

# PRESS RELEASE

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## moers festival: Presenting the Program for Whitsuntide Weekend 2024

### Jazz Festival for Music, Sense-ification, Politics & Superheroes

**Moers.** Whitsuntide weekend 2024. The Earth seems to be going to pieces, the gaps are getting bigger, the glaciers are getting smaller, right-wingers are getting stronger and the voices of reason are getting weaker. The world is overrun by villains, who, in the political sphere, the weapons industry and mainstream culture, have created a breeding ground for easy answers. And we all have that one uncle we'd prefer not to sit next to anymore at family gatherings.

**WHOOSH!** With a rush, a conglomeration of superheroes emerges from a cloud of verbiage, a state of suspended animation, to combat evil using their individual superpowers, from their headquarters in Moers. Armed with Japanese kotos, for instance, they produce sounds powerful enough to push back fascists, abusers of power and other brutes. With Namibian click consonants, they repel rhetorical poison arrows and redirect them back to the brown swamp from whence they came. This year's moers festival, running from 17 to 20 May, can be described thusly, or at least these colourful images are a fair approximation. **Nothing earth-shattering** in and of itself. In the scope of the annual pre-festival press conference, the festival organisers presented the program, along with this year's poster design.

#### *MUSIC*

For the 53<sup>rd</sup> time, from 17 to 20 May 2024 (Whitsuntide weekend), a sort of extended family reunion is taking place, whose participants listen to music that can perhaps best be labelled as somewhere between avant-garde, contemporary improvisation and the "unclassifiable" - if it can be labelled at all. On the festival stages (in the Enni Event Hall, in the open air at Rodelberg and within the "Annex", as well as throughout the entire Moers metropolitan area) a laboratory-type situation manifests itself, a massive space for experimentation materialises from thin air. Here, acts that were previously absolute strangers to one another perform side by side, world premieres are celebrated, trends are set. **Not your thing?** Maybe. moers has never been particularly worried about audience approval, and acts can even totally bomb here, as long as they are reaching for something special. In the lab for 2024, among other artists ready for unscripted encounters, we're looking forward to welcoming: US-American harpist **Zeena Parkins**, a sound researcher and improviser who has already performed seven times in moers; exceptional South-African pianist **Nduduzo Makhathini**, recipient of numerous awards who first achieved great notoriety in Europe through a residency program in Basel; German trombonist **Konrad "Conny" Bauer**, one of the legendary progenitors of free jazz in former East Germany; **Amirtha Kidambi's Elder Ones** from the USA, who tackle the subjects of power, oppression, capitalism, colonialism, white supremacy and violence; and then there's **Antumbra**, a collaboration between **Elias Stemeseder** and **Christian Lillinger**, whom the broadcaster SWR has described as "two of the most idiosyncratic voices on the European jazz scene".

This edition features a special focus on two remarkable countries: Namibia and Japan. For Namibia, the festival organisers will be presenting a sort of kaleidoscope, an exemplary selection of artists whose works could be described as classical or pop music, from this country that is intimately linked with Germany through its colonial history. The Japan Focus builds on the long years of friendship that moers festival has enjoyed with the fascinating country's improvised music scene. Now, Japan can finally be an official guest country, following on three Covid-19 years characterised by debilitating travel restrictions. In addition, the festival looks forward to welcoming a wealth of musical talent from all around the world, including Australia, Belarus, Belgium, Brazil, Germany, France, Great Britain,

Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Korea, Cuba, Namibia, the Netherlands, Austria, Portugal, Russia, Switzerland, South Africa, Uganda and the USA.

