JULIUS EASTMAN
ARTHUR RUSSELL

and

(WORLD) OF E-C-H-O

An exhibition presented
as part of
TO THE FULLEST
a landmark collaboration
between
LA Phil Insight
REDCAT
and
Wild Up

3/15

5/4/25

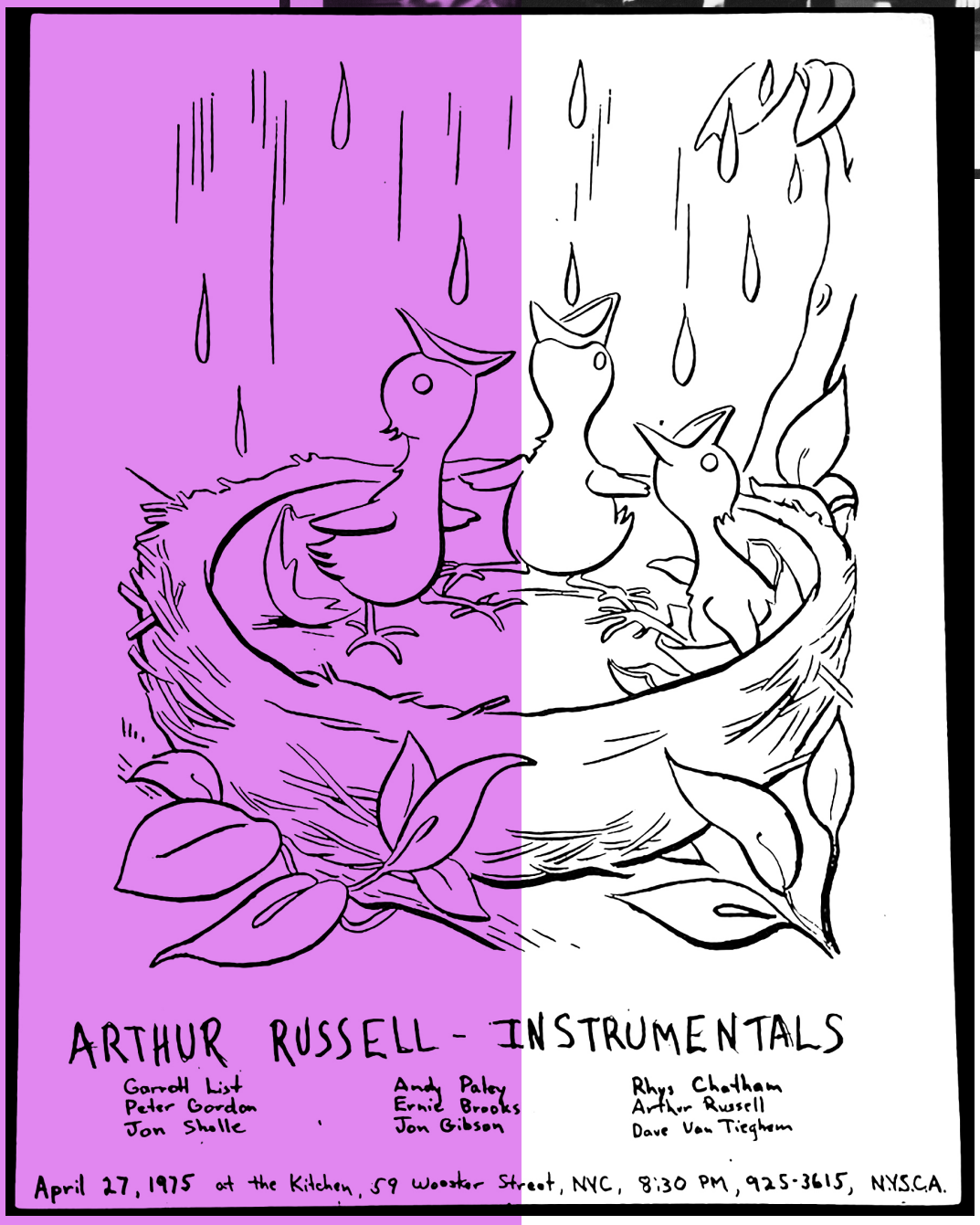
REDCAT ROY AND EDNA DISNEY CALARTS THEATER

LA Phil GUSTAVO DUDAMEL MUSIC & ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

INSIGHT

WILD UP

Kevin Noble, Julius Eastman and others with piano, February 8-9, 1980. Courtesy of The Kitchen, NYC and The Kitchen Archive, c. 1971 - 1999, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles (2014.M.6).



