



Bündnis InterReligiöses Deutschland e.V.

BIRD

People First – United Through Music

11 Years of Living Interfaith Dialogue



People First. United Through Music..

How It All Began

In 2015, an idea was born in Dresden that at first seemed almost impossible.

People of different faiths no longer wanted to talk about one another. They wanted to create something together — not through debate, but through music.

*This vision led to the founding of **BIRD – Alliance for Interfaith Germany**.*

Christians, Muslims, Jews, Buddhists, Hindus, Bahá'ís, Sikhs and people of no religious affiliation came together to organise interfaith peace concerts.

**Not despite their differences.
But because of them.**

For diversity was never seen as a problem.

It was seen as a strength.

Since 2015, BIRD has organised interfaith peace concerts under the motto:

“People First. United Through Music.”



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An Idea Became a Movement

What began in 2015 with a small group of committed individuals has grown into a Germany-wide network for interfaith dialogue..

The first encounters became friendships. Shared projects created trust.. Today, BIRD – Alliance for Interfaith Germany brings together faith communities, associations, artists and dedicated volunteers from across the country.

They are united by one shared conviction:

Peace begins where people meet.

With the founding of **Ensemble Coexist** in 2023, this vision gained an international voice.

Today, musicians from Israel, Palestine, Syria, Egypt, Türkiye and Germany bring this vision to life on stage together.

**Not despite their differences.
But because they enrich one another**

BIRD Today



FOUNDED
2015



MEMBERS
35 organisations
and public figures



PEACE CONCERTS
Across Germany



ENSEMBLE COEXIST
Since 2023



GUIDING PRINCIPLE
"People First.
United Through Music."

2015 – The Beginning of a Movement

An interfaith cultural festival marked the beginning of an idea that continues to bring people together today.

In September 2015, BIRD took a step that was considered unusual at the time.

People of different faiths were invited not only to engage in dialogue, but to create culture together.

The first Interfaith Cultural Festival, held at Dresden's historic Church of the Holy Cross (Kreuzkirche), brought together representatives of Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, the Bahá'í Faith and Sikhism.

More than 200 artists, musicians and volunteers took part in the festival.

Its overwhelmingly positive response demonstrated a strong desire for encounter, mutual respect and peaceful coexistence across religious boundaries..



Dresdner Neueste Nachrichten – August 2015

The First Cultural Festival

- *September 2015*
- *Church of the Holy Cross (Kreuzkirche), Dresden*
- *More than 200 participants*
- *Seven faith traditions*
- *he beginning of a movement that continues to grow today*

"People First. United Through Music."

Where Encounters Become Community

In September 2015, a vision became reality.

More than 200 participants representing seven faith traditions and thousands of visitors turned Dresden's first Interfaith Cultural Festival into a powerful symbol of peace, mutual respect and lived diversity.

What began during one remarkable weekend grew over the following years into an expanding movement for interfaith dialogue, cultural exchange and mutual understanding.



People of different faiths – united by a shared commitment to peace, dialogue and mutual respect



Every encounter begins with a conversation.



A growing interest in a culture of encounter.



Where words end, music begins..



The grand finale of the 3rd Interfaith Peace Concert, "People First. United Through Music" (2017).

Music as a Bridge Between Faiths

Music has been at the heart of BIRD since its foundation.

It is far more than a form of artistic expression. Music creates encounters where language, cultural backgrounds or religious differences might otherwise keep people apart.

Making music together means listening to one another, responding to one another and allowing trust to grow — values that lie at the very heart of interfaith dialogue.

Over the years, BIRD's peace concerts have become powerful symbols of this shared commitment.

Musicians from different faiths and cultural backgrounds have taken to the stage together, demonstrating that diversity does not divide us — it enriches us.

In this way, music has become a universal language that connects people and builds bridges between faiths, cultures and generations.

**Music does not require a common language
— it creates understanding.**

Music Connects

CONCERTS AS A SIGN OF PEACE

11

INTERFAITH
PEACE CONCERTS

held at Dresden's
Church of the Holy Cross
since 2015

20,000+

AUDIENCE MEMBERS

in total

UNITED ON ONE STAGE

Musicians from different faiths
and cultural backgrounds

CONCERTS AS LIVING DIALOGUE

Performances at the Church of the Holy Cross –
a place of encounter and
mutual understanding

MUSIC BUILDS BRIDGES

Connecting people across faiths,
cultures and generations

When Music Connects



Making music together: Estelle Akta (Israel) and Badee Alhindi (Palestine).

When music begins, nationality, religion and language fade into the background

What matters is listening to one another, trusting one another and embracing the willingness to create something new together.

BIRD's Interfaith Peace Concerts bring musicians from different faiths, cultures and national backgrounds together in the sanctuary of Dresden's Church of the Holy Cross (Kreuzkirche).

