



Ibrahim Quraishi & Eunice Martins

# **WALLS ARE TUMBLING DOWN**

A cantata for resistance and reconciliation

***“ ‘Walls Are Tumbling Down’  
is a musical manifesto for  
diversity, critical inquiry, and  
collective action.***

***It connects art and everyday  
life – and shakes foundations.”***

***– taz - die tageszeitung,  
16.05.2025***

# ARTISTIC STATEMENT

We come from different belief systems - Jewish, Muslim, atheist - yet we are united by a common urgency: to build bridges between the spiritual traditions of forgiveness, resistance and hospitality. Anger exists.. Pain persists. But we believe that through sound, gesture and presence, new spaces of hope can be opened - spaces where walls dissolve and breath flows freely.

We draw on the cantata form not as a historical genre, but as a ritual of collective remembrance - performed by voices from Jewish, Islamic, Arab, Turkish, African and diasporic communities.

It is a musical invocation of togetherness: across gender, creed, origin and experience. Our aim is to remember the forgotten, to give breath to the silenced and to honour the power of the human voice - not in isolation, but in constellation.

Ibrahim Quraishi & Eunice Martins

# A TRANSCULTURAL CANTATA BY EUNICE MARTINS AND IBRAHIM QURAIISHI

“At some point in life, every person must tear down the walls that confine them.”  
Ibrahim Quraishi

*Walls Are Tumbling Down* is a transcultural cantata that explores visible and invisible barriers in today’s world—through sound, language, and embodied performance. Composed by pianist Eunice Martins and composer and media artist Ibrahim Quraishi, this evolving piece premiered in February 2025 at the Staatsschauspiel Dresden, in collaboration with the Jewish Community of Dresden and the Stadtmuseum Dresden.

What begins as a concert becomes a collective ritual—a resonant, polyphonic protest song that transforms with each venue, ensemble, and audience. Rooted in collaboration and process, the cantata gathers voices across faiths, languages, and musical traditions to cultivate a shared space of resistance and repair. Its structure draws inspiration from the fall of the walls of Jericho (Joshua 6:20)—not as a religious act, but as a metaphor for political rupture, liberation, and radical renewal.



# A POLYPHONIC ACT OF RESISTANCE

“It’s not just a concert. It’s an event. It asks: What remains when the walls fall?”  
– Dresdner Neueste Nachrichten, 12.02.2025

Structured in seven movements, the cantata fuses classical instrumentation with electronic textures, traditional instruments (e.g. the shofar, cello, oboe), and multi-lingual vocal scores. It brings together Jewish, Muslim, Arab, Afro-German, secular, and atheist performers—intentionally defying cultural siloing.

The text draws from writers and thinkers such as Adonis, Anna Seghers, Rosa Ausländer, Heiner Müller, Elfriede Jelinek, Giorgio Agamben, and Hopi oral traditions—opening a poetic-political space for shared reflection on displacement, resistance, and transcendence.

The first full public rehearsal in Dresden brought together 21 instrumentalists, the choir of the Singakademie Dresden, and the Synagogue’s choir—musicians with roots in Israel, Syria, Germany, Brazil, and the United States. A core ensemble will continue to perform the work internationally, collaborating with local musicians and choirs at each location.

Walls Are Tumbling Down is at once protest, poetry, and a call for humanity and lived diversity. Each performance invites participation, empathy, and critical reflection. In a time when new walls are being erected, this cantata gives voice to the overheard and point to those Walls that urgently need to fall.

# PERFORMANCE SETTING & VISUAL DESIGN

The cantata is conceived for non-traditional, open settings—such as museums, galleries, or public spaces—that encourage dialogue between architecture, audience, and sound. The performance is conducted by Sara Isabel Grajales Tamayo, a Colombian-born conductor based in Vienna.

The visual setup is intentionally minimal yet evocative: three video screens form the core of the staging, developed in collaboration with acclaimed film editor Beatrice Babin—known for her work with directors such as Wim Wenders—and the Berlin-based visual collective berlin.

Alternatively, three sculptural elements may replace the video screens, functioning as resonant objects that transform into sonic sculptures when the performance is not underway. This sculptural setup can also exist independently—as a standalone installation before or after the concert—extending the cantata’s presence beyond the live event.

These forms echo the cantata’s underlying themes of Jewish-Arab entanglement and shared histories. The spatial architecture is conceived by Luka Murovec member of Raumlabor Berlin, while the interactive and sonic architecture is developed by Steffen Armbruster and Uli Dziallas of USOMO.de. Video, editing, and camera work are realized by Andreas Ulrich.



# STAGING

The performance is designed for non-traditional venues—museums, open spaces, or adaptive architectural environments.

## Stage elements may include:

- Three screen-based video or sculptural components
- Flexible staging for interaction between performers and public
- Site-specific integration of local choirs or community groups

## Sound requirements

Vocal amplification is required for all voices and choirs. Instruments do not require amplification in ensemble settings; however, a contact microphone is needed for solo instrumental performance. Adequate sound reinforcement for all vocal elements must be ensured.

