, I was ushered into the inner sanctum before I could even do a mental scarf-check.

Thanks to all the vodka-Club Mates, my memories thence become blurry (so much for pacing myself). It's a typical Berlin drink: the bartender hands you a bottle of Mate (an Argentine substitute to tea with copious amounts of caffeine), you drink as much of it as you can, hand it back, and then it's filled up to the brim with vodka.

I couldn't help but get excited, as I'm used to stingy London bartenders carefully measuring shots like a pharmacist dosing strychnine. No such formalities in Berlin. For the uninitiated, proceed with caution!

Because before you know it, you've found the unicorn in the beer garden and you're riding it. You're with your friends in a black-and-white photo booth spreading glittery glue on each other's faces.

You're talking about Nietzsche in a bathroom cubicle in a derelict warehouse. You're stuffing your face with Currywurst and fries. You're in a cage in a basement under a erstwhile department store listening to minimal electronic music. You're in a rowboat in a garden and the vodka-Club Mate keeps on flowing.

Suddenly, it's 11 a.m. and you're on the banks of the river Spree on a bouncy castle with 30 other people throwing confetti as a giant plastic statue of a cat is waving at you. Disco balls glitter in the trees above, but at least someone has been thoughtful enough to turn on the sprinklers as the midday sun starts to bake.

You wonder if it's time to go home – or start all over again. Berlin, you're thinking: There isn't anywhere quite like it.

*Nina Schick (left) is director of communications at the London office of the award-winning EU policy think tank Open Europe. She frequently visits Berlin.*

PICTURES: PRIVATE



# Last bastion of democracy

Berlin has become a nexus of global digital activism. Jacob Appelbaum, the journalist and privacy activist, is not alone in finding refuge in the German capital | *By Christoph Zeiher*

It was an earthquake of a speech. It was also journalistic career suicide, as he said so himself. Jacob Appelbaum took the podium at a Berlin symposium for hackers and journalists in March this year. At times during his remarks his voice trembled and his hands shook. He was settling the score with journalists whom he accused of betraying Edward Snowden and Julian Assange, singling out *The Guardian* for special mention. It is, in his opinion, "absolutely the shittiest publication in the English language."

Appelbaum's remarks, as ever, were laced with emotion and profanity. But together with his technological chops, charisma and gift for public speaking, they illustrate elegantly why he has become a figurehead of the hacktivist movement. His appearances draw a lot of public attention, and this day was no exception.

It's no coincidence that Appelbaum chose Berlin as a venue for venting his spleen. Born in the United States, Appelbaum has been living and working in the German capital since 2013. During this time the core developer of the online anonymity software, Tor, also established his reputation as a journalist. For breaking the story about the US eavesdropping on German Chancellor Angela Merkel's cell phone, he shared the Henri Nannen Prize – Germany's equivalent to the Pulitzer – with journalists from the news magazine *Der Spiegel*.

Appelbaum has since settled down in Berlin, where he values his many friends in the city. "I take part here in the Chaos Computer Club, and know plenty of developers who deal with encryption and open-source software," he told the daily *Berliner Zeitung*. "And I have plenty of real friends – not Facebook friends. In that respect I feel comfortable here."

In retrospect it seems to have been a good decision, but it was chance that first brought him to Berlin. When the first Snowden documents were being published in 2013, Appelbaum was on his way to Oslo. Laura Poitras, director of the Oscar-winning documentary *CitizenFour* and a close friend of Appelbaum, lived and worked at the time in Berlin. It seemed only logical to him to stay there as well.

> "Berlin is becoming a platform for a digital movement that seeks fresh alternatives."

In the US, Appelbaum was snooped on all the time. He's also under surveillance in Berlin, yet he feels safer in the city than in his native country, where he would probably face prosecution because of his work for WikiLeaks. For years the network of hackers and activists who focus on surveillance has been growing continuously. Many impulses and developments within the privacy movement originated there. And people here seem to know early on about pretty much everything. Hardly a week passes without someone telling a small circle of friends that he or she is moving to Berlin. WikiLeaks journalist Sarah Harrison, who helped Edward Snowden escape from Hong Kong, has also been living in Berlin for three years.

But mostly it's the unnoticed ones – the legions of programmers and activists from France, Italy, the UK and the US working on independent software projects – who find their own kind in Berlin. It's a harmonious little group, but also a closed one. Some of its members are like endemic organisms that finally manage to flourish in their new culture.

Two incubators – or petri dishes – have made Berlin a hotbed of this digital culture. One is the Chaos Computer Club (CCC), one of the foremost hacktivist institutions. It has an almost magnetic effect on many people. The birth of the CCC dates back to a 1981 meeting in the editorial offices of *taz*, West Berlin's leftist daily.

For many, this same current of journalism is part of the second reason for coming to Berlin. Germany's rugged and decades-long tradition of press freedom and other liberties has turned Germany into a sort of life raft for journalists and information activists. Berlin is the last bastion of democracy, many of them claim.

Recognition as a journalist is vital to many – and not just in terms of careers. "My work is generally protected when it's considered to be journalistic," Appelbaum says. "This protection is important when you're disclosing or treating certain things." He finds it threatening when journalists from large publishing companies still refuse to acknowledge him as a colleague. That was another reason for his no-holds-barred speech. As those around him know, Appelbaum has been seething for some time.

For journalists, activists and programmers, Berlin is increasingly becoming a platform for a digital movement seeking fresh alternatives that transcend the old hacker clichés. The German writer Jean Paul once said: "Berlin is rather a part of the world than a city." And people like Jacob Appelbaum have made Berlin the center of a movement – one whose brilliance radiates far beyond the city's frontiers.

*Christoph Zeiher is a journalist based in Berlin. He works for the Centre for Investigative Journalism and the Logan CIJ Symposium.*

IMAGO/CHRISTIAN ERTZH

A call to digital arms: Jacob Appelbaum

# FACES OF BERLIN

WILD BOAR: IMAGO/PETRA SCHNEIDER; AI WEIWEI: IMAGO/FUTURE IMAGE; RAUSCH: RAUSCH WALTZ: DPA/ULI DECK; MÜLLER-STAHL: DPA/PATRICK BECHER; OKTAR: PRIVATE; MEGALOH: ROBERT WINTER; WOLTMANN: KPM; VICTORY COLUMN: IMAGO/STEFAN ZEITZ; HUTH: IMAGO/ACTION PLUS; GUÉROT: DOMINIK BUTZMANN; NEFERTITI: IMAGO/WOLF P. PRANGE; BLECK: DPA JÖRG CARSTENSEN; BENNETT: IMAGO/SVEN LAMBERT; AMPELMANN: IMAGO/IMAGEBROKER; HEGEMANN: DPA/DORIS SPIEKERMANN-KLAAS

**The GDR wouldn't let him perform, so the West German rockstar, Udo Lindenberg, wrote a song to the East German head of state, asking: "Why don't you let me sing, in the workers' and farmers' state." In 1983 he was finally allowed to take the stage at East Berlin's Palace of the Republic. In 2000 Lindenberg wrote a hymn to a city ever in the making:**

*Welcome to Berlin / Which all you freaks are in / Come and join the insanity / The stage is set for all humanity*
*Berliner Bear – your den is fair / Freaks of today are inventors of tomorrow / Every kid knows that, though*
*When everywhere it's "good night" / Berlin's just turnin' on the light.*

**Here's our selection of the crazies and creatives, the thinkers and tinkers who create the face of Berlin.**

## Wild boar
Wild bores?

Several thousand wild boar live in Berlin, estimates Milena Stillfried, researcher of wild boar at the Leibniz Institute for Zoo and Wildlife Research. And increasing numbers of them are realizing that there's lots of food to be found in the city, especially when the trees are bearing less fruit. Would you call them economic refugees? Not really. A better description is industrious, adaptable animals that know they have nothing to fear from humans. But should humans fear them? No, says the doctoral candidate. What does she do when she comes across a sow and her little ones? "I talk to them. It calms them, and me, too."

