



The Jewish Museum and Bang on a Can Present
ETHEL Performing the String Quartets of Julia Wolfe



Photos by Matthew Murphy (ETHEL) and Peter Serling (Julia Wolfe)

Thursday, February 28, 2019 at 7:30pm
Scheuer Auditorium at the Jewish Museum
1109 5th Ave at 92nd St | New York, NY

Tickets: \$20 General; \$16 Students and Seniors; \$12 Jewish Museum Members
Available at www.thejewishmuseum.org. Includes museum admission.

New York, NY – Bang on a Can and the Jewish Museum’s 2018-2019 concert season, pairing innovative music with the Museum’s exhibitions and showcasing leading female performers and composers, continues on **Thursday, February 28, 2019 at 7:30pm**. The acclaimed string quartet **ETHEL** performs the complete string quartets of Pulitzer Prize-winning composer **Julia Wolfe**: *Dig Deep*, *Early that Summer*, *Four Marys*, and *Blue Dress*. This is the first performance of all of Wolfe's string quartets at one time, on one stage.

Julia Wolfe's string quartets, as described by *The New Yorker*, "combine the violent forward drive of rock music with an aura of minimalist serenity [using] the four instruments as a big guitar, whipping psychedelic states of mind into frenzied and ecstatic climaxes." This performance is presented in conjunction with the exhibition of fellow New York City cultural icon *Martha Rosler: Irrespective*.

Established in New York City in 1998, ETHEL quickly earned a reputation as one of America’s most adventurous string quartets. Twenty years later, the band continues to set the standard for contemporary concert music. ETHEL is Ralph Farris (viola), Kip Jones (violin), Dorothy Lawson (cello), and Corin Lee (violin).

Martha Rosler is considered one of the strongest and most resolute artistic voices of her generation. She skillfully employs diverse materials to address pressing matters of her time, including war, gender roles, gentrification, inequality, and labor. From her feminist photomontages of the 1960s and 1970s to her large-scale installations, Rosler’s vital work reflects an enduring and passionate vision. This survey exhibition showcases her five decades-long practice that continues to evolve and respond to the shifting contours of political life.

The 2018-2019 season marks the fifth year of the Jewish Museum and Bang on a Can’s partnership, producing dynamic musical performances inspired by the Museum’s diverse slate of exhibitions. The final performance this season on **Thursday, May 23, 2019 at 8pm** will feature composer/performer **Meredith Monk** in a rare, intimate concert – her premiere at the Jewish Museum – with renowned members of her Vocal Ensemble, Katie Geissinger and Allison Sniffin. This performance parallels *Leonard Cohen: A Crack in Everything*, a contemporary art exhibition inspired by the life and work of the world-renowned novelist, poet, and singer/songwriter.

About Julia Wolfe: Julia Wolfe's music is distinguished by an intense physicality and a relentless power that pushes performers to extremes and demands attention from the audience. She draws inspiration from folk, classical, and rock genres, bringing a modern sensibility to each while simultaneously tearing down the walls between them.

Her Pulitzer prize-winning work, *Anthracite Fields*, a concert-length oratorio for chorus and instruments, draws on oral histories, interviews, speeches, and more to honor the people who persevered and endured in the Pennsylvania Anthracite coal region. Mark Swed of the *Los Angeles Times* wrote *Anthracite Fields* "captures not only the sadness of hard lives lost...but also of the sweetness and passion of a way of daily life now also lost. The music compels without overstatement. This is a major, profound work."

Recent projects include her evening-length *Steel Hammer* for the Bang on a Can All-Stars and singers which toured in an expanded theatrical form with director Anne Bogart and her SITI Company. In January 2019, the New York Philharmonic premieres *Fire in my mouth*, Wolfe's large-scale work for orchestra and women's chorus, continuing her interest in American labor history with the subject of women in New York's garment industry at the turn of the century. Upcoming projects include new works for SO Percussion, and the New World Symphony.

