

Rundfunkchor Berlin

PRESS RELEASE 9 June 2026

RundfunkchorLounge »The Other Half of Olympus«: Music and Talk on Women, Power and Myth

Bestselling author and content creator Tara-Louise Wittwer and classical philologist Prof. Dr Katharina Wesselmann as guests on 2 July at Heimathafen Neukölln

On 2 July 2026, the Rundfunkchor Berlin presents the RundfunkchorLounge »The Other Half of Olympus – Women, Power and Myth« at Heimathafen Neukölln, focusing on female figures from antiquity and their impact up to the present day. In moderated conversations with author and content creator Tara-Louise Wittwer and classical philologist Prof. Dr Katharina Wesselmann, the evening explores how patriarchal narratives about women continue to shape gender images and role expectations today – and how these ideas are negotiated and reinterpreted in music. Under the direction of Chief Conductor Gijs Leenaars, the programme spans a musical arc from Schubert’s Romantic interpretations of the gods and Antigone, via Renaissance madrigals by Monteverdi and Marenzio and Szymanowski’s mythical sound worlds, through to Brahms’ »Nänie« and ABBA’s »Cassandra«.

Antigone, Ariadne, Demeter, Athena, Venus, Cassandra: the third and final RundfunkchorLounge of the 25/26 season turns its gaze to female figures from mythology and antiquity that remain present in literature, music and visual culture to this day. Between resistance and obedience, care and loss, and traditional ideals and images of beauty, the programme opens up different perspectives on images of women, mechanisms of power and social attributions.

Musically, the evening ranges from the Renaissance and Romanticism to modern and contemporary compositions. In Szymanowski’s cantata »Demeter«, the goddess appears above all as a mother who mourns her abducted daughter and, through her lament, asserts herself against a divine order in which the child’s fate is decided without her. In Monteverdi’s »Lamento d’Arrianna«, Ariadne is left alone after a love story with the hero Theseus – her lament gives voice to the pain of separation and presents her as a figure whose fate is bound to the man’s decision.

»Cassandra« takes up the myth of the seer whose warnings of the fall of Troy go unheard – a motif that continues to resonate today in the experiences of women whose voices often go unheard in social and political contexts.

Tara-Louise Wittwer, known online as »wastarasagt«, is a cultural studies scholar, author, SPIEGEL columnist and content creator based in Berlin. On her social media platforms, she addresses feminist topics and shows how pop culture and the media shape our self-image, for example in relation to

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internalised misogyny and traditional gender roles.

In her TikTok format »TikToxic«, she analyses misogynistic content on the internet; with books such as »Sorry, aber ...« and »Nemesis' Töchter«, both of which reached number 1 on the SPIEGEL bestseller list, she has toured with sold-out events in Germany, Austria and Switzerland.

Katharina Wesselmann is Professor of Classical Philology at the University of Potsdam and studied Greek and Latin philology as well as art history in Tübingen, Cologne and Basel. Her research focuses on Greek historiography and epic, gender studies, the didactics of classical languages, and the history and social connotations of the subjects Latin and Greek. Her book »Die abgetrennte Zunge. Sex und Macht in der Antike neu lesen« (»The Severed Tongue. Re-reading Sex and Power in Antiquity«) attracted particular attention; in it she shows how Greco-Roman antiquity continues to shape Western notions of female and male roles and makes gender and power relations visible.

The **RundfunkchorLounge** has been a fixture since the 16/17 season and deliberately takes place outside traditional concert halls at Heimathafen Neukölln. In a relaxed lounge atmosphere with standing and seated areas, the format combines vocal and chamber music with socially relevant themes. Before and after the programme, DJ sets and a bar in the hall invite the audience to linger over a drink and talk with artists and guests. The RundfunkchorLounge is moderated by **Tessniem Kadiri**. Tickets cost 30 euros, concessions 17 euros.

The event will be recorded and broadcast on Deutschlandfunk Kultur on 9 July 2026 at 8 pm.

Heimathafen Neukölln

2 July 2026

Thu 7.30 pm

Programme

Franz Schubert (1797–1828)

»Die Götter Griechenlands« (The Gods of Greece), D 677

for voice and piano

»Antigone und Oedip«, D 542

for two voices and piano

Karol Szymanowski (1882–1937)

»Demeter«

Cantata for mezzo-soprano, women's chorus and orchestra
(arranged for violin and piano four hands by Philip Mayers)

Claudio Monteverdi (1567–1643)

»Lamento d'Arianna« from the opera »L'Arianna«

for five-part chorus and basso continuo

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Aristea Mellos (*1982)

»Athena«

for voice, violoncello and piano

Luca Marenzio (1553/1554–1599)

»Scendi dal paradiso«

for five-part chorus a cappella

Benny Andersson / Björn Ulvaeus (1946 / 1946)

»Cassandra«

arranged for baritone, chorus and piano by Philip Mayers

Johannes Brahms (1833–1897)

»Nänie«, op. 82

for chorus and piano four hands

Karol Szymanowski (1882–1937)

»La fontaine d'Aréthuse« from »Myths«, op. 30

for violin and piano

Konstantia Gourzi (*1962)

»Rezitativ Antigone«, op. 81

for soprano and piano

Performers

Soloists of the Rundfunkchor Berlin:

Melanie Dreher – soprano

Hyewon Ju – soprano

Roksolana Chraniuk – mezzo-soprano

Bruno Meichsner – baritone

Bettina Pieck – harpsichord

Philip Mayers – piano

Nico Köhs – piano

N.N. – violin

N.N. – violoncello

Johannes Malfatti – DJ

Tessniem Kadiri – presenter

Tara-Louise Wittwer – guest

Prof. Dr Katharina Wesselmann – guest

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Gijs Leenaars – conductor

For press tickets and interview requests please contact:

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