Poster for Arthur Russell concert "Instrumentals," April 27, 1975, at The Kitchen. Collection of Dave Muller.

The intertwined creative legacies of Julius Eastman and Arthur Russell—a web of friendship, community, and radical musical vision—is the subject of this unprecedented collaboration between the Roy and Edna Disney CalArts Theater (REDCAT), LA Phil, and Wild Up. While we have been presenting Eastman's music at REDCAT since 2007, the exhibition and performance program conceived in unison also offers new breadth of insight into these two influential figures in contemporary music.

Such an undertaking is only possible given a chorus of voices. We are grateful to our wonderful partners for their ongoing support and engagement of this project: Elizabeth Cline, Executive Director, Wild Up; Christopher Rountree, Artistic Director, Wild Up; Mark McNeill, Creative Producer, LA Phil; and Julia Ward, Senior Director, Programming, LA Phil, all whose enthusiasm, musicality, and vision have engendered this unique collaboration. We are indebted to the numerous lenders to the exhibition for the generosity in sharing many personal and rarely-seen materials, as well as their stories, memories, and critical reflections. The result of meticulous scholarship by Katy Dammers, Deputy Director and Chief Curator, Performing Arts, with Talia Heiman, Assistant Curator, the resulting exhibition and program both engage this material to expand our understanding of these two composers, musicians, and artists. The exhibition and program have been possible thanks to the diligent work of the entire REDCAT staff: Jacques Boudreau, Facilities and Production Manager; Chu-Hsuan Chang, Associate Technical Director, Lighting; Brent Charles, Box Office and Visitor Services Manager; Allison Keating, Deputy Director, Finance and Operations; Naomi Oppenheim, Front of House Manager; Daniela Lieja Quintanar, Chief Curator and Deputy Director, Programs; Lucio Maramba, Associate Technical Director, Audio and Video; Adam Matthew-McMillen, Director of Production and Technical Director; and Rolando Rodriguez, Administrative Manager.

As always, our work at REDCAT is possible thanks to the many individuals and organizations offering their continued support. The Roy and Edna Disney CalArts Theater (REDCAT) is CalArts' downtown center for contemporary arts. As a multidisciplinary center for the performing and visual arts, REDCAT encourages experimentation, discovery, and lively civic discourse in the tradition of CalArts. I am grateful to Ravi Rajan, President of CalArts, as well as the CalArts trustees for their unwavering support of our important and singular mission.

JOÃO RIBAS
Steven D. Lavine Executive Director and
Vice President for Cultural Partnerships

Roy and Edna Disney CalArts Theater (REDCAT)

In 2021, Wild Up launched the *Julius Eastman Anthology*, a GRAMMY®-nominated multi-volume recording project alongside performances, dialogues, and public programs. This To The Fullest festival is, in many ways, a culmination of that project.

Our approach to performing Eastman's work is rigorous and open—honoring his instructions while embracing the collective and individual decisions. Each performance becomes a three-way conversation between Eastman, the musicians, and the ensemble as a whole. Wild Up is, at its heart, a collective—a band. Like everything we do, this project is built on shared effort, trust, and the belief that music is most powerful when it brings people together.

With that same spirit, we began a new journey with Arthur Russell this year. When Eastman was "in the band," he was in the band with Russell. Now, as we step into Russell's classical and dramatic works, we are at the beginning—exploring, learning, and searching for the essence of his music through both his notated and recorded practices.

In charting their collaboration through *To The Fullest* and this gallery exhibition, *World of Echo*, we see Eastman's and Russell's legacies as deeply intertwined. As we look to the history of American music to imagine the future of classical music, we can't think of two more fearless, expansive, or visionary predecessors to learn from.

We have immense gratitude to the members of Wild Up, our guest artists, and the scholars who have contributed to this Anthology and Festival. To our board of directors and supporters—thank you for being part of this journey. To Brian Sea, our Production Director, for his intention and care. And to our Anthology record producer, Lewis Pesacov, for his boundless creativity and dedication.

We are eternally grateful to Julius and Arthur for what they brought to the world and continue to teach us.