She has written a major body of work for strings, from quartets to full orchestra. Her quartets, as described by *The New Yorker*, "combine the violent forward drive of rock music with an aura of minimalist serenity [using] the four instruments as a big guitar, whipping psychedelic states of mind into frenzied and ecstatic climaxes." Wolfe's *Cruel Sister* for string orchestra, inspired by a traditional English ballad, was commissioned by the Munich Chamber Orchestra and received its U.S. premiere at the Spoleto Festival. *Fuel* for string orchestra is a collaboration with filmmaker Bill Morrison, and *Spinning* is a multi-media work written for cellist Maya Beiser with visuals by Laurie Olinder. She has collaborated with theater artist Anna Deveare Smith, choreographer Susan Marshall, visual designer Jeff Sugg, and director François Girard, among others. Her music has been heard at venues throughout the world, including the Brooklyn Academy of Music, Lincoln Center, Carnegie Hall, the Sydney Olympic Arts Festival, Muziekgebouw (Netherlands), Barbican Centre (UK), Settembre Musica (Italy), Theatre de la Ville (France), among others. Her music has been recorded on Cantaloupe Music, Teldec, Universal, Sony Classical, and Argo/Decca.

Wolfe was a 2016 MacArthur Fellow and was a recipient of the 2015 Herb Alpert Award in Music. She is co-founder/co-artistic director of New York's legendary music collective Bang on a Can, and she is Artistic Director of NYU Steinhardt Music Composition. Her music is published by Red Poppy, Ltd. (ASCAP) and is distributed worldwide by G. Schirmer, Inc.

About ETHEL: Established in New York City in 1998, ETHEL quickly earned a reputation as one of America's most adventurous string quartets. Twenty years later, the band continues to set the standard for contemporary concert music. Known for its enlivened playing, blending uptown, conservatory musicianship with downtown genre-crossing, ETHEL has been described as "indefatigable and eclectic" (*The New York Times*), "vital and brilliant" (*The New Yorker*), and "infectiously visceral" (*Pitchfork*). Since its inception, ETHEL has released six feature recordings (one of them nominated for a Native American Music Award), performed as guests on 35+ albums, won a GRAMMY® with jazz legend Kurt Elling, and performed in 14 countries, 45 states, and 250 cities.

At the heart of ETHEL is a collaborative ethos—a quest for a common creative expression that is forged in the celebration of community. The quartet creates and tours rich, often multimedia, productions including the evening-length *ETHEL's Documerica*, inspired by the tens of thousands of images shot in the 1970's as part of the Environmental Protection Agency's decade-long *Project Documerica*; *The River*, a collaboration with Taos Pueblo flutist Robert Mirabal; *Grace*, a journey of redemption through music featuring works from Ennio Morricone, to Hildegard von Bingen and Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan; and *Circus – Wandering City*, which explores the phenomenon of circus through the eyes and insights of people who have created its special thrills and illusions. Commissioned by The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art and the Brooklyn Academy of Music, *Circus - Wandering City* is an immersive work combining projections of stunning images, films and interviews from the Museum's archives, the words of circus performers past and present, and original music composed and performed live by ETHEL. *Circus – Wandering City* made its world premiere in January 2018—the 250th anniversary of the modern circus—at The Ringling, and its New York premiere at the BAM Next Wave Festival in November 2018.

ETHEL is the Resident Ensemble at The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Balcony Bar and Ensemble-in-Residence at Denison University and 2018/19 Quartet-in-Residence at Kaufman Music Center's Face the Music.

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Tickets for the February 28, 2019 program are \$20 general public; \$16 students and seniors; and \$12 for Jewish Museum members and Bang on a Can list members, and include exhibition admission prior to the performance. Further program and ticket information is available by calling 212.423.3337 or at TheJewishMuseum.org/calendar. The Jewish Museum is located at Fifth Avenue and 92nd Street, NYC.