## Visual & Spatial Team

- Visual Direction: Beatrice Babin (DE)
- Spatial Design: Luka Murovec (DE/SI, Raumlabor Berlin)
- Interactive Sound Architecture: USOMO / Armbruster & Dziallas (DE)
- Video & Camera: Andreas Ulrich (DE)

# FACT SHEET

Title: Walls Are Tumbling Down

Format: Cantata

Artists: Ibrahim Quraishi (Composer, Concept),  
Eunice Martins (Co-Composer)

Musical director/ conductor:  
Sara Isabel Grajales Tamayo

Ensemble:  
Approx. 14 international and local musicians,  
10-15 Choir (10-15 singers), 2-3 Voices

Instrumentation:  
Voice, strings, wind instruments (including Sho-  
far), percussion, electronics

Length: ca. 40 minutes ( 7 movements plus  
interludes)

Language(s):  
Multilingual (Arabic, Hebrew, Yiddish, German +)  
/ Non-verbal structure

Rehearsals:  
Rehearsals can be public/ Modular /  
site-responsive / open rehearsal model

The Synagogue Choir as well as the most of the  
shofar players as well as the other musicians  
for the temporary ensemble will be chosen  
locally.

Core Ensemble:

Israeli cellist Danielle Akta  
Israeli oboist Estelle Akta  
Somali-Syrian actor Khalid Abubaker  
Syrian Cellist Yara Abou Fakher  
American flutist Avery Gosfield  
Michael K ppler - and Singakademie Dresden  
Der Afro-German Actor Komi Togbonou  
German oboist Isabelle Warm

Guest Performers:

Israeli shofar player Tamir Akta  
Arab-Israeli pop icon Mira Awad  
German actress Hanna Schygulla  
Egyptian electronic musician Yara Mekawei  
Turkish soprano G rkem Ezgi Yildirim

# A GLIMPSE INTO THE FUTURE: INSTALLATION & IMMERSIVE EXPERIENCE

## **RUACH – Breath of Freedom**

**An installation by Ibrahim Quraishi in collaboration with USOMO**

Commissioned by the Dresden City Museum, Ibrahim Quraishi, together with the Berlin pioneers of immersive sound technology, USOMO, is developing a new multimedia installation set to open in 2027.

The work unfolds as a multilayered architecture of resonance: a space where sound, image, and movement interlace, making the boundaries between inside and outside, individual and society, present and memory, porous. At the center stands the breath – Ruach in Hebrew, the breath of life, the spirit – as an invisible, connecting force. Ruach flows through the space as a symbol of life, resistance, and interconnectedness.

The installation is situated in a flawlessly white cube. Inside, a surreal stone garden spreads out: on a seamless, glossy floor rest sculptural rocks made of Styrofoam, metal, and fabric – fluorescent orange meets deep black velvet. Visitors move between monumental blocks and broken fragments, relics of an imagined collapse.

Sounds emanate from the sculptures: voices, breathing noises, vibrating resonances, echoes of crumbling walls. They respond to the movements of those present, weaving into a living soundscape. The space becomes a field of experience, where the political, spiritual, and personal intersect: stones as witnesses of separation and memory, as ruins or tools of resistance.

RUACH – Breath of Freedom invites you to experience breath as an elemental connection – between people, times, and cultures. An open space that brings questions of responsibility, solidarity, and the value of life to the fore.

# ARISTS / CORE ENSEMBLE BIOS

Born in 2002, Israeli cellist **DANIELLE AKTA** has gained international recognition for her expressive playing and stage presence. She has performed in renowned venues such as Carnegie Hall, Chicago Symphony Center, Lincoln Center, Barbican Centre, Boulez Saal, and Teatro Colón.

Danielle has appeared as a soloist with prestigious orchestras including the Russian Philharmonic, Tbilisi Symphony, Staatsorchester Darmstadt, Jerusalem Symphony, Moscow Virtuosi, Rotterdam Symphony, and Novosibirsk Philharmonic. She has collaborated with esteemed conductors like Julian Rachlin, Vladimir Spivakov, Daniel Cohen, Fabio Mechetti, and Daniel Ettinger.

A celebrated talent from a young age, Danielle is known for combining technical mastery with emotional depth, captivating international audiences and media alike.

-

Oboist **ESTELLE AKTA**, originally from Israel, has built a flourishing career in Germany since 2017. She currently plays with the Akademie of the Staatskapelle Dresden and frequently appears in first oboe productions of works by Strauss, Mozart, Ravel, Grieg, and Donizetti. Estelle performs regularly with the NDR Radio-philharmonie, Jungen Deutschen Philharmonie, Komische Oper Berlin, Kammerakademie Potsdam, and Magdeburgische Philharmonie. In Berlin, she collaborates with the Boulez Ensemble and musicians of the Staatskapelle under conductors such as Daniel Barenboim and Matthias Pintscher.

**KHALID ABU BAKR** is a Somali-Syrian theatre and radio director, actor, and writer with over two decades of experience across the Middle East and Europe. His work spans theatre, television, film, dubbing, and radio. He began his career in 2000 and has since directed major productions and held leading positions such as Drama Director for BBC Radio Beirut and Director of Dubbing Studios in Lebanon. Khalid is known for his powerful storytelling and cultural resonance. He has won numerous awards, including Best Actor at the Algiers International Short Film Festival. His creative highlights include Change (Netherlands, 2020) and a Luxembourg-based documentary about a Syrian orchestra. Now based in Luxembourg, he writes, mentors, and conducts creative writing workshops to support emerging talents.

-

Born in 1992 in Damascus, violinist **YARA ABOU FAKHER** received early musical training at the Sulhi Al-Wadi Music Academy. She earned her Bachelor's degree in violin from the University of Music in Damascus, with a focus on classical chamber music and instrumental technique. Yara became the first violinist of the Syrian Symphony Orchestra and performed with several prominent Syrian ensembles. Since arriving in Germany in 2015, she has worked in Dresden as a freelance musician and music educator, collaborating with projects such as Mosaik – Grenzenlos Musizieren, the Heinrich-Schütz Conservatory, Klangbrücke 2.0, and Banda Comunale's "Come Together." She performs with the Syrian Expat Philharmonic Orchestra, Ensemble Compassione, and the Coexist Ensemble. Yara also founded the string trio Al-Andalus, blending Spanish, Jewish, and Syrian musical traditions.

