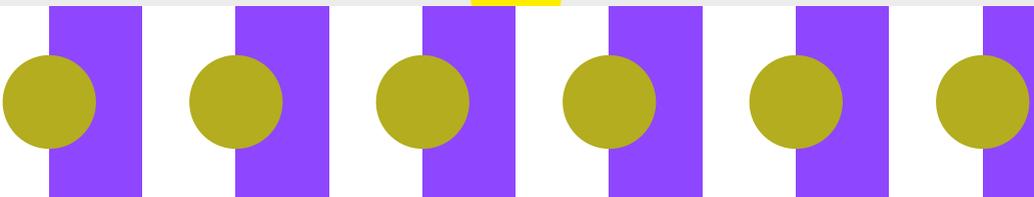
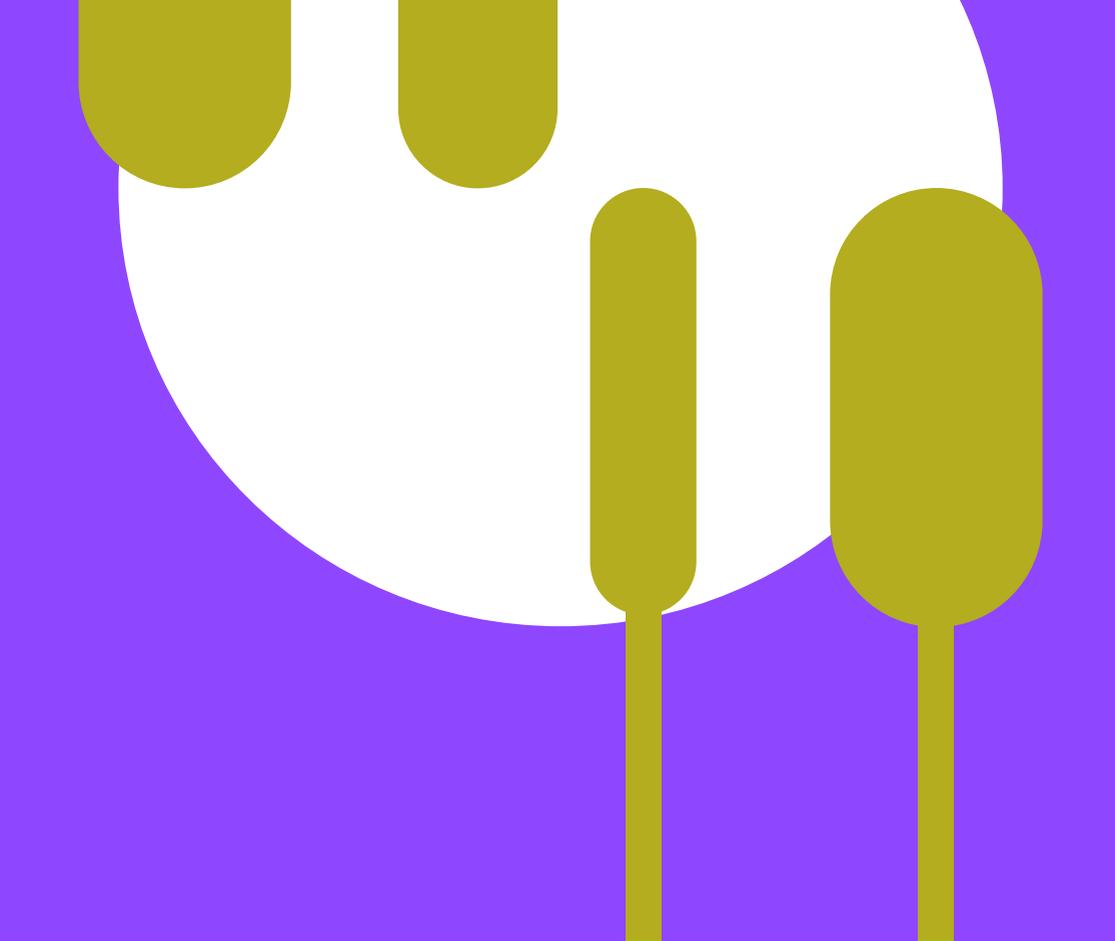


Facilitated by **Julius Bär** curated by **VAN**

# Berlin **2021** for Prize Young Artists

**#bpfya2021 Finals**  
**June 21, 2022**





## Dear finalists, dear guests,

Why start a new competition? Isn't there enough competition—enough rivalry, antagonism, perfectionism, and conformism—in classical music already? At VAN, we've covered and often criticized these aspects of our field.