### **SENSE-IFICATION**

moers festival - which arose from the student and social movements of 1968, roots with which the festival maintains a very conscious connection - is more than just freaky music and drum circles in the great outdoors. It is "a whole attitude to life, if you don't mind our saying so"! At the press conference in March, artistic director Tim Isfort gave a sneak preview of what's in store over the Whitsuntide weekend. The audience can expect **nothing mind-blowing**, or so he claimed, while the festival office, the creative forge where new ideas are hammered out, apparently smells of cherry blossoms. Then his team presented a poster, conceived in a cartoon style, upon which the keen observer can recognise a whole host of villains threatening to overrun the globe, while opposite them stand artists from around the world who will meet in moers on Whitsuntide weekend '24 to push back against evil (at least) for four full days. One can ponder this poster for hours, guessing and discussing too, of course. However, Isfort and his team are aiming to reach guests beyond the realms of the olfactory, graphical and musical too: "In a time where the gaps are getting even wider all over, politically, socially and financially, we mustn't lose our ability to talk to one another, to pursue reconciliation, while taking a firm stand at the same time," according to Isfort. To this end, a fictional individual, who would have turned 99 this year, is brought into play as a poetic standard bearer, making repeated appearances with clever, political and at times cabaret-ripe statements, a person who is perhaps not entirely based on fantasy, but derived from real life instead. Why does this person always seem to appear aboard a white ship? Isfort wouldn't say precisely, but he mentioned that he does hope that all festival attendees will take the following feeling with them on their way into the days, weeks and months following the four-day event:

*"and everyone talks and drinks  
eats and thinks  
to heart's content and appetite's fulfilment -  
everyone except the fascists, that is."*

### **POLITICS**

For three years now, the festival team has turned an annual focus to one new individual country from the African continent. This year's focus country, Namibia, is not only represented with multiple musical projects - following conversations with curators Ainoo Mongo (Nam) and Thorsten Schütte (Germany), we'll be showing moving works from the archiving and exhibition project "**Stolen Moments: Namibian Music History Untold**". This project tells the story of Namibian pop music from the 1950s to the 1980s, a music which was censored by the South African apartheid regime and made nearly impossible to develop and distribute. The exhibition is accompanied by a concert featuring songs from this era, whose arrangements have been created over the past years in the scope of workshops focussing on German-Namibian collaboration. In addition, moers has commissioned a work from **Eslon Hindundu**, the creator and director of the first Namibian opera, which treats the genocide of the Herero and Nama peoples. This genocide, in general, is such a long-neglected issue here! Who actually knows anything about it? How is it talked about in schools in Germany, or in Namibia? In the scope of our *discussions* series, these and other questions will be on the table. Uncomfortable truths and perspectives are welcome here.

In 1904, the Herero and Nama rose up against their German occupiers. The rebellion was brutally put down, culminating in the first genocide of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. 120 years later, German festival organisers are bringing a delegation consisting of nine women and men of the **Ju'/Hoansi** to Germany. As a subgroup of the San, they are among the world's oldest peoples. Archaeological finds indicate that their ancestors were already moving through Southern Africa as hunters and gatherers at least 20,000 years ago. The group will appear in moers in diverse configurations, interacting with improvising musicians from the international scene.

## **SUPERHEROES**

**Nothing earth-shattering?** "We pull people in and kick them back out again," announces Leticia Carrera. Together with Lukas Döhler, the 18-year-old runs the project "*Captain Niederrhein Enraptured by the Unimoers*", in which young talents who make their home on the Lower Rhine will take to the stage on Whitsun Monday to present their interpretations of superheroes. Both rehearsed and spontaneously, bathed in sound from all sides, full of surprises, all naturally featuring constructive involvement on the part of the grown-ups. Carrera knows what she's talking about - she herself has graced the stage several times as a participant, and now she would like to pass her enthusiasm on to the next generation, in the conviction that moers is just the place for opening up new perspectives.

## **moers festival**

So, a **jazz festival for music, sense-ification, politics, superheroes and: togetherness?** Those who still think things were flashier back in the days of the full-park squat-fest era are invited to stroll around the festival grounds. The space between the Enni Event Hall, Rodelberg and the Filder Benden school complex is connected by the world's longest festival village - here, aside from a range of delicacies, one can discover high-quality, sustainable fair-trade goods from merchants, along with attractive knick-knacks. moersland is, on the other hand, a whole different deal: the fourth stage at moers festival whisks participants away to a one-of-a-kind virtual reality experience. Then, at "Where the Wild Kids Are", as the creative area for children stretching across a busy meadow is known, guests both young and old can try out all sorts of things in the scope of a wide variety of workshops. The rest of our "little big city" is equally "moersified" on Whitsuntide weekend: numerous spots within the city limits will play host to actions and concerts, sometimes even planned in advance, but always exciting. Whoever hasn't yet had their fill of music on Saturday night can make their way to Bollwerk107, where Istanbul Ghetto Club will keep the mood running high into the early morning hours.

