

Music at the Bauhaus – New Research on Musical Life in Weimar, Dessau and Berlin

***bauhaus / music weekend* – 22-24 September 2023 in Berlin**

2023 marks the 100th anniversary of the Bauhaus Week 1923, during which music was the main focus – an ideal occasion to draw attention to the relatively unexamined role of music at the Bauhaus. The *bauhaus / music weekend* from 22 to 24 September in the Meistersaal Berlin will explore the yet unknown contexts and relationships between the Bauhaus and music for the first time, as well as showcase a musical premiere.

The *bauhaus / music weekend* will present the initial findings of a research project which began in 2021 at the Bauhaus-Archiv in Berlin. The interdisciplinary team headed by the musicologist and project manager PD Dr Kai Hinrich Müller set out to systematically reconstruct the musical life at the historic Bauhaus in Weimar, Dessau and Berlin. The music weekend marks the start of an extended investigation into the musical life at the historic Bauhaus.

As Dr Annemarie Jaeggi, director of the Bauhaus-Archiv / Museum für Gestaltung explains: “Our current research shows that the Bauhaus and music belong together. The musical life at the historic Bauhaus sites was multifaceted, though still very little is known about it. We are delighted to intensively explore this subject with our research partners and present our initial findings. The *bauhaus / music weekend* will make the musical world of the historic Bauhaus visible and audible to the public.”

The focus of the *bauhaus / music weekend*, organised by artistic directors Michal Friedländer and Karl-Heinz Steffens, will be on works which are directly related to the Bauhaus. The programme includes Igor Stravinsky’s *The Soldier’s Tale (Histoire du Soldat)*, Paul Hindemith’s *The Life of Mary (Das Marienleben)* and *Work for Piano (Klavierwerk)* by Ferruccio Busoni, as well as music by members of the Bauhaus, such as Stefan Wolpe, or influential musical figures who visited the Bauhaus like Ruth Crawford Seeger, Kurt Weill and Paul Arma – all of whom produced highly modern and avant-gardist works. Audience members will also have the chance to hear the jazz repertoire of the legendary Bauhaus Orchestra which existed from 1923 to 1933. The *bauhaus / music weekend* will feature performances by such renowned musicians as Guy Braunstein (violin), Tehila Nini Goldstein (soprano) and Matan Porat (piano). The concerts will be accompanied by various events highlighting the music at the Bauhaus and discussions with experts and musicians.



PROGRAMME

Friday, 22 September 2023:

Workshop *Pierrot lunaire* @ the temporary bauhaus-archiv Berlin

Free admission

Arnold Schönberg was one of the central musical figures at the Bauhaus. His music was performed in concerts and artistically reviewed, not least of all by his own students who studied at the Bauhaus. He himself had numerous ties to the institution, e.g. as a member of its “Circle of Friends”, and maintained close contacts with Wassily Kandinsky and other members of the Bauhaus. The organisers of the Bauhaus Week 1923 had planned to perform Schönberg’s *Six Orchestral Songs Op. 8*, which ultimately didn’t happen. However, prior to that in October 1922, his epochal melodrama *Pierrot lunaire* was staged in joint production with the Bauhaus. In this workshop, students from Berlin’s universities of music will rehearse the piece at the *temporary bauhaus-archiv*, and the audience is cordially invited to listen in!

Saturday, 23 September 2023:

Concerts and more @ Meistersaal on Potsdamer Platz

Day ticket: 15 euros

Stefan Wolpe: *Stage music to Molière’s “Le malade imaginaire”* / Paul Hindemith: *Chamber Music Nr. 1*

Intermezzo in the Green Salon

Igor Stravinsky: *The Soldier’s Tale (Histoire du Soldat)*

Sunday, 24 September 2023:

Concerts and more @ Meistersaal on Potsdamer Platz

Day ticket: 15 euros

Ferruccio Busoni / Stefan Wolpe / Ruth Crawford Seeger / Paul Arma: *Works for Piano*

Intermezzo in the Green Salon

Paul Hindemith: *The Life of Mary* / Stefan Wolpe: *Songs* / Kurt Weill: *Songs*

Closing set with *Jazz of the Bauhaus Orchestra*



THE ROLE OF THE BAUHAUS IN MUSIC HISTORY

The Bauhaus-Archiv / Museum für Gestaltung began collaborating with the musicologist PD Dr Kai Hinrich Müller and his interdisciplinary team in 2021 to systematically reconstruct the musical life at the historic Bauhaus sites in Weimar, Dessau and Berlin. The aim was to fill in the gap in musical and Bauhaus research which had long skirted the relationship between music and the Bauhaus. The Bauhaus might not have been a university of music, but it is impossible to separate music from the Bauhaus, as previous investigations have impressively shown.