## Robert Rausch
Germany's Willy Wonka

Berlin may be known for Currywurst and Berliner Weisse; they're never more than a stone's throw away. But on the corner of Charlottenstraße and Mohrenstraße, on genteel Gendarmenmarkt, you can find chocolate worthy of such a coveted address. Not only in the Rausch Schokoladenhaus, but also at its neighboring café, and in the restaurant that serves Sauerbraten or fresh pollack laced with Plantagenschokolade. The establishment is one of Berlin's most visited tourist attractions; 80 percent of its clientele hails from abroad, including royal families, foreign ministers and Hollywood stars.

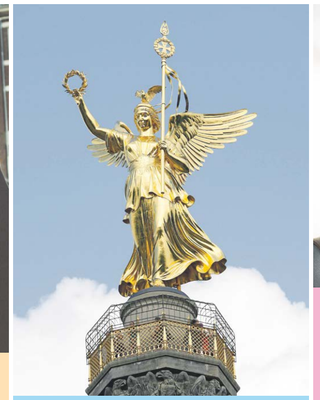
## Armin Müller-Stahl
Captain of Köpenick

In 1952 he defected – to East Germany. "Theaters in the East were simply better than those in the West," he said recently in an interview with the tabloid "Bild". His career under communism ended in 1976 as he spoke out publicly against the expatriation of songwriter and critic of the regime, Wolf Biermann. In 1980 he settled in West Berlin. In 1990 he set his sights on Hollywood. His 85 years have produced 130 films for the big and small screen, including one Oscar nomination for the 1997 movie "Shine". Müller-Stahl has also shone as a painter, writer and musician. For decades a citizen of the world, he claims to always keep a suitcase in Berlin. Where exactly? Köpenick.

## Megaloh
Bohemian rap-sody

The sound of the city. Megaloh, the Berlin hip hop star spouting German raps doesn't splurge on cars, jewelry (bling-bling) or fans who worship him. The son of Nigerian and Dutch academics, who still sidelines as a warehouse worker, raps in his song "Loser" about what it means to live from and for his music:

**Sweat flows, job blows,**
**gotta go, back's broke, air's cold**
**I pay the bills,**
**You spend 'em gettin' refills.**



## Victory Column
Golden Lizzie

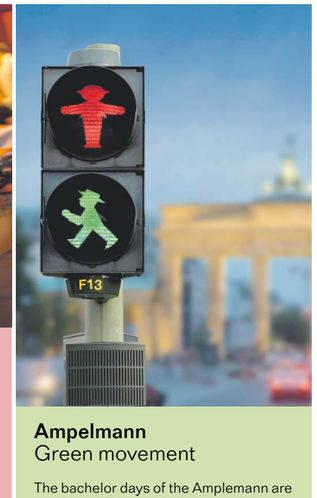
Berliners show no respect for its landmarks. The Victory Column? The national memorial in honor of the wars of unification fought between 1864 and 1873? Berliners have contemptuously dubbed this bronze statue of Victoria "Goldelse," or something akin to "Golden Lizzy."

## Ulrike Guérot
European championing

She's one of Berlin's many forward thinkers. Her aim: reframing Europe. Turning it inside out, as she puts it. Vanquish the nation state, found a continent-wide republic. "Europe must finally be made right," she says. She's written a book laying out her utopia; day one is set for May 8, 2045.

## Holger Bleck
Town crier

He's one of the few remaining custodians of a dying profession, and perhaps Berlin's most distinguished. Holger Bleck sells evening editions of newspapers table to table at the capital's swankiest restaurants. Where in non-German cities he would never make it past the maître d's – in New York they'd probably call the cops – in Berlin he's welcomed on a nightly basis by the likes of Borchardt, Paris-Moskau and Vau. Their clientele expect it and indeed purchase issues of the German papers Bleck purveys, often with a clever rhyme amalgamating the headlines of the day's top stories. In the age of the Internet, when the news cycle is about as long as it takes Donald Trump to bang out a Tweet, it's a marvel and a delight that Berlin's finest diners and establishments continue to honor this time-honored trade.



## Ampelmann
Green movement

The bachelor days of the Amplemann are numbered. The city is playing matchmaker for its red and green crossing guard. It's actually a matter of gender equality, but the triumph over patriarchy is getting bogged down in the details. The introduction of Ampelfrauen in Mitte has caused some strife: should they be wearing braids and a dress, stilettos and a miniskirt, or slacks and flats?

## Ai Weiwei
The art of fleeing

He photographed himself in the same position as Alan Kurdi, the three-year-old Syrian boy who drowned off Lesbos; he organized a piano concert in the mud of a Greek refugee camp; and he swathed the columns of Berlin's Konzerthaus with life preservers of drowned refugees. This current crisis is Ai Weiwei's greatest theme.
In 2011 the Berlin University of the Arts offered Ai Weiwei an Einstein Visiting Fellowship. After suffering 81 days in a Chinese prison and a travel ban lasting 4 years, the sculptor, performance artist, filmmaker and architect has finally arrived in the German capital, which feels to him like "a mixture between Beijing and New York."

## Sasha Waltz
Stage name

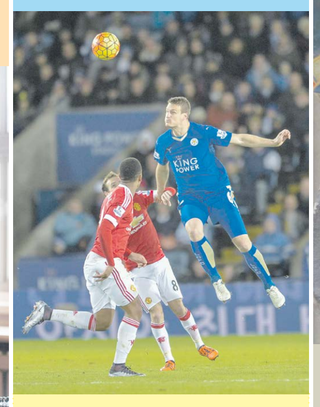
Sasha Waltz – dancer, choreographer, opera director – is a master at combining movement, music and song in a Gesamtkunstwerk. The 53-year-old has been shaping the Berlin performance stage ever since 1999, when she became intendant of the Schaubühne, a Berlin theater steeped in tradition.
At Radialsystem, a former water-pumping station, Waltz and her dance company now regularly stage world-renowned productions. "Magical scenes" of "new, never-before-seen beauty" wrote the "Berliner Zeitung" in describing a performance staged by Waltz.

## Oktar
Beer guardin'

Berlin has over 1000 Spätkaufs. These little, late-night convenience stores have become indispensable for Berliners and tourists alike. And their best-selling item is testament to the fundamental need and overriding priority of the common Berliner: beer. Oktar, the owner of a Spätkauf on Gleimstraße in hip Prenzlauer Berg, stocks 125 varieties, and he's no exception. He recently took over the store from his parents, who moved their family from Turkey to Berlin in 1998. There's hardly one essential item that can't be had there at 4 a.m. Tuesday, or noon Sunday, which is why so many Berliners develop uncommon loyalty, even love, for their favorite local "Späti."

## Jörg Woltmann
Berlin China

The Royal Porcelain Factory, renamed in 1763 by Frederick the Great after buying it from a merchant, went bankrupt ten years ago. Then came its savior, Jörg Woltmann. The 69-year-old banker is said to have invested €40 million of private funds into the firm. He considers it his duty, as a Berliner, to rescue an institution so vital to the city, and to make sure it ever remains in the capital.



## Robert Huth
Export good

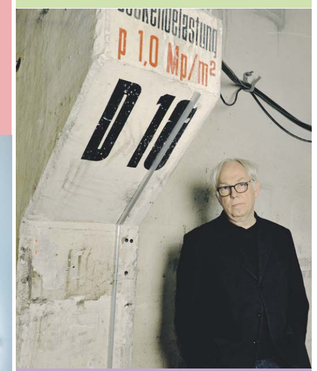
Hertha BSC is playing some good soccer. However, it's a different Berliner who has reached the pinnacle of his profession: Leicester City fullback Robert Huth, 31, from Berlin-Biesdorf. His club has just clinched the English Premier League's title and is already looking ahead to next season's Champions League. As the Foxes' starting center fullback, Huth has been given a well-earned nickname by the team's appreciative fans: The Berlin Wall.

