Guide to Jazz Musicians coming to Berlin

By this time it might be a cliché to quote Klaus Wowereit, the governing city mayor, who described Berlin as “poor but sexy”. Since 2004, when this quote was spread out all over the place things have changed somehow, Berlin is no longer quite as poor, it became more expensive and also more attractive. From the grey and regime censured city to the creative and open-minded *mecca* for artists, musicians, bohemians and dreamers, Berlin still remains sexy.

Since the Wall came down the art and culture scene have exploded in Berlin. Many abandoned buildings, huge spaces and cheap rent created the right conditions for artists to live cheaply and pursue their work. Musicians, artists and writers moved to neighbourhoods of Soviet era buildings, blogs and studios in East Berlin where they started their hedonistic lifestyle.

No wonder the music industry is the main driver of the Berlin’s economy. Around 2100 music industry companies are based in Berlin and more than 16 000 Berliners are working in the music industry which generated sales of more than 700 million Euros. If you happen to be another Jazz musician coming to the town, you better check this guide out which will provide you with detailed information about how to settle down, explore the microcosmos of creativity and how to expand your talent in Berlin.

Find a Wohnung

First of all you need a place to live. You have got two options, you can rent out your own place or you can live in WG (Wohngemeinschaften, in English flat share). Finding the perfect flat in Berlin has become increasingly difficult over the past years due to the general gentrification of many parts of the city, however it is easier than in other cities as Stockholm, Paris or London. If you want to rent your own place it is probably going to be unfurnished, sometimes even without the kitchen, just the sink. Most rentals involve an application to a Property Management group (Hausverwaltung) which takes care of the building for the landlord. You will have to provide evidence of financial stability, steady pay checks, six months of earnings in Germany or at least you will need a contract of employment.

[www.immowelt.de](http://www.immowelt.de)

[www.immonet.de](http://www.immonet.de)

[www.immobilienscout24.de](http://www.immobilienscout24.de)

[www.wohnung-jetzt.de](http://www.wohnung-jetzt.de)

[www.suche-neue-wohnung.de](http://www.suche-neue-wohnung.de)

The other, easier option of living is WG. In other European cities flat share might be considered as a sign of poverty but in Germany they are extremely popular among students and young professional. It is excellent way of saving money and it’s suitable for people who enjoy company. The best place to start is wg-gesucht.de where you can find nice room for relatively cheap. Some people say that there is no point of searching before you actually get here but many people are willing to do skype interview.

[www.wg-gesucht.de](http://www.wg-gesucht.de)

[www.studenten-wg.de](http://www.studenten-wg.de)

[www.berlin.en.craigslist.de](http://www.berlin.en.craigslist.de)

Get a job

As at every beginning you will need enough cash flow to support your music career. Even if some music company or people are paying for your record, recording, support etc. you will still need to have the freedom to pursue opportunities as they come. The fact is that it is not that difficult to find a job here, but what’s much harder, is to find a stable job which is related to you field of study. If you are thinking of Berlin as a long-run place to be than there is one thing you should know: You won’t progress far without speaking German! You will have to master German if you want to get a proper job. I am sure there are people not having any knowledge of German living in Berlin but if you really want to get deep you have no choice. There are also many people coming to Berlin to enjoy and experience the “sweet life”, stay for a year and afterwards they leave because they don’t have enough financial resources to support themselves anymore. However, Berlin has a vivid start-up scene where you can find many employment opportunities to support yourself while building up your jazz career.

<http://www.deutsche-startups.de>

<http://venturevillage.eu/jobs/>

<http://berlinstartupjobs.com/>

<http://berlinstartupmap.com/>

<http://www.gruenderszene.de/jobboerse/>

<http://www.rocket-internet.de/jobs>

<http://www.teameurope.net/en/career/>

<http://www.project-a.com/karriere/>

<http://www.work-in-berlin.com/jobs>

<http://www.i-potentials.de/>

<http://www.berliner-jobmarkt.de/>

<http://www.toytowngermany.com/jobs/>

<http://www.jobsinberlin.eu/>

<http://berlin.xpatjobs.com/jobs>

Deutsch lernen

Many people living in Berlin manage with very little German. However it pays off to learn the language, especially if you want to live here for longer and start business. Also most owners of Jazz clubs in Berlin will prefer to correspond with you in German. There are many ways how to become a master. You have to consider that there are good teachers and bad teachers. One of the best language teachers can be found at the universities but it is not the cheapest option (3 weeks intensive course costs €400). Good language courses are also offered at the city community colleges which are called Volkshochschule (usually you pay around €177 per month). There is also Goethe Institute which is the most famous language school but in this case you have to bear in mind the very high price (4 hours a day for one month can cost you more than €1000).

