



PROF. DR. LARS-CHRISTIAN KOCH



Prof. Dr. Lars-Christian Koch is an internationally renowned ethnomusicologist, whose work has significantly strengthened cultural and academic exchange between India and Germany. His engagement with India, and particularly with Rabindranath Tagore, spans several decades. He was associated with the Tagore Institute in Bonn, founded by musicologist Dr. Trina Purohit-Roy, who took him as a disciple in Sitar, Surbahar and Rabindra Sangit and later pursued studies in Santiniketan, West Bengal- Tagore's place of residence, with a special interest in the songs of the Indian poet. There he studied Sitar with Pandit Indranil Bhattacharya.

2. Born on 21st June, 1959, Prof. Koch is Director of the State Ethnographic Collections in the State Art Collections Saxonia in Dresden Germany since October 2025. From 2018 to 2025, he was Director of the Ethnological Museum Berlin and the Museum of Asian Art, State Museums Berlin, Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation and Collection Director at the Humboldt Forum for the Humboldt Forum Foundation and the State Museums Berlin. He is an adjunct professor of ethnomusicology at the University of Cologne, an honorary professor at the Berlin University of the Arts and honorary professor at the Humboldt University Berlin. He holds guest professorships at the University of Chicago and the University Vienna.

3. Prof. Koch conducted anthropological research in India and South Korea over a period of more than 30 years. His research focuses on the theory and practice of North Indian music, organology with a special emphasis on musical instrument making, audiovisual media in cultural contexts, popular music and urban culture, musical interpretations in historical contexts and music archaeology. He studied cultural anthropology (Master of Arts degree), received his doctorate in musicology and habilitated in ethnomusicology. Since 2003, he has headed the Department of Media- Ethnomusicology, Berlin Phonogram Archive and Visual Anthropology at the Ethnological Museum Berlin. He is a member of several advisory boards and professional associations and was co-editor of the Zeitschrift für Ethnologie from 2013 to 2020.

4. Prof. Koch has led numerous research projects, including in the museum-related field of ethnomusicology, such as: Indexing and digitizing the sound recordings of the Prussian Phonographic Commission 1915-1918 / Digitization of historical and contemporary musical instruments of South Asia in expanded object perspectives / ILKAR - Integrated solutions for the conservation, archiving, and restoration of endangered magnetic tapes and reel to reel tapes and the collaborative project Three Metropolises Project - Music as a medium of urban transformation in the metropolises of Berlin, Chicago, and Kolkata. After moving, setting up, and opening the museums at the Humboldt Forum in 2022, he initiated the format The Collaborative Museum, which involved cooperation with cultures and countries of origin in and around the collections of both museums with 40 sub-projects, 20 fellowships and 4 international exhibitions over a period of three years. The aim was to make the museum collections accessible and usable through joint efforts.

5. In 2014, Prof. Koch received the Bruno Nettl Prize from the Society for Ethnomusicology for his outstanding publications. He was honoured with the 6th Merck-Tagore Award 2025 in February 2026 for his outstanding contributions to fostering cultural exchange between India and Germany. His publications include: Musikethnologie. WBG Darmstadt 2020 / Sitar – Manufacturing: The Tradition of Kanailal & Bros., Calcutta / Berlin (SMB) 2011 / My Heart Sings – Die Lieder Rabindranath Tagores zwischen Tradition und Moderne / Berlin (LIT) 2011.