## Nefertiti
Queen of Berlin

She's Berlin's greatest beauty, and many in her country of origin believe she's the victim of theft: Ludwig Borchardt found the 3,350-year-old bust of Nefertiti, sculpted by Thutmosis in the Nile Valley's Tell el-Amarna, during an archaeological dig in 1912. It was love at first sight, despite her missing left eye: "Stunning work," wrote Borchardt in his journal. "Can't be described, must be seen." Nefertiti is enthroned, as befits a priceless monarch (she's worth several hundred million euros), as the only object in the Neues Museum's Nordkuppelsaal – in a 4-meter-high, alarm-activated vitrine.

## Fiona Bennett
You can leave your hat on

The milliner's family left Brighton for Berlin when Fiona was six. Christina Aguilera, Brad Pitt, Katie Holmes, Yoko Ono and Hugh Jackmann have worn her creations. What makes Berlin and hats perfect for each other? "Berlin was never a beautiful town," she says, "there's always been much to prettify!"



## Dimitri Hegemann
Safe-cracker

Twenty-five years ago, Dimitri Hegemann founded a club in the safe vault of a former department store in decrepit East Berlin. DJs drudged up from Detroit spun the music: avant-garde, hard and instrumental. "Tresor was the cradle of techno," he says, "and techno was the soundtrack to reunification." Today he helps young people from the countryside make venues out of abandoned buildings, with the hope that they will be saved. With the same purpose he frequently flies to Detroit.

# The founding years

The German capital is a hot spot for startups. Entrepreneurs come from all over the world to build their companies in Berlin | *By Corinna Visser*

Narem Shaam sits on the sixth floor of a freshly renovated office building in Prenzlauer Berg, enjoying for a moment the view over the rooftops of Berlin. Ping-pong can be heard from next door, but that's the extent of the startup ambience on offer there. The five floors below house almost 180 employees of GoEuro, mainly engineers at simple Ikea desks staring at their monitors. They are at work making Naren Shaam's dream become reality: "My vision is to allow all customers to travel anywhere in Europe with the click of a button."

WWW.GOEURO.DE

*Europe on a shoestring: Naren Shaam, founder of GoEuro.*

The online booking platform gives an overview of how – by bus, train or plane – travelers can get from one place to another the fastest or cheapest, and also sells them the ticket. GoEuro is one of an estimated 2,500 startups in Berlin, depending on the definition you use. According to the German Startups Association, a startup is less than ten years old, is based on an innovative technology or business model and targets significant growth. One current study by the Institute for Strategy Development defines startups – as opposed to simple firms – as being less than five years old, following a business model that could not exist without the Internet and having an independent management. From this perspective Berlin has only 620 startups providing jobs for 13,500 employees. However, the two sources agree that young digital companies have enormous importance for Berlin's economy.

According to the somewhat broader definition, Berlin gains a new Internet company every 20 hours. This was determined by Investitionsbank Berlin (IBB), which also calculated that one of every eight jobs in Berlin is provided by the digital economy. "In the coming years the capital has the chance to become one of the winners of the digital transformation," according to economists at IBB. "In the next 15 years the digital economy will create around 270,000 additional jobs." This bodes well for Berlin, which could see its unemployment rate drop below the national average for the first time.

But for this to happen, however, the city needs more companies like GoEuro, which was borne through a personal experience, a problem Naren Shaam wanted to solve. In 2010 the young Indian was backpacking across Europe and became frustrated with how long it took to find the best route to his next destination. Europe's wide selection of transportation means complicated his planning. "Thus, GoEuro was born. Naren quit his job in finance, packed up, moved to Berlin and started the company," or so goes the company's short and sweet foundation myth.

The somewhat longer version has Naren Shaam studying math and engineering in Bangalore, going to the US to work in the automobile industry, staking his earnings on a degree at Harvard Business School, working in finance and then quitting his job to start a company in Berlin.

That was 2012. In those days Naren Shaam could speak no German and knew little of the city beyond Alexanderplatz. Nevertheless, he was convinced that Berlin was the right location for his company, and this is still true. "It's one of the best decisions I made," he says. "Talent is moving here. Berlin is a phenomenal place for startups."

Today GoEuro operates in 11 European countries. More than 32,000 bus and train stations and 207 airports are integrated into its platform. But not only is the company international, the team is, too. The 180 current employees hail from 32 different companies. And 45 percent are women, a fact of which Naren Shaam is particularly proud given the male-dominated nature of the industry.

> Naren Shaam convinced his own people of his vision – and powerful financial backers.

The team is growing not only fast, but in expertise as well. GoEuro has been successful at drawing top talent. The chief technology officer came from Google, other higher-up employees from Goldman Sachs, eBay, Facebook and Zalando. Attracting the right employees is a critical determinant for the success of a young company.

Naren Shaam convinced not only his own people of his vision, but powerful financial backers as well. In the latest round of financing in December of last year, the Berlin startup raised 45 million dollars from renowned investment banks like Goldman Sachs and from venture capital firms such as Atomico from London, Battery Ventures in the US and Hasso Plattner Ventures and Lakestar from Germany.

"When I first met the GoEuro team, I was amazed at their ability to build relationships with large organizations that historically have not given out proprietary information," says Klaus Hommels, founder of Lakestar, one of Europe's most important venture capital firms. Indeed, one can glean from Narem Shaam that is not easy to initiate business with the old guard of state-run enterprises such as Deutsche Bahn. His earliest success was the new partnership with SNCF, the French railroad company. Negotiations lasted more than a year, and the 34-year-old's voice betrays the fact that it was no cakewalk.

The investors have great trust in Naren Shaam. After all, they cut him a check for $45 million, a relatively high sum for a German startup in its first round of financing. Except for Rocket Internet's startups, most make do with far less capital, especially compared to the American competition. GoEuro has shown that Berlin startups are also in a position to draw foreign capital of this magnitude.

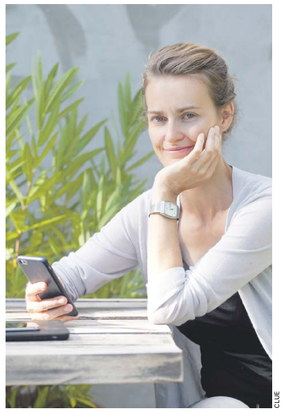
Rocket Internet can claim a considerable amount of responsibility for Berlin's flourishing startup scene. "Rocket is one of the founding pillars of the ecosystem. It would not be as strong without Rocket," says Naren Shaam. Although the business practices and leadership culture of the renowned startup factory have often met criticism, Rocket's professionalization of the art of building companies is indisputable. Many founders have learned the ropes there and are now contributing their expertise to more and more new enterprises. GoEuro also has its fair share of former Rocket personnel.

Shaam's company still has big plans. As 80 percent of Europe's bus and train tickets are still booked offline, Naren Shaam has his work cut out for him. He still speaks only a little German, but a bit of German mentality is detectable when he concludes: "There is absolutely no glory in calling yourself a founder. Trust me. It is a lot of hard work. But it is still a very fulfilling journey."

*Corinna Visser is editor-in-chief of the startup magazine* Berlin Valley.

