

## **Prefaces from the programme brochure**

### **Greeting from the Minister of Family, Children, Youth, Culture, and Sports of North Rhine-Westphalia Ute Schäfer**

Unlike almost any other federal state, North Rhine-Westphalia's music profits from the diversity of cultures that have found their home here.

For several decades, people from all around the world have been moving to our federal state, bringing their diverse singing styles, dances, and musical forms.

One of the most important results of this development is that generations of musicians have created their own musical styles based on the richness of impulses that come together here. In performances and concerts, by some identified as world music and others as global music, we do not only experience imported music cultures, but something new: sounds that have grown out of cooperation.

I am delighted that "creole NRW" offers a forum to this cooperation already for the fourth time and that the "Landesmusikrat NRW" has accepted this forum.

It is a pleasure for the federal government to support this three-day festival. And even if it is called a competition, first of all it is a forum for encounters: For three evenings we will musically encounter the cultural diversity of North Rhine-Westphalia in the "Domicil" (name of the venue); and many musicians will meet and listen to each other for the first time.

I am wishing success to the "creole NRW" and the best of luck in Berlin for the three winning bands.

### **Greeting from the President of the "Landesmusikrat NRW"**

#### **Werner Lohmann**

As umbrella organisation of the music syndicates, the "Landesmusikrat NRW" holds a wide spectrum of musical work and cultural-political interests. 55 music syndicates are members of the umbrella organisation – starting from the rather small, but very active syndicate of the media musicians "mediamusic" to the choir syndicate of North Rhine-Westphalia with its 3,200 choirs.

This alone is a reason for giving our special attention to the cultural diversity in North Rhine-Westphalia and we are very happy about the immense richness that our federal state has to offer.

A century of immigration has positively influenced all societal aspects of making music. A large number of musical styles in the Rhine and the Ruhr regions have been created through the meeting and collaboration of cultures. Even music specialists always marvel at the ensembles and bands that can be discovered here. This is why the competition "creole NRW" is a heartfelt matter to us. And this is also why we as organisers will learn a lot from the performances of the 14 participating bands.

I am delighted by the support of our co-organisers, the "Kulturbüro der Stadt Dortmund" (the cultural office of the city of Dortmund) and by the federal government's sponsorship through its theatre/music, intercultural art and art/cultural affairs departments. I would also like to thank our media partner WDR3 whose editorial department of "Musikkulturen" (music cultures) once more shows how important musical diversity is in North Rhine-Westphalia. Further, we very much appreciate that the staff of the "Domicil" in Dortmund again offers a venue to this competition.

## **Band infos**

### **1.) Touch of Noise**

Magical sound and drumming fireworks

'Touch of Noise' combines extremely different elements into an unusual mixture of Brazilian *joie de vivre* and Northern vastness; of Asian magic and African drum art.

The quintet creates its magical sound through a wide instrumentation: cello meets Asian gongs; subtle melodies of the clarinet and the saxophone meet the most diverse drums; and archaic singing blends with the sounds of the marimba and the thumb piano to create atmospheric patterns of sound. In addition to that, there are unusual instruments, such as a barrel from Hamburg's fish market; gongs made out of glass tubes; or up to two metre long organ pipes dipped into water to make sound. In the group's 20 years of existence, they have given delightful performances at unusual venues, such as on the bow of a ferry across the Weser river, in a tropical green house in the Botanic Gardens, or on the grounds of a castle with tower and catacombs.

Moritz Reinisch – tenor and soprano saxophone, bass clarinet, percussion

Barbara Burghardt – voice, cello, marimba, percussion

Udo Engler – changoo, darabukka, marimba, waterphone, percussion

Andrea Seewig – congas, cajon, pandeiro, barrel drum

Jochen Mariss – cello, talking drum, barrel drum, waterphone, marimba

## **2.) Gipsy Pearls**

Virtuosic Balkans

Sometimes good music only needs two ingredients, such as an accordion and a voice. In the group 'Gipsy Pearls', Dragan Mitiovic's extremely multifaceted accordion plays around Rada Radojic's intense singing. The duo goes on a musical-lyrical journey across the different cultures, with the Balkans being the virtuosic launch pad for their spacious excursions: for songs from the 20s to the 40s, Gipsy songs, Chansons, as well as Russian romances, and traditional songs from the Balkans. This colourful mix is further enriched with elements from swing music, jazz, and funk.

