

CONCERT  
IN THE  
FRAMEWORK  
OF THE  
INTERNATIONAL  
WEEKS  
AGAINST  
RACISM

LENBACHHAUS

## CONCERT IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE INTERNATIONAL WEEKS AGAINST RACISM

The Lenbachhaus is hosting a concert by Sofia Jernberg (vocals) and Simone Keller (piano) in its Kunstbau. They will perform works by international composers of the 20th and 21st centuries – Julius Eastman (1940–1990), Irene Higginbotham (1918–1988), Sofia Jernberg (\*1983), Jessie Marino (\*1984), Julia Perry (1924–1979) and Arnold Schönberg (1874–1951). The program brings together artists from recent music history who were discriminated against or even persecuted on the basis of their origin, gender or sexual orientation and were therefore only able to work under difficult conditions.

Individual pieces by Eastman are important early testimonies to the thematization of racism and homophobia in our society. Already his original work titles confront us with this theme: With *Nigger Faggot*° (1978), *Evil Nigger*° (1979), or *Gay Guerrilla* (1979), Eastman addresses racist or homophobic themes consciously and directly, in order to leave no one the possibility to escape the reality of these discriminations. Analogous to the titles, Eastman developed an aesthetic-musical correspondence to the structural racisms of his time, which still exist today. The topicality of his compositions is a sad fact in this context, as he brings before our eyes and ears that even decades later we are still far from a language and society free of discrimination. The verbal violence of the work titles is therefore an unconditional part of Eastman's aesthetic work and these must be written out in the context of the performances so as not to jeopardize the integrity of his work and his intentions.

This is an additional concert in the series *Julius Eastman. Minimal Music* held at the Lenbachhaus's Kunstbau between February 8 and March 12, 2022. Julius Eastman was a representative of Minimal Music. His challenging music, though rarely performed, is an impressive example of the international and cross-genre movement of Minimalism. The concerts at Lenbachhaus are intended as a musical complement to important works of Minimal Art in the museum's collection by artists such as Dan Flavin, Marcia Hafif, Rosemary Mayer, Robert Morris, Senga Nengudi, Charlotte Posenenske, and Richard Serra.

The Munich Philharmonic, the Münchener Kammerorchester, and the Kukuruz Quartet staged Eastman's works *Feminine*, *Buddha*, *Prelude to The Holy Presence of Joan d'Arc*, *The Holy Presence of Joan d'Arc*, *Fugue No. 7*, *Evil Nigger*,° and *Gay Guerrilla*.

° This is the original title of the composer. Julius Eastman deliberately exposed the term as racist, drawing the attention of non-black people in particular to structural racism and verbal violence. We therefore decided to write out Eastman's original title in the context of the performance of his work.

## ABOUT THE PROGRAM

by Simone Keller

The first female composer still known to us today was Cassia who lived in the eighth century in the Eastern Roman Empire. Around the same time, it was common in the caliphates in Moorish Spain for women to make music and compose; however, they did not notate their works. One would think there would have been many women musicians, conductors, and composers over the last 400 years, yet one is disillusioned upon taking a closer look: The canon of classical music was a club for white men until the late 20th century, and it is still not so easy or natural for women to make themselves heard.

The program's dramaturgical arc extends from Julia Amanda Perry to Irene Higginbotham, two outstanding African-American women composers who, despite their immense skill, have hardly been noticed. *Slender Threads* is a piano piece by American composer Jessie Marino, in which she traces the fine ramifications of intersectionality and builds a sonic altar of remembrance for composer Julia Amanda Perry, who found herself in a "triple marginalized position" as a woman, as an African-American, and as a person with physical disabilities after suffering multiple brain strokes. Intersectionality, the simultaneity of different categories of discrimination, probably deceives our view of music history more often than we think, and so Jessie Marino shines a flashlight on an invisible thread at the end of her piano piece on the invisible spots of our perception. By Julia Amanda Perry, I play the small piano piece *Prelude*; she left behind an impressive catalog of works, including three operas and twelve symphonies, which I hope will soon find their way onto the great stages.