*Free download available at* ***berlinvalley.com***

MARTIN MISSERE



CLUE

*Captivating expertise: Sören Hofmayer (left) and Ijad Madisch (middle) have piqued Chancellor Angela Merkel's interest.*

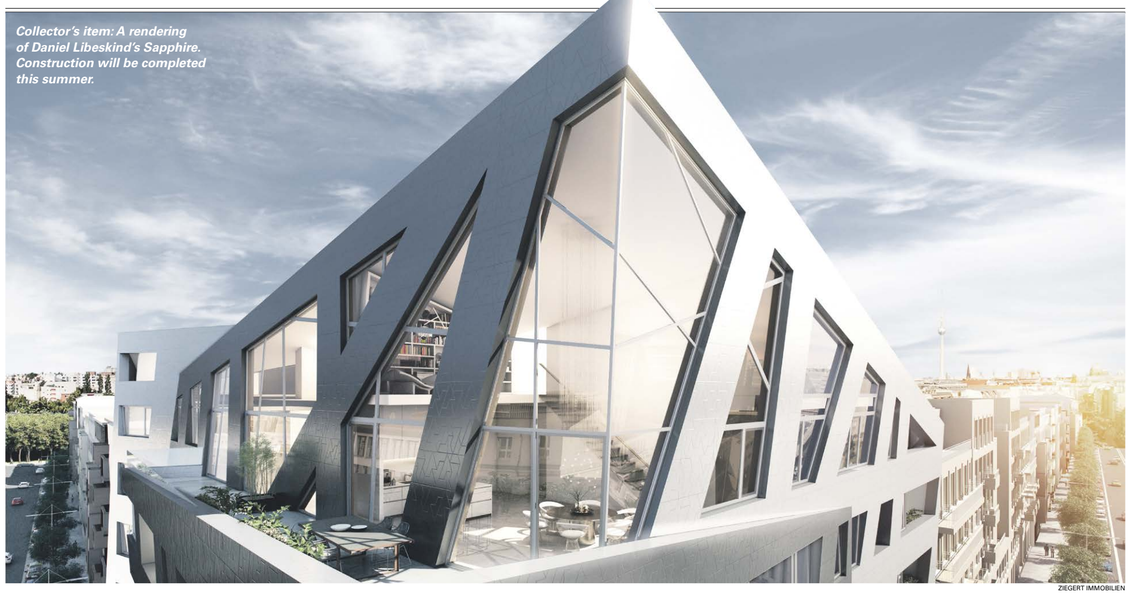
*Taking control: Ida Tin (right) developed a fertility app.*

## Friends of Bill and Angie

One of Berlin's most famous startups is Researchgate. The source of its fame, however, is not only its success , but also its famous investor: Bill Gates. The founder of Microsoft does not normally invest in tech projects, but in 2013 he made an exception. Together with other financial backers, Gates infused the professional network for scientists with 35 million dollars. The mission of the company – founded in 2008 by the doctors Ijad Madisch and Sören Hofmayer and the computer scientist Horst Fickenscher – is "to connect researchers and make it easy for them to share and access scientific output, knowledge and expertise." The platform gives scientists overviews of what has already been researched and which studies have gone wrong. Researchgate currently has more than 200 employees and more than 9 million members, including 52 Nobel Prize winners, in 193 countries. In the network's first four years researchers uploaded to the platform a total of two million publications. The current figure is 2.5 million each month.

## Family planning 2.0

As elsewhere, women startup founders are much the exception in Berlin. But they're out there and Ida Tin is one of them. In 2013 the Danish entrepreneur founded BioWink, which developed Clue, the world's fastest growing period and fertility app. The app helps people take their reproductive lives into their own hands while furthering progress in health research. Clue already has two and a half million users in 190 countries who collect their own health data through the app. The startup has earned international attention and thus far collected a total of over $10 million in venture capital across six rounds of financing, including $7 million in October 2015. Among their backers is Union Square Ventures, which also invested in Twitter, Kickstarter and Tumblr. "We're convinced of Clue's potential to give women all over the world more control over their health," says Albert Wenger, managing partner of the New York venture capital firm.



*Collector's item: A rendering of Daniel Libeskind's Sapphire. Construction will be completed this summer.*

ZIEGERT IMMOBILIEN

# BERLIN CRIBS

International buyers of luxury homes are still astounded at how much they can get for their money in the German capital | *By Tong-Jin Schmith*

For quite some time Chausseestraße in Berlin-Mitte was an unattractive, run-down, post-socialist thoroughfare – not exactly an area where affluent investors or new Berliners would fancy buying an apartment. But things have changed.

When in 2003 the German government decided to move the Federal Intelligence Service's headquarters from the outskirts of Munich to Chausseestraße, the neighborhood suddenly became interesting – like so many others before. First, the existing historical buildings were refurbished and renovated. Then, new developments began to revive the empty lots along the street. More and more the southern end of Chausseestraße began looking like the rest of Mitte, with a mix of hip hostels, bars, cafés and, last but not least, condominiums and town houses.

The latest addition is Sapphire, an upscale condo project spearheaded by the Ziegert real estate consultancy and designed by Daniel Libeskind, whose buildings stand out in any metropolis – be it Toronto, Seoul or London.

Sapphire is no exception. It wraps around the corner of Chausseestraße and Schwartzkopffstraße and sports a three-dimensional, jutting façade. An imposing pinnacle caps a penthouse with sloping glass walls and access to a rooftop patio overlooking the city. Every one of Sapphire's 73 apartments features the Libeskind trademarks of large angular windows and canted walls, while rooms facing north or east offer astounding views – of the notorious secret fortress across the street. The house is the architect's homage to Berlin.

"I love the city," Libeskind says. "I spent many years here. You know, my kids grew up here. And Berlin is a city of architecture. It's a city of beautiful things. So what a thrill to be invited to design a building which is not a museum or a public institution, but something that people can actually live in."

However, with prices upward of €6,400 per sqm very few Berliners can actually afford to live in it. Nonetheless, 90 percent of the homes were sold off in no time at all.

"Sapphire will most likely be sold faster than any other project in Berlin in the €5,000+ per sqm segment," says André Schlüter, head of communications at Ziegert. "Among the buyers are many enthusiasts who did not want to miss out on the unique opportunity to own a Libeskind apartment in Berlin."

Daniel Libeskind is an artist, so it comes as no surprise that one might look upon his houses as pieces of art worth collecting. "Sapphire is also a good example that – contrary to popular Berlin bias – creativity and money are not mutually exclusive," says Schlüter. "A number of architects, interior designers and gallerists have bought homes here. And many, especially in the larger apartments, will be real owner-occupiers. We expect only a minority of the apartments to be rented out for about €19 to €23 per square meter." Berliners may find these base rents expensive, but they're no longer unusual for the neighborhood.

Just down the street from Sapphire, The Garden Living offers a mix of apartments and town houses for round about €4,000 per sqm – a real bargain, one might say. It was designed by Berlin-based architect Eike Becker, who was also responsible for Yoo Berlin near Friedrichstraße.

Yoo is an exclusive residence with most homes sold to non-Berliners as luxurious pied-à-terres. The penthouse even made headlines in 2014 as Germany's most expensive apartment, selling for €6.25 million, or €25,000 per sqm. A six-room garden unit is currently on offer for €3.4 million.

"We offer premium German quality – many buyers are looking for exactly that – in prime locations," explains Allyce Kluver, senior partnership manager at Zabel Property, during a tour of the town house. "And quite a few are surprised how much they can get for their money." Despite massive increases in Berlin's property and building costs over the past six years, no other metropolis offering so much still has luxury homes at such affordable prices.

> "Luxury housing in Berlin tends to target established neighborhoods, especially bohemian ones."

What may seem outrageous to Berliners has been a magnet for international investors who are especially drawn to the urban flair of Berlin's historical center, with its mix of various shops, galleries and culinary offerings. Compared to Berliners, or to Germans from elsewhere in the country who move to the city, this international clientele is more willing and able to pay upwards of €7,000 per sqm for living space.