# ARTISTS / CORE ENSEMBLE BIOS

Flutist and director **AVERY GOSFIELD** leads the ensemble Lucidarium, specializing in medieval and Renaissance music. With over 1,000 concerts and several award-winning recordings, she is a respected performer, educator, and scholar. She has taught masterclasses worldwide, including at the Geneva Conservatory, Yiddish Summer Weimar, and the Cini Foundation.

Avery's publications appear in the European Journal of Jewish Studies, Yearbook for European Jewish Literature Studies, and others. In 2016, she curated the "Reinventing a Usable Past" symposium at the Utrecht Early Music Festival and created "Sounds from Shylock's Venice," a multimedia project marking the 500th anniversary of the Venice Ghetto. She also held a Sassoon Fellowship at the Bodleian Library in 2018–2019.

**MICHAEL KÄPPLER**, born in 1986 in the Erzgebirge region of Germany, is a distinguished choral conductor, tenor, and educator. He serves as the Artistic Director of the Singakademie Dresden, where he oversees the musical and dramaturgical direction of its various choirs, including the Great Choir, Chamber Choir, and Youth Chamber Choir. Kämppler's musical education includes studies in church music at the Hochschule für Kirchenmusik Dresden, with further postgraduate work in choral conducting under Professor Hans-Christoph Rademann at the Hochschule für Musik "Carl Maria von Weber" Dresden. His academic achievements are marked by distinctions in choral and orchestral conducting, as well as vocal performance. In addition to his role at the Singakademie, Kämppler is a lecturer in choral conducting at the Hochschule für Kirchenmusik Dresden and the University of Erfurt. He is also the founder and artistic director of the Konzert Werkstatt Dres-

den, an initiative dedicated to innovative concert programming. Kämppler's work is characterized by a commitment to bridging traditional and contemporary music, fostering collaborations between amateur and professional musicians, and engaging audiences through thoughtful and dynamic performances.

**EUNICE MARTINS** (b. 1965, Berlin) is a composer and pianist trained at the Berlin University of the Arts and Wiesbaden Academy of Music. Her work blends experimental and traditional techniques with electronics, composing for ensembles, film, virtual reality, and sound design. Martins has performed internationally at major festivals and venues, including the Venice Biennale, CTM Festival Berlin, Paris' Les Nuits Blanches, Pordenone Silent Film Festival, Hong Kong International Film Festival, Istanbul International Film Festival, and Berlin International Film Festival, among others. Her multidisciplinary approach bridges contemporary music with cinematic and immersive experiences.

# ARTISTS / CORE ENSEMBLE BIOS

**IBRAHIM QURAISHI** (YE/US/DE) is a multi-disciplinary artist and musician born in Nairobi with a multicultural upbringing across Tunisia, Yugoslavia, and the Soviet Union. After emigrating to the USA in the late 1980s, he studied philosophy at Columbia University under Edward W. Said and music at Juilliard. Quraishi has lived and worked across Europe and Asia, currently based in Amsterdam and Berlin. His collaborations include work with György Ligeti and Esa-Pekka Salonen. As a visual artist, he works in analogue photography, video, and performance installations, often exploring themes of migration and identity. Quraishi co-developed the VR project ROAMance, funded by Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg and the Netherlands Film Fund, premiering at IDFA Amsterdam 2024. He was awarded a Stiftung Kunstfonds grant in 2021-22 and will publish his first novel, *Being Everywhere, Being Nowhere*, in 2026. He contributes regularly to the German newspaper TAZ and US magazine CounterPunch. His exhibitions span major venues worldwide, including Galerie Crone Berlin, Institut du Monde Arabe Paris, Sharjah Arts Foundation, DOCUMENTA 14, National Museum of Singapore, Kochi-Muziris Biennale and a.o.

**SARA ISABEL GRAJALES TAMAYO** is a Colombian conductor, musicologist, and educator pursuing a PhD in Musicology at the Universität für Musik und darstellende Kunst Wien (MDW), focusing on expressive rhythm theory in 20th-century music. She holds a Master's in Musicology with a focus on Music Theory and a Bachelor's in Conducting from Universidad EAFIT in Medellín, Colombia. Her multifaceted career integrates artistic direction, conducting, pedagogy, and academic research with strong social engagement. Sara began her musical path as a violinist in the Red de Escuelas de Música de Medellín, later joining IBERACADEMY and Universidad EAFIT, where she expanded her training in orchestral conducting and music theory. She has participated in masterclasses with conductors and educators including Roberto González-Monjas, Alejandro Posada, Andrés Orozco, Lina Granados, Cecilia Espinosa, Manuel Hernández, and Francisco Rettig, shaping her artistic perspective across Latin America and Europe. Her work is rooted in artistic excellence and community transformation, bridging research, performance, and education.

