



BORDERLINES FILM FESTIVAL

KÖLN 75 (15)

Director: Ido Fluck

Starring: Mala Emde, John Magaro, Michael Chernus, Alexander Scheer, Ulrich Tukur
Germany/Poland/Belgium, 2025 1 hour 54 minutes German/English + English subtitles

"*Köln 75* is not strictly a jazz movie – but then, as Ido Fluck's film keeps telling us, the improvised music of pianist Keith Jarrett is not really jazz. This is the story of the 1975 solo concert at the Köln Opera House that yielded Jarrett's legendary best-selling album *The Köln Concert* – or rather, the story behind the concert. While it highlights an engagingly spiky performance by John Magaro as Jarrett, the real focus is on Vera Brandes, the teenage jazz fan who, against all odds, made the event happen.

"The film is a vivid vehicle for a dynamic, often very funny Emde who, at 28, is convincing as a wide-eyed, sharp-mouthed teenage force of nature. More contentious, but nonetheless magnetic, is Magaro's portrayal of Jarrett as a moody, refractory, somewhat Dylanesque mystic – not a figure of fun by any means, but one who the film drapes somewhat wryly in an aura of otherworldly enigma." Jonathan Romney,

Screen Daily

"Organising a successful show or tour demands meticulous planning and precision – there's little room for improvisation. Venues need to be secured and musicians must be ready to perform. Yet somehow, a teenager named Vera Brandes pulled off one of the most iconic live performances in jazz history – and one of its bestselling albums – by orchestrating Keith Jarrett's legendary concert at the Cologne Philharmonic.

"Anyone familiar with Keith Jarrett's work or the general outline of the story will already know that the concert ultimately took place. However, this doesn't mean that the third act is without its share of suspense. The stakes are incredibly high for everyone involved, particularly for Vera, whose dream of escaping the predictable and mundane life of a dentist is riding on the success of this audacious gamble. As the clock ticks down to the concert, the tension ramps up and the film shifts into a nerve-wracking, high-pressure finale.

"It's one of those exhilarating 'mad dash' moments where every second counts, you're rooting for the underdog and the outcome feels far from certain. Despite knowing the historical result, the film keeps you on edge, reminding you that, sometimes, artistic magic can emerge from the most chaotic, unpredictable circumstances." Jared Abbott,

Journey Into Cinema

Notes compiled by Steve Freer (Borderlines Chair)

Preview courtesy of Vue Lumiere

If you like **Köln 75**, you may enjoy:

SPRINGSTEEN: DELIVER ME FROM NOWHERE A biopic that chronicles the making of Bruce Springsteen's 1982 'Nebraska' album as a young musician on the cusp of global superstardom.

QUEER AS PUNK In Malaysia, where LGBT identities face legal challenges, a trans man named Faris and his punk band defy norms and build camaraderie.