What often divides people elsewhere becomes the foundation of a shared musical experience.

Through intensive rehearsals, mutual respect grows into friendship, and dialogue continues long after the final note has been played.

In this way, music becomes a common language — connecting people where words alone are often not enough..



Cellist Danielle Akta (Israel) performing at the 11th Interfaith Peace Concert.

A Diversity of Musical Traditions



The Interfaith Peace Concerts bring together not only people of different faiths, but also musical traditions from across the world.

European classical music meets Middle Eastern melodies, Jewish liturgical music and traditional instruments from Asia.

The result is a concert experience in which different musical traditions do not simply exist side by side—they merge into one shared musical language.

Duong Huyen Ly performing on the đàn t'rung, a traditional Vietnamese bamboo xylophone.)



Woodwinds and strings in musical dialogue



International soloists performing together with the orchestra
Weiter mit Seite 9

An Evening That Brings People



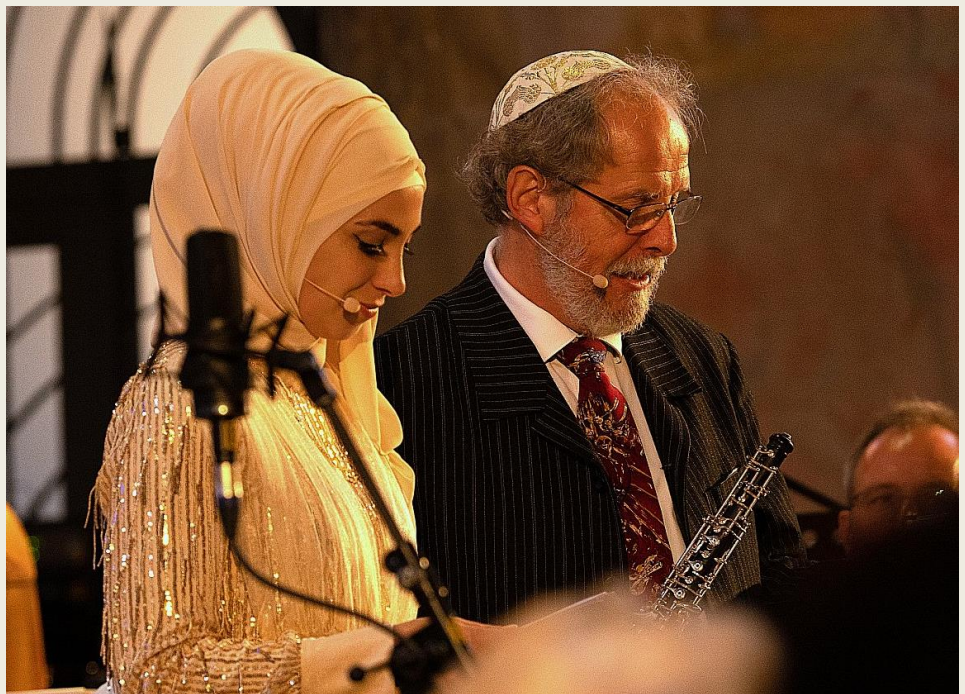
The Interfaith Peace Concerts do not end with the final note.

They create encounters between people of different faiths, cultures and generations.

On stage and among the audience, moments of mutual respect, joy and trust come to life.

Music becomes a shared language—one that transcends nationality, faith and native language.

Many visitors tell us that it is these personal encounters that make the concerts such a memorable and meaningful experience.



Jewish and Muslim voices guiding the audience through the evening together.

Ensemble Coexist – Interfaith Dialogue Brought to Life



Ensemble Coexist performed at the award ceremony of the Association for Civic Engagement (VGE), where BIRD was honoured for its outstanding contribution to social cohesion and civic engagement.

From Vision to Impact

BIRD – Alliance for Interfaith Germany is more than a network for interfaith dialogue. It also develops its own initiatives that transform encounter, cooperation and social cohesion into lived experience. The most prominent of these is Ensemble Coexist—an international interfaith chamber ensemble that has brought together musicians from different faiths, cultures and countries since its founding in 2023. Through the universal language of music, the ensemble demonstrates that peaceful coexistence is not merely an aspiration, but a reality that can be experienced on stage. The social impact of this vision has also received public recognition. BIRD was honoured by the Association for Civic Engagement (VGE) for its contribution to strengthening social cohesion. At the award ceremony, Ensemble Coexist provided the musical programme—an inspiring example of how music can build bridges between people.



Ensemble Coexist – Interfaith Dialogue Brought to Life Through Music



ENSEMBLE COEXIST

Music Connects What Politics Often Divides.