CHRISTOPHER ROUNTREE
Artistic Director

ELIZABETH CLINE
Executive Director

Wild Up

LA Phil Insight is a program purpose-built to expand upon the programming that audiences encounter on our stages. We strive to enrich experiences by broadening the scope and diving deeper into the cultural contexts that inform the music we present. Two composers who deserve ever more thoughtful examination are Arthur Russell and Julius Eastman. In their lifetimes, both artists willed into existence whole new worlds of sound.

Operating on the fringes of innovative musical communities that they personally helped mold, Eastman and Russell pushed towards new possibilities that flirted with the mainstream while innovating from the underground. Ultimately, Russell and Eastman both passed far too young, but their legacies reinforce the importance of building creative ecosystems to bolster the wildest visions by giving space and support to the daring humans who dream them into being.

Alongside our partners Wild Up and REDCAT, LA Phil Insight is proud to co-present To the Fullest, a festival celebrating Julius Eastman and Arthur Russell, two distinct composers whose legacies remind us that music is a miracle.

MARK McNEILL
Creative Producer

JULIA WARD
Senior Director,Programming

LA Phil

Chuck Russell, Arthur Russell, Courtesy of Steve Knutson/ Audika Records.

JULIUS EASTMAN (1940-1990) was a composer, conductor, singer, pianist, and choreographer. A singular figure in New York City's downtown scene of the 1970s and '80s, he performed at Lincoln Center with Pierre Boulez and the New York Philharmonic and recorded music by Arthur Russell, Morton Feldman, Peter Maxwell Davies, and Meredith Monk. "What I am trying to achieve is to be what I am to the fullest," he said in 1976. "Black to the fullest, a musician to the fullest, a homosexual to the fullest."

Eastman was young, gay, and Black at a time when it was even more difficult to be young, gay, and Black. He swerved through academia, discos, Europe, Carnegie Hall, and the downtown experimental music scene. And in 1990, at age 49, Eastman died in Buffalo, New York, less than a decade after the New York City Sheriff's Department threw most of his scores, belongings, and ephemera into the East Village snow.

Eastman's music shines like a retroactive beacon to today's musical creators. Any term used to characterize today's musical landscape—"genre-fluid" or the like—was anticipated by Eastman decades before. Yet, he was punished for being ahead of his time, both in the treatment of his music and, tragically, his person. Eastman's music flowed freely from—and through—his myriad influences and was terribly served by the musical infrastructure of his day. In our unique approaches to Eastman's work, we're pushing ourselves to work in dialogue with the composer's creative impulses, channeling his individualistic spirit, augmenting the pieces with our ideas and concepts, and trying to stay true.

Paula Court, Julius Eastman at The Kitchen, 1981. Courtesy of The Kitchen, NYC and The Kitchen Archive, c. 1971 - 1999, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles (2014.M.6)

ARTHUR RUSSELL (1951-1992) was a cellist, vocalist, and composer known for his fusion of classical and popular music.

Originally from Oskaloosa, Iowa, Russell traveled to the West Coast in 1970, joining a Buddhist commune and studying Indian classical composition at the Ali Akbar Khan College in Marin County. In 1971 Russell met and performed with Allen Ginsberg who brought him to New York for a recording session produced by John Hammond that also included Bob Dylan, Perry Robinson, and Happy Traum.

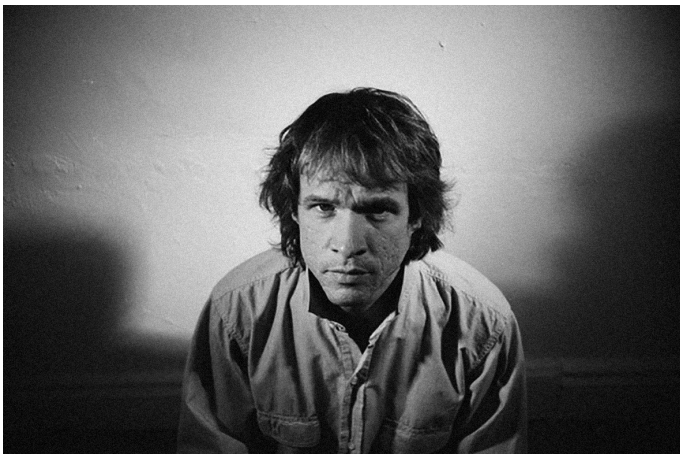
Russell moved to New York in 1973 to study at the Manhattan School of Music. Quickly gravitating to the then burgeoning downtown music scene, Russell wrote and performed his minimal compositions, including the bubblegum pop-inspired *Instrumentals*, and was music director at The Kitchen in 1974, along with recording his own pop songs for John Hammond.

