



MEDIA RELEASE

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African American minimalist Julius Eastman celebrated in Zeitgeist's 8th Annual Early Music Festival

Zeitgeist's **8th Annual Early Music Festival** explores the powerful contributions of our musical pioneers with a celebration of African American minimalist composer Julius Eastman, March 22-25 at Studio Z in Lowertown Saint Paul. Eastman's vibrant, virtuosic, and rhythmically aggressive music, and the racially and sexually charged nature of his work challenged the musical establishment and anti-establishment alike in the 1970s and 1980s, greatly impacting the trajectory of American minimalism. Lost after his death in 1990, Eastman's music has been recently recovered is asserting its influence once again.

As a group of musicians dedicated to the music of our time, Zeitgeist knows the most meaningful expressions of today are informed by the musical contributions of yesterday. The annual Early Music Festival honors that artistic debt with performances of influential and rarely-heard works by 20th century masters.

The festival will be preceded by two **Lowertown Listening Sessions** at Studio Z featuring performances and discussion of Eastman's work led by experts in the field. On March 15, historian/composer **Davu Seru** will discuss Eastman's musical activism in conjunction with a performance of Eastman's *Evil Nigger*. On March 21, visiting author/composer/performer **Mary Jane Leach** will discuss her work recovering the music of Julius Eastman alongside a performance of Eastman's *Stay On It*.

Julius Eastman (1940-1990) was a composer, vocalist, and pianist. He was among a small number of 20th century African American composers who found their voice through the American experimental music tradition. Highly regarded as a performer and composer, Eastman was a member of the Creative Associates at SUNY Buffalo from 1968-1975 and part of the "downtown" NYC music scene of the late 70s and 80s. He created high-powered minimalist works, and was among the first to infuse minimalism with a pop music sensibility. He made bold social statements through his compositions, addressing bigotry and non-inclusion of African Americans and LGBTQ communities with his use of provocative titles (*Evil Nigger*, *Gay Guerrilla*) and unconventional performance practice. A series of misfortunes and personal struggles left Eastman homeless in the mid 1980s, with much of his music confiscated when he was evicted from his home. Eastman died in Buffalo in 1990 at age 49.

Lowertown Listening Session: Music & Activism of Julius Eastman
March 15, 6 p.m.

Studio Z: 275 East Fourth Street, Suite 200, St. Paul
\$10

Historian/composer Davu Seru leads a discussion on the musical activism of composer Julius Eastman alongside a performance of Eastman's work *Evil Nigger* arranged for four mallet instruments and performed by Patti Cudd, Heather Barringer, Eri Isomura, and Bjorn Grina.

Lowertown Listening Session: Mary Jane Leach on Julius Eastman
March 21, 6 p.m.

Studio Z: 275 East Fourth Street, Suite 200, St. Paul
\$10

Author, composer and performer Mary Jane Leach discusses her work recovering the music of Julius Eastman, creating the book *Gay Guerrilla* with Renee Packard, and the New York City new music scene in the late 1970s and 1980s. Plus a performance of Eastman's work *Stay On It*.

Zeitgeist Early Music Festival: Julius Eastman
March 22-25

Studio Z: 275 East Fourth Street, Suite 200, St. Paul
\$15 / \$10 students & seniors / \$40 festival pass

March 22, 7:30 p.m.

Evil Nigger (four percussion)
Stay On It (mixed ensemble)
Buddha (mixed ensemble)

March 23, 7:30 p.m.

Feminine (piano, vibraphone, percussion, winds, bass)

March 24, 7:30 p.m.

Crazy Nigger (four pianos)

March 25, 2 p.m.

Stay On It (mixed ensemble)
Our Father (2 vocalists)
Joy Boy (2 percussion, 2 flutes)

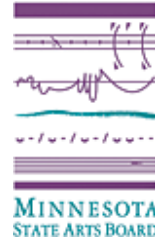
Guest Artists: Eri Isomura and Bjorn Grina (percussion) from 10th Wave; Carrie Vecchione (oboe) and Rolf Erdahl (bass) from OboeBass!; Joshua Weinberg (flute) from RenegadeEnsemble; Joan Hutton (saxophone) from Ancia Saxophone Quartet; Julie Johnson (flute) from Crocus Hill Ghost Story; deVon Russell Gray (piano, bassoon) from Heiruspecs; Davu Seru (drums) from No Territory Band; Michelle Kinney (cello) from JelloSlave); Bill Eddins and Jill Dawe (piano); and Joe Horton (vocals).

Tickets and info at zeitgeistnewmusic.org.

About Zeitgeist:

Founded in 1977, Zeitgeist is a new music chamber ensemble consisting of two percussion, piano and woodwinds, and is one of the oldest and most successful new music groups in the country. Based in St. Paul, Minn., the group presents an annual concert series and delivers a wide variety of community-based performance programs for residents of the Twin Cities and the surrounding areas. Zeitgeist's mission is to bring newly created music to life with performances that engage and stimulate. Members are: Heather Barringer, percussion; Patti Cudd, percussion; Pat O'Keefe, woodwinds; Nicola Melville, piano.

Zeitgeist is supported by the The City of St. Paul's Cultural STAR Program, The Amphion Foundation, The Knight Foundation, The Lowertown Future Fund, the Target Foundation, the McKnight Foundation, the Jerome Foundation, the Albrecht Family Foundation, the Aaron Copland Fund, The Mandel Family Foundation, and the Minnesota State Arts Board and the Metropolitan Regional Arts Council, through an appropriation by the Minnesota State Legislature.



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