

# Berlin Playlist

A personal best of Europe's dance capital

By [Tom Parkinson](#)



Like its history, Berlin's soundscape is a complex web of influences bound together by a unique sense of place, creating the most dynamic and restlessly inventive music scene in Europe. With over 130 different club nights on any given Saturday (not including illegal venues) and a real 24-hour culture, it's also one of the best party cities in the world.

Compiled in the spirit of a DJ set, this mix takes a breakneck breakbeat tour through the scope of Berlin nightlife, past, present and personal...

## **Lou Reed - 'Berlin'**

In Berlin, by the Wall... Lou conjures up pre-Wende city life in all its seamy, dreamy glory. An essential track from the days when Western musicians flocked to Berlin as the centre of the free alternative scene.

### **U2 - 'Zooropa'**

These days Germany's Irish pubs often take pride in NOT playing U2 tunes, but back in the early 90s Bono and pals were regular visitors: Zooropa was inspired by Zoo station, the busy heart of former West Berlin and a symbol for the changing face of Europe.

### **Extended Spirit - 'Caprice'**

A real chill-out classic and one of the earliest releases on the Sonar Kollektiv label. It's easy but edgy, much like the Berlin scene itself, resisting definition just as it inexorably sucks you into its deceptively complex rhythms.



### **Jazzanova featuring Ursula Rucker - 'Keep Falling'**

Arguably the most important artists working in Berlin today, Jazzanova singlehandedly created the downtempo scene that influenced Berlin lounge sounds. Here they get together with spoken-word legend Ursula Rucker for a slinky but tough gem of broken-beat perfection.

### **Micatone - 'D-D-D-D-Dance'**

A funkier-than-usual cut from these purveyors of wistful nu-jazz; they started as regulars at the deliriously retro Kurvenstar bar, but have now established themselves firmly as part of the city's musical landscape.

### **Chicks on Speed & The No-Heads - 'History Will Outlive Us'**

Formed as a 'fake band' in art school, the Chicks have come to dominate the local punk-pop scene. Teaming up with Spanish group the No-Heads brings out their sardonic humour in this bathetically titled exposé of Berlin lounge lizards.

### **Namosh featuring Hisako - 'Dear Diary'**

Newly 'discovered' in Berlin nightlife circles, local boy Namosh displays a fondness for creepy-sleazy voices and lyrics, brought out to great effect here by Hisako's geisha vocals and an impeccably filthy bass hook.

### **2raumwohnung - 'Sex Secret' (2Raum mix)**

Sex in Berlin is no secret: the city has an active sex-club scene, boasts the most active gay community outside Amsterdam, and was recently voted the world's most fetish-friendly capital. This longtime duo's sugar-sweet melodies almost seem too innocent to capture it.

### **Kruder & Dorfmeister - 'Black Baby' (DJ Kicks)**

They may be Austrian, but as the first major signing to Berlin's Studio !K7 this smoked-out DJ duo helped lay the foundations for the city's most innovative and interesting independent record label. The *DJ Kicks* compilation series for which this exclusive track was recorded set the pattern for subsequent imitations such as *Back to Mine*.

### **Tanith - 'Wotatune'**

Along with fellow veteran Dr Motte, Tanith is a stalwart from the early days of the Love Parade, often favouring jittery, almost garage drums over the usual thumping four-to-the-floor.

### **T.Raumschmiere - 'All Systems Go!'**

Nu-skool breakbeat has been surprisingly slow to catch on in Berlin, despite its popularity in the UK and elsewhere; this could be because labels like Shitkatapult carry on producing high-quality old-skool breaks tracks like this dark slow-burner.

### **Peaches - 'F\*\*k the Pain Away'**

Berlin's most famous Canadian immigrant, the delightful Peaches has built a career on pushing the obscenity envelope as far as possible, with some beautifully filthy results.

### **Kabuki - 'Lunar Phase'**

Kabuki is one of the main artists on hard:edged records, Berlin's most important drum'n'bass label and the people behind the Watergate club, the city's top address for full-on nights and so-late-they're-early-then-late-again mornings.

### **Dillinja - 'Go Dillinja'**

After the tragic death of British drum'n'bass DJ Kemistry in 1999, her Berlin hard:edged residency at the legendary WMF club was one of the few that former partner Storm kept up. Dillinja's tracks have long been the cornerstone of her dark, turbulent sets.

### **EZ Rollers - 'RS2000'**

Trip-stepping into a jazzier vibe, the Rollers were a regular fixture at Icon around the same time, and never failed to set the big sweaty basement alight with their blend of beats and live vocals.

### **Seed - 'Dickes B'**

This upbeat reggae/ragga outfit have been the runaway success story of the last few years, infusing a real local flavour into their imported Caribbean punch. The 'Big B' of the title is of course Berlin itself, celebrating everything from brick buildings and exhaust fumes to 24-hour licensing and joints under the Brandenburg Gate.