Dr. Rudolf Goette Konzertdirektion Hamburg

Alexej Gerassimez, Percussionist

Born in Essen in 1987 into a highly musical family, percussionist and composer Alexej Gerassimez developed an early curiosity for sounds that went far beyond the usual boundaries of a drummer. What began as a childish fascination soon became an artistic vision that has made him one of the world's most influential percussionists today.

Trained by Peter Sadlo and Rainer Seegers in Cologne, Berlin and Munich, among others, his career began early with remarkable successes. Awards such as winning the TROMP Percussion Competition 2010, the Special Prize of the German Music Foundation, numerous first prizes at 'Jugend musiziert' and the ARD Music Competition 2014 brought him international attention.

His repertoire encompasses classical music, contemporary music, jazz and minimal music – a range that is constantly expanding, not least through his own compositions. New works are also constantly being written for him, including John Psathas' sensational concerto 'Leviathan', premiered at the Berlin Philharmonic in 2021, and Malika Kishino's percussion concerto, written in 2022 and premiered at the NOW Festival in Essen. The same year also saw the premiere of Kalevi Aho's double concerto for viola and percussion, together with the Lahti Symphony Orchestra.

Collaborating with other musicians is at the heart of his creative work. Whether with jazz pianist Omer Klein, the SIGNUM Saxophone Quartet, or organist Iveta Apkalna—Gerassimez consciously seeks dialogue, common ground, and the unexpected. And with great success: For his acclaimed European tour with pianists Lucas and Arthur Jussen and percussionist Emil Kuyumcuyan, Alexej Gerassimez will be honored with the 2026 OPUS-Klassik award in the category "Live Performance of the Year (Ensemble/Orchestra)."

During the 2026–27 season, Gerassimez will highlight numerous artistic projects. Together with Michael Wollny, he will perform at Schloss Elmau and at the Mecklenburg-Vorpommern Festival. With the Orquestra de Valencia, under the baton of Alexander Liebreich, he will make his orchestral debut in Spain, performing Helmut Lachenmann's "Air." The program also includes a project comprising several performances with the Chorwerk Ruhr.

Gerassimez will have a particularly prominent presence at the Elbphilharmonie Hamburg, which will celebrate its tenth anniversary during the 2026/27 season. There, he will perform in a wide variety of configurations: as a soloist with the Dresden Philharmonic and with the Alexej Gerassimez Percussion Collective in a program celebrating Philip Glass's anniversary.

Gerassimez's major tour with the Dresden Philharmonic under Donald Runnicles is another highlight of the season. Together, they will present James MacMillan's virtuosic percussion concerto "Veni, Veni, Emmanuel" in Dresden, Frankfurt, Hamburg, Hanover, and Düsseldorf.

Alexej Gerassimez's compositional body of work—now performed in over 50 countries worldwide—significantly expands the repertoire for percussion. It combines virtuosic physicality with narrative depth, surprising sound objects, and unusual setups. This is further underscored by his album "Black Mountain," released in 2026, which presents his own orchestral compositions for the first time.

Since 2017, Alexej Gerassimez has been a professor of percussion at the University of Music and Performing Arts Munich, where he is shaping a new generation of percussionists.

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