

06.04.2020–01.05.2020

## FEMINALE OF MUSIC – Female Composers

The ZKM pays tribute to female composers with a four-week digital festival

[www.zkm.de/feminale-der-musik](http://www.zkm.de/feminale-der-musik)

Monday to Friday, daily at 6 pm

In digital space the ZKM can contribute to making the musical achievements of outstanding female composers better known, who are sadly still underrepresented in the real spaces of concert halls. On the online platform [www.zkm.de/feminale-der-musik](http://www.zkm.de/feminale-der-musik) selected works from the seventeenth century to the present day will be presented from 6 April to 1 May, Monday to Friday: 500 years of compositions by women.

In all epochs and in all of the women's biographies there were obstacles, such as social constraints, envy and bigotry on the part of male colleagues, and even prohibition to practice, which these remarkable women composers had to overcome in order to work creatively and publish their music. Some were very well known during their lifetime, but were often forgotten after the artist's death. Even today, in the ostensibly open and democratic information age, conservative structures significantly impede female composers in learning, exercise, and practice of their chosen métier.

Within the framework of the Festival one to two composers will be featured each day. The program presents early women composers such as Francesca Caccini (1587–1640), Barbara Strozzi (1619–1677), Wilhelmine von Bayreuth (1709–1748), Lili Boulanger (1893–1918), Mel Bonis (1858–1937), the Karlsruhe composers Clara Faisst (1872–1948) and Margarete Schweikert (1887–1957), as well as contemporary artists like Olga Neuwirth, Rebecca Saunders, and Adriana Hölszky.

Background information and samples of compositions offer a comprehensive insight into the life and work of selected composers. There will be live broadcasts of interviews, screenings, and home concerts on certain days, always at 6 pm: these will be announced as and when they are arranged.

The Festival opens with the streaming of the documentary *Komponistinnen* (D, 2018, 95 min). Immediately after, at 20:00 hrs, there will be a discussion via Zoom in the virtual presence of filmmakers Kyra Steckeweh

## Press Information

April 2020

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Location

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Opening

**Fri, 06.04.2020**

**6 pm** Filmscreening *Female composers*

**8 pm** Talk with Peter Weibel and the filmmakers

**Press Contact**

Dominika Szope

Head of Departement

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ZKM | Center for Art and

Media Karlsruhe

Lorenzstraße 19

76135 Karlsruhe

Cooperation partner



University of Music  
Hochschule  
für Musik  
Karlsruhe



grapefruits SWR»»



Archive Women and Music



musica femina münchen

Founders of the ZKM



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and Tim van Beveren. Zoom makes interaction between the filmmakers and the audience possible.

The proportion of women who are active and represented in classical music is very small, as confirmed by the major statistical studies on the share of women in culture and media conducted by the Deutscher Kulturrat (German Cultural Council). In the season 2014/15 only 14.5% of the operas performed in German opera houses were written by women. Very few? Statistically, however, this percentage of women represents a huge increase. In the season 1994/95 the figure was less than 3%. By contrast, from 1994 to 2015, not one light opera written by a woman composer was performed. In the 2017/18 season, according to figures compiled by the Neue Musikzeitung, of 441 premieres in German concert halls only four of the works performed were by a woman. Nevertheless, according to an international survey conducted by Bachtrack, one of the largest websites for classical music, which analyzed last year's 30,551 concert and opera performances at leading international houses, the number of women in the "Top 100 Composers" of contemporary music increased from 7 in 2016 to 24 in 2019. Criteria for selection, however, were not published. In school textbooks, however, female composers do not feature at all. These numbers are incontrovertible evidence that the discrepancy between the gender parity aspired to and actual gender parity is huge, and this can also be observed in other areas of the cultural landscape.

Over the last thirty years at the ZKM 47 women composers in residence developed new works. A selection of their works is being presented again in the Festival in the areas of electronic compositions, New Music, and radio plays. The first prize of the prestigious Giga-Hertz-Award of ZKM and SWR ("Southwest Broadcasting") for lifetime achievement in electronic composition was awarded in three out of twelve cases to a woman composer: Pauline Oliveiros, Laurie Anderson, and Éliane Radigue.

On behalf of all women composers, musicians, and artists we would like to sincerely thank everyone who with courage and energy despite obstructions continues to contribute to the diversity of music culture. The speedy realization of the FEMINALE DER MUSIK — Female Composers would not have been possible without the uncomplicated support of our partners. We understand this Festival as a voice for the initiatives, which are especially committed to enhancing the visibility and securing the equality of women in the realm of music. Some of these initiatives have

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— EnBW

been doing this for over thirty years now. Many, many thanks to: Archiv Frau und Musik, Frankfurt; Grapefruits, musica femina münchen; Karlsruhe University of Music; the SWR; and the German Cultural Council.

**Initiated by Peter Weibel**

**Curated and organized by Lisa Bensele and Dominique Theise**

**Collaborating partners:**

**Archiv Frau und Musik, Frankfurt ([archiv-frau-musik.de/](http://archiv-frau-musik.de/))**

The Archiv Frau und Musik is an international research facility and offers both musicologists and musicians access to resources such as sheet music and literature, as well as numerous audio recordings, hundreds of visual materials, and manuscripts. In addition, the Archiv mediates for educational institutions of all kinds, organizes concerts and conferences, and supports women composers with a Composer in Residence grant.

**grapefruits (<http://grapefruits.online/>)**

grapefruits is a fanzine about women composers and sound artists put out by Nathalie Brum, Elisa Kühnl, Elisa Metz, and Theresa Nink. It was founded in 2019 at the Institute of Music and Media, Düsseldorf, with the support of Professors Heike Sperling and Swantje Lichtenstein.

**musica femina münchen ([musica-femina-muenchen.de/](http://musica-femina-muenchen.de/))**

For over thirty years now musica femina münchen has worked to make the compositions of women composers visible and known and to ensure they receive a professional performance. The association also oversees that the works and names of female composers are cited with the requisite prominence in the printed programs of all large and small orchestras.

**Karlsruhe University of Music ([hfm-karlsruhe.de](http://hfm-karlsruhe.de))**

The Karlsruhe University of Music is firmly opposed to any kind of discrimination. It stands for promotion of diversity and gender equality. In its libraries the university holds large collections of sheet music and concert recordings of works by historic and contemporary women composers.

**SWR ([swr.de](http://swr.de))**

As a public service broadcaster the SWR ("Southwest Broadcasting") is committed to promoting the visibility of women composers and has already

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produced several series as well as recordings of works by female composers.

### German Cultural Council (kulturrat.de)

The German Cultural Council is the umbrella association of the Federal German Cultural Organizations. It initiates discussion of cultural policy at all political levels. It published the study titled *Frauen in Kultur und Medien* (Women in Culture and Media) and with a project office under the patronage of Monika Grütters it works explicitly to strengthen the networking and visibility of women in culture and the media.

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