# ARTISTS / CORE ENSEMBLE BIOS

**KOMI MIZRAJIM TOGBONOU**, born in 1972 in Remscheid, Germany, is a versatile Afro-German actor, musician, and performer with Togolese heritage. He is a member of the ensemble at the Deutsches Theater Berlin, and has appeared at renowned stages including Münchner Kammerspiele, Theater Bremen, Schauspiel Frankfurt, Volksbühne Berlin, Schauspielhaus Graz, and the Salzburger Landestheater. Togbonou's artistic path is deeply shaped by his engagement with postcolonial themes, cultural hybridity, and performative critique. An early and formative collaboration with Christoph Schlingensiefel, including participation in the project *Bitte liebt Österreich* and performances connected to the Church of Fear, placed him in the lineage of radical, politically charged performance art. This experience helped shape Togbonou's own approach to socially engaged and interdisciplinary work. He has since played roles such as Helicon in *Caligula*, appeared in *Der Auftrag* by Heiner Müller, and performed in *Psyche 17* by Elemawusi Agbédjidji, among many others. His film and television credits include *Tatort* and short films such as *Ein Teller Suppe* and *Elf Onkel*. Beyond the stage, Togbonou is also a musician, having collaborated with Nina Hagen and Die Fantastischen Vier, and is active as a spoken-word performer and cultural commentator. He is a founding member of the artist collective Marsnetz, working at the intersection of theater, sound, and visual art. His multidisciplinary practice consistently explores issues of identity, migration, memory, and resistance in the context of German and global cultural narratives.

Born in Bogotá and raised in Hessen Germany, flutist **ISABEL WARM** studied orchestral music at the Carl Maria von Weber Academy in Dresden and trained under Prof. Eckart Haupt. She also earned qualifications in music education, music theory, ensemble conducting, and Suzuki flute pedagogy in the Netherlands. During her studies, Isabel performed with various Saxon orchestras, including the Landesbühnen Sachsen, Neue Lausitzer Philharmonie, and Sorbisches Nationalensemble. International concert tours have taken her to Japan, South Africa, France, the UAE, and China. Since 2008, she has taught at the Heinrich Schütz Conservatory in Dresden and, since 2019, performs as a flutist and presenter with the Saxony Police Orchestra.

# GUEST PERFORMERS

**TAMIR AKTA** is an Israeli-born trumpet soloist and composer known for his powerful performances in both classical and shofar music. Born in 1973, he studied at the Talma Yelin School of Arts and received the prestigious America Israel Cultural Foundation scholarship between 1987 and 1995. His early talent was affirmed with first prizes at the Interlaken Classics Competition (1991), the Selmer Trumpet Competition, and the Young Soloist Trumpet Competition. Akta continued his studies at the Paris Conservatory and has performed internationally as a soloist. His 2008 album *Hope* is a deeply personal work inspired by his family's experiences during his daughter Ariel's illness, blending traditional motifs with contemporary compositions. In addition to his performance career, he leads masterclasses worldwide, including noted sessions on Arab's *Fantaisie* and *Variations on the Carnival of Venice*, sharing his technique and passion with the next generation of brass musicians.

**MIRA AWAD** is a Palestinian-Israeli singer, actress, and composer born in Rameh to a Palestinian-Christian father and a Bulgarian mother. She studied at the Rimon School of Jazz and Contemporary Music in Israel and gained national attention through her roles in the popular sitcom *Arab Labor* and Eytan Fox's film *The Bubble*. Awad has contributed music to several films, including *Forgiveness* (Uri Aloni) and *Lemon Tree* (Eran Riklis), and in 2009 made history by representing Israel in the Eurovision Song Contest alongside Jewish-Israeli singer Noa. Their duet, *There Must Be Another Way*, was the first Israeli Eurovision entry with lyrics in both Arabic and Hebrew and marked the first time an Arab-Israeli and Christian woman represented the country. Awad continues to be an influential voice advocating for coexistence through art.

**HANNA SCHYGULLA** is one of Germany's most iconic actresses, internationally renowned for her collaborations with director Rainer Werner Fassbinder. Born in 1943 in Silesia and raised in Munich, she studied acting in the 1960s and quickly became a defining presence in the New German Cinema. Her performances in films such as *The Marriage of Maria Braun*, *Effi Briest*, and *Lili Marleen* earned her critical acclaim, including a Best Actress award at the Berlin International Film Festival and Cannes. Schygulla later worked with filmmakers like Jean-Luc Godard, Wim Wenders, and Fatih Akin (*The Edge of Heaven*), while also building a career as a chansonnière and performer in experimental music-theater projects. Her artistry continues to influence generations of European cinema and performance.

**YARA MEKAWEI** is a sound artist and researcher. Her soundscapes draw inspiration from the dynamic flow of urban centres and the infrastructure at the heart of cities. Interested in architecture, social history and philosophical literature, she uses sound as an essential tool for exploring her visionary ideas. Her research-driven practice establishes a close connection between the ideologies of the mythical past and the technologies of the 'eternal present'. She is currently working on a sound composition inspired by Sufi philosophy and the methodology of the *Book of the Dead*. Mekawei uses her research as the basis for her work as an experimental musician. Her artistic works combine research and artistic practice. She addresses 'intangible aspects of her cultural identity and femininity' within a North-East African society, among other things.

# GUEST PERFORMERS

Turkish soprano **GÖRKEM EZGI YILDIRIM** studied cello and piano at Ankara Anadolu Fine Arts High School before graduating top of her class from Hacettepe University's State Conservatory Opera Department in 2006. She has performed internationally at venues such as Schauspielhaus Vienna, Grand Théâtre de Luxembourg, and Nationaltheater Mannheim, including collaborations with director Ibrahim Quraishi. A soloist at the Ankara State Opera and Ballet, she has taken on major roles including Queen of the Night (The Magic Flute), Adina (L'Elisir d'Amore), Gilda (Rigoletto), and Violetta (La Traviata). Yıldırım has been recognized with the Grand Prix at the IV International P.I. Slovtsov Opera Competition, as well as national honors such as the "Suna Korad Special Award" and "Best Female Opera Performer" at the Donizetti Classical Music Awards.