All of the superheroes performing in moers in 2024 will be gradually revealed over the coming weeks at [www.moers-festival.de/programm](http://www.moers-festival.de/programm). Tickets for the entire weekend cost 159 euros, and are also available at a reduced rate of 53 euros for eligible guests. There will be a ticket counter on-site, and day passes and VIP tickets will also be available. Those possessing the Kulturpass app can secure tickets free-of-charge. The outdoor swimming pool complex "Solimare" will serve as a festival campground, and a limited number of spaces for guests' own recreational vehicles are also available on request. Whoever desires to be particularly mobile over the weekend can book their very own moersbike.

To ensure that everyone on the festival grounds feels comfortable and is able to enjoy a safe visit to the festival, an awareness team is active on-site. For individuals with reduced mobility, the team has solutions to make travelling around the festival grounds safe and comfortable.

moers festival is funded by the Federal Commissioner for Culture and Media, the Ministry of Culture and Science of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia, Kunststiftung NRW as well as the City of Moers. Media partners include WDR3 and Kultur West. The international guest program of KULTURsekretariat NRW enables eight influential international "multipliers" to attend the festival.

Regional sponsors include enni, CAD Schroer, Volksbank Niederrhein and Initiativkreis Moers.

The festival continues to receive generous support from numerous local companies and co-operation partners.

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## Confirmed artists moers 2024

name	cast
Brüssel / Charles / Hawkins / Wittbrodt "Cafe OTO #3 - Justice League" (DE/UK)	Julia Brüssel (vl) Emily Wittbrodt (vc) Neil Charles (b) Alexander Hawkins (p, synth, sampler)
Danny Fox Trio (US)	Danny Fox (p) Chris van Voorst van Beest (b) Max Goldman (dr)
Jambinai (KO)	Bomi Kim (voc, haegum) Ilwoo Lee (g, piri) Byeongkoo Yu (b) Jae Hyuk Choi (dr)
NDUDUZO MAKHATHINI (ZA)	Nduduzo Makhathini (p) Zwelakhe-Duma Bell Le Pere (b) Francisco Mela (dr)
SKYLLA (UK/DE/IR)	Ruth Goller (b, vocals) Lauren Kinsella (voc) Alice Grant (voc) Max Andrzejewski (dr)
Satoko Fujii Duo (JP)	Satoko Fuji (p) Natsuki Tamura (tp)
Satoko Fujii Tokyo Trio (JP)	Satoko Fuji (p) Takashi Sugawa (b) Ittetsu Takemura (dr)
Amirtha Kidambi's Elder Ones (US)	Amirtha Kidambi (voice, harm, synth, effects) Matt Nelson (sopran sax) Alfredo Colon (ts, effects) Lester St. Louis (b, effects) Jason Nazary (dr, electronics)
Cecile Lartigau (FR)	Cecile Lartigau (ondes martenot)
ANTUMBRA (DE/AT)	Elias Stemeseder - Christian Lillinger (cembalo, dr, electronics, synth)
Burnt Friedman & João Pais Filipe (DE/PT)	Burnt Friedman (electronics/synth) João Pais Filipe (dr)
KIND (DE)	Shannon Barnett - trb Emily Wittbrodt - cello

	Shabnam Parvaresh - cl David Helm - bs Bruna Cabral - perc Jan Klare - sax
SANKAKU (JP)	Miyama McQueen Tokita (koto) Yuki Byeol (dance) Akiko Nakayama (visuals)
Unknown Mirrors (JP/UK)	Miyama McQueen Tokita (koto) Ryan Williams (recorder)
VAX (US)	Patrick Breiner (sax) Liz Kosack (keys, electronic) Devin Gray (d)
DJ BlipVert (US)	Will Northlich-Redmond (electronics)
Neues Werk für Stimme, Performance, Kammerensemble und Improviser (Uraufführung) (NA/DE/FR)	Eslon Hindundu (composer, voc) Angelina Tashiya Akawa (voc, performance) Max Andrzejewski (dr), Cecile Lartigau (ondes martenot)  more t.b.a.
Stolen Moments (NA/DE)	Jackson Wahengo (git, voc) Mark "Moody" Hernadi (keys, arr)
Ju/'Hoansi (NA)	Sari Oma, Fransina Kxao, Casa Nc Emsje, Kaziko Tsamugao Cwi, Albert Nase, N!aica N!ani, Johannes Cwi, Khaum Iloce, Emile Ilxouri (voc, perc)
Sach' ma nix Eine Hommage an Captain Niederrhein (DE/IT/JP)  <i>moers special</i>	Nonoko Yoshida (sax) Peter Engelhardt (git) Silvia Bolognesi (b) Achim Krämer (dr) Oxana Omelchuk (samples, electronics)
YPY (JP)	Koshiro Hino (electronics)
KAKUHAN (JP)	Koshiro Hino Yuki Nakagawa (vc, electronics)
GOAT (JP)	Koshiro Hino, Akihiko Ando, Atsumi Tagami, Rai Tateishi, James Pinkl