When I first heard a concert by the singer Sofia Jernberg, I was immediately fascinated by her unconventional way of using her voice more like an instrumentalist than a vocalist. Her virtuoso split tones and other technical effects captivated and impressed me, but at the same time her singing touched me deeply because it is never complacent, but always a very personal expression of her inner voice, an authentic and independent expression. In this concert we experience different facets of Sofia Jernberg: the virtuoso improviser, the devoted interpreter of Julius Eastman's powerful compositions, and the crossover artist who fearlessly tackles one of the most difficult vocal works of the 20th century—the *Pierrot Lunaire* by Arnold Schönberg, which Sofia Jernberg interpreted brilliantly at the Vienna Festival and from which we will perform the *Holy Crosses* as a small excerpt and fitting homage to *Joan d'Arc*.

Finally, as an encore so to speak, I will play *Good Morning Heartache* by Irene Higginbotham, who should be an icon of the song-writing of this standard alone. Regrettably, she has remained so little known to this day that she is regularly confused with Irene Kitchings, who also wrote songs for Billie Holiday. Philip Bartels of the Kukuruz Quartet has arranged *Good Morning Heartache* for me in a very reduced way, that is almost reminiscent of a Venetian gondola song by Mendelssohn. "Good morning heartache, you old gloomy sight...I've got those Monday blues straight through Sunday blues."

**Julius Eastman** (1940 New York City–1990 Buffalo) grew up in Ithaca, New York, where he took piano lessons at Ithaca College at age 14. Composition and piano studies followed in 1959 at the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia. After making his concert debut as a pianist in 1966 at Town Hall in New York, Eastman moved to Buffalo. There he received a fellowship sponsored by the Center for the Creative and Performing Arts and taught at SUNY Buffalo beginning in the early 1970s. During this time, he composed numerous pieces for the S.E.M. Ensemble, which he and Petr Kotík founded. In 1973, Eastman created one of his key works, *Stay On It*, which is still considered one of the earliest examples of post-minimalist music that takes influences from pop music. In 1974 he created *Femenine* and *Masculine*. In 1975 Eastman's productive phase in Buffalo came to an end, and in 1976 he moved to New York, where he worked free-lance, and in a short time created several of his important compositions, such as the *Nigger Series*°. There he collaborated with Meredith Monk and Arthur Russel, among others. Julius Eastman died of cardiac arrest in Buffalo on May 28, 1990, at the age of only 49, away from the musical public eye.

**Jessie Marino** (b. 1984 New York) is a composer, performer, media artist, and cellist with the electro-acoustic ensemble Pamplemousse in New York. She studied composition at Wesleyan University with Alvin Lucier and Ronald Kuivila. In 2018, she received the Rome Prize from the American Academy in Rome. In her work, Jessie Marino uses sound, video, gesture, light, and staging as equally important materials. In her interdisciplinary compositional work, she often eschews conventional musical instruments; instead, she asks performers to use their gestures, facial expressions, and everyday movements as both alternatives and complements to music. Marino has taught and given guest lectures at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, the University of Chicago, the Hochschule für Musik und Tanz Köln, and the Staatliche Hochschule für Musik und Darstellende Kunst Stuttgart. She also teaches at the Chicago branch of TECHNE, a non-profit organization dedicated to introducing female youth to the fundamentals of technology-based art making, musical improvisation, and collaborative community. Marino's pieces have been performed by notable new music ensembles including KNM Ensemble, SoundInitiative, TAK Ensemble, We Spoke Percussion, eighth blackbird, Decoder Ensemble, Die Ordnung Der Dinge, Zwerm Electric Guitar Quartet, Retro Disco.