The theatre maker and singer Rada Radojic and the great accordion player Dragan Mitiovic from Belgrad met in 2008 at the 'Micro!Festival' in Dortmund. Dragan was playing with the ensemble 'KAL' from Serbia – one of the best known bands from the Balkans. Last year, the two artists founded 'Gipsy Pearls' which has led to other collective projects, especially on music for theatre. With their mixture of fiery, vivid, and stirring to slow and melancholic pieces, they tell stories that invite their listeners to laugh, cry, and dream.

Dragan Mitiovic – accordion

Rada Radojic – voice

## **3.) Badeken di Kallah**

'Merryage' times for Klezmer

The music of the Klezmer, the Yiddish 'Spielleute,' originates from the old world of the East European 'Shtetl'. This is a world of ordinary people with their dreams, desires and happiness; their sadness and vitality, which can be heard in the rhythm of their music. All those elements came together and led to the ensemble's foundation.

The ensemble's name, 'Badeken di Kallah', describes a Jewish wedding ritual where the bride's face (= Kalle) is covered (= badeken) by a veil after the groom has seen her for a short moment. It is also the title of a composition by Leib Yakoov Rigler, which in the mid-1990s sparked clarinet player Norbert Labatzki's interest in Klezmer music and inspired him to found the group 'Badeken di Kallah' in 1997. Their aim is not only to interpret traditional Klezmer pieces, but also to develop their own stylistically diverse compositions, combined with jazz elements which guitarist Christian Hammer brings in.

The quartet has often played at synagogues and has worked with the 'Schindowski Ballet' from the 'Musiktheater im Revier'.

Norbert Labatzki – clarinet, bass clarinet

Rainer Ortner – accordion

Christian Hammer – guitar

Michael Ledig – bass

## **4.) Ablaye Cissoko – Volker Goetze – Duo**

Complementary sound colours

This unusual duo consists of a bridge harp player from Southern Senegal and a trumpet player from the 'Bergisches Land'. In 2001, Ablaye Cissoko and Volker Goetze performed together in Senegal as a support act for Youssou N'Dour. Despite all cultural differences, they soon discovered a great number of musical and personal similarities. Throughout the years, they have developed a friendship that has created a joint cultural and social commitment. Cissoko's interest in jazz and Goetze's interest in West African music have been a wonderful and complementing condition for a captivating dialogue that the Senegalese artist describes as follows: 'There is a power that grows out of our difference.'

Ablaye Cissoko performs brilliantly with his virtuosic play on the 21-string bridge harp kora and his touching vocals. Cissoko comes from a griot family, in which the tradition of the singing story teller has been passed on for centuries. It is on this ground that his own inspirational compositions flourish. The trumpet virtuoso Volker Goetze has travelled far, and with his smooth and floating melodies he harmoniously plays around the pearl-like playing of the kora.

Ablaye Cissoko – kora and voice

Volker Goetze - trumpet

## **5.) White Canvas Quartett**

Borderless musical worlds

This 'blank screen' mirrors a musically more and more intertwined world. Completely grown out of improvisation, nowadays the music of the ensemble is an intuitive examination of our auditory world cultural heritage. The music of the White Canvas Quartet can be understood as a free-style encounter of ethnic and archaic sounds, electric loops, and classical timbre. Africa and India, rain forest and desert, vibrating and freely floating, overtone elements and bowed guitar strings – everything deeply related and interrelated. Those elements seem to intertwine and create an associative whole in which the voice of Rena Mayer Weil takes on the form of many different musical instruments. The White Canvas Quartet has been playing together since 2009. It was formed as an extension of the duo of Rena Meyer Wiel and Rolf Beydemüller with co-musicians who enjoy drawing upon the vast reservoir of world-wide music cultures, and who, with these sounds and colours, design imaginative musical landscapes.

Rena Meyer Wiel – voice  
Rolf Beydemüller – guitars  
Christoph Selbach – keyboards  
Christoph Schumacher – drum kit, percussion

## **6.) Banda Pelodum**

AfroSambaReggaeSoul

What happens when six thoroughbred musicians with completely different musical backgrounds meet? In this particular case it was the birth of: AfroSambaReggaeSoul. Banda Pelodum creates music with multi-cultural influences and mixes styles such as samba-reggae, funk, soul, Afro, or Latin into an independent sound.