Still, I believe that competitions can be important to young musicians. For artists in the early stages of their careers, competitions can strengthen their motivation to continue, solidify their aesthetic position, and help them decide which professional paths they want to follow—as well as which ones they don't. Competitions are a way for up-and-coming musicians to present their artistic personalities outside the incentives of social media.

For that to happen, a competition needs to give young artists the space to present the unique aspects of themselves. Two years ago, we started discussing the idea for what would become the Berlin Prize for Young Artists with our development partner, Bank Julius Baer. From the beginning, it was essential that the competition avoid the standard, almost athletic, model where musicians clear a series of increasingly difficult technical and interpretative hurdles to reach the finals. Instead, we wanted artists to apply with a program of their choosing: music that they believe in, that they enjoy talking about as well as playing, and that fits with their aesthetic vision.

Our work with VAN has shown us how hard it is for young artists to attract the kind of attention they need to establish themselves on a small and ferociously competitive market, especially if their artistry takes them off the beaten path. We want to walk with our finalists on this path for a while. This is reflected in the #BPFYA prizes, which include a website, a video profile filmed at the Elbphilharmonie Hamburg, career coachings, and an album recording with the label Outthere Music.

Both the number of applicants and the feedback these applicants have given us show that the idea behind the #BPFYA has hit a nerve. The up-and-coming generation of young musicians combines fantastic training and ability with a diversity of interests and a willingness to question the traditional mechanisms of our industry.

More than 230 applicants from 49 countries applied to #BPFYA2021. In today's final, you'll be hearing the six finalists: six fascinating personalities, six exciting programs. I'm thrilled that we're finally able to gather, discuss, and listen. Thanks so much for being here.

**Hartmut Welscher**

*Founder and Editor-in-Chief, VAN Magazine*



## Dear finalists, dear guests,

A year ago, I wrote here that live music would surely regain the status it had enjoyed before the pandemic. And even though it took another winter of restraint, my optimism has borne itself out. Concert halls are full, organizers are able to plan ahead—and musicians can finally take center stage again. That said, the last two years were especially challenging for young classical musicians as they lacked important performance opportunities. This makes it all the more important that they are encouraged and supported at the beginning of their careers.

Many initiatives have taken and are taking place to support talents. The Berlin Prize for Young Artists is one of them, bringing together established artists and emerging talent.

I'm extremely grateful that we can hold the finals for the second edition of the #BPFYA here in Berlin. Having gotten to know the finalists last year at the Elbphilharmonie, I'm now looking forward to their performances. They are all incredible musicians and inspiring personalities.

Bank Julius Baer continues to take its social and corporate responsibility seriously. We have proudly supported various cultural projects, initiatives, and prizes for the last several decades, and have been especially keen on promoting young talent. We will continue to do so and look forward to it.

To all of the artists performing today: Have a brilliant performance!

**Linda Krajnak**

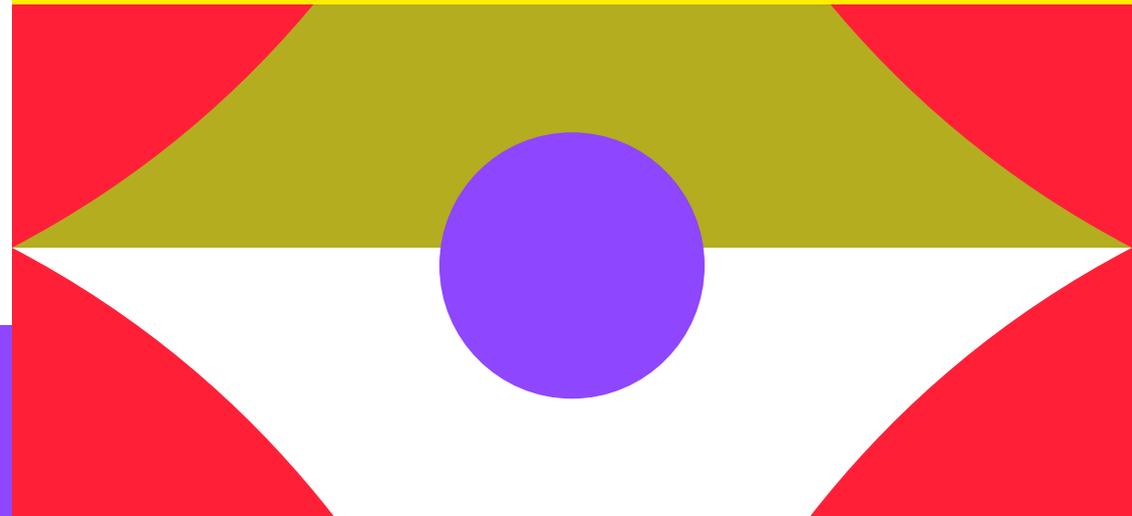
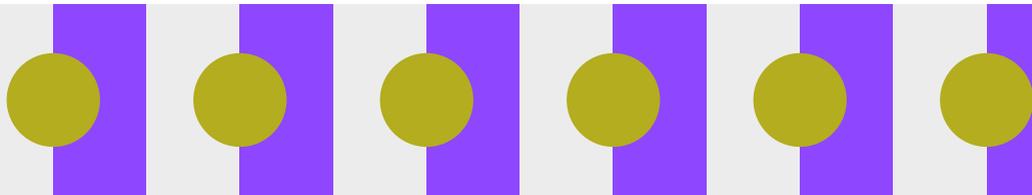
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## Program