# CURATORIAL TEAM AND ORGANIZATION

**OLIVER BAURHENN** is a Berlin-based curator, cultural worker, and long-time co-director of the CTM Festival for Adventurous Music and Art. With a background in literature and cultural studies, he is dedicated to transdisciplinary artistic practice and international collaboration. His work spans festival curation, discourse programming, and the support of emerging and underrepresented voices in experimental music and sound art. Baurhenn has been involved in numerous EU-funded cultural initiatives and regularly contributes to cultural networks that explore the intersections of technology, sound, and society.

**JACEK SOSNOWSKI** is a Warsaw-based curator and artistic director with a background in cultural studies, art history and Lacanian psychoanalysis. He is the founder and director of PRPGND (formerly Galeria Propaganda), an independent platform for contemporary art and critical spatial practice. His work explores the intertwining of art, language and the unconscious, often addressing the question of how systems of knowledge and perception are shaped and destabilized. Sosnowski's curatorial practice includes exhibitions, public art commissions and transdisciplinary research projects. He was the curator of the Polish Pavilion at the 18th International Architecture Exhibition of the Biennale di Venezia (2023) and has collaborated with institutions such as the Zachęta National Gallery, the CTM Festival and UNAM in Mexico City. In his projects, he often works with artists operating at the intersection of technology, social critique and embodied experience.

## **TRANS-MEDIA-AKADEMIE HELLERAU**

Is a non-profit institute for integral perception and media research based in Dresden. Founded in 2001, TMA initiates year-round projects that forge new connections between art, science, and technology. The organization addresses challenges at the intersection of new media technologies and societal conventions, serving as a network where artists, technologists, scientists, activists, and students from around the world converge. TMA is renowned for organizing the annual CYNETART Festival, which, since 1997, has showcased international artistic positions at the nexus of art and science. The festival presents trans- and interdisciplinary explorations of current technologies and media, attracting artists, researchers, and creatives globally. In addition to the festival, TMA operates the Trans-Media-Labor (TML), a space dedicated to the development, testing, and application of virtual environments and audiovisual projects. The TML facilitates the creation of interactive spaces that form the basis for multimedia performances, dance productions, installations, and workshops. Through its initiatives, TMA contributes to the exploration of media technologies' potential to expand self and world understanding, fostering innovative potentials in artistic and socio-cultural media usage.



Die Menschen auf der Bühne könnten den Querschnitt einer lokalen Straßenbahnfahrt abbilden. Foto: Ibrahim Quraishi

# Ein Protestsong in Form einer Kantate

„Walls are tumbling down“ von Eunice Martins und Ibrahim Quraishi ist ein jüdisch-muslimisch-atheistisches Gemeinschaftswerk. In Dresden fand die Generalprobe statt

donnerstag, 13. februar 2025 taz

Von Robert Mießner

Werkstattatmosphäre im nicht zu seinem Vorteil als Szenenquartier bezeichneten Stadtbezirk Dresden-Neustadt: Ein schmuckloser schwarzer, zur Bühne hin abfallender Raum, ein Marimbaphon, ein Vibraphon, ein ausladendes Schlagzeug mit einer Reihe Timpani, Notenständer, Monitore; das Ganze mehr Klanglabor als Konzertsaal: Für den Montagabend hatten die ausgebildete Komponistin Eunice Martins und der sich im Gespräch als Amateur ausgebende Künstler und taz-Autor Ibrahim Quraishi zur öffentlichen Generalprobe ihres Gemeinschaftswerks „Walls are tumbling down“ in das Staatsschauspiel Dresden eingeladen. Dessen oberes Stockwerk war gut gefüllt, das Publikum hörte zuerst Bandaufnahmen des Schofar, eines liturgischen Blasinstrumentes aus der jüdischen Religionstradition. Im Konzert spielten dann Avery Gosfield, Shimon Friedberg und David Limburger die Hallposaune, wie der Schofar treffend auch genannt wird. Der Schofar hat eine jahrtausendealte, mythische Geschichte, sie führt zurück bis zu der im letzten Moment abgesagten Opferung Isaaks durch Abraham und dem Einsturz der Mauern Jerichos durch die Posaunen der Priester. Das Theatergebäude, so viel kann an dieser Stelle bereits verraten werden, hat die Aufführung von Martins' und Quraishis sieben-

teiliger Kantate überlebt, obwohl sie die eine oder andere Vibration im Gebäck ausgelöst haben dürfte. Geleitet von der Dirigentin Sara Isabel Grajales Tamayo, geriet „Walls are tumbling down“ zu einer oft überraschenden Mixtur aus minimalistischen, ruhigen Blöcken und zumeist perkussiven, dynamischeren Passagen. Die Streicher, namentlich die Cellistinnen Danielle Akta und Katrin Meinigast, wussten, wie man Schönklang aus dem Weg geht, ohne dabei geräusch- und rauschhaft aufzutrupfen; den Perkussionisten Eduardo Mota, Georg Wieland Wagner und Samuel Dietze gelang es, scharf und kantig zu spielen, ohne das zum Selbstzweck werden zu lassen. Das perkussive, gelegentlich marschmusikalische Element erklären Martins und Quraishi mit ihrem Wunsch, so etwas wie einen epischen Protestsong zu schreiben. Tatsächlich sprachen die Schauspieler Komi Togbonou und Khalid Abubakar einen Text, der seinen Ernst der momentanen, allerdings auch nicht über Nacht entstandenen Situation zu verdanken haben dürfte. Das Libretto ist das Werk einer kollektiven Intelligenz. Quraishi, Togbonou und Martins haben eigene und andere Stimmen kompiliert: Zitate des Dichters Adonis oder des Philosophen Giorgio Agamben, der Dramatikerin Elfriede Jelinek oder aus der oralen Überlieferung der Hopi-Indianer, mit denen Togbonou seinen Auftritt