Humboldt University Berlin

[www.sprachenzentrum.hu-berlin.de](http://www.sprachenzentrum.hu-berlin.de/erasmus-deutsch-intensivkurse/maerz/intensivkurs)

Freie University Berlin

[www.sprachenzentrum.fu-berlin.de](http://www.sprachenzentrum.fu-berlin.de/)

Goethe-Institut

[www.goethe.de](http://www.goethe.de)

Hartnackschule

[www.hartnackschule-berlin.de/](http://www.hartnackschule-berlin.de/)

If you don’t want to spend any money for language course you can become a self-learner. There is a wide range of media which can help you to gain deeper knowledge of German.

[Zattoo](http://zattoo.com/) – live stream German TV and radio, and watch Spiegel TV on demand, for free.  
Deutsche Welle – get the news and other current affairs programmes as audio and video.  
[Learn German for Free](http://www.openculture.com/free_german_lessons) – kostenlos audio lessons on the Open Culture website.  
[Radiant-Flux](http://diary.radiant-flux.net/2012/07/deutsch-lernen/) - Patrick Wilken’s own blog tackles the issue of “Deutsch lernen”.

Music schools in Berlin

Many people are coming to Berlin to become musicians or DJs. Some of them have natural talent and others have to work hard to master the techniques. Being a musician of any kind (from jazz to techno) it requires inspiration, practice and commitment. Some people might think that studying music might be waste of time, nevertheless knowing the music theory and how to compose music is crucial. There are plenty of music school in Berlin which can help you to expand your knowledge and practical skills. *Jazzschule* offers wide range of courses, from private lessons to group courses, which are taught by various musicians, including Claus Rückbeil, director of the school. You can experience the taste of the Wild West in the East of Berlin on Viktoriastraße 10. Another place to profound your jazz skills might be *Hanns Eisler Academy of Music* which offers training in classical performance, conducting, composition, vocal coaching, instrumentation and arranging, voice, jazz and popular music. In July 2005 Hanns Eisler Academy of Music joined the University of the Arts and founded the Jazz Institute Berlin (JIB) where you can choose from jazz theory, music history, ear training, and recording technology to Master of jazz which is a joint master degree offered by the conservatories of Amsterdam, Berlin, Paris, Copenhagen and Trondheim.

Jazzschule

[www.jazzschule-berlin.de](http://www.jazzschule-berlin.de)

[Jazz Institute Berlin](http://www.jazz-institut-berlin.de/)  
[www.jazz-institut-berlin.de](http://www.jazz-institut-berlin.de/)

[Hanns Eisler Academy of Music](http://www.hfm-berlin.de/)

[www.hfm-berlin.de](http://www.hfm-berlin.de)

Other Universities to study

[The Berlin University of the Arts](http://www.udk-berlin.de/) (Universität der Künste Berlin - UdK), School of Music offers programs for orchestra musicians, conductors, composers and church musicians. It is also one of two universities in Germany that grant degrees in audio engineering.

[www.udk-berlin.de](http://www.udk-berlin.de)

[Humboldt University of Berlin](http://www.hu-berlin.de/), Musicology Department including the Popular Music Research Center (Forschungszentrum Populäre Musik)

[www.musikundmedien.hu-berlin.de/musikwissenschaft](http://www.musikundmedien.hu-berlin.de/musikwissenschaft)

[Freie Universität Berlin](http://www.fu-berlin.de/), Institute for Musicology  
Courses of study including music theory of antiquity, aesthetics of music, history of notation, composition, works, styles and genres, as well as the history of performance and social history of music through the present.

[www.fu-berlin.de](http://www.fu-berlin.de)

[Academy of the Arts](http://www.adk.de/) (Akademie der Künste)  
[www.adk.de](http://www.adk.de)

Space to practice

Listening to a concert in the concert hall is a very different experience compared to listening to your neighbour practising. Usually serious musicians practice for hours with repetitive and systematic techniques which can bring the worst out of pleasant neighbours. Practising in your apartment won’t be probably the best idea. However Berlin offers many spaces to where you can practice for hours and hours. One of the best places is the *ORWOhaus* which is an old industrial building from the 70’s which was increasingly used by bands for rehearsal space in Marzhan. It offers a unique 2500sq.m. of space which is used for meetings, studios and music services. If you prefer something in Mitte, *Super-Sessions* offer rehearsal rooms which are sound-insulated and ventilated, approximately between 10 and 35 square meters in size and hence are suitable for single musicians as well as bands. The standard fee for one hour session is 6€. If you are not really a fan of rehearsal studios you can rent your own space which can cost you around 250€ per month.

[www.noisy-musicworld.com/rooms.html](http://www.noisy-musicworld.com/rooms.html)

[www.super-sessions.de/](http://www.super-sessions.de/)

[www.orwohaus.de](http://www.orwohaus.de/)

[www.schallmauer-ev.de](http://www.schallmauer-ev.de/)

[www.jugendnetz-berlin.de](http://jugendnetz-berlin.de/de/jugendarbeit/promix-auskopplungen.php)

[www.proberaumberlin.de](http://www.proberaumberlin.de/)

[www.tanzraumberlin.de](http://www.tanzraumberlin.de/index.php?article_id=23)

[www.artconnectberlin.com/spaces](http://www.artconnectberlin.com/spaces)

Musicians to Musicians

If you planning to establish a band and searching for other musicians it would be efficient to make online portfolio at ARTCONNECT BERLIN which is a networking platform for the creative community of Berlin. It provides an easy way to connect with other people from the creative class. You can also find out about job opportunities, events or even about studios and space which you can work in. Other option might be the Jazz musicians’ pool by us which is a forum that connects the international and local musicians in Berlin.

