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The Art Of Being Human

Press Information | February, 23, 2023



Performance Piece “The Art of Being Human” Looks into the Healing Potential of Art
The interdisciplinary project premieres March 23 at the Pierre Boulez Saal

Music of the 16th and 17th centuries, dance, and visual art come together in the interdisciplinary performance **“The Art of Being Human”** created specifically for the Pierre Boulez Saal. Laurence Dreyfus and his Ensemble Phantasm, choreographer Sommer Ulrickson, and visual artist Alexander Polzin transform the stage of the concert hall into a laboratory for communication between people and aesthetic disciplines. The work was commissioned by the Pierre Boulez Saal and has its world premiere on March 23, with further performances on March 24 and 25. (The production was originally announced for March 2020 and delayed due to the pandemic.) Tickets are available at the box office, at boulezsaal.de, or by calling +49 30 4799 7411.

“The Art of Being Human” is a creative experiment in which dance, sculpture, and English viol consort music by William Byrd, Henry Purcell, John Dowland, Orlando Gibbons, Mathew Locke, and others blend into new aesthetic forms. Fascinated by the playing of Ensemble Phantasm, which sets the acoustic framework, Sommer Ulrickson and Alexander Polzin have developed stunning visual dimensions for the performance. At the Pierre Boulez Saal, the trio found a space that allowed them to explore and embrace the tension of their disciplines.

“Musicians tend to think very little about their bodies. As soon as you begin to work with dancers, you’re in awe of what these bodies can do, but this also makes you reflect on your own body. We’re making music using our bodies, and one of the really beautiful things in this piece is taking these risks and having to trust. We learn how this can relate to our playing. There’s a vulnerability in each experience that’s unbelievably precious.”
—Laurence Dreyfus



Sculpture from Alexander Polzin © Peter Adamik

The Art of Being Human

Thu, March 23, 7:30 pm World Premiere

Fri, March 24, 7:30 pm

Sat, March 25, 7:00 pm

► **Watch here:** A conversation on “The Art of Being Human” with Sommer Ulrickson, Laurence Dreyfus, and Alexander Polzin.

► **Watch here:** A trailer of the production.

Creative Team:

Treble Viol and Musical Direction: Laurence Dreyfus

Visual Concept: Alexander Polzin

Choreography: Sommer Ulrickson

Costume Design: Andrea Schmidt-Futterer, Ulrike Plehn

Phantasm: Emilia Benjamin (Diskantgambe), Jonathan Manson (Altgambe), Heidi Gröger (Altgambe), Markku Luolajan-Mikkola (Bassgambe)

Dance: Phoenix Chase-Meares, Yamila Khodr, Saeed Hani Moeller, Camille Jackson

Phantasm, an award-winning consort of viols, was founded in 1994 by Laurence Dreyfus and has become recognised as the most exciting viol consort active on the world scene today. The ensemble catapulted into international prominence when its debut CD of works by Henry Purcell won a Gramophone Award for the Best Baroque Instrumental Recording of 1997. It has since won two further Gramophone Awards - for Orlando Gibbons (2004) and John Dowland's Lachrimae (2017).

Alexander Polzin, born in East Berlin in 1973, is an international sculptor, painter, stage designer and opera director. In addition, he develops unique collaborations with writers, composers, musicians, choreographers and scholars from all over the world. Polzin's sculptures and paintings can be seen today in public spaces across the world. For example, his Giordano Bruno Monument in Berlin's Potsdamer Platz, Zürich, Tel Aviv, Paris, Madrid and many other.

Sommer Ulrickson was born in California, where she studied dance, theatre and performance. She came to Berlin in 1998 on a Chancellor's Scholarship from the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation and works here as a director and choreographer. In 1999 she co-founded the wee dance company and worked with Johann Kresnik at the Volksbühne. She created numerous choreographies of her own and theater productions such as *Writer's Block* on the occasion of the 66th anniversary of the book burning on Bebelplatz and in the Jewish Museum. Together with the composer Moritz Gagern she developed and staged several music theater pieces for the Neuköllner Oper Berlin.



The Art of Being Human © Pierre Boulez Saal

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