eröffnete: „Diesen Moment, den die Menschheit gerade erlebt, kann man als eine Tür oder als ein Loch betrachten. Die Entscheidung, ob man in das Loch fällt oder durch die Tür geht, liegt bei einem selbst.“ Den ersten Satz wird niemand bestreiten, der zweite deutet allerdings einen Pfad ins Esoterische an, der in der Folge noch ausgebaut werden sollte. Überzeugender waren die Momente, in denen der Text sich auf den Weg in die konkreten Niederungen der spätkapitalistischen Dystopie machte. Das letzte Drittel artikulierte Skepsis und Zweifel. Mehr da-

sang sorgten die Sopranistin Dorothea Wagner, der Bariton Leon Gauning, der Synagogalchor der jüdischen Gemeinde zu Dresden und der Jugendkammerchor der Singakademie Dresden unter der Leitung von Michael Käßler. „Walls are tumbling down“ lebt vom Zusammenspiel zweier Ansätze: Der eine ist der von Ibrahim Quraishi vertretene insistierende, der bei dem bekennenden Fan der Einstürzenden Neubauten übrigens nicht unfern Niederungen der spätkapitalistischen Dystopie machte. Die Hauspianistin des Berliner Kinoros Arsenal weist im Gespräch darauf hin, dass „Walls are tumbling down“ ein *work in progress* ist, dessen Gestalt sich analog zu den jeweiligen Auftrittsorten und Mitwirkenden gestaltet. Deren Namen deuten es an: Bei Martins und Quraishi stehen Menschen auf der Bühne, die den Querschnitt einer lokalen Straßenbahnfahrt abbilden könnten. Am Morgen nach dem Konzert empfahl sich ein Spaziergang langsam aus der Neustadt heraus. Linker Hand in Richtung Bahnhof wies ein Baustellenschild auf drei über die Jahre ramponierte Stadtviellen hin, die jetzt mit Geld aus München aufgewertet werden sollen. Was auf einer der versiegelten Fassaden fehlt, ist ein Graffiti aus der Glückritterzeit nach 1989: „Das Kapital ist schlauer / Geld ist die Mauer.“ Dass der Zweizeiler simpel ist, ändert nichts an seiner Richtigkeit.



Mittwoch, 12. Februar 2025 | Seite 9

# KULTUR



**Eine Könnerin**  
Die Künstlerin Petra Zille ist tot  
Seite 10

## Mauern zum Einstürzen bringen

Die Kantate „Walls Are Tumbling Down“ verbindet Klang, Videokunst und Performance zu einem intensiven Erlebnis, das Grenzen hinterfragt.

Von Friederike Partzsch

Die Generalprobe der transkulturellen Kantate „Walls Are Tumbling Down“ am Montag im Kleinen Haus des Staatsschauspiels Dresden war weit mehr als eine musikalische Darbietung – sie war eine intensive, körperlich spürbare Erfahrung. Das Projekt der Trans-Media-Akademie Hellerau verbindet Musik, Videoinstallation und experimentelle Klangwelten zu einem einzigartigen Erlebnis.

Die Symbolkraft dieses Projekts zeigte sich bereits während der Proben: Während die 20 Musiker vor knapp vier Monaten in der Dresdner Neustadt arbeiteten, stürzte in unmittelbarer Nähe die Carolabrücke ein. Ein Zufall? Oder ein kraftvolles Sinnbild für das Ziel dieses Werks: Mauern einreißen, falsche Brücken zum Einsturz bringen und Raum für Neues schaffen – ähnlich wie in der biblischen Geschichte von Jericho, in der Trompetenklänge die Stadtmauern zum Fallen brachten.

„Walls Are Tumbling Down“ ist als Probestück gedacht. Die Kantate greift die biblische Metapher auf und überträgt sie auf die Gegen-

wart. Dabei geht es nicht um physische Mauern, sondern um unsichtbare Barrieren – Vorurteile, Hass und kulturelle Zuschreibungen, die durch Musik überwunden werden sollen. Statt einer starren Struktur lebt das Werk von der Dynamik zwischen Komposition, Videokunst und Performance. Ziel ist es nicht, verschiedene Kulturen bloß nebeneinanderzustellen, sondern einen transkulturellen Raum zu schaffen, in dem Identitäten neu geformt werden.

Die Musik verbindet scheinbar Unvereinbares: Jüdische und arabische Musiker, die sich in anderen Kontexten möglicherweise als Gegner gegenüberstünden, musizieren hier gemeinsam. Ihre Stimmen, Instrumente und Texte in Deutsch, Arabisch, Jiddisch und Hebräisch verweben sich zu einer Einheit. Neue Klangformen entstehen – beispielsweise, wenn der Celloklang in das tiefe Grummeln eines Gesangs übergeht.

Einer der zentralen Köpfe dieses Projekts ist der Künstler Ibrahim Quraishi. Geboren 1973 in Nairobi, ist sein Leben von Bewegung geprägt – nicht nur geografisch, son-

Die Kantate steht in der Tradition des Protestsongs und greift Themen wie Diskriminierung, Migration und Solidarität auf.

aus der Ankündigung auf der Webseite der Organisatoren

dem auch künstlerisch. Quraishi arbeitet mit Fotografie, digitaler Bildkunst, Video, Film, Performance und Installation. Für ihn steht zu Beginn eines Projekts nicht das Medium im Vordergrund, sondern der Inhalt – erst danach entscheidet sich die künstlerische Form. Mit „Walls Are Tumbling Down“ suchte er nach einer zeitgemäßen Ausdrucksweise für Protest, ohne in Klischees zu verfallen.