- 09:00 a.m. Coffee service
- 09:30 a.m. Welcome
- 09:45 a.m. Performance: Flora Marlene Geißelbrecht
- 10:45 a.m. Performance: Francesco Palmieri
- 11:30 a.m. Break (with coffee service)
- 11:45 a.m. Performance: Eszter Kruchió
- 12:30 p.m. Lunch break (refreshments provided)
- 1:15 p.m. Performance: Núria Carbó Vives
- 2:15 p.m. Performance: Joy Guidry
- 3:00 p.m. Break (with coffee service)
- 3:15 p.m. Performance: Kevin Lee Sun
- 4:00 p.m. Jury deliberations (*guests are invited to enjoy light refreshments and conversation during this time*)
- 4:45 p.m. Winners are announced
- 5:30 p.m. Post-announcement reception for attendees, jury, and finalists

**Host: Susann El Kassar**

*Susann El Kassar (\*1986) has been an editor and presenter at Deutschlandfunk since 2017, overseeing piano solo, vocal music, and organ programming.*





# Francesco Palmieri

\*1996, Porto San Giorgio, Italy



**June 21, 2022,  
10:45–11:30 a.m.**

Classical guitar and electric guitar may share a name, but in technique, sound, and expression, they inhabit different planets, as far removed as trumpet and cello. The Italian performer Francesco Palmieri inhabits both of these worlds. Born in the small town of Porto San Giorgio, Palmieri's father played guitar in a rock band. But when Francesco asked to play too, he was sent to a music school to learn the classical guitar.

Palmieri honed his technique on the acoustic instrument, studying at the Pergolesi Conservatory in Fermo, Italy. Then he moved to Switzerland, a mecca for contemporary classical music training, studying at conservatories in Bern and Basel. He took up the electric guitar only recently, in 2019. But for Palmieri, the instrument was not a hobby or a conduit to non-classical genres. Though the classical guitar and the electric guitar "are totally different," they "both need their space in the new music scene," he says.

A fascinating element of Palmieri's Berlin Prize program, titled "Naked Corporeality," is its reversal of instrumental stereotypes: It turns on its head the notion that the electric guitar is loud and brash, while the acoustic guitar is refined and sensitive. Palmieri notes that classical guitarists are generally expected to perform against type, to seem loud and solid where their instrument is quiet and fragile, to hold their own against orchestral forces. In his program, Palmieri goes a step further, turning the *electric* guitar into a vulnerable, tenuous partner in an intimate performance. In otherworldly works by Hugues Dufourt, Marco Momi, Oliver Thurley, and Pierluigi Billone, Palmieri says he hopes to "embrace the fragility of live performance," where music gains meaning from mistakes. It's an opportunity that is hard to find elsewhere. "It's my dream program, but it usually doesn't work in a competition," Palmieri says. "That's why I usually don't do competitions."