Throughout his life, Russell collaborated with a who's who of some of New York's most influential artists including Christian Wolff, John Cage, Peter Gordon, Peter Zummo, Ernie Brooks, Jon Gibson, Mustafa Ahmed, Rhys Chatham, Jill Kroesen, David Byrne, Laurie Anderson, Larry Levan, Philip Glass, Robert Wilson, Julius Eastman, Arnold Dreyblatt, Walter Gibbons, and Phill Niblock.

Russell's music shifted dramatically in 1977 after an unexpected visit to a disco. Inspired by the sonic repetition and sense of community, Russell wrote and recorded some of the most influential records of the disco era including "Kiss Me Again," "Is It All Over My Face," and "Go Bang." By 1984 Russell began stretching the boundaries of disco and composition, becoming entranced with echo, and its use in his own songwriting. The completed album, *World of Echo,* combined Russell's rich composition skills with echo, feedback, voice, and cello, and remains one of the most influential documents of the era as a work of timeless beauty.

When Arthur Russell died from complications due to AIDS in 1992, he left an overwhelming archive of unreleased material that Audika Records in association with Russell's partner Tom Lee have steadily been releasing. As a cellist, songwriter, composer, and disco visionary, Arthur Russell consistently challenged our expectations of what pop music could be.

Unknown photographer, Photo of Julius Eastman in The All-American Dream Concert, 1971. Courtesy of the Los Angeles Philharmonic Archives



Arthur Russell. Courtesy of Steve Knutson/Audika Records.

1975 March 13-16
s.e.m. festival at The Kitchen

Evening of Julius Eastman compositions on Thursday, March 13

Curated by Arthur Russell as Music Director at The Kitchen

1978 May 9
"Instrumentals" performance at The Kitchen

Arthur Russell piece performed by CETA Ensemble and conducted by Julius Eastman

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1979 April 27-28
24 to 24 Music performance at The Kitchen

Arthur Russell piece performed by Julius Eastman, Peter Zummo, Larry Saltzman, Jeff Berman, Mustafa Ahmed, Rome Neal, and Peter Gordon

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1981 Feb 5-6
Medea recording session

Arthur Russell piece conducted by Julius Eastman

1981 Dinosaur L releases 24 → 24 Music album on Sleeping Bag Records

Arthur Russell music with Julius Eastman on vocals and keyboards

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1982 June
Recording of "In the Light of the Miracle"

Arthur Russell song with Julius Eastman on vocals

1983 *Tower of Meaning* album released on Chatham Square Productions

Arthur Russell composition conducted by Julius Eastman

KATY DAMMERS

with

ELIZABETH CLINE
TALIA HEIMAN
MARK MCNEILL
CHRISTOPHER ROUNTREE

and

JULIA WARD

LOST IN THE MESHES

Stay on it.

This phrase—and itself the title of Eastman's 1973 composition—sparked the inception of this project, and has remained an important rejoinder, and reminder, for our work on the landmark collaborative project *To The Fullest*: *Julius Eastman and Arthur Russell*. Together this concert series, exhibition, and scholarship reflect more than a year's effort amongst LA Phil Insight, REDCAT, and Wild Up to craft a program that reconsiders the legacy of these maverick artists and the continued echoes of their work today. Amidst this time of turmoil, it feels ever important to reflect back on the trailblazing work of these artists who had an unrelenting, uncompromising commitment to their practice that combined fierce ethics with tender feeling.

This project is the first time, to our knowledge, that the legacies of Eastman and Russell are considered in dialogue with each other. While they were active collaborators across their careers, they are best known for their independent creative projects. Considering their moments and modes of intersection brings a new perspective to these multidimensional artists and to the thickly fertile period of their collaborations from 1975-1983. While this intersection is the central consideration of the show, it is important to us not to overstate their relationship or to impose a narrative or arc beyond what was present. Their collaboration was certainly not a central animating force in either of their careers, and rather than crafting that narrative, we are curious what considering some of the lesser-known aspects of their work might reveal.