So far, researchers have identified some 150 musicians who had multiple ties to the Bauhaus. These include such renowned composers as Arnold Schönberg, Béla Bartók, Paul Hindemith, Henry Cowell and John Cage, ensembles like the Kolisch Quartet and the Harlan-Duis-Lucas Trio from the field of Early Music, as well as prominent figures like Ruth Crawford Seeger or Herbert Hübner, who, after his time at the Bauhaus, made radio broadcasting history as the head of the NDR series *das neue werk*. Musicians, who played lesser-known roles in music life, are also among this illustrious group, Paul Arma and Stefan Wolpe being just two outstanding examples.

Researchers also identified the contours of a Bauhaus repertoire: works that were created in connection to the Bauhaus and were staged and reviewed in concerts, texts and in classroom instruction. One field appeared to have captured the imagination of the Bauhaus in particular – opera. The members of the Bauhaus were fascinated by the genre, evident by their enthusiasm for designing sets for numerous theatres in Germany well into the post-war era. These include sets designed by Alfredo Bortoluzzi, Roman Clemens, Erich Döhler, László Moholy-Nagy, Clemens Röseler, Xanti Schawinsky, Oskar Schlemmer, Ursula Schuh and Friedhelm Strenger.

One should view the Bauhaus cooperation with the Berlin Kroll-Oper in this context, which stands as a paradigm of opera life in the Weimar Republic. Bauhaus artists, such as Moholy-Nagy and Schlemmer, created backdrops for *The Tales of Hoffmann*, *Madama Butterfly* and *The Lucky Hand*. Otto Klemperer, who had close ties to the Bauhaus, produced the musical counterpart to these. Today the Kroll-Oper remains the embodiment of experimental music theatre, a legend of the modernist era, even though its specific connections to the Bauhaus have yet to be fully investigated.



About the Bauhaus-Archiv

The Bauhaus-Archiv / Museum für Gestaltung studies, presents and illuminates the history and impact of the Bauhaus, the most influential school of architecture, design and art of the 20th century. Over the past decades, it has amassed the world's largest Bauhaus-themed collection. In order to better present its extensive holdings, the Bauhaus-Archiv is building a new museum annex. Both the museum and archive will be closed for construction and renovation for the next couple years. The Bauhaus-Archiv is scheduled to reopen in 2025.

While the Bauhaus-Archiv / Museum für Gestaltung is being renovated and expanded, the *temporary bauhaus-archiv* in Berlin-Charlottenburg is open to visitors. Its changing programme highlights the collection of the Bauhaus-Archiv and addresses current topics of design, architecture and society. For example, the Bauhaus-Archiv actively addresses issues of relevance on its way to becoming a new museum and seeks to engage in dialogue with its guests and the public. Until the museum reopens, the bauhaus shop at the *temporary bauhaus-archiv* is open for business.

About the Meistersaal

The Meistersaal is the centrepiece of the Greater Berlin Builders' Association building, built in 1913, at Köthener Straße 38. The name "Meistersaal" (Master Hall) refers to the ceremony held there when finishing tradesmen received their master craftsman certificates. In the 1920s, the Meistersaal assumed greater artistic significance. George Grosz's gallery started business on the ground floor, along with the Malik Verlag, which hosted a reading by Kurt Tucholsky in the Meistersaal in 1921. Today, the location is legendary, not least of all for Hansa Studio 2 which operated there in the 1970s. This is where David Bowie wrote "Heroes" and U2, Iggy Pop, Depeche Mode and Nick Cave produced their music.

About the Bauhaus Orchestra

A highlight of the *bauhaus / music weekend* will be the debut of the reconstructed repertoire of the Bauhaus Orchestra. Founded in 1923 by Andor Weininger and Heinrich Koch, the orchestra performed during the historic Bauhaus Week 1923. The legendary orchestra, which existed until 1933, was known for performing all night long to enthusiastic party-goers. It drew inspiration from Dadaist elements – as one of its titles "Bo-la-bo" tellingly suggests – and combined eastern European folk music with jazz and wild improvisation. Exactly 100 years later, its repertoire has been reconstructed based on newly discovered documents.



About Stefan Wolpe, composer

Stefan Wolpe was born in 1902 in Berlin where he studied composition. He cultivated contacts with leading contemporary artists, the Berlin Dadaists and the Bauhaus in Weimar. Wolpe joined the “November Group” artists’ association, to which Philipp Jarnach, Hanns Eisler and Kurt Weill also belonged. After the Nazis seized power in 1933, Wolpe – a Jew and ardent communist – fled the country. He moved to Palestine, and in 1938, emigrated to the United States where he lived and worked until his death in 1972. His stage music for Molière’s *Malade imaginaire* was composed as an operatic treatment – the most influential musical genre at the Bauhaus, as was evident by the work of the theatre workshop and the numerous set designs produced by members of the Bauhaus well into the post-war era.

