

Düsseldorf
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The sound of Düsseldorf

From the Rhine out into the world

Düsseldorf's artists and musicians tend to gravitate towards the same places, where it's easy to meet and talk. The perfect sounding board for new ideas, especially in music. In the Altstadt (Old Town), between the Academy of Arts and the Kunsthalle art gallery, bands like Kraftwerk and NEU! launched a futuristic sound in the 1970s that is still influencing pop music today. Punk, electro punk and techno found a home in Ratinger Hof, where ZK – who would later become Die Toten Hosen, one of Germany's most famous bands – graced the stage. These days, club-goers head to the Salon des Amateurs, the home of alternative music in the city, or to the new Ratinger Hof, which has been resurrected as a community and cultural hub.

From new and unique to legendary

The area around the Academy of Arts and Ratinger Strasse in the Old Town is at the heart of the city's musical history. Creative types have been meeting here, starting bands and influencing each other for more than 50 years. "Music non stop, techno-pop" was the message that Kraftwerk sent out into the world from Düsseldorf and perfectly summed up its style. Their music embodied the attitude that music should be new and unique, not sound like what has gone before. This idea influenced their work in the Kling-Klang studio located in a courtyard near Düsseldorf's main train station, which has since become a place for a special kind of pilgrimage. At the time, alternative artists met at the Liverpool Club, in Ratinger Hof or at Creamcheese, where greats such as Joseph Beuys, Anatol Herzfeld and Günther Uecker were regular visitors.

Düsseldorf – a test bed for music to this day

The band NEU! was formed in the Kunsthalle art gallery and would go on to influence the likes of David Bowie, Blur, Placebo, Sonic Youth and Stereolab. Düsseldorf became the birthplace of a

world sound, and it was here that music was created the likes of which no-one had heard before. The city also wrote a chapter in the history of German punk music in the shape of Die Toten Hosen, whose lead singer Campino is one of Düsseldorf's most famous sons still alive today. The enduring band celebrated its 40th anniversary in 2022, which is how long it took for the raw punk combo to become probably Germany's best-loved and most revered act. Punk music inspired the musical genre Neue Deutsche Welle, or New German Wave. Fehlfarben launched their groundbreaking album 'Monarchie und Alltag' and DAF got the crowds bouncing. The local music scene is just as lively today, as bands such as Broilers, Antilopen Gang and Love Machine prove.

The loudest city tour in town

The pop music tour The Sound of Düsseldorf explores music's influence on the city, visits iconic locations and reveals some lesser-known stories. Local music journalists Sven-André Dreyer and Dr Michael Wenzel use trendy clubs, legendary bars and locations of pop-cultural importance to trace the city's love affair with music, while playing some well-known songs from Düsseldorf here and there during the tour.

Electropop, punk and a guided tour

- The pioneers of electropop hail from Düsseldorf. In 1970, Ralf Hütter and Florian Schneider founded the band Kraftwerk, which would go on to influence artists and musicians around the world, including David Bowie, Depeche Mode and Moby. In 2021, Kraftwerk became the first German band to be inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.
- The story of German punk began a new chapter in Düsseldorf in 1982 with Die Toten Hosen. Lead singer Campino and the band evolved into one of the biggest rock acts in Germany, Austria and Switzerland. The connection between the band and the city remains very strong to this day.
- Düsseldorf-based composer and pianist Hauschka won an Oscar in 2023 for the musical score for All Quiet on the Western Front. He writes modern scores for European films and for Netflix and Hollywood productions, and won a BAFTA – the leading British film award – in 2023.
- The history of music in Düsseldorf can be explored on a pop music tour aptly named The Sound of Düsseldorf.

Matching blog articles



Ratinger Straße was the absolute hot spot

www.duesseldorf-tourismus.de/stories/2021/12/01/die-ratinger-strasse-war-der-absolute-hot-spot



Kraftwerk's laboratory

www.duesseldorf-tourismus.de/stories/2021/03/16/das-labor-von-kraftwerk



Six important places of "The Sound of Düsseldorf"

www.duesseldorf-tourismus.de/stories/2021/03/08/sechs-wichtige-orte-die-untrennbar-mit-the-sound-of-duesseldorf-verbunden-sind

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