 FOUNDED 2023	 MUSICIANS FROM • Israel • Palestine • Syria • Egypt • Türkiye • Germany • Portugal • Poland	 FAITH TRADITIONS • Judaism • Islam • Christianity • Druze Faith • Buddhism • Non-religious artists	 ENSEMBLE Professional vocalists, instrumentalists and chamber musicians	 REPERTOIRE • Classical music • Jewish music • Arabic folklore • Original compositions • Interfaith arrangements	 OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLE <i>We do not make music despite our differences – we make music because of them.</i>
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“ *Music cannot resolve global conflicts. But it can bring together people who might otherwise never have met.* **”**

Ensemble Coexist – A Project of BIRD

Ensemble Coexist was founded in 2023 in response to the renewed escalation of the conflict in the Middle East.

BIRD – Alliance for Interfaith Germany brought together professional musicians from Israel, Palestine, Syria, Egypt, Türkiye, Germany and other countries to make a visible statement for peace, dialogue and our shared humanity.

What began as a courageous idea quickly evolved into a nationally recognised cultural initiative. Concert tours have taken the ensemble to churches, synagogues, cultural centres and concert halls across Germany, where thousands of people have experienced how music can build bridges where words often reach their limits.

The Association for Civic Engagement (VGE) honoured not only the artistic excellence of Ensemble Coexist, but above all BIRD's outstanding contribution to interfaith dialogue and social cohesion..

**Music cannot resolve global conflicts.
But it can bring together people who might otherwise never have met.**

ENSEMBLE COEXIST

On Tour Across Germany – 2025

11 concerts in 11 cities –
bringing people together
across faiths, cultures
and borders.



ENSEMBLE COEXIST 2025



11
Concerts



Approx. 2,750
Audience Members



11
Cities



30+
Local Cooperation
Partners



Nationwide
Concert Tour



Supported by
the German Federal
Ministry of the Interior
and Community

Within just a few months, Ensemble Coexist developed into a cultural initiative recognised throughout Germany.

The concert tour brought the ensemble to churches, synagogues, cultural centres and civic institutions in cooperation with local partners across the country.

More than 2,700 audience members experienced how music can build bridges between religions, cultures and nations.

OUR TOUR STATIONS 2025

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Dietzenbach	München	Tübingen	Passau	Köln	Herford	Dresden	Osnabrück	Stuttgart	Frankfurt	Weimar
5 June 2025	12 July 2025	13 July 2025	19 July 2025	20 July 2025	3 August 2025	24 August 2025	30 August 2025	6 November 2025	8 November 2025	9 November 2025
Kreuzsaal des Rathauses	Herz-Jesu Kirche	Fußgängerzone	Universitätskirche St. Nikola	St. Karl-Kirche	Ev.-Luth. Marien-Kirchengemeinde Stift Berg	Jüdische Kultusgemeinde	Lutherkirche	FachTagung der ACK	Marienkirche	Herderkirche

In 2025, Ensemble Coexist toured 11 cities across Germany, supported by the German Federal Ministry of the Interior and Community (BMI).

In cooperation with the **Federal Congress of Councils of Religions in Germany**, concerts took place in churches, synagogues, cultural institutions and public venues.

The tour reached **more than 2,700 audience members**, demonstrating how music can foster dialogue, trust and peaceful coexistence across religious and cultural boundaries.

Following the tour's outstanding success, the project received **renewed federal funding for 2026**, enabling Ensemble Coexist to continue its nationwide concert series.

COOPERATION & SUPPORT



Federal Congress
of Councils of Religions
in Germany



Supported by
the German Federal
Ministry of the Interior
and Community
(BMI)

Together for Dialogue. Together for Peace.



When the Music Ends, the Dialogue Begins



Tübingen

The concerts did not end with the final note. After every performance, audience members were invited to meet the musicians and continue the conversation. Music became encounter. And encounter often became the beginning of new perspectives, new friendships and lasting dialogue. These conversations were never an optional part of the programme. They were an essential part of Ensemble Coexist's artistic vision.

**Music Builds Trust.
Trust Creates Dialogue.**



Weimar



München



Herford

**Dialogue was never an addition to the concert.
It was part of the artistic concept itself..**

BIRD Creates Spaces for Dialogue

Konzerte · Workshops · Dialogveranstaltungen · Friedensgebete · Begegnungsprojekte

Interfaith dialogue does not take place only on the concert stage.

Throughout the year, BIRD organises dialogue events, workshops, panel discussions and community projects that bring people of different faiths and worldviews into direct personal encounter.

These initiatives create safe and welcoming spaces where listening, mutual understanding and lasting relationships can grow.