But not all luxury developments have been a success. Living Levels – completed in 2015 on a controversial waterfront property in Friedrichshain, where the wall once divided the city – is still largely empty, although its developer claims that 80 percent of the apartments are either sold or reserved. Perhaps €12.9 million for a penthouse on the 13th floor of a standalone tower is asking a bit much; after all, there's no neighborhood, no *Kiez*, as Berliners would say.

For better of for worse, luxury housing in Berlin tends to target established neighborhoods, especially bohemian ones, which are of limited supply. So, while the luxury segment is growing, it will never become a dominant one. Or as Daniel Libeskind would say, "we don't really judge cities by their grey buildings, we judge them by how people live. Do they live well? Do they have beautiful streets? Do they have the kind of space that human beings deserve?"

*Tong-Jin Smith is a Berlin-based freelance journalist specializing in urban development.*

DENIS WEINDORNER

*Daniel Libeskind*



# Homes for have-nots

Co-ops are the residential alternative of choice for the less well-off | *By Tong-Jin Smith*

In the fall of 1999, the historical buildings on Gneiststraße and Buchholzer Straße in Prenzlauer Berg went up for sale. The tenants were alarmed. They had seen other houses in the area sold off to investors who either converted the Wilhelminian tenements into condominiums or simply hiked up the rents, forcing many people to move out. To prevent this from happening, 43 neighbors joined forces in January 2000 to found the Bremer Höhe co-op.

"It wasn't easy," recalls Ulf Heitmann, one of its founding members. "Starting the co-operative was one thing, buying the houses was another." However, with a lot of courage, public support and dedication, along with a significant financial effort by its growing number of members, the co-op bought the 521 apartments in question.

Renovation began in 2001, which included combining smaller units into larger ones to make more room for families. By 2003 Bremer Höhe had achieved the almost impossible and converted a run-down block of brick tenements into 460 modern, energy-efficient homes while saving the neighborhood from gentrification.

Today, the co-operative has around 600 members and owns 650 apartments and commercial units in different parts of Berlin. "We're small by comparison to some of the older co-operatives," says Heitmann. "But we are often approached by tenants who would like us to buy their apartment building to save it from speculative investors and to manage it for them. But we do not operate like a municipal housing enterprise that can use public subsidies to keep rents below the local index. Although membership is not mandatory, co-ops thrive on it, for it includes a financial stake in return for life estate in one of the co-op's apartments. It's a give-and-take based on solidarity."

> "Co-ops represent a mix between capitalism and socialism."

At Bremer Höhe, the stake consists of ten mandatory shares worth €5,112.90, plus a €100 entrance fee. In return, members do not pay rent but rather a user fee of around €5 per sqm, which is lower than what one might generally pay for a public housing unit.

But there is more to owning a stake in the business than affordable life estate. Co-ops represent a "third way," a mix between capitalism and socialism that relies on communal commitment. They are not focused only on making money. Instead, co-ops invest in their community and real estate to ensure continuity and sustainability. They own the real estate but manage it in the interest of their members, who have a full say. "One vote per member," explains Heitmann, "no matter how many shares you own." In Germany the first co-ops were founded in the mid-19th century in the wake of social and economic reforms.

By the early 20th century, co-ops had become the residential alternative of choice for workers and have-nots who were subject to the arbitrariness of tenement owners and speculators. Instead of cramped, dark rooms in dirty back courtyards, co-ops offered their owner-tenants modern sanitary facilities, light and airy homes – often with large communal gardens and other social features – at affordable rates. Kindergartens, libraries, clubs and even pubs became features of Berlin co-ops.

"The new dimension of co-ownership, co-management and solidarity included the extension of occupant rights and opportunities to create new forms of living together," explains Barbara von Neumann-Cosel, an expert on co-operatives. "Members received hard and fast warranties such as protection against eviction, life estate and a say in all matters. These novel co-op standards later served as a blueprint for anti-eviction laws." Social responsibility and participation have always been central to the co-op idea, no matter how the organizations may otherwise differ. And they still set examples for urban development.

PARWEZ

*Ulf Heitmann*

"Every co-op really has its own flavor," says Ulf Heitmann. There are traditional ones like "1892" – named for the year it was founded – with more than 14,000 members from all walks of life. It owns close to 6,800 apartments all over Berlin, including in areas that used to be social hotspots, and operates its own savings institution as a means of generating capital to create more homes and social institutions. There are very small ones, with less than 50 members, that manage a single house or block – a rather recent phenomenon.

One is Innerstädtisch Wohnen, which built a multi-family apartment house with 31 units on an empty lot in Prenzlauer Berg – a nucleus for co-ops founded after German reunification. This intergenerational, ecological complex was completed in 2011 and has inspired other alternative, affordable housing projects.

"A disproportionately high number of our members are freelancers," says Heitmann, "academics with a marginal income. They could never afford to buy a home of their own because they lack the minimum equity required for banks to grant them a loan, even with the current low interest rates."

This holds true for many Berliners. The city has traditionally been a tenant city, where close to 90 percent of all homes are rentals. With current net population increases of more than 40,000 annually, market pressures are high. The citywide vacancy rate has dropped below 2 percent, while in some popular districts it is close to zero, which has resulted in a rather uneasy situation.

Property prices have shot up in the last few years due to speculation and increased urban density. In addition, building costs have been steadily climbing as government regulations in energy efficiency, soundproofing and fire protection have increased. "As co-ops, our capital resources are generally weak," Heitmann says. "Since we are not municipally affiliated, we do not qualify for government aid that public housing enterprises receive. On the other hand, we are not capital-driven project developers with investors backing our endeavors. So it has become rather impossible for us to build new homes."

However, if Berlin followed Munich's example of using a fixed-price procedure for public tenders, co-ops could throw their hat into the ring with convincing, sustainable concepts. But as long as Andreas Geisel, Berlin's senator for urban development, thinks that co-ops are "just another private developer," factors will remain as they are: low home ownership, high social expenditure and ample gentrification.

With the right political instruments, co-ops could play a decisive role in Berlin's future. After all, they have been at the forefront of both modern housing design and social development while changing the faces of many neighborhoods and innovating new forms of ownership and participation. *T-JS*

DPA/PAUL GLASER

*Co-ops can be elegant, too. Schillerpark, part of the "1892" co-op, is part of the renowned Berlin Modernism Housing Estates and a UNESO World Heritage Site.*

# CASTLING

Wilhelm von Boddien has achieved the unachievable: the reconstruction of Berlin's castle façade
*By Nikolaus Bernau*

*Construction for the new castle began in 2013. Wilhelm von Boddien had started working towards it 20 years earlier.*

PARWEZ

Can a castle be rebuilt, or at least its façade? Particularly one so closely enmeshed in the House of Hohenzollern? After essentially having thwarted the political modernization of Prussia since 1871 and instigating the outbreak of World War I in 1914, the head of the house, Kaiser Wilhelm II, effectively deserted in 1918. Fifteen years later, in 1933, the presence of the Hohenzollern Crown Prince at the Day of Potsdam more or less gave royal blessing to Hitler's totalitarian claim to power. Why then should the Federal Republic of Germany, which is hardly in a position to justify the maintenance of genuine, already existing castles, bedeck itself with a replica of a castle façade in the center of Berlin?