## **PROGRAM**

- Hugues Dufourt (\*1947): *La Cité des Saules* (1997) for electric guitar
- Marco Momi (\*1978): *Quattro Nudi* (2014, rev. 2018) for electric guitar & electronics
- Oliver Thurley (\*1988): *Polynya, or ever less* (2018) for electric guitar
- Pierluigi Billone (\*1960): *Sgorgo Y* (2012) for electric guitar

# **Eszter Kruchió**

**\*1993, Budapest, Hungary**



**June 21, 2022,  
11:45 a.m.—12:30 p.m.**

Béla Bartók, who lived through two world wars, once said that he believed in “the brotherhood of peoples, brotherhood despite all wars and conflicts. I try—to the best of my ability—to serve this idea in my music.”

This line stuck with violinist Eszter Kruchió, whose admiration for Bartók is more a matter of ideology than patriotism. Born in Hungary and raised in Austria, Kruchió writes: “Why do we still tend to think that outer influences endanger our identity? When do we start to believe that the more open we are the stronger our individual voice can get?” The change of scene from Budapest to Vienna broadened Kruchió’s own identity and musical voice. With so many great orchestras in her backyard, her initial dream was to play in one of them.

Then, as a teenager, she turned her focus to the intimate world of chamber music. “When I had my first serious quartet, it became clear to me that, if at all possible, that was the direction I wanted to go.” She continued to expand her horizons, studying first in Vienna with Ernst Kovacic, then in Hamburg with Tanja Becker-Bender. Currently, she studies in Hanover with Ulf Schneider. Additional studies with Rita Wagner, Ferenc Rados, and Péter Eötvös (among other) have proven how openness to outside influences can strengthen an individual voice.

In her BPFYA program, “Controvento – With Headwind,” Kruchió retraces Bartók’s musical footsteps with his Violin Sonata, the movements broken up and interwoven with other works that are designed to complement or contrast—or both. Bartók’s affinity for the crepuscular comes across in Kaija Saariaho’s Nocturne. His folk dances are mirrored by György Kurtág, proverbially working backwards and in heels. A similar equanimity of influence is felt in the folk and pop influences in works by Eötvös and Helena Winkelman, two composers with whom Kruchió has also worked; deepening the program’s personal connection. Her goal is to lead us, the listener, through a “multilingual suite,” but one where she acts as a skilled interpreter for the stories communicated.

## **PROGRAM**

- Béla Bartók (1881–1945): Sonata for Solo Violin, Sz. 117, BB 124
  - Tempo di ciaccona (1944)
- György Kurtág (\*1926): Signs, Games and Messages for Violin Solo
  - Im Volkston (1987, rev. 1994)
- Kaija Saariaho (\*1952): Nocturne for Solo Violin (1994)
- Péter Eötvös (\*1944): Para Paloma for Solo Violin (2006)
- B. Bartók: Sonata for Solo Violin, Sz. 117, BB 124
  - II. Fuga: Risoluto, non troppo vivo ▸ III. Melodia: Adagio
- Gy. Kurtág: Signs, Games and Messages for Violin Solo
  - Carezza Jig (1989, rev. 1991/1994/1997)
- Helena Winkelman (\*1974): Ciaconna for Solo Violin (2002)
- B. Bartók: Sonata for Solo Violin, Sz. 117, BB 124
  - IV. Presto

# Núria Carbó Vives

*\*1997, València, Spain*



**June 21, 2022,  
1:15–2:00 p.m.**

Inspired by her grandfather, who once played snare drum in a military band, Núria Carbó opted to study percussion as a young girl in València, playing alongside her grandfather in their hometown's wind band. Such bands are a matter of course in Spain—a cornerstone regardless of a city's size or population—and even though Carbó is now based in the Swiss capital of Bern, some of her favorite performances are still those she makes when she visits home and joins her grandfather in the percussion section.

That sense of communal music making extended into Carbó's orchestral career, including as a member of the National Youth Orchestra of Catalonia and the Barcelona Symphony Orchestra/National Orchestra of Catalonia. Still, orchestra percussionists walk a fine line: "You play only a few things, but it's those few things that you have to do perfectly," she explains. This is one aspect of the instrument, but it's not the only territory Carbó is interested in charting.

On other stages, her musical style seems a far cry from the traditional Spanish music that has provided a seemingly infinite repertoire for wind bands or the orchestral repertoire that provides those blink-and-you-miss-it moments of glory. Her instrument of choice is the marimba, and her main creative drive is to sideline its "overcrowded and overplayed" classical repertoire in favor of works that "extend and maximize" the instrument and enjoy more freedom of interpretation. While other percussionists may look to go a mile wide for a solo program, incorporating a panoply of instruments known and obscure, Carbó has gone a mile deep for her Berlin Prize program. The repertoire challenges playing techniques, at one point literally extending the instrument's range by adding 11 additional woodblocks. Through this, Carbó creates a character study of the instrument, giving it the sort of dramatic range that Bette Davis or Katharine Hepburn would envy. It's in these works that she feels right at home.