Taking its title from Russell's 1986 album *World of Echo*, this exhibition employs the echo as a central curatorial strategy. Russell described echoes as "acoustic reverberation or electronically as a single delay … concepts of time and space expressed sonically." Echoes are present across Russell's music: both literally through the use of unique pedal boxes and fine-tuned mixing and more metaphorically as song titles and lyrics are recycled and reworked across various albums and projects. Echoes can also be found across Eastman's work, from lyrical passages in *Gay Guerilla* that quote "A Mighty Fortress is Our God" to the multiples pianos in pieces like *Crazy N–* or *Evil N–* in Eastman's organic music that highlight the relationship across multiple instruments in a single composition. Hearing echo as reflection, response, reperformance, and resonance resounds across the exhibition—between Eastman and Russell, between these artists and contemporaries working today, and between the recorded music and its felt experience. Likewise, this project has engineered echoes across its two-month duration to encourage concert visitors to engage with the exhibition and vice versa to allow for continued echoes amidst historical and contemporary material, recorded documentation and live performance, and solitary contemplation and transcendent communal activity.

One of the most notable echoes in this exhibition is that between Eastman and Russell's lives and our understanding of them today. Working with posthumous artists has been an immense privilege and responsibility as we aim to represent and honor the complexity of their lives. We have sought to highlight the colorful, human, and complex aspects of these artists, who have often been depicted in black and white—both literally, due to limited archival materials, and broadly, through narrow interpretations of their diverse and layered practices. Inspired by Arthur Russell's 1985 piece "Lost in the Meshes," recorded by Phill Niblock at the Experimental Intermedia Foundation as part of Russell's evolving *World of Echo* project, there

are moments in the exhibition where focus is given to small details, zooming in on particular pieces and moments of intersection—while offering a chronological, though not encyclopedic, approach to each artist's broader oeuvre. Acknowledging both Eastman and Russell's resistance to easy understanding, the exhibition seeks to inspire curiosity and offer context for greater entanglement with their work and lives, rather than offering a singular biography. This exhibition would not have been possible without the partnership and support of their loved ones, their respective estates and archives, and individuals who have lent materials, shared stories, and offered insight into the dynamic lives and work of these two men.

Loss has been an ever-present echo across this project. Grief remains in the wake of the all-too-early deaths of Eastman and Russell, and continues as we imagine both what might have been had there been more time, resources, and recognition and as we imagine all that was lost—scores, recordings, photographs, and more. Eastman tragically lost many of his belongings and scores when displaced from his home in the East Village. While many ephemera and recordings remain of Russell's work, a small percentage of this material was shared publicly before his life was cut short by AIDS. The recent wildfires in Los Angeles have brought loss close again as our community has weathered loss of life, home, and livelihood. This context was inescapable as we designed this exhibition—impacting the items that could be included, the lives of our collaborators, and further highlighting our attention to the somatic register of the show's design.

Seeking to grapple with the continued impact of these deceased artists, contemporary artists are threaded across the exhibition in a reflection of the multitude of ways Eastman and Russell continue to impact artists today. Including primarily pre-existing works, artists used a variety of strategies to intersect with Eastman and Russell's legacy. Seth Parker Woods, Christopher Rountree, Davóne Tines, and Adam Tendler reflect on their approach to interpreting and performing their work, while Dave Muller, Andrew Yee, and Ethan Philbrick investigate the potential of the archival remnant. Moor Mother, Missy Mazzoli, and Roberto Carlos Lange look to Eastman and Russell as inspiration as they present works crafted in response to the compositional legacy of these artists, while Julia Holter, claire rousay, Kristi Sword, and Devendra Banhart approach them as fans who continue to find new inspiration from revisiting their works a generation later. Kyle Marshall, Adee Roberson, richard valitutto, and Matt Wolf anchor Eastman and Russell as queer ancestors, while Jeremy Toussaint-Baptiste and LaMont Hamilton, Justen Leroy, and Saul Williams contend with their legacy in works that consider the force of their performance and language.

To The Fullest is an unprecedented collaboration between LA Phil Insight, REDCAT, and Wild Up—representing a collaborative, generative venture between these organizations. Inspired by the interdisciplinary, world-crossing nature of Eastman and Russell's practice, our organizations want to consider how we can support artists equally at home in world-renowned concert halls, intimate black box theaters, and experimental musical ensembles. Likewise, we also wanted to stretch our institutions and find new ways of supporting artists amidst this period of precarity and reduced government support for the arts. We have found that one of the best ways to do that is to do it together—sharing ideas, resources, and commitments.