When Wilhelm von Boddien, the Hamburg merchant who had just turned 50, suggested so at the beginning of the 1990s, people laughed in his face. His only support came from the media arm of the Springer publishing house, a few Prussian sentimentalists in politics and the highly regarded West Berlin publisher Wolf-Jobst Siedler, author of a widely disseminated critique of *the* modern architecture. Germany just wasn't poised to build in so stately a manner. Then, in 2000, the president of the Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation, Klaus-Dieter Lehmann, and the general director of Germany's state museums, Peter-Klaus Schuster, proposed linking the façade replica to the pending move of Berlin's one-of-a-kind Ethnological Museum to the city center from the sleepy suburb of Dahlem. Despite the failure of this measure, the cultural and political groundwork had been laid for the embryo of the Humboldt Forum, before which we stand today.

It is one of the most astonishing results achieved by any one individual in the history of German architecture, a person who is neither the project's builder, financier, contracting authority nor architect. He is an enthusiast, and make no mistake about it: Without Wilhelm von Boddien, there would be no replica of the castle façade. Without him there would never even have been any real debate on the subject. Despite populism's critical role here, it is without a doubt that this construction project has been democratically sanctioned like perhaps none other in German history. To get it done, Boddien has performed a series of breathtaking feats. The fact that there was no proposal for the tens of thousands of square meters behind the façade did not matter to Boddien: residence for the president, shopping mall, hotel, history museum, art museum, world cultural forum. Although his own company, an agricultural machinery business, declared bankruptcy in 2004, he has since lived off his salary as CEO of the association he himself founded for the reconstruction of Berlin's castle. This association has faced consistent criticism for its handling of its finances and personnel. Yet, without Boddien's personally guaranteed promise that the entity would raise €105 million by 2019 for the construction of the façade, the Bundestag would most certainly never have approved the project now estimated to cost at least €621 million. Boddien's association has indeed exhibited some astonishing fundraising prowess; according to his tally, some €40 million has already been collected. Boddien's tactic of appealing to any potential donors, big or small, has led to the emergence of a veritable fan club in support of "our castle."

> "In the 1990s people laughed in his face."

The burnt-out remains of northern Germany's most significant Baroque building was demolished in 1950 on orders from the SED. For the party's general secretary, Walter Ulbricht, it was the symbol of Prussian supremacy and German militarism. But the destruction of the castle left behind a void in the people's collective memory, which remained unfilled until the 1976 construction of the East German parliament building dubbed the Palace of the Republic. However, a partial replica of the façade was thought, in 1990, to be merely utopian. When two architectural historians proposed in 1991 to erect scaffolding in front of the Palace of the Republic, which would then be used to present a two-dimensional depiction of the castle, the plan fell flat. That is, until Boddien chipped in and popularized the idea in 1993-94 with the exhibition "The Castle?", in which he appealed to the public with authentic craftsmanship. The image of the castle was handpainted, just as the future façade – as was persistently stressed – would be chiseled by hand. Although the castle replica is a technologically state-of-the-art project, in large part built using precast concrete, it will appear throughout to be constructed with brick.

Boddien's interest in architecture has always focused only on its exterior, that is, on its façade. Thus, he has no problem whatsoever in accepting the most absurd of proposals for the structure's function or the wanting design for the floorplan and interior spaces conceived by Italy's Franco Stella, who was selected in 2009 as the architect. The fact that architecture involves spatial configur-ation, structures and materials that ideally even visibly precipitate in the overall design of a building, or that a façade may convey a message of power or impotence, is in his view secondary. The single important factor for him is the building's exterior design.

A fundamental principle for Boddien was that there is plenty of territory for Modernism to claim across the rest of Berlin, but not here. What Modernism is, or how it looks, are things he never bothered to define. Boddien, who can come across as so liberal and so conciliatory, was always radical in one respect: nothing could compete with his castle reconstruction.

*Nikolaus Bernau is architecture critic for the* Berliner Zeitung.



# Instruments of peace

Israeli and Arab musicians play together in Daniel Barenboim's West-Eastern Divan Orchestra
*By Klaus Grimberg*

When Daniel Barenboim and the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra first played in the West Bank town of Ramallah in 2005, a little Palestinian girl came up to him after the concert and said: "You are the first thing I've seen from Israel that is not a soldier or a tank."

It was a brief encounter that engraved itself into the memory of the world-renowned pianist and conductor. And it reinforced his determination to continue with his musical mission for peace, bringing young instrumentalists from Israel and Palestine and other Arab states together in one orchestra to make music together.

"There can only be personal and international harmony when we listen to one another," says Barenboim, "people who listen to one another – not just when playing music, but at other times as well – can achieve great things."

This conviction led Barenboim to collaborate with the American-Palestinian literary critic, Edward W. Said, to found the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra in 1999. Since 2002 the orchestra has been meeting regularly for rehearsals in Seville, Spain. Originally planned as a project limited to the German city of Weimar's year as a European City of Culture, Barenboim's vision for a peaceful, music-based coexistence of the peoples of the Middle East developed into a permanent institution with extensive concert tours all around the world.

*The West-Eastern Divan Orchestra will play in Berlin's famous 22,000-seat Waldbühne on Aug. 13.*

IMAGO FUTURE IMAGE; IMAGO/KAI HORSTMANN (RIGHT)

But Barenboim, artistic director and general music director of the Berlin State Opera, wants more. He founded the Barenboim-Said Academy, which will open its doors later this year at the heart of the German (music) capital. Once more, the theme is reconciliation – up to 100 gifted

*Daniel Barenboim*

music students from Israel and Arab countries will receive scholarships for two years of musical training along with general studies in music and the history of the arts. The academy will have its home in the State Opera's former props warehouse, which is currently being refitted for its new purpose. It is just a stone's throw from the famous opera house and will include a 700-seat concert hall designed by star architect Frank Gehry.

Barenboim himself will shoulder the musical and educational directorship of the academy. He calls it a "house of hope." Those who study there will not necessarily become ambassadors for peace, but they will learn to listen to other points of view – not to reject them out of hand – in an atmosphere free from aggression. "The academy can perhaps be viewed as an unusual, even unheard-of experiment," says Barenboim, "one that uses music to promote political development that can lead to mutual understanding." *KG*

# WHAT PURITY LAW?

Johannes Heidenpeter is a Berlin craft brewing pioneer. In the basement of Kreuzberg's Markthalle Neun he's been producing beer the way it was made centuries ago | *Von Nina Anika Klotz*

It's a place that combines the ancient with the avant-garde. Markthalle Neun, the indoor market in Berlin's tony Kreuzberg district, is 120 years old. Its masonry may be refurbished, but ornate, green steel girders still support both its skylit roof and the old lamps suspended over its visitors' heads. This hoary venue hosts Berlin's biggest streetfood events, with a cutting-edge pasta works, a butcher with nothing to hide, a weekly organic market and a pioneer of Berlin's craft beer scene: Heidenpeter.

"Brewing is an ancient skill that captivates me. It's almost archaic," says founder Johannes Heidenpeter, adjusting his cap made of an old flour sack – his trademark. "When I mash the grain and the odor wafts through the whole brewery, I often think, 'this is exactly the way it smelled when people made beer 300 years ago.'" A lovely idea, says the 36-year-old entrepreneur, who taught himself how to brew.

Johannes Heidenpeter is an artist. He came to Berlin to study at an arts academy and then, vectoring his cooking hobby, started at-home brewing – small-scale, with a pot on the stove and a bag of hops he bought online.

What happened next is perhaps the story of craft beer in a nutshell. When Johannes Heidenpeter invited friends and associates to sample his beers, all his tasters were amazed, begging him over and over to start selling his ware. Finally, he did just that. Heidenpeter searched for the right location to brew his beer and settled on Markthalle Neun.

Today he's the boss of a small company with four employees producing 20,000 liters of beer a month. Some is consumed on site, at his little brewpub in the market, but Berlin restaurants and bars also order kegs of his local product. More recently, his beer has become available by the bottle in craft beer specialty shops Germany-wide.

> "The craft beer movement needed time to gather steam in Germany."