Support

Public Programming at the Jewish Museum is supported, in part, by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, in partnership with the City Council.

About Bang on a Can

Bang on a Can is dedicated to making music new. Since its first Marathon concert in 1987, Bang on a Can has been creating an international community dedicated to innovative music, wherever it is found. With adventurous programs, it commissions new composers, performs, presents, and records new work, develops new audiences, and educates the musicians of the future. Bang on a Can is building a world in which powerful new musical ideas flow freely across all genres and borders. Bang on a Can plays “a central role in fostering a new kind of audience that doesn’t concern itself with boundaries. If music is made with originality and integrity, these listeners will come.” (*The New York Times*)

Bang on a Can has grown from a one-day New York-based Marathon concert (on Mother’s Day in 1987 in a SoHo art gallery) to a multi-faceted performing arts organization with a broad range of year-round international activities. “When we started Bang on a Can, we never imagined that our 12-hour marathon festival of mostly unknown music would morph into a giant international organization dedicated to the support of experimental music, wherever we would find it,” write Bang on a Can Co-Founders Michael Gordon, David Lang and Julia Wolfe. “But it has, and we are so gratified to be still hard at work, all these years later. The reason is really clear to us – we started this organization because we believed that making new music is a utopian act – that people needed to hear this music and they needed to hear it presented in the most persuasive way, with the best players, with the best programs, for the best listeners, in the best context. Our commitment to changing the environment for this music has kept us busy and growing, and we are not done yet.”

Current projects include the annual **Bang on a Can Marathon; The People's Commissioning Fund**, a membership program to commission emerging composers; the **Bang on a Can All-Stars**, who tour to major festivals and concert venues around the world every year; recording projects; the **Bang on a Can Summer Music Festival at MASS MoCA** - a professional development program for young composers and performers led by today’s pioneers of experimental music; **Asphalt Orchestra**, Bang on a Can’s extreme street band that offers mobile performances re-contextualizing unusual music; **Found Sound Nation**, a new technology-based musical outreach program now partnering with the State Department of the United States of America to create **OneBeat**, a revolutionary, post-political residency program that uses music to bridge the gulf between young American musicians and young musicians from developing countries; cross-disciplinary collaborations and projects with DJs, visual artists, choreographers, filmmakers and more. Each new program has evolved to answer specific challenges faced by today’s musicians, composers and audiences, in order to make innovative music widely accessible and wildly received. Bang on a Can’s inventive and aggressive approach to programming and presentation has created a large and vibrant international audience made up of people of all ages who are rediscovering the value of contemporary music.

About the Jewish Museum

Located on New York City's famed Museum Mile, the Jewish Museum is a distinctive hub for art and Jewish culture for people of all backgrounds. Founded in 1904, the Museum was the first institution of its kind in the United States and is one of the oldest Jewish museums in the world. Devoted to exploring art and Jewish culture from ancient to contemporary, the Museum offers intellectually engaging exhibitions and programs, and maintains a unique collection of nearly 30,000 works of art, ceremonial objects, and media reflecting the global Jewish experience over more than 4,000 years.

Location: 1109 Fifth Avenue at 92nd Street, New York City
Hours: Saturday, Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday, 11am to 5:45pm; Thursday, 11am to 8pm; and Friday, 11am to 4pm
Admission: \$18.00 for adults, \$12.00 for senior citizens, \$8.00 for students, free for visitors 18 and under and Jewish Museum members. Pay What You Wish on Thursdays from

Information: 5pm to 8pm. Free on Saturdays and select Jewish holidays.
The public may call 212.423.3200 or visit TheJewishMuseum.org

Press Contacts:

For the Jewish Museum:

Daniela Stigh or Alex Wittenberg
212.423.3271 or pressoffice@thejm.org

For Bang on a Can:

Jensen Artists – Maggie Stapleton
646.536.7864 x2 or maggie@jensenartists.com

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