Eine weitere zentrale musikalische Kraft hinter dem Projekt ist Eunice Martins. Die Komponistin und Pianistin trägt mit ihrer einzigartigen Klangsprache zur Dynamik und Ausdruckskraft der Kantate bei.

Doch das Projekt endet nicht mit der Bühnenaufführung: Es soll als dreidimensionales Klangerlebnis in der Ausstellung „Atmen“ im Stadtmuseum Dresden installiert werden. Besucher können dort mit Kopfhörern in die Klangwelten der Kantate eintauchen – ein immersives Erlebnis, das die Verbindung zwischen Musik, Raum und Identität in eine neue Dimension führt.

Diese Installation ermöglicht es dem Publikum, sich individuell mit den Themen des Projekts auseinan-

derzusetzen. Auch hier bleibt die Metapher von Jericho präsent: Klang kann Mauern einreißen – und „Atmen“ erinnert daran, dass wir alle dasselbe tun müssen, um zu existieren.

„Walls Are Tumbling Down“ ist mehr als nur ein Konzert – es ist ein Ereignis. Es stellt die Frage: Was bleibt bestehen, wenn Mauern fallen? Wer sind wir, wenn wir uns nicht mehr über Zuschreibungen definieren? Die Antwort darauf kann beängstigend, aber auch befreiend sein, denn in der Zerstörung steckt sowohl Verlust als auch ein Neuanfang.

Die Ausstellung im Stadtmuseum Dresden wird diese Fragen weitertragen und Besuchern eine sinnliche und auditive Auseinandersetzung mit dem Thema ermöglichen. Eine Aufführung in Amsterdam ist bereits geplant. Bleibt zu hoffen, dass dieses transkulturelle Experiment auch in anderen Städten ein Publikum findet – die Welt könnte ein paar mehr einstürzende Mauern gebrauchen.

Weitere Informationen unter: [t-m-a.de/projekte/walls-are-tumbling-down](https://t-m-a.de/projekte/walls-are-tumbling-down)

# PRESS REVIEWS

Dresdener Neueste Nachrichten

12.02.25

Mauern zum Einstürzen bringen : Die Kantate verbindet Klang, Videokunst und Performance zu einem intensiven Erlebnis, das Grenzen hinterfragt.

(Bringing down walls : The cantata combines sound, video art and performance to create an intense experience that challenges boundaries.)

“Walls Are Tumbling Down“ im Kleinen Haus Dresden: Besuch bei der Generalprobe

By Friederike Partzsch

Online :

[https://www.dnn.de/kultur/regional/kantate-als-musikalischer-protest-in-dresden-walls-are-tumbling-down-WTNZYOXQNNC7DBSL4YMECNZYGA.html?outputType=valid\\_amp](https://www.dnn.de/kultur/regional/kantate-als-musikalischer-protest-in-dresden-walls-are-tumbling-down-WTNZYOXQNNC7DBSL4YMECNZYGA.html?outputType=valid_amp)

## BRINGING DOWN WALLS

The cantata "Walls Are Tumbling Down" combines sound, video and performance to create an intense experience that pushes boundaries.

The dress rehearsal of the transcultural cantata "Walls Are Tumbling Down" on Monday in the Kleines Haus of the Staatsschauspiel Dresden was much more than a musical performance - it was an intense, physically tangible experience. The Trans-Media-Akademie Hellerau project combines music, video installation and experimental soundscapes to create a unique experience.

The symbolic power of this project was already evident during the rehearsals: Almost four months ago, while the 20 musicians were rehearsing in Dresden's Neustadt district, the Carola Bridge collapsed nearby. A coincidence? Or a powerful symbol of the aim of this work: to tear down walls, demolish false bridges and make way for something new - similar to the

biblical story of Jericho, in which the sound of trumpets brought down the city walls.

"Walls Are Tumbling Down" is a protest piece. The cantata takes the biblical metaphor and applies it to the present day. It is not about physical walls, but about invisible barriers - prejudices, hatred and cultural stereotypes that are to be overcome through music. Rather than a rigid structure, the work thrives on the dynamic between composition, video art and performance. The aim is not simply to juxtapose different cultures, but to create a transcultural space in which identities are reshaped. Music seems to unite the incompatible: Jewish and Arab musicians, who in other contexts might be opponents, make music together. Their voices, instruments and lyrics in German, Arabic, Yiddish and Hebrew weave together to form a unity. New sounds emerge - for example, when the sound of the cello merges with the deep growl of a song.

One of the central figures in this project is the artist Ibrahim Quraishi. Born in Nairobi in 1973, his life has been marked by movement - not only geographically, but also artistically.

"The cantata is in the tradition of protest songs. It deals with themes such as discrimination, migration and solidarity". Quote from the organisers' website.

Quraishi works in photography, digital and visual arts, video, film, performance and installation. For him, it is not the medium that is at the centre of a project, but the content - the artistic form comes later. With "Walls Are Tumbling Down", he sought a contemporary way of expressing protest without falling into clichés. Another central musical driving force

behind the project is Eunice Martins. As a composer and pianist, her unique musical language contributes to the cantata's dynamism and expressiveness. But the project does not end with the stage performance: it will be installed as a three-dimensional sound experience in the "Atem/Breathing" exhibition at the Stadtmuseum Dresden. Visitors will be able to use headphones to immerse themselves in the soundscapes of the cantata - an immersive experience that takes the connection between music, space and identity to a new dimension. This installation will allow the public to engage with the themes of the project on an individual basis. The metaphor of Jericho remains present: sound can break down walls - and "To Breathe" reminds us that we all have to do the same in order to exist.