This project grapples with the legacy of two artists who have received much more attention and acclaim in the period following their deaths than in their lifetimes. While we are thrilled to bring more interest and scholarship to their incredible work, it comes with a significant tinge of regret and even anger—that they were not afforded more resources, that forces larger than themselves, like racism, homophobia, and disease had an indelible impact on their lives, and that they themselves may have hindered their own success. This posthumous renown both enables an important reconsideration of the past, and offers a strident rejoinder to us in the present—to support artists, to enable collaboration, and to give credence to that which is fundamental. And most importantly, to stay on it.

"I am not afraid."
-JOAN D'ARC
(1431)

"speak boldly!"
-JULIUS EASTMAN
Prelude to
The Holy Presence
of Joan d'Arc
(1981)

Paula Court, Andy deGroat & Dancers performing GRAVY at The Kitchen, 1981. Courtesy of The Kitchen, NYC and The Kitchen Archive, c. 1971 - 1999, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles (2014.M.6).

J-O-A-N S-A-Y-S

Joan d'Arc was wrought from a world of chivalric romance, religious fervor, dragons, and demons—emerging from the vast strangeness of the medieval imagination, where reality and the miraculous were entangled. It was an age consumed by suffering, sanctity, and sacrifice. But Joan is no mythic fantasy. She wielded a sword, commanded an army, and refused authority. The world she moved through could not contain her—so they burned her alive.

Composer performers Julius Eastman and Arthur Russell unraveled conventions— musical, cultural, personal, and political. They resisted categorization, defied institutions, and questioned the aesthetic and social orders that sought to define them. In their practices, they insisted on artistic autonomy—rejecting constraints and fixed identities—and turned to their spirituality to seek and embrace the unseen. Their work was a mystical pursuit of liberation and a search for new ways of being, making, and knowing. Their music pulsed with vitality, a testament to their singular presence, yet it also offered access to experiences beyond their lifetimes—into ours.

For both, freedom and liberation could materialize from their radical presence as much as from their self-destruction. Their artistic journeys were as much about ascent as descent—soaring into the dazzle of the ecstatic and plunging into the shadows of isolation. To glimpse the unknown is to linger in the midnight of the mind, in the glow of a dance floor where in both, time fractures—the self dissolves into pulse and breath, and music becomes a language of undoing, of remaking.

Eastman's iconoclasm was explicit. His music tore into classical and minimalist structures, forcing queerness, Blackness, and

confrontation into spaces that rejected them. Even his spirituality was unconventional. His martyrs and mystics were warriors of transformation—reflections of his own struggles and revelations. He turned sacred forms of Western music into a call for gay liberation, something at once deeply personal and radically communal. His compositions, with their relentless repetition and harmonic density, enact a kind of musical martyrdom—a ritual of endurance, purification, and revelation.

Eastman's music propels us toward an ecstatic dismantling. His compositions mirror mystical practices: a single idea layered, repeated, pushed to its limits toward the infinite. In his *Prelude to The Holy Presence of Joan d'Arc*, he invokes the three saints who guided Joan's revelations, her divine inspiration. The score consists of only fifteen words, with three appearing just once. It is both a spiritual invocation and a warrior's cry, a call to arms as much as a call to prayer—a statement of artistic defiance as a personal sacrifice.

In one of his last recorded interviews, Eastman referred to himself as being in his "last stage," living as a "wandering monk," in a state of expulsion and perhaps self-exile. A figure moving toward liminality—or toward something beyond definition. Now, his work is revived, performed, and absorbed—a paradox he might have predicted and opposed.

Russell's rebellion was quieter yet no less radical. He drifted between concert music, disco, funk, and the avant-garde, refusing to be contained to a single tradition. His deeply personal and sometimes ephemeral music lingered at the margins of recognition. And yet, in the decades after his death, his recordings have been unearthed and enshrined, making him a kind of patron saint of experimental pop—a figure whose restlessness has paradoxically been fixed in place.

Russell's sense of the sacred was fluid—moving through boundaries rather than tearing them down. Whether in his singular solo performances, where his voice, cascading in echos, intertwined with his cello—both a drone and a heartbeat—or within a group, where looping repetition and improvisation gave way to reinvention, to revelation. In disco, he found a world where music, dance, and devotion became one. In the recording studio, he approached production as both a compositional and performative tool, transforming sound into a layered, collaged dialogue with himself—a method as impermanent as it was immersive.

