

## **2024 Bauhaus Music Festival**

**Music festival on freedom and exile**

**17–19 October 2024**

### **Musical Life at the Bauhaus**

**Research project at the Bauhaus-Archiv / Museum für Gestaltung**

In line with its new focus on “Bauhaus and Music”, the Bauhaus-Archiv / Museum für Gestaltung launched an interdisciplinary research project in 2021 to investigate musical life at the Bauhaus. Since then, the team of art historians, musicologists and professional musicians have been systematically reconstructing the musical life at the historic Bauhaus sites in Weimar, Dessau and Berlin.

The research team has already identified more than 160 Bauhaus-affiliated musicians who engaged in lively dialogue and cross-genre collaboration. Among their number are well-known names, such 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 and Herbert Hübner, who, after his time at the Bauhaus, made radio broadcasting history as head of the NDR radio series “das neue werk”. There are also numerous musicians who only play a marginal role in today’s musical scene, such as the composer Stefan Wolpe.

The project has also identified the contours of a Bauhaus repertoire: works that were created in connection to the Bauhaus, staged in concerts and reviewed in texts and in the classroom. One field apparently captured the imagination of the Bauhaus in particular – opera. Bauhaus members 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 stage designs by Alfredo Bortoluzzi, Roman Clemens, Erich Döhler, László Moholy-Nagy, Clemens Röseler, Xanti Schawinsky, Oskar Schlemmer, Ursula Schuh and Friedhelm Strenger. While researching, the project team unearthed the 1929/30 avant-garde opera “Parabola and Circula” by the American composer Marc Blitzstein. It was supposed to debut at the Bauhaus theatre in Dessau, but the opera never made it to the stage. Inspired by Blitzstein’s occupation with Constructivist Art, “Parabola and Circula” tells the story of a romance between a square and a dot, accompanied by many other geometric shapes. Excerpts from the opera will be performed at the Bauhaus Music Festival.

The project thus closes an important gap in musical and Bauhaus research, and at the same time, reveals exciting new angles from which to view the artistic legacy of the Bauhaus. The initial findings of the research project were presented at the “bauhaus music weekend” in 2023. This year’s edition of the three-year festival series is dedicated to the highly topical themes of freedom and exile.