"From Person to Person"

Dialogue event as part of the International Weeks Against Racism



Abraham's Children Peace Festival

Annual musical contribution to the Peace Festival at Dresden City Hall



Rally for Freedom of Religion

A shared public stand against hatred, discrimination and exclusion



Interfaith Calligraphy Workshop

Discovering dialogue through art and shared creativity



Interfaith Prayer for Peace

People of different faiths praying together for peace and reconciliation

"There will be no peace among the nations without peace among the religions.

There will be no peace among the religions without dialogue among the religions."

Hans Küng.Global Ethic Foundation

The People Behind BIRD



BIRD is built on the commitment of its members..

Since its foundation, people of different faiths, cultures and worldviews have volunteered their time and expertise to promote encounter, dialogue and social cohesion.

Many contribute their professional, cultural and religious experience, helping to shape projects, events and long-term partnerships.

As BIRD continues to grow, so does its membership.

The photograph shown here features members from the organisation's early years and reflects the interfaith spirit that continues to define BIRD today.

BIRD AT A GLANCE



FOUNDED

2015 in Dresden, Germany



MEMBERS

People of different faiths, cultures and worldviews



CORE ACTIVITIES

- Interfaith dialogue
- Music and cultural projects
- Education
- Community engagement
- Peacebuilding



FOUNDER OF

Ensemble Coexist



PARTNERSHIPS

- Religious communities
- Municipalities
- Educational institutions
- Civil society organisations



ORGANISATION

Entirely volunteer-led

Achieving More Together – Our Network

Interfaith dialogue can only succeed through collaboration.

For many years, BIRD – Alliance for Interfaith Germany has worked closely with faith communities, civil society organisations, municipalities, cultural institutions and educational partners. These collaborations give rise to concerts, dialogue events, educational programmes and peace initiatives throughout Germany. Together, they create lasting opportunities for encounter, mutual understanding and social cohesion.

Gefördert durch:



Bundesministerium
des Innern
und für Heimat

aufgrund eines Beschlusses
des Deutschen Bundestages

Kulturstiftung
des
Freistaates
Sachsen

gefördert durch
das Amt für Kultur und
Denkmalschutz



Dresden.
DIEZIGU



Ostsächsische
Sparkasse Dresden

WEISST
DU ER
ICH BIN?

Das Projekt der drei großen Religionen
für friedliches Zusammenleben in Deutschland

BKRR
Bundeskongress der Räte der Religionen


HOUSE OF ONE
DREI RELIGIONEN. EIN HAUS.

FORUMDIALOG
GEMEINSAME WERTE - GESELLSCHAFTLICHE VIELFALT

 **STIFTUNG
WELTETHOS**



NEUMANN & MÜLLER
VERANSTALTUNGSTECHNIK



**Semperoper
Dresden**



A STRONG NETWORK OF PARTNERS



Dialogue grows through cooperation.

BIRD works with faith communities, public institutions, educational organisations and civil society partners across Germany.



The organisations shown here represent a **selection** of the **many partners** who support our shared mission.

Where Encounters Become Lasting Relationships



The challenges of our time remind us how essential places of encounter have become.

That is why BIRD – Alliance for Interfaith Germany will continue to bring together people of different faiths, cultures and worldviews through music, dialogue, education and shared civic engagement.

With new projects, international partnerships and the continued development of Ensemble Coexist, we aim to build even more bridges and demonstrate that peaceful coexistence is not only possible—it can be experienced.

Every encounter has the potential to become trust. Every dialogue has the potential to become friendship.

And every friendship can become the foundation for a more peaceful society.



OUR NEXT PRIORITIES



GERMANY
TOUR 2026



INTERNATIONAL
PARTNERSHIPS



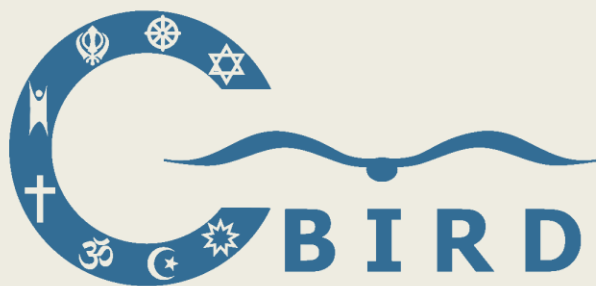
EXPANDING
ENSEMBLE
COEXIST



EDUCATION &
DIALOGUE
PROJECTS



INTERFAITH
ENCOUNTERS



Bündnis InterReligiöses Deutschland e.V.

Contact Person:

Sebastian Römisch

Chairman of BIRD

Director of Ensemble Coexist

Zittauer Str. 11

01099 Dresden

Germany

☎ +49 172 3747086

✉ sebastian.roemisch@bird-dresden.de

🌐 www.bird-dresden.de



Initiator of the international interfaith chamber