Eastman and Russell asserted the composer as an active, embodied force. Their work was a practice of heightened and radical presence. In *The Composer as Weakling* (1979), Eastman wrote of the "puny state" of the contemporary composer, railing against the divide between composer and instrumentalist. He wanted to see composers (re)assert themselves in the musical community and the collective process. He saw the composer's presence as the key to the vitality and relevance of contemporary music.

Eastman commanded and shaped space, counting down transitions in *Evil N–* (1979) with a booming "1-2-3-4"—a gesture as assertive as it was musical. His presence was undeniable, and his compositions demanded a similar force of will from their performers. Russell's presence, too, was deeply felt, whether in collective or solo contexts. His voice and cello weaved through layers of sound like a ghostly imprint, disintegrating and re-emerging.

If Eastman embodied the paradox of the martyr, the warrior-saint moving toward destruction as a form of transcendence, Russell's practice resonated with the Buddhist renunciation of self—an unmaking of imposed limits until only music, only presence, remained. Russell's early musings reflect this quest: 'How, or how not to, mix a meditative and non-mediated approach?' He also said his structured improvisations in *Instrumentals* (1975-1978) were "designed to purify, discipline, and restrain impulses" to create a space for presence and meditation.

For both, improvisation was more than a method—it was a philosophy, a way of accessing freedom. Their scores invited musicians to step inside their agency to shape and reshape the music through presence and interaction. The mutability of improvisatory practices crafted works that remained in motion and defied finality.

Eastman's scores, scattered and rediscovered in fragments, feel like they are still manifesting in time. Russell's work exists in layers of revision, each version fading into the next. Their art was not about permanence and definition but transformation—genre into texture, self into other, structure into flux. This speaks to Russell's Buddhist practice of impermanence and Eastman's Christianity, burning away the excess to reveal something raw and divine. In their defiant practices was a deep reverence—for the act of becoming and the alchemy of creation within a collective.

To honor their disruption is to resist closure ourselves—to help their music drift through genres and elusive spaces as a restless energy. Rather than cling to what they were, we can follow where they still lead toward what music and the world can yet become. Their radical and unwavering commitment is a force still unfolding, still demanding something of us.

And when they ask, we will "speak **boldly**."

ANANDA AND THE NEW AGAIN BAROQUE

or

The Chalice of Now:
Julius Eastman
Arthur Russell
and the
Embrace of Liberation

Some artists can taste the room. They have, drifting through their hair, around their tongues, through their fingers, the filament of something the rest of us don't see. But we know it when we hear it. And while we, left here, are all doing our damnedest with *World of Echo* to not mythologize these gifted friends, there's no way around the simple fact that Julius Eastman and Arthur Russell were true gods of the moment. We see in them the light of a thousand mirrors pouring energy on a single spot. But the glow isn't somehow too bright for us to look upon. It burns, but not us. It is an experiment in eros, but only in our hearts are we disrobed. We, left here, are elementally bewitched, ensorcelled, besieged—our bodies unlocked—by the alchemy of these unseen musics. Truly, like that light, they—pouring forth—pool into us with some relentless gentle embrace known to each of us beyond the history of our birth.

The works of Julius Eastman have been, for some time, the primary teacher for me and my colleagues at Wild Up. While Eastman's boyfriend called Julius (who spent a period of time traversing lower Manhattan in white robes) "Ananda," for us to call the pages of his scrawled manuscripts—his conceptual methodologies of activism and shock, or the vernacular earthquake rumble and firefly murmuration of his music—"our guru" would be both too far and simply not enough. Eastman's ideas, approach, and creativity have inspired me—and us—in a way that has wholly transformed our approaches, resonances, and creative structures. Like Pina Bausch radically changing the course of Tanztheater Wuppertal, re-carving the organization into a bastion of dance theater—or perhaps like Eastman's own encounter with philosopher-composer Fredric Rzewski, sending him headlong into conceptual and critical ecstatic minimalism from a place of previous post-war conservatory modernism—we have been reshaped by our continued encounter with his work.