**Irene Higginbotham** (1918 Worcester, Massachusetts–1988 Brooklyn, New York) was an American composer and pianist. Higginbotham began composing at a young age; she wrote her first song at age 13, and began performing publicly as a concert pianist two years later. Before studying music with Kemper Harold and Frederic Hall, she attended the New York Business School so she could work as a stenographer. In 1944, she became a member of the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (ASCAP). During her career, Higginbotham composed numerous pieces of music that were interpreted by prominent musicians, including Diana Krall, Natalie Cole, and Benny Goodman. Although as an African-American musician she always experien-

ced discrimination and exclusion in the rather male-dominated music world, she composed about fifty pieces. Among her best-known works are *Good Morning Heartache*, *No Good Man*, *This Will Make You Laugh*, *It's Mad, Mad, Mad*.

**Julia Amanda Perry** (1924 Lexington, Kentucky–1979 Akron, Ohio) was an American composer. After successfully completing her master's degree in voice, piano, and composition at Westminster Choir College in 1948, she continued her studies at institutions such as the Juilliard School in New York City and the Berkshire Music Center in Tanglewood. She then spent nearly a decade in Europe, primarily in France and Italy, where she studied with Luigi Dallapiccola and Nadia Boulanger, among others, with a Guggenheim Fellowship. After returning to the United States in 1959, she taught at Atlanta University. By the 1960s, Perry was already gaining widespread recognition in the United States and her music was performed by many renowned orchestras, including the New York Philharmonic and the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra under the baton of William Steinberg. She received awards from the National Association of Negro Musicians and the National Institute of Arts and Letters and was awarded the Boulanger Grand Prix. Julia Perry's works have a strong emotional power. Her unique compositional style evolved from combining classical and neo-classical elements of European music, integrating components from African-American music, particularly in her early pieces. Although she initially focused primarily on works for voice, she wrote more instrumental compositions as her career progressed. In total, Julia Perry composed twelve symphonies, two concertos, three operas, and many smaller pieces.

### **Arnold Schönberg**

Arnold Schönberg (1874 Vienna–1951 Los Angeles) was one of the most important and influential composers of the first half of the 20th century. His musical roots lie in late Romanticism, which he, however, overcame in a radical step to pursue atonality. In 1921, Schönberg composed his first piece in the twelve-tone-music that he developed, and which is inseparably linked with his name. In doing so, he created a prerequisite for serial music after the Second World War—in whose tradition Julius Eastman also stands. Schönberg's students included Alban Berg and Anton Webern; all three are decisive for the development of New Music in the 21st century. Together with Alban Berg and Thomas de Hartmann, Schönberg collaborated with the international artists' circle of the Blauer Reiter. Schönberg and Kandinsky met in 1911 and influenced each other from then on. It is hardly known that Schönberg also painted; five of his paintings are currently on view in the exhibition *Gruppensdynamik – Der Blaue Reiter* at Lenbachhaus.

**Sofia Jernberg**, born in Ethiopia and raised in Vietnam and Sweden, is an exceptional singer/voice artist and composer. She studied jazz and composition in Sweden and lives and works in Stockholm. Her work focuses on unconventional techniques and sounds such as non-verbal vocalization, split tones, toneless singing and distortion. Music theater and contemporary opera play an important role in Jernberg's artistic work. She participated in performances of Arnold Schönberg's *Pierrot Lunaire* in 2010 and Salvatore Sciarrino's *Lohengrin* in 2014 by the Swedish ensemble Norrbotten NEO and embodied roles specifically written for her in new works such as *Folie à Deux* by Emily Hall and *UR\_* by Anna Thorvaldsdóttir.

Another running theme in her work is the collaboration with visual artists such as Camille Norment in her pieces *Rapture* and *Lull*. Sofia Jernberg can be seen as singer in the film *Union of the North* with Matthew Barney, Erna Ómarsdóttir and Valdimar Jóhannsson. She has received several commissions for compositions and is currently working on a composition for children's choir, soprano, voice and chamber ensemble for the Ultima Contemporary Music Festival, which will premier in 2022.

