

Press Release

20 April 2020

11. Edition of the Independent Audio Play Festival Goes Online All competition entries will be streamed on the internet, 21–24 May Listeners can vote online

Despite the coronavirus crisis, the *11. Berliner Hörspielfestival* (BHF, 11th Berlin Audio Play Festival) is taking place as planned from 21–24 May 2020. It began in 2008 at Strandbad Weißensee, as a gathering and competition of the independent radio play scene – free from the influence of public broadcasting as well as from audio publishers. Over the past few years the festival has been held in and around Theaterdiscounter, an independent venue in Berlin. This year it was scheduled to make its debut at the Akademie der Künste. However, in light of current events, the festival has now moved to the internet. All of the nominated audio plays will be streamed live, in real-time, over the YouTube channels of the BHF and the Akademie der Künste. Listeners are encouraged to cast their votes online, and will be able to listen to individual entries for an additional week. Josef Maria Schäfers is creating a unique visual image for each audio play.

The four-day live festival will be moderated, among others, by actress Britta Steffenhagen (radioeins radio show) and the multiple award-winning radio playwright Robert Schoen (*Entgrenzgänger*). Moderators accompany the competition and hold talks with the authors following the live broadcast of each audio play. The award ceremony for the winning entries, based predominantly on listeners' online voting tallies, will also occur live online. A previously planned accompanying programme – including performative audio pieces and installations, workshop discussions and a site-specific audio walk – has been rescheduled. This events programme is planned to be held in fall 2020 at the Akademie der Künste Hanseatenweg venue.

The BHF has set a new record, boasting a total of 151 submissions (more than 50 hours of airtime), and 35 of these entries have been nominated in four categories competing for the *Brennende Mikros* (Burning Mics) awards. All audible genres and acoustic arts are represented: narratives, documentaries, as well as sound art and forms of experimental language. Since the independent scene's festival aims to serve the entire spectrum of acoustic arts, the audio pieces are not grouped according to genres but simply based on length. Even the newly-added competition category *The Burning Mic*, for non-German language audio works, has launched successfully with 30 entries from around the world.

A fifth category in the competition, *Der MikroFlitzer*, is intended for productions of "quick 'n' dirty" audio works that must fulfil three conditions: They cannot exceed 60 seconds and must include both a specific phrase and sound. These

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prerequisites will be announced in an official invitation to participate published on 29 April 2020. The deadline for submissions is at midnight on Sunday, 10 May.

An Overview of the Competition Categories:

/ Der MikroFlitzer, for pieces up to 60 seconds (using a given phrase and sound)

/ Das glühende Knopfmikro, for pieces up to 5 minutes

// Das kurze brennende Mikro, for pieces up to 20 minutes

/// Das lange brennende Mikro, for pieces up to 60 minutes

\\ The Burning Mic, for non-German language pieces, 60 seconds to 60 minutes

The winner of *Das lange brennende Mikro* (The Long Burning Mic) award will be selected by a four-member specialist jury, made up of BHF's audio play critic Jochen Meißner, Swiss artist and radio playwright Annette Schmucki (from the Blablabor duo), audio play director Oliver Sturm – both Akademie members – as well as last year's winner Anja Penner (*Wasserspuren*). All the other awards are chosen directly by audiences, whose listeners cast their online votes on festival evenings. Each prize winner will receive valuable audio equipment.

Contributors taking part in the competition include the German-Polish artist Mariola Brillowska, Tom Heithoff's off audio play persona, Deutschlandfunk deconstruction artist Carsten Schneider and the Improbable Players theatre performance group from the USA.

Planned live (world) premieres by the Liquid Penguin Ensemble (*Lake Vostok*), Natascha Gangl and Rdeča Raketa (*Wendy Pferd Tod Mexiko*), Armin Chodzinski (*Freiheit II*) and the local matadors Berner & Schültge (*Die Phantome des Türquälers*) have been rescheduled for fall 2020. Akademie member Paul Plamper's installation *Der Absprung* and Bruno Pilz's audio walk *AliceD – Time Tea* can also be experienced this fall.

The *Berliner Hörspielfestival* is a cooperation with the Akademie der Künste. It is supported with funding from Berlin's Senate Department for Culture and Europe.

Special Event Information

11. Berliner Hörspielfestival (BHF)

21–24 May 2020, 6 – 11 pm

New trailers of nominated competition entries are published daily on the BHF YouTube and Facebook channels starting on 17 April.

Further information: www.berliner-hoerspielfestival.de (relaunch on 24 April) and www.adk.de

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