About Ruth Crawford Seeger, composer

Ruth Crawford Seeger, a leading American modernist composer, was born in East Liverpool, Ohio, in 1901. She took piano lessons in Chicago from Henriot Levy and Louise Robyn, and received instruction in composition from John Palmer and Adolf Weidig. After completing her piano studies under Djane Lavoie Herz, she became involved in the so-called “ultra-modernists”, a group which combined an eagerness to engage in musical experimentation and a general distaste for the European classical music tradition. Her later husband, the musicologist and composer Charles Seeger, whom she met in New York, also became one of her composition instructors. As the first female Guggenheim scholarship recipient, she travelled through Europe in the early 1930s. After visiting the Bauhaus Dessau, she wrote in a letter: “Bauhaus yesterday was an experience. It made a big impression on me. In fact, I was for a few minutes strongly tempted – to study there!! [...] It is the most optimistic place in feeling (I mean, the architecture, the space-feeling, the light) [...]. I felt released, freed.” Her mostly short compositions are characterised by a heightened atonality and dissonance, which continued to influence composers long after her death in 1953.

About Paul Arma, composer

Born as Imre Weisshaus in 1905, the Hungarian pianist, conductor and composer Paul Arma studied under Béla Bartok at the Franz Liszt Academy in Budapest, with whom he continued to remain in contact during this time at the Bauhaus Dessau. He gave his first concert there in 1928 and organised a three-part lecture series on contemporary music in 1931. By his own account, Arma and Mies van der Rohe had planned to follow up the series with a new music course at the Bauhaus Dessau. His stay at the Bauhaus was likely facilitated by Virginia Tooker, whom he supervised while she was a student there. He had met her during one of his many trips to the United States, where he established contacts with the avant-garde scene. His career as a pianist, composer and conductor of orchestras and choirs was brought to an abrupt halt by the Nazis in 1933. Arma – a Jew and antifascist – became the target of the Gestapo and the SS. After being imprisoned and tortured, he managed to escape to Paris. His role in the history of French Résistance music is enormous, both with respect to his own compositions as well as safeguarding the music composed during the war. After World War II, Arma devoted his life to making music-themed



wooden and metal sculptures, the *Musiques sculptées*. He obtained French citizenship in the 1980s and received numerous distinctions and honours. He died in 1987.



About Kai Hinrich Müller, director and curator of the *bauhaus/music weekend*

PD Dr Kai Hinrich Müller (born in 1985) is a member of the Institute of Historical Musicology at the University of Music and Dance in Cologne. He received several fellowships from various foundations before earning his PhD in 2013, followed by his postdoctoral qualification (habilitation) in 2022. As a recipient of the Thomas Mann Fellowship, he will be visiting the Thomas Mann House in Los Angeles this year to carry out a project on “political opera” in history and the present. He is the research director of various research projects in Germany and abroad, including “Musica non grata” and “Wagner-Lesarten”. He has also served as the artistic director of the Terezín Summer Academy at the former Theresienstadt concentration camp since 2021. Through his many activities, he maintains ties to several universities in Germany and the USA, Schott Music, the WDR broadcasting company and numerous concert and opera houses.

About Karl-Heinz Steffens and Michal Friedländer, artistic directors

The pianist Michal Friedländer made her debut at Carnegie Hall with a piano trio at the invitation of Isaac Stern at the age of 15. Chamber music and accompaniment have remained the focus of her multifaceted career ever since.

Born in Geneva and raised in Israel, Michal Friedländer studied at the Rubin Academy in Jerusalem under Professor Benjamin Oren and Professor Ilona Vince-Kraus. She later completed her studies under Patricia Zander at the New England Conservatory in Boston. She has regularly performed as a soloist with orchestras in Europe and Israel, including the Jerusalem Symphony, the Israeli Chamber Orchestra, the Bavarian Chamber Philharmonic, the German Philharmonic Orchestra of Rhineland-Palatinate and the Hamburg Symphoniker.

Karl-Heinz Steffens was born in Trier in 1961. He received his musical training at the Stuttgart University of Music. In 2000 he was chosen as the solo clarinetist of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra. The decisive boost to his conducting career came from Daniel Barenboim who recognised his potential in a concert recording. In August/September 2008 Steffens made his official debut at the Staatsoper Unter den Linden. In December he was appointed to head conductor of the German Philharmonic Orchestra of Rhineland-Palatinate. Under his direction, the orchestra has received numerous distinctions, including the ECHO Prize for Best Orchestra in 2015 for its recording of works by B.A. Zimmermann. In 2016 he was appointed musical director of the Norwegian National Opera in Oslo. In 2019 Steffens was presented with the Federal Cross of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany. From 2019 to 2022 he served as musical director of the Prague State Opera.