

Hermann Keller - Biography

Hermann Keller was born in Zeitz (Saxony-Anhalt, Germany) in 1945. He took piano lessons from the age of six and started composing at the age of 14. From 1963 to 1968, he attended the Franz-Liszt-Hochschule Weimar, where he studied composition with Johann Cilenšek and piano with Ingeborg Herkomer. This was followed by an assistantship and a teaching position at the Hochschule für Musik “Hanns Eisler” Berlin.

From 1971, he played regularly with jazz musicians, drawing international acclaim with his Berlin Improvisation Quartet (or Trio). Many of his improvisation patterns and works with improvisation date from this period. From 1981, Hermann Keller worked as a freelance composer, pianist and improvisation musician. He taught music theory and improvisation at the Freie Musikschule Musikhaus e.V. in Berlin, which he co-founded in 1990.

His compositions have been performed at Gewandhaus zu Leipzig, Künstlerhaus Boswil, Musikbiennale Berlin, Berliner Festwochen, Klangwerkstatt Mannheim, MDR Musiksommer, Ultraschall-Festival Berlin, Rheinsberger Musiktage and Forum neuer Musik des Deutschlandfunks. Interpreters of his works include the Sinfonieorchester Jena, Hallische Philharmonie, Ensemble Modern, Kammerensemble Neue Musik Berlin, ensemble mosaik, modern art sextet, Ensemble United Berlin and Ensemble Chronophonie as well as Heinz Holliger, Steffen Schleiermacher, Ingo Metzmacher and Vinko Globokar.

Hermann Keller died in Berlin in 2018.