Little could he have imagined his future success when, night after work-filled night, he converted the old butcher shop in the market's basement, tearing out its smoker, putting in new flooring and installing an initial, small brewing unit he had built himself. That was just three and a half years ago.

The craft beer movement needed time to gather steam in Germany. In the United States it's been an established industry since the millennium. Garret Oliver, founder of Brooklyn Brewery in New York, one of the country's leading craft breweries, put it this way during a 2012 visit to Berlin: "German beer has always been OK. It was just too OK. Therefore people never really felt the need to drink something else."

That's what gave craft beer its start in the US. After prohibition was abolished, three big breweries came to dominate the entire beer market, and all three brewed the same type of beer: crisp lager. People seeking something different had to make it themselves. That spawned the home brewing scene, from which craft beers eventually emerged.

From the start, Johannes Heidenpeter has been brewing beers that are exotic by German standards. One bestseller is his pale ale; earlier he also made a stout, an IPA and framboise, a beer brewed with raspberries. In a country where brewers are subject to a (supposedly) 500-year-old law dictating that beer shall be brewed from four ingredients only – water, barley malt, hops and yeast – that's a relative rarity, of course.

But Heidenpeter, who taught himself to brew and was therefore never fed any industry orthodoxies, doesn't feel bound to the German Beer Purity Law. For him, brewing beer is and remains an art, meaning it's creative and, above all, free. "You take various ingredients and brew something good out of them. First you have the malt, which gives body. Then you add the hops. And then, if there's something missing, you give it a certain kick. Finally, you throw it in the tank and pack a few fruits in for good measure," he says. He likes working with spices like coriander, verbena and orange peel. Brewers did the same centuries earlier, before the Purity Law was enacted on April 23, 1516. And that's what Heidenpeter likes most: Brewing beer like in the good old days – the good very old days.

*Nina Anika Klotz is a freelance journalist and founder of the craft beer magazine, Hopfenhelden.de ("hops heroes".de)*

HOPFENHELDEN.DE

*Johannes Heidepeter at his brewpub at Markthalle Neun.*

**Berlin establishments serving craft beer:**

**Hops & Barley**
Brew house, Friedrichshain

**Hopfenreich**
Craft beer bar, Kreuzberg

**Salt'n'Bone**
Restaurant with good craft beer menu, Prenzlauer Berg

**Herman**
Beer bar with modern Belgian beers, Prenzlauer Berg

**Berlin Beer Shop**
Beer specialty shop, Moabit



# Endangered species

Berliner Weisse is facing extinction. But Michael Schwab is on a mission to rescue the original Berliner Weisse

The age-old beer-garden source of contention: Is Berliner Weisse tastier with woodruff or raspberry syrup? Whatever the blend, one thing's for sure: it's not the real deal. For centuries, Berliner Weisse – the city's own indigenous style of beer hailed by Napoleon's troops as "the champagne of the north" during their occupation of the Prussian capital – was almost always drunk pure, or very occasionally with a shot of caraway schnapps. The idea of purveying the light, acidic beer in "red" or "green" was a marketing ploy of the early 20th century, when bottom-fermented beers like lager and pilsner began gaining popularity and stealing market share from the Berlin original.

It went so far that, until a few years ago, real Berliner Weisse was no longer brewed in Berlin. As master brewer Michael Schwab explains, even the Berlin original is authentic only when a microorganism named Brettanomyces takes part in the fermentation process. Brettanomyces is a special variety of yeast that gives the Weisse its characteristic aroma. "It can have a sort of animal quality," Schwab adds.

Big breweries don't care much for this yeast because it can infect other beers and alter their taste. That's why Berliner Kindl, a major industrial producer, makes beer without it. However, in his small brewery in Berlin-Moabit, Michael Schwab gets along just fine with "Brett," as the pros call it.

Schwab offers a broad portfolio of craft beers, all linked to Berlin. His imperial stout is called Berliner Nacht. He also brews a Bellevue Pils, after the German president's official residence. His specialty, however, is Original Berliner Weisse, the very name under which it's served in craft beer pubs as far away as New York and Boston. *NAK*

# Variety vacuum

Teaching Germans about beer? Three Americans went ahead and founded Vagabund Brewery in Berlin-Wedding

What an outcry. When Berliners first heard reports of the three Americans behind Vagabund Brewery, national pride was at stake: No Americans will tell us how to brew beer!

Thus Tom Crozier's caution in a 2013 interview: "So it really isn't that German beer is not good." "No really, this is not about quality," assured his business partner Matt Walthall. David Sprengler then clarified: "What's missing is the variety."

That remark sent mugs slamming in anger onto pub tables. A cursory glance at any German supermarket reveals long shelves of beer with no shortage of selection. But look closer and you'll see that, although the number of brands is exceedingly high – Germany has some 1,400 breweries – they almost all make the same kinds of beer: pilsner and lager, wheat beer and, regionally, Kölsch, Alt or black beer. That's not many, given that there are between 120 and 150 varieties of beer.

That's where the fellows at Vagabund – two historians and a journalist, who moonlight as English teachers to make ends meet – took their cue, setting up shop in a less-than-hip yet thoroughly cozy (in their words) part of Wedding to brew beers the likes of which Berlin's legions of veteran guzzlers had never seen nor tasted. Highly recommended are their Sezuan Saison, a Belgian-style beer with coriander and red pepper, and the Double IPA, a big, hoppy, typically American ale with a stately 7.5 percent alcohol content. Vagabund also offers seasonal beers in its taproom. About a thousand liters are brewed here each week, but don't count on always getting what you want. With certain suds, the rule is: when it's gone, it's gone. *NAK*

# One roof

*Pastor Gregor Hohberg, Rabbi Tovia Ben-Chorin and Imam Kadir Sanci (from left to right).*

## A Berlin pastor brings Christians, Jews and Muslims together in the House of One – in the heart of Berlin

*By Benjamin Lassiwe*

When Gregor Hohberg, the Protestant pastor, steps to the altar at St. Mary's Church on Sunday mornings, he is standing in the heart of Berlin. 779 years ago Symeon, provost of Berlin, lived close to this very spot. His name can be found in an original document of Albert the Bear, the Margrave of Brandenburg; it is the first mention ever of the city on Spree, now home to almost 4 million people. And as a pastor in the St. Peter-St. Mary congregation, Hohberg is a direct successor of the man with whom the history of the metropolis began. Granted, Symeon never gave a sermon in St. Mary's; he would have preached where he presided, St. Peter's, the congregation's second church, which was demolished in 1964 by the East German government. Its foundation lay unnoticed for decades under a parking lot; but for a few city historians, no one could recall the nucleus of Berlin until the city archaeologically investigated the area. "The old city hall was found, a Latin academy – and the foundation of four St. Peter's churches," says Gregor Hohberg as he sits in a pew at the Gothic house of worship. Surrounding him is a series of paintings once donated to St. Mary's by the citizens of Berlin. Tombs line the walls. The history of the city is alive all through St. Mary's. It is no wonder that the congregation was interested in the excavations. "We held a service in the middle of the foundation." He quickly clarified: "But we wanted to come back here."

Today, Gregor Hohberg and his congregations are known the world over – they are planning a unique project. While in Dresden the destroyed Church of Our Lady was rebuilt, and has since become one of Germany's greatest tourist attractions, the site of the old St. Peter's Church will be home to something completely new: the House of One. A building where all three Abrahamic faiths will be at home: Christianity, Judaism and Islam. A church, a synagogue and a mosque will be housed in separate sacral spaces, but under the same roof. There will be Friday prayers, Eucharist services and Sabbath observances in the same structure – and a whole lot of dialogue between the religions. "We want to show, in the center of the city, how we as religions coexist in peace," say Hohberg. The theologian came to St. Mary's in 2002 as a pastor. Almost immediately there were encounters with members of other religions. "Muslims came into the church, tourists, and asked if they could pray here," said Hohberg. "In the parish council we decided that this should be possible." The congregation is very open-minded; their offerings should serve all people in the city. This corresponds perfectly to Hohberg's brand of theology; the 48-year-old has spent his entire professional life at large houses of worship in Berlin. He was a theologian at the Berlin Cathedral and vicar at the Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church. And he has always focused on how the congregations and large houses of worship in the center of the city can reach modern individuals with their programs. "But one of the pivotal questions is how people of various origins can live together in peace," says Hohberg. The House of One will seek answers to this question.