## **PROGRAM**

- Arturo Corrales (\*1973): IDEM (2009)
- Jose María Sánchez-Verdú (\*1968): Arquitecturas de la sombra (2005)
- Pierluigi Billone (\*1960): Mani.Matta (2008)

# Joy Guidry

*\*1995, Houston, Texas, United States*



**June 21, 2022,  
2:15–3:00 p.m.**

Most classical musicians come to their careers on a straight and narrow path. Ambitious parents provide high-quality music lessons in their early childhood; a stream of prestigious opportunities leads to a predefined trajectory in the orchestra or as a soloist. Not so for Joy Guidry, who came to the bassoon almost by accident. A fortunate accident, though, which allows their radical, liberated approach to the instrument to flourish.

Guidry grew up in Houston, Texas, and began playing wind instruments in school band: First the saxophone, then the oboe, and finally the bassoon. They began a music education degree, but realized it was not for them: A year of intense practice in Guidry's first year of college in Texas—late by most instrumental standards—allowed them to transfer to the Peabody Conservatory, in Baltimore, for a more traditional education. "Once it was there, it was like, classical, classical, classical," Guidry says with a pause. "Which I do not do anymore!"

Since Guidry never followed the traditional trajectory, the way to their innovative Berlin Prize program, titled "Radical Self-Love," was free from stereotypes about the soloistic potential of their instrument. Their solo program includes three original compositions, alongside works by Lisa E. Harris, Jessie Cox, and Olivia Shortt (no white composers on this program). Guidry notes that the relentless practice of orchestral excerpts at Peabody had a negative impact on their mental health, and their program is a reaction to his bulldozing of individual differences by classical music's standards of perfection. Incorporating fixed media, film, spoken word, and bassoon virtuosity, Guidry explains that the performance hopes to attain the status of, in Sonya Renee Taylor's words, "a lush and verdant island offering safe harbor." As Guidry intones in Shortt's work, "she exists in several different time zones at once" (which Guidry helped compose): "I've had to truly learn to love myself, I've had to truly go back and hold my inner child." The music in Guidry's concert is challenging; the final aesthetic goal is to weave the listener a cocoon.

## **PROGRAM**

- Lisa E. Harris: *Joy becomes Light* (2021) for bassoon, voice, and electronics
- Jessie Cox: *Form Content Negotiations* (2018) for solo bassoon
- Joy Guidry: *2:19 am* (2019) for bassoon and film
- Joy Guidry: *Maudry Richard Davis* (2021) for bassoon and fixed media
- Olivia Shortt: *She exists in several different time zones at once* (2021) for bassoon and fixed media
- Joy Guidry: *Grace* (2022) for bassoon and fixed media

# Kevin Lee Sun

*\*1993, Sacramento, California, United States*



**June 21, 2022,  
3:15–4:00 p.m.**

Few classical musicians also co-author papers with titles like “Thalamocortical connectivity is associated with autism symptoms in high-functioning adults with autism and typically developing adults.” But for Kevin Lee Sun, who came from “a family of engineers and pediatricians from Communist China,” his artistry is shaped by both his studies of piano and medicine. In fact, he seems to thrive in situations fuelled by duality.

He initially pursued a career in medicine at Stanford, majoring in Biology and Classics. He completed a Masters of Music at the same university, before enrolling in its School of Medicine on an MD track with a focus in psychiatry. He’s on a break from Stanford at the moment, completing a DMA with Alexander Kobrin at the Eastman School of Music. But psychiatry still factors into Sun’s musicality: Hours spent with patients as a student led him refining his sense of empathy and skills as a listener.

Empathy and diversity are at the core of Sun’s musical philosophy, and are reflected in his BPFYA program. Recognizing the human mind as “at once frighteningly flawed and mesmerizingly beautiful” (more duality), Sun has assembled a program designed to bring audiences on “psychological surveys and explorations” in an effort to foster that same sense of empathy and wonder within the listener. What are Robert Schumann’s piano works if not the most meticulously-detailed case notes to his own mental anguish?

