



*“Berlin is a city condemned forever to becoming and never being”*

Karl Scheffler (1869–1951)

There’s probably no better description of the spirit of Berlin, its history and culture past and present. It also captures well the distinctive musical journey that [The Somnambulist](#) began in the German capital ten years ago.

The Somnambulist is the project of a fluid international collective of musicians. Their unique and ever-changing approach to their work freely embraces the transient and infinite nature inherent to music and art in general. Their intention to both respectfully acknowledge and surpass definitions and boundaries of style is a key reason why it is difficult, maybe even nonsensical, to put a label on their work. Critics have placed them within the tradition of the Berlin innovative music scene which began in the late 1970s, and if you had to pin them down you could say that they combine characteristics from psych rock to jazz, indie to experimental. While they acknowledge the influence of renowned musicians such as Zappa, Bowie, Dead Can Dance, Radiohead, Nick Cave and Tom Waits, they are nevertheless relentlessly engaged in carving out their own name and place in the contemporary European music scene, where their holistic and defiant approach has earned them a steady and loyal fan base.

The current members of The Somnambulist are [Marco Bianciardi](#), [Thomas Kolarczyk](#) and [Leon Griese](#).

Marco Bianciardi (vocals, guitar) founded the band in 2009. He is currently active as a musician, composer, filmmaker, writer and producer in Berlin and throughout Europe. Born and raised in Castellina in Chianti, Marco began his career in the late 1990s working as a multi-instrumentalist and arranger in several seminal bands of the Italian indie scene, [Elton Junk](#) (drums) and [Caboto](#) (guitar) above all. Drawn to Berlin in 2007, he quickly became involved in various musical projects such as Jane Walton (drums, bass), The Polymonsters (guitar, electronics), and Hotel Ambiente (vocals, guitar), the latter of which evolved into The Somnambulist. Parallel to his band career, Marco also composes soundtracks for film and theatre, including stagings of *The Death of the Cherub* by Franco Fortini (2002) and *Brief Interviews with Hideous Men* by David Foster Wallace (2010). His mid-length film *Liebe macht frei* was presented at the Cannes Film Festival in 2008, and his original soundtrack to the 1927 documentary *Berlin – die Sinfonie der Großstadt*, produced with the support of Goethe Institute and Centre Jean Vigo, won first prize at the 2014 Rimusicazioni Film Festival in Bolzano. Marco has also finished his first novel *Il medio abisso*.

Thomas Kolarczyk (double bass, electric bass) joined the band in 2013. Currently based in Berlin, he has earned himself a reputation as a multi-faceted, genre-spanning musician and composer. Thomas is a graduate of the University of Arts Berlin and the Jazz Institute at Hanns Eisler Academy of Music, where he studied double bass with Marc Muellbauer and Greg Cohen. Thomas' musical scope has always been broad since his early days playing in funk and punk bands. Besides The Somnambulist, he is active in jazz collectives such as Flying Cakes, Abisko Lights, Marc Doffey Quintet, Leleka, Gaststätte zum Heißen Hirten and Eyal Lovett Trio. Another focus of his musical work lies in his collaborations with musicians from world music: he has played with the Turkish band Roye Ma, the Kurdish singer Sakina, and is a double award winner of the Creole competition for world music. He also plays with classical orchestras and in opera projects. The diversity of all these musical influences finds a balance in his compositions and arrangements, some of which appeared on the debut album of his own quintet in April 2018 as part of the prestigious Jazz Thing Next Generation CD series. He has won prizes in numerous competitions, including Jugend Musiziert, Jugend Jazzt, Art of Improvisation, HFM Jazz Prize, Young German Jazz Award and Young Munich Jazz Prize.

Leon Griese (drums, percussion, piano) is the newest member of the trio, joining in 2017. Born in Berlin, he studied to be a music teacher, a calling that remains close to his heart, and he enhanced his education and training as a professional musician at the Carl Maria von

Weber College of Music in Dresden. He is involved in several musical projects in Berlin: Gaststätte zum Heißen Hirten (with Somnambulist band mate Thomas Kolarczyk), Nebula, Das Eismeer, Zirkus 7 and his Improvisation Session Project BabyBazaar, which in his own words offers “a unique way to return to the roots of musical communication, which I perceive as the origin of jazz”.

To describe what the band plays, and to mention their wide assortment of musical influences, would be like trying to understand the taste of a dish through its list of ingredients. From experimental rock to art pop, from neo-psychedelia to nu jazz, from post-punk to post-progressive, The Somnambulist uses genres like the keys of a piano, a colour palette for producing innovative textures, moods and emotions in order to bring to life a new way of understanding the pop-rock song, where past, present and future can paradoxically coexist. The discography of The Somnambulist reveals a persuasive, sharp, sombre yet energetic approach to music with a strong personal signature. They are also renowned for their highly emotive live shows, and have toured extensively all over Europe.

In its decade-long existence, the band has released three full-length albums (*Moda Borderline*, *Sophia Verloren* and *Quantum Porn*) as well as several singles and EPs, each of which has set a new mark in its ongoing development. Their fourth studio album *Hypermnestic* is set to be released in February 2020 on the band's own label Slowing Records.