"Walls Are Tumbling Down" is more than a concert - it is an event. It asks the question: What is left when walls fall? Who are we when we are no longer defined by categories? The answer can be frightening, but also liberating, for in destruction lies both loss and new beginnings.

The exhibition at the Stadtmuseum Dresden will explore these questions and allow visitors to engage with the theme in a sensory and auditory way. A performance in Amsterdam is also planned. This transcultural experiment will find an audience in other cities: the world needs more crumbling walls.

For more information, visit: <https://t-m-a.de/projekte/walls-are-tumbling-down/>

# PRESS REVIEWS

TAZ : Die Tageszeitung

13.2.2025

Ein Protestsong in Form einer Kantate. (A protest song in the form of a cantata)

By: Robert Mießner

Online:

<https://www.taz.de/!6065296>

<https://taz.de/Interkulturelles-Musikstueck/!6065296/>

A workshop atmosphere in the Dresden-Neustadt district, which is not known for its trendy atmosphere: an unadorned black room sloping down to the stage, a marimba, a vibraphone, an expansive drum kit with a row of timpani, music stands, monitors; more of a sound laboratory than a concert hall: On Monday evening, the trained composer Eunice Martins and the artist and taz author Ibrahim Quraishi, who in conversation humbly self-professed as a true “amateur,” being quite the opposite, had invited guests to the public dress rehearsal of their joint work “Walls are tumbling down” at the Staatsschauspiel Dresden.

The upper floor was well filled and the audience first heard tape recordings of the shofar, a liturgical wind instrument from the Jewish religious tradition. In the concert, Avery Gosfield, Shimon Friedberg and David Limburger then played the reverberating trombone, as the shofar is also aptly called.

The shofar has a mythical history stretching back thousands of years to the sacrifice of Isaac by Abraham, which was canceled at the last moment, and the collapse of the walls of Jericho due to the trumpets of the priests. The theater building, that much can be revealed at this point, survived the performance of Martins' and Quraishi's seven-part cantata, although it may have caused a vibration or two in the beams.

Led by conductor Sara Isabel Grajales Tamayo, “Walls are tumbling down” turned out to be an often surprising mixture of minimalist, quiet blocks and mostly percussive, dynamic passages.

## March music elements

The strings, namely the cellists Danielle Akta and Katrin Meingast, knew how to avoid beautiful sounds without being noisy and raucous; the percussionists Eduardo Mota, Georg Wieland Wagner and Samuel Dietze managed to play sharply and edgy without letting this become an end in itself. Martins and Quraishi explain the percussive, occasionally march-like element with their desire to write something like an epic protest song.

In fact, the actors Komi Togbonou and Khalid Abubakar spoke a text that probably owes its seriousness to the current situation, which did not arise overnight. The libretto is the work of a collective intelligence. Quraishi, Togbonou and Martins have compiled their own and other voices: Quotes from the poet Adonis or the philosopher Giorgio Agamben, the playwright Elfriede Jelinek or from the oral tradition of the Hopi Indians, with which Togbonou opened his performance: “This moment that humanity is currently experiencing can be seen as a door or a hole. The decision as to whether you fall into the hole or go through the door is up to you.”

No one will dispute the first sentence, but the second hints at a path into the esoteric, which was to be expanded on later. More convincing were the moments when the text made its way into the concrete lowlands of late capitalist dystopia.

Skepticism and doubt

The last third articulated skepticism and doubt. More of these would be appropriate; after all,

they are certainties that can lead to cruelty. The writer Christa Wolf and the playwright Heiner Müller, two GDR citizens admired by Quraishi, knew about this.

This does not mean that all utopia should be banned, on the contrary. The soprano Dorothea Wagner, the baritone Leon Gauning, the Synagogal Choir of the Jewish Community of Dresden and the Youth Chamber Choir of the Dresden Singakademie under the direction of Michael Käßler provided the singing of the future.

“Walls are tumbling down” thrives on the interplay of two approaches: One is the insistent one represented by Ibrahim Quraishi, which incidentally does not come across as unfriendly in the case of the self-confessed fan of Einstürzende Neubauten; the other is Eunice Martins' focus on the communal.

In conversation, the house pianist of Berlin's Arsenal cinema points out that “Walls are tumbling down” is a work in progress whose form is analogous to the respective performance venues and participants. Their names hint at this: Martins and Quraishi have people on stage who could represent the cross-section of a local streetcar ride.

On the morning after the concert, a slow walk out of the new town was recommended. To the left, in the direction of the train station, a construction site sign pointed to three urban villas that have been battered over the years and are now to be upgraded with money from Munich. What is missing on one of the sealed façades is a graffito from the post-1989 era of fortune-hunting: “Capital is smarter / Money is the wall.” The fact that the two-liner is simple does not detract from its accuracy.

# CONTACT:

**OLIVER BAURHENN**

**FREIER KURATOR**

**E: BAURHENN@CYNETART.DE**

**T: +49 179 244 71 32**

**TMA** Trans-Media-Akademie Hellerau  
**nmk** CYNETART  
netzwerk:  
medien kunst

**MON  
TAGS  
CAFE**  
STADTSSCHAUSPIEL  
DRESDEN



Die Beauftragte der Bundesregierung  
für Kultur und Medien

**K&M** Stiftung  
Kunst und Musik  
für Dresden



gefördert durch  
das Amt für Kultur und  
Denkmalschutz

Dresden:  
Dresdner  
Opernhaus

**PRP  
GND**