> "We want to show how we as religions coexist in peace."

Without partners, of course, this would be next to impossible. "With the Jewish community this was not all that difficult," said Hohberg. In Germany, the Jewish community is largely organized in unified congregations: Orthodox and liberal factions come together under the same roof. The only problem was that many Jewish communities in Germany lack trained rabbis, even the Berlin congregation, which is why it was decided bring Potsdam's Abraham Geiger College on board as a training center. Andreas Nachama, the son of the legendary choirmaster Estrongo Nachama, who has been a rabbi at the former American military synagogue on Hüttenweg in Berlin-Dahlem since 1999, is now the Jewish representative on the House of One team. The search for a Muslim partner was a bit more complicated, as Germany's Muslims are fragmented into a countless number of currents and groups. There is not simply one contact. For almost two full years Hohberg and his fellow campaigners were engaged in talks. An important, yet far from straightforward condition was that the mosque at the House of One, just like the Christian church and the synagogue, must also be welcoming to other variants of its faith and prepared for open dialogue. "Our project is placing us squarely in the public sphere; we want to show how we live our faiths," says Hohberg. "Several Muslim group we spoke with were unable to embrace this transparency requirement." The eventual choice was the Forum for Intercultural Dialogue, which is closely associated with the Turkish preacher Fetullah Gülen. Many experts on Islam, however, consider the Gülen movement to be fundamentalist. It is forbidden in Turkey. But in Berlin it has been experienced differently. "This partner, which is well networked and has been very active in Germany in terms of dialogue and education, has fulfilled our expectations splendidly," says Hohberg. Imam Kadir Sanci is now working with and alongside Hohberg and Nachama.

PICTURES: WWW.HOUSE-OF-ONE.DE

*Church, synagogue and mosque: a rendering of the future House of One.*

The House of One as a dialogue project is already running at full steam. But it may be some time before the impressive building in the center of Berlin becomes a reality. The association is dependent on donations. In 2014 a crowdfunding campaign was launched and "over one million euros have since been raised," says Hohberg. People from over 201 countries have visited the website while donations have been received from 50 different countries across the globe. "But that's not enough," says Hohberg. At least €10 million is needed for the association to begin construction on the building estimated to cost 40 million. "What we need is a large donor," says Hohberg, glancing at the epitaphs on the walls of St. Mary's church. "Someone who supports the new House of One the same way the citizens of Berlin once upheld their church on Alexanderplatz."

*Benjamin Lassiwe works as religious affairs correspondent for several German newspapers.*



# GREENER PASTURES

## Pál Dárdai has remolded Hertha BSC into a top team with lofty ambitions | *By Frank Bachner*

The millionaires took each other's hands, formed a circle and the fun began. They tapped the ball to one another, but it was not allowed to touch the ground. All the while the circle moved forward like a giant crab… 20 meters, 30 meters. All the players screeched with laughter like little boys at the pool.

Their coach stood by, nodding in satisfaction. The circle was a therapeutic strategy instigated by Pál Dárdai, the new coach for Hertha BSC; it was his first day on the job, and the circle was the first exercise. He wanted his players to laugh, to feel happy again, to be relaxed, and to approach the coming matches with newfound motivation.

It was Feb. 5, 2015. Time would tell whether Pal Dárdai was getting it right. His predecessor, the Dutchman Jos Luhukay, had been sent on leave; Hertha was almost at the bottom of the Bundesliga table; the players couldn't manage to come to terms with Luhukay's authoritarian style of leadership. Dárdai, a Hungarian, saved Hertha from relegation – but only just.

IMAGO/CONTRAST

*True love, new love: Pál Dárdai and defensive midfielder Niklas Stark, a team and a city.*

Today, soccer-loving Berliners are dreaming of the big time; Hertha BSC is number four in Germany's premier division and in a good position to qualify for the Champions League; the team also reached the DFB Cup semifinals and has beaten one big Bundesliga team after another. And all this with a refreshingly offensive game that's fun to watch. The defensive battles of recent years are a thing of the past.

The 40-year-old Dárdai has significantly changed the capital's club. Dárdai has an impish, mischievous laugh, plants flower bulbs in his garden for relaxation and misses the hot soup for lunch his mother used to make. As head coach for Hertha, he just doesn't have the time. He works unceasingly for the club, and does so without affectation – Dárdai has kept his feet squarely on the ground. The man is the embodiment of team spirit; he defended his team after a five-nil shellacking by Mönchengladbach but later kicked Änis Ben-Hatira off the team for hitting a fellow player.

Dárdai took the field 286 times as a player for Hertha – that's more than any other man in the history of the club. He was a monster at midfield; although not a technically outstanding player, he moved about the pitch as if every ball was his. "The fans are behind me. They know I've always worked for the club," he says.

Giving him the job was a risk. Before taking the reins, Dárdai had only coached Hertha's under-15s and did not even have a professional license, although he had been head coach of the Hungarian national team. Thus, general manager Michael Preetz gave him an assistant coach who had a license and Dárdai would acquire his own at a later date. He gave up coaching Hungary in July 2015.

> "He had been with Hertha through thick and thin and knew how to build up the players."

Dárdai was practical, and that was what counted. He had been with Hertha through thick and thin and knew how to build up the players. "We all have a lot of self-confidence," says top-scorer Salomon Kalou. Kalou hails from Ivory Coast, was a Champions League winner with FC Chelsea in 2012, but kept missing his chances under Luhukay, scoring just six goals last season. Under Dárdai he scored three goals against Hanover alone. So far this season he has 14 goals through 28 matches.

The second reason for Hertha's success? Dárdai's rigorous training regimen. "He demanded a lot as we prepared for the season," says captain Fabian Lustenberger. The team now has the strength to put pressure on its opponents. And Hertha has fewer injuries than under Luhukay, despite the heavy training.

Precisely this fact "plays a huge role," says Frank Brenner. "The team has fewer injuries because it now has exercise trainers and physiotherapists." Brenner is a respected osteopath and physiotherapist who has worked with Bundesliga teams VfL Wolfsburg, Hamburg SV and Bayer Leverkusen and is currently employed by the German Football Association. "You can't prevent every single injury," says Brenner, "but injured players are now back on their feet faster than they used to be."

Brenner was meant to work with Hertha, too – Preetz wanted to hire him while Luhukay was coach. But Luhukay refused, claiming he had enough coaches. That's why Hertha had no exercise trainers or physiotherapists. Brenner still doesn't understand it. "Every professional club has people like that. They do exercises with the players to help prevent injuries."

When Dárdai became head coach, he immediately hired two exercise trainers and physiotherapists, but Brenner was no longer available. Hertha can now more frequently field a well-coordinated and winning team.

But its head coach remains grounded, regardless of whether Hertha wins or loses. During the winter break he said "we're making a mistake if we feel satisfied now." Dárdai himself is only satisfied when sitting on his lawnmower, twice a week – Tuesdays and Fridays. With disarming honesty he told *11 Freunde* magazine that "my neighbors probably think I'm not right in the head." Well, only if they're not Hertha fans.

*Frank Bachner is staff writer at the Berlin daily* Tagesspiegel.

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