[www.artconnectberlin.com](http://www.artconnectberlin.com)

[www.jazzclubsinberlin.com](http://www.jazzclubsinberlin.com)

ww[www.berlin.en.craigslist.de/muc/](http://www.berlin.en.craigslist.de/muc/)

www.musolist.com/Germany/Berlin/Musician-Wanted

[www.jazzguitar.be/forum/musicians-seeking-musicians](http://www.jazzguitar.be/forum/musicians-seeking-musicians)

Make connections

In the music industry it is not about ‘what do you know’ but ‘who knows you’. One of the most important aspects of connections in the music industry is how deep your relations are and what it can bring you in the future. You don’t want to simply know people but on the contrary you should establish a relationship with other musicians, writers, club owners, bands. The best way to do that is to go simply out and meet people. Go to the jazz sessions that many clubs offer, get to know what is going on in the town, what are the jazz meetings, any concert you might be interested in.

[www.berliner-adressen.de](http://www.berliner-adressen.de) [www.jazz-guide-berlin.de/](http://www.jazz-guide-berlin.de/)  
[www.smoothjazz-berlin.de/](http://www.smoothjazz-berlin.de/)  
[www.jazzmeeting-berlin.de/](http://www.jazzmeeting-berlin.de/)  
[www.eventim.de/cgi-bin/TINFO.DLL?su...;sort\_direction](http://www.eventim.de/cgi-bin/TINFO.DLL?su...;sort_direction)=  
[www.berlinerfestspiele.de/](http://www.berlinerfestspiele.de/)  
[www.jazz-in-town.de/en/](http://www.jazz-in-town.de/en/)

[www.exberliner.com](http://www.exberliner.com)

Recording your jazz tones

When you finally come to the stage where you want to record your own music there are several options to do so in Berlin. If you are looking for a studio with a calm atmosphere, good equipment and the right people you might consider the *LowSwing* Studio. The studio is located in the middle of Berlin and can offer the best of analogue, digital, vintage and new equipment. Another alternative can be the legendary *Hansa Studio* which is well known among English performing musicians such as Nick Cave, David Bowie or Iggy Pop who made their recordings here. A team of first-class engineers and assistants will accompany you in the studio space that is flooded with daylight and equipped with classic analogue and digital equipment. If you are looking for a low-cost recording *One Million Mangos* might be the right catch. The OMM studio offers recording to either high resolution digital or to analogue tape. For recording, mixing or mastering at the studio, the price is charged per day (200€) and for mixing and mastering online, the price is charged per track (30€). Among other highly recommended is also *Audio Sound Arts* which consists of two live rooms with daylight and one dead room. Depending on your project, you can also work other rooms as well, like the famous “Meistersaal” where a lot of top artists recorded (Kurt Tucholsky, U2, Herbert Grönemeyer etc.) and which is the oldest hall that survived the Second World War.

If you are up for a challenge there is also an option where you don’t have to pay anything at all to record your jazz tones. Each year, the federal state of Berlin financially supports Berlin jazz bands and musicians with their *Jazz Studio Project*. The *Jazz Studio Project* offers Berlin jazz bands and musicians with their own musical concept and professional approach the chance to have high quality recordings made in the recording studio of their choice. The chosen recording studio does not have to be in Berlin, it could be a studio somewhere else in Germany or even, in some cases, abroad. The funding is provided only for the cost of using the studio, any other additional fees for the musicians or travel cost are not paid. If there is no specific deadline for submission, all applications should be submitted by the end of the year for the following year. Good luck!

Jazz Studio project

<http://www.berlin.de/sen/kultur/foerderung/informationen/maininfo.html#K2>

LowSwing Studio

[www.lowswing.de](http://www.lowswing.de)

Hansa Studio

[www.hansastudios.de](http://www.hansastudios.de)

One Million Mangos (OMM)

[www.onemillionmangos.com](http://www.onemillionmangos.com)

Audio Sound Arts

[www.audiosoundarts.com](http://www.audiosoundarts.com)

Other Recording Studios

Emil Berliner Studios

[www.emil-berliner-studios.com](http://www.emil-berliner-studios.com)

Hot Milk Studio

[www.hotmilkstudio.de](http://www.hotmilkstudio.de)

Planet Earth Studios

[www.planet-earth-recordings.com](http://www.planet-earth-recordings.com)

Retox Studio

[www.retoxstudio.com](http://www.retoxstudio.com)

Tricone Studios

[www.triconestudios.com](http://www.triconestudios.com)