Banda Pelodum has an extraordinary musical scope and yet in its heart it stays loyal to the vivid Afro-Brazilian rhythms –presented naturally and with great passion.

The leader of the group is the experienced percussionist Danilo da Silva from Salvador de Bahia/Brazil, where he played in popular 'Blocos Afro'-bands such as 'Ilê Aiyê' and 'Timbalada'. The 'Blocos-Afros'-bands take part in the carnival, and in Brazil they self-consciously demonstrate their Black African identity with energetic music and impressive shows. Singer Jeffrey Amankwa, originally from Ghana, and singer Ina da Silva sing in Portuguese, Spanish, and English. In addition to their stage work, the musicians also offer workshops for children and samba marching bands.

Danilo da Silva – percussion  
Ina da Silva – guitar, voice  
Jeffrey Amankwa – voice  
Markus Conrad – guitar  
Mic Thieme – bass  
Marcel Settner – drum kit

## **7.) Duo Santoor**

Iranian string fantasies

The santoor is an old Persian form of the zither, related to the dulcimer, the Hungarian cymbal and the Greek santouri. It can have up to 72 strings, which are struck with small wooden sticks. In Iranian art music, the santoori is recognised as a noble and intimate instrument and is therefore usually played solo or in small ensembles. In 2001, two music students met at the University of Art in Tehran. They were both virtually electrified by the santoor, and wanted to extend the Persian zither's expression through creating a duo. Hardly any adequate pieces existed for such a duo, however. The "Duo Santoor" is therefore the first ever Iranian ensemble which professionally composes and arranges for two santours and that picks up the instrument's originality: the extremely fast stroke by the sticks demands a dense interlocking of both musicians' playing, and the enduring sound of the strings creates a floating polyphony.

After finishing their studies in Teheran in 2006 the musicians decided to continue their studies in France and Germany respectively, in order to further explore the possibilities of the Persian zither in “Duo Santoor.”

### **8.) Diagilew Project**

Belorussian ethnojazz

Belarus is a blank spot on the Western world music map. This is what Maksim Diagilew realised when he, after his classical music studies in Belarus, came to Dortmund and Essen to follow jazz studies and to perfect his technical skills on the saxophone. In December 2006 he founded the Diagilew project which shows world music as the high art of the cultivation of homesickness, enhanced with the colourful sounds of the diaspora. In North Rhine-Westphalia the saxophone player met brilliant musicians from his former home country, such as the percussionist Timofey Birukov and the bass player Artjom Frenkel. Already at an early stage, the Ukrainian jazz guitarist, who has been rewarded internationally several times, left his distinctive traces in the music of the ensemble. Since last year, the singer Tatiana Kovaleva has been giving a voice to the former instrumental ensemble. She studied traditional singing and knows the Belorussian roots from her own field research trips. The Diagilew project takes on traditional pieces and transports them into present time without changing their peculiarity.

### **9.) Kavpersaz**

Inspiring Anatolia

At first glance, the instrumentation of this quartet suggests traditional Anatolian music. The name of the ensemble, Kavpersaz, consists of significant syllables of particular instruments, such as the shepherd’s flute kaval, the Kurdish frame drum erbane, the vase drum darbuka, the Anatolian davul, and the long-neck lute saz. A Western ingredient is the classical guitar and the fretless guitar that over the last twenty years has become a new instrument of the Turkish music culture. For Kavpersaz, the roots neither function as additional decor, nor as random folkloric entertainment; rather, they use the potential of Anatolian music tradition. The quartet creates a musical cosmos from the sound reservoir of its instruments and from the melodic and rhythmic richness of Anatolia.

After many years of experience performing with different bands, the four Turkish and Kurdish musicians gathered and only recently founded their very own ensemble to which they bring their own experiences.

### **10.) Kleopatra**

Afro-Oriental project

Is this going to work? Five musicians from very different countries, such as Tunisia, Ukraine, and Germany, meet for the “Afro-Oriental project.” In their joint work with the roots of “le grand Maghreb” (Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, Mauritania, and Libya), they keep discovering more and more points of references and refreshing inspiration.