Beyond the Western classical canon, Sun also brings the other large musical force in his life—traditional Asian folk music—into this program. A traditional Korean tune emerges from stormy dissonances in Hyo-Shin Na’s “Rain Study.” In fact, folk music is the psychological signature that unifies all four works in his program, from Schumann and Na to Leos Janáček’s “From the Street” and Frederic Rzewski’s “Winnsboro Cotton Mill Blues.” The obsessive repetition of these popular tunes becomes a catalyst to discovering the deeper emotions that drove each composer to write, a wayfinder for the ephemeral bits of human existence that they channeled into sound.

## **PROGRAM**

- Hyo-shin Na (\*1959): Rain Study (1999)
- Leoš Janáček (1854–1928): Sonata 1.X.1905  
From the Street (1905)
- Frederic Rzewski (1938–2021): Winnsboro Cotton  
Mill Blues (1979)
- Robert Schumann (1810–1856): Gesänge der Frühe,  
Op. 133 (1853)

# The Jury



## ***Barbara Lebitsch***

Barbara Lebitsch has been director of artistic planning at the Elbphilharmonie in Hamburg since 2018. After earning degrees in theater studies, musicology, psychology, and journalism, she served as an artistic planner and director of production at the Konzerthaus in Vienna and for the Wien Modern festival from 2002 to 2012. From 2012 to 2015, she was assistant to the artistic director at the Berlin Philharmonic Foundation. She joined the Elbphilharmonie in 2015 as lead dramaturge.



## ***Olivia Giovetti***

Olivia Giovetti is an editor at VAN Magazine. Previously, she has served as the Classical & Opera Editor at Time Out New York, and as a host on WNYC's New Sounds (formerly Q2 Music). Her writings about culture and classical music have been published in the Washington Post, London Review of Books, Los Angeles Review of Books, Literary Hub, Gramophone, and Architectural Digest.



## ***Eric Lamb***

Flutist Eric Lamb was a core member of the International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE) and is currently a member of Ensemble Reconsil, Synchronos Ensemble, Quasars Ensemble, as well as co-artistic director of ensemble paladino. A versatile performer, he has premiered over 200 new works. He teaches flute at the Academy of Music and Performing Arts in Vienna.



## ***Matan Porat***

Matan Porat is a pianist and composer known for his narrative-based programming. His repertoire ranges from Bach to Schubert to Ligeti, and has been heard at the Berlin Philharmonie, Concertgebouw Amsterdam, and Chicago Symphony Orchestra (among others). His compositions have been commissioned and performed by the Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra, Andreas Scholl, Avi Avital, and Vladimir Jurowski.



## ***Julian Steckel***

Julian Steckel studied cello in Berlin and Vienna. Recent performances include the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, the Munich Philharmonic, and the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra. He also performs as a chamber artist with partners including Lars Vogt, Janine Jansen, Christian Tetzlaff, and the Ébène, Armida, and Modigliani string quartets. He lives in Berlin and teaches in Munich.



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## ***VAN Magazine***

Founded in 2014 and based in Berlin, VAN is an independent online classical music magazine, published weekly in English and German, covering everything from the first documented music to the latest world premieres. VAN is a fanzine, written for music lovers and professionals by music lovers and professionals. The magazine is fueled by over 100 writers who blend serious knowledge with a sense of humor, and isn't afraid of the weird, wonderful, or just plain wrong. Oh, and the name comes from van Beethoven.

## ***Bank Julius Baer***

Bank Julius Baer became a development partner for VAN Magazine in 2019, supporting culture journalism in an international, digital format.

Supporting art and music has been integral to bank Julius Baer's philosophy for decades. An interest in visual art dates back to the early 1930s when the Baer family began its private art collection. As a result, the family maintained an intensive contact with the art scene in Zurich, Paris and New York. In the early 1980s, bank Julius Baer founded its corporate art collection. The purpose was—and still is— to support artists who, at the time of a first purchase, are not yet firmly established, but clearly show great potential. Nearly two decades later, the bank has built on its legacy of artistic support by sponsoring concert halls, festivals, and museums.

Today, Julius Baer supports renowned cultural institutions, competitions and digital platforms worldwide.

## ***The Berlin Prize for Young Artists would not be possible without the generous support of:***

- Bank Julius Baer
- Elbphilharmonie Hamburg
- Outhere Music
- Villa Elisabeth Berlin