In 2021/22, she will give the world première of Chaya Czernowin's *Atara* with the ORF Vienna at Wien Modern and will be a guest at MaerzMusik Berlin with a solo recital. *Pierrot Lunaire's* production, directed by Marlene Monteiro Freitas and conducted by Ingo Metzmacher, featured her as soloist together with Klangforum Wien at the Wiener Festwochen 2021. In 2022, she will make her début at the KunstFestSpiele Herrenhausen presenting *Pierrot Lunaire*, where she will also perform a solo recital.

Sofia Jernberg, Photo: Jon Edegren



Swiss pianist **Simone Keller** was born in Weinfelden in 1980, and trained in the concert class of Hans-Jürg Strub and the Lied class of Daniel Fueter at the Zurich University of the Arts. As a soloist and chamber musician, she cultivates a very broad repertoire ranging from classical and modern music to experimental and interdisciplinary formats, her own concepts and mediation projects, and pursues an intensive concert activity in Switzerland and in many other countries in Europe, the U. S., and Asia. As a guest, Simone Keller has performed regularly with the Musikkollegium Winterthur, the Südwestdeutsche Philharmonie and the Collegium Novum Zürich and has been invited by Ensemble Contrechamps Geneva, the Glassfarm Ensemble New York and the Hong Kong New Music Ensemble, among others, where she has worked with conductors such as Peter Rundel, Jac van Steen, Jonathan Stockhammer, Pablo Heras-Casado, Peter Ruzicka, and Heinz Holliger. In 2016, Simone Keller was invited to the Cité Internationale des Arts in Paris for several months, and in 2018 she lived for half a year in an artist residency in Belgrade. In 2017 she was privileged to collaborate with the Center for Computer Research in Music and Acoustics at Stanford University in California, and in 2019 she received renewed invitations from Columbia University and the Manhattan School of Music in New York, as well as Brown University in Providence/Boston. In 2018, Simone Keller's recording of Julius Eastman's piano music, released with her piano quartet on Intakt Records, appeared on various best lists—along with recordings by Hilary Hahn and Igor Levit on the Boston Globe's "Best classical albums," and the New York City Jazz Record's "Album of the year 2018." In 2019, Simone Keller received two awards from the International Lake Constance Conference and was nominated for the International Innovation Award by Classical:NEXT in the same year. In 2021, she was awarded the Conrad Ferdinand Meyer Prize. [www.simonekeller.ch](http://www.simonekeller.ch)

Simone Keller, Photo: Monika Zürcher



February 8, 2022, 8 pm

*Femenine* (1974)

Musicians of The Munich Philharmonic

March 5, 2022, 8 pm

*Buddha* (1984 / Version for string orchestra by Philip Bartels, 2022)

*Prelude to The Holy Presence of Joan d'Arc* (1981)

*The Holy Presence of Joan d'Arc* (1981 / Version for string orchestra)

Münchener Kammerorchester

Sofia Jernberg, vocals

March 11 and 12, 2022, 8 pm

*Fugue No. 7* (1983)

*Evil Nigger*° (1979)

*Gay Guerrilla* (1979)

Music for four pianos with the Kukuruz Quartet

ADDITIONAL CONCERT IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE  
INTERNATIONAL WEEKS AGAINST RACISM

MARCH 14, 2022, 8 PM

JULIA AMANDA PERRY (1924–1979), *PRELUDE* (1962)

JULIUS EASTMAN (1940–1990), *PRELUDE TO THE HOLY PRESENCE OF  
JOAN D'ARC* (1981)

JULIUS EASTMAN, *PIANO 2* (1986)

SOFIA JERNBERG (\*1983), *IMPROVISATION* (2022)

ARNOLD SCHÖNBERG (1874–1951), *DIE KREUZE* (1912)

JESSIE MARINO (\*1984), *SLENDER THREADS* (2020)

JULIUS EASTMAN, *BUDDHA* (1984)

IRENE HIGGINBOTHAM (1918–1988), *GOOD MORNING HEARTACHE* (1945)

SOFIA JERNBERG, VOCALS

SIMONE KELLER, PIANO

All concerts take place in the Kunstbau of the Lenbachhaus.

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# LENBACHHAUS

BR  
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