

Christian Löffler

Doors: 7.30pm

Fejká: 8pm

Interval: 8.30pm

Christian Löffler: 8.50pm

Ends: 10.30pm

Please note all timings are approximate and subject to change.

Please note that this performance contains strobe lighting

Selim Bulut and Christian Löffler talk about making the return to live performance.

Christian Löffler has been busy since his last London show. Back in November 2019, the German musician, composer, producer and visual artist performed in the city in support of his third studio album *Graal (Prologue)*. Since then, he's released two more albums, 2020's *Lys* and this year's *Parallels: Shellac Reworks*, and has been working on new music set for release next year. Tonight's performance has been a long time coming. It was first scheduled for May 2020 and pushed back by the pandemic, but now, more than 500 days later, audiences will finally hear his expressive, melodic electronic music in the Barbican Hall. Unsurprisingly, his show has changed a lot in that time.

'During COVID, I had a lot of time to rethink my live setup,' Löffler explains. 'This is a completely new show. I'm extending my setup, using a lot of things I usually use in the studio that I wanted to have on stage.' Where in the past Löffler's live show used simple, portable gear, tonight he'll be introducing a larger number of synthesisers, vintage effects, and drum machines into the mix. 'I'm also changing a few things and adding sounds,' he adds. 'The drums are programmed on my records, but for this live show, I'll be doing everything on the drum computer, so there'll be improvisation with every performance.'

Löffler is a visual artist as well as a musician – his previous albums have been accompanied by his own paintings, photography, and video material – so it was important that tonight's show was enhanced with a strong visual component too. He worked with Canadian light designer **Chris Moylan** to create an audiovisual experience that utilises the full scale of the Barbican Hall. 'Since it's only me on stage in this huge room, we also thought about something that uses the whole stage for the performance,' Löffler says. 'Chris wanted to go up vertically, and to create different spaces on the stage to widen the performance.'

Notably, Löffler will also be playing some of the new, as-yet-unheard music that he's been working on over the past few months. 'I'm playing new sketches, ideas, and songs – but also my 'classic' material that people always want to listen to.'

Some of that material comes from *Lys*, an album that audiences haven't had much of a chance to hear in a live setting – it was released in March 2020, just as lockdowns and travel restrictions were coming into force. With countries now more open for travel, he's finally witnessed the response to the album. 'I played in Prague last weekend, and a fan showed up after the show and told me "Lys is my favourite album, these are my favourite tracks!" I was thankful, but also surprised, because I didn't have a great chance to play it out and see much of a reaction from people. I was like, "There's actually people enjoying this record! They have a favourite song!" It was almost under-the-radar, in my mind.'

During lockdown, Löffler was approached by the revered classical label Deutsche Grammophon to rework newly digitised recordings from its archive. The resulting album, *Parallels: Shellac Reworks*, features Löffler's takes on Bach, Beethoven, and Chopin compositions that were first pressed to shellac (the predominant format of recorded sound in the early 20th century) some 100 years ago. 'My aim was to create something that can stand up in my catalogue, but also handle the original material with all the given respect. I wanted to connect different worlds, to give classical fans an idea of dance music, and to give younger people an idea of how classical music can work too.'

Both *Lys* and *Parallels* saw Löffler move from his roots in melodic techno towards home listening. 'I was playing many shows in 2019 – club shows and festivals and raves – and I was trying to go more into this listening mode,' he says. 'With COVID, everything came to a stop. Then Deutsche Grammophon

barbican

approached me with the shellac project, which was clearly not connected to dancing or clubbing at all. So it was actually perfect timing to work on a project like that.' Yet the more time Löffler spent at home, the more he missed crowds. 'I was at home in the studio, living on the coast in Germany in an area where no tourists were allowed. When shows were coming up again, I was very eager to play live. When I first started making this music, I was really into clubbing and nightlife, but also how to connect this with my passion for nature and the quieter sounds of life. I had this feeling that I wanted to go back to dancing and clubbing, the origins of this music.'

Some of the music Löffler will be premiering tonight returns to that feeling. 'It felt like a restart, working on the new stuff that I'll be playing at this show, going back to that music and finding the initial love for this project,' he says.

Performers

Christian Löffler electronics, synths, visuals

Chris Moylan lighting, visuals

Produced by the Barbican in association with Soundcrash



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