suzueri (Elico Suzuki) (JP/DE)	suzueri (electronics, objects) Makoto Oshiro (electronics, objects) Taiko Saito (marimba) Emily Wittbrodt (vc)
Zeena Parkins (US)	Zeena Parkins (hp)
Ndox Electrique (SN/IT/FR)	Ndeye Coumba Mbaye Kebe (vox) Oumar Ngom (sabar perc) Mouhamet "Sangue" Sambe (sabar perc) Mamadou "Pape" Ngom (sabar perc) Gianna Greco (bass guitar, voc) François R. Cambuzat (git, computer, voc)
Yeah You (UK)	Gustav Thomas Elvin Brandhi
Kruglov - Koshevnikova (RU)	Alexey Kruglov (sax) Karina Koshevnikova (voc, p)
Rian Treanor & Ocen James live (UG/UK)	Rian Treanor (electronics) Ocen James (Ugandan fiddle, flutes, thumb piano, voice)
Carpool Kino (DE)	Carolin Pook (vl) Sebastian Gramss (b) Daniel Schröteler (dr)
Joe Hertenstein's XCountry Bungalow with Eliad Wagner & Kellen Mills feat. Dafna Naphtali & Liz Allbee (DE/US/IL)	Dafna Naphtali (live processing & voice) Liz Allbee (electronics/electro-acoustic trumpet) Eliad Wagner (modular synths) Kellen Mills (b) Joe Hertenstein (dr)
Erwan Keravec 8 PIPERS FOR PHILIP GLASS (FR)	(Bag)pipers: Gaël Chauvin, Mickaël Cozien, Erwan Hamon, Gweltaz Hervé, Erwan Keravec, Guénolé Keravec, Vincent Marin, Enora Morice  Programme: Two Pages, Music in Contrary Motion, Music in Fifths, Music in Similar Motion by Philip Glass
AIN'T I Akawa   Philipp   Lucaciu (NA/DE)	Angelina Tashiya Akawa (voice, performance) Theresia Philipp (sax) Robert Lucaciu (b)
...Nix Berausches (JP/FR/RU/DE) <i>moers special</i>	Masayo Koketsu (sax) Cecile Lartigau (ondes martenot) Karina Koshevnikova (voc/p) Bruna Cabral (dr)
Naoko Kikuchi & Taiko Saito (DE)	Naoko Kikuchi (koto) Taiko Saito (marimba)
HYPERPLEXIA (DE)	Stefan Schultze (p, player piano)

Kata-Inu (JP)	Nonoko Yoshida (sax) Loui Yoshigaki (git)
MICROGRAPHIA (concert version) (FR)	Alvise Sinivia and Frédéric Blondy (p)
Jackson Wahengo (NA/DE)	Jackson Wahengo (voc, git) Mark "Moody" Hernardi (keys)
Captain Niederrhein - Im Rausch des Unimoersums	Lukas Döhler Laeticia Carrera
Virginia Genta (sax) Bill Nace (git)	Virginia Genta (sax) Bill Nace (git)
Gwyn Wurst (FR)	Gwyn Wurst (keys)
DJ Scotch Egg (DE)	DJ Scotch Egg
BRÖTZFRAU (RU/JP/DE) <i>moers special</i>	Alexey Kruglov, Masayo Koketsu (sax) Conny Bauer (tb) more t.b.a.
Zoubek Gramss Ditzner (DE/AT)	Philip Zoubek (p) Sebastian Gramss (b) Erwin Ditzner (dr)
Michiyo Yagi (JP)	Michiyo Yagi (JP)
Conny Bauer - Rieko Okuda (DE/JP)	Conny Bauer (tb) Rieko Okuda (p)