Characteristic are the highly rhythmic arrangements which very much appeal to an audience longing to dance. Kleopatra does not simplify the complex rhythms and harmony of the different styles, however, as their concert should also be an experience for their listeners. Sahbi Amara Oud studied violoncello in Tunisia. With Kleopatra he realised his dream of a music ensemble with trumpet and saxophone in Dortmund in 2004. There he met his ideal musicians, who in their very own way work on the music of the overlapping Africa and the Orient. Within this international band, every musician can perform as soloist. Today, the repertoire consists almost exclusively of the musicians’ own compositions.

### **11.) Sina Nossa**

A passion of Fado

Sina Nossa means “our destiny.” The name expresses the group’s self-conception as the musicians live their music with enormous intensity.

The septet from North Rhine-Westphalia has mainly Portuguese roots, but does not remain within the home boundaries: taking the Fado as driving force, Sina Nossa overcomes narrow stylistic borders and unites elements from classical music, jazz, Latin and pop. This openness also becomes visible in the instrumentation: piano and concert guitar, bass, accordion and percussion. And of course, the Portuguese guitar keeps its ancestral place within this finely shaded symbiosis.

Singer Anabela Ribeiro, with her clear, sensual voice, evokes a longing for her home country in a way that helps the highly emotional stories become more accessible, also for non-Portuguese people.

However, the septet does not stay within a cliché of Fado melancholy. It gives new shoots to its roots and, with a lot of rhythm and happiness, enwraps the Fado with a new robe.

## **12.) Lagash**

New music from Mesopotamia

Lagash is a 5000-year old Sumerian city in Southern Mesopotamia. With its soloistic instrumentation of the Iraqi knee violin djoze, percussion, clarinet, and piano, the quartet Lagash fascinates with complex sound patterns, seducing Oriental melodies, melancholic harmonies, surprising rhythms and major precision respecting the century old maqamat.

Maqam is a melodic modus in Classical Arabic music. For the quartet, a contemporary reconditioning means giving new impulses to this old form. The instrumental accompaniment appears equal to the melodic-rhythmical virtuosity of the singing. Within the pieces of Lagash, we find composed as well as improvised parts.

Saad Thamir and Bassem Hawar teach as lecturers for composition, piano and violin at the “Institute of Fine Arts” in Bagdad. In exile, they joined together with two prize-winning musicians of European tradition: the clarinet player Christina Fuchs and the German-Indian pianist Jarry Singla, in order to interpret this new music of Mesopotamia in their very own way.

## **13.) Ensemble Draj**

Jewish song worlds

The trio expresses musically the stories that Yiddish songs tell. These highly emotional songs talk about deep poverty and old people, but also about being in love and hope during difficult times. They are evidence of a past Yiddish world. Aside from the singer-songwriter culture in which it is the word that dominates, the ensemble Draj creates a meaningful text-music which appears both concertante and cheerful.

The peculiarity of each song is shaped by the musical experience of the three musicians. Stylistic elements from Classical music, new music, blues, or Modern Classical music reflect Jewish (his)stories. A motif by Erik Satie is being finely spun, a small quotation by ‘King Crimson’ flashes up, the Oriental ‘Taksim’ becomes an improvised introduction and the Chassidic nigun mutates into scat singing.

The ensemble Draj was founded in 1996 and has held its ground in a challenging niche. Performances in Portugal, Spain and at the EBU festival in Finland prove that their interpretation of Yiddish songs is understood also without the knowledge of Yiddish language.

## **14.) Uwaga!**

Fiery harmonies

Everything started with two duos and their shared intersection: the violinists Maurice Maurer and Christoph König had been “sharing” accordionist Miroslaw Tybora as their duo partner over a long time. The move towards a common trio was therefore very obvious. “Uwaga!” means “Beware!”.

Already the audience’s enthusiasm to this fiery formation’s first concert confirmed the band’s name. In autumn 2007, the trio was completed to an ideal formation with the bass player Markus Conrads. Based on the four musicians’ different musical experiences, a diverse repertoire was born. Well-known pieces are presented in a surprising arrangement. Uwaga! unites what seems to be contradicting opposites: the seriousness of Classical music with the untamed spirit of traditional Gypsy music, the emotional depth of the tango with the vivid spontaneity of jazz.

The group quickly turned from an insider’s tip into a well-known group in the Ruhr region – with concerts at festivals, at museums’ nights and at different theatres and clubs. The focus of their concert tours is Poland – country of origin of the band’s name and the accordion player. The quartet has also performed in China, Russia, and France.