As we begin now to explore a new archival project—delving here into the pop, classical, dance, theater, and unclassifiable works of Arthur Russell—we see two collaborators, Eastman and Russell, kindred spirits with distinct practices and circles, simply orbiting and creating. Sometimes in dialogue with one another, but each always in palpable dialogue within themself and with their community. In fact, it is these *dialogues* inherent in each of their practices that contain that core motivator, that core light, that has altered Wild Up's trajectory and artistic practice. Their works hold some truth about the moment, about the taste of the room. They triangulate something great: mandating discussion, calling out for community support, holding the soft individual, belonging to the meditative pathos of chant, simultaneously mundane and profound, critical and about non-judgement.

As we have such a history with Eastman's works, I'll tighten the aperture here on an argument centered on his opus in relation to the Western Classical canon. I see this depth of presence—in the moment, in a place, of songs in a room, with a specific group of people, that divine conduit of audience and a band making their sounds—as a profound return to the Baroque, the rhetorical, or to the Socratic in music. In a brilliant essay that codified for me the differentiating essence of Baroque music from the Classical and Romantic periods, from his collection *The End of Early Music,* Bruce Haynes lays out a framework that suggests that the core of Western music making from the time of the ancient Greeks through the Baroque period is centered on a rhetorical or almost Socratic dialogue between performers. The relationships are the performers',

the choices are theirs, the glory even is theirs. The composer sits in the band as a performer themself, living within their personal agency just like everyone else in the room. They all ornament and adorn at will—questioning, asking, exchanging energy, and positing moment to moment the direction that the music should take. And their dialogues elucidate the truth.

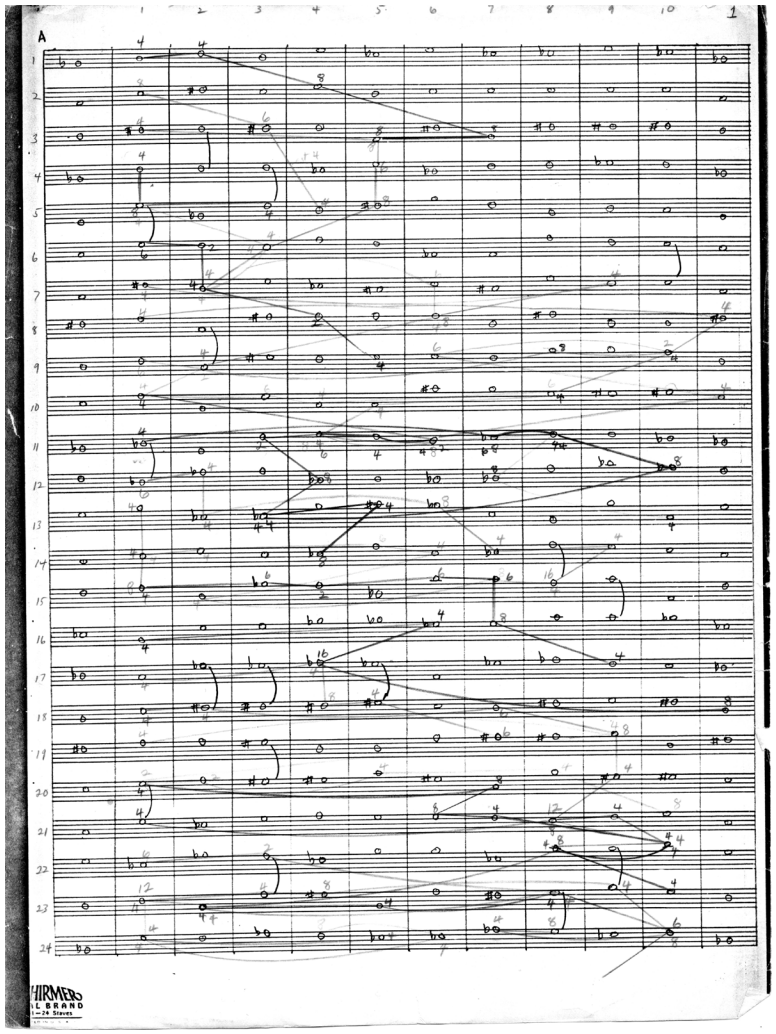
This freedom, this choice, this power of the individual among the collective from the Baroque is starkly missing when we consider the Romantic musical landscape post-Beethoven. Now, where the individual once stood, we have the God-Emperor Composer. Dead and gone and (almost always) male and (always) white and (usually also) white bearded. We, as classical musicians, are brought up steeped in that mandated conservatory—we can call it Conservative—tradition that draws its current roots from this Romantic period (approx. 1790-1880). Wherein we *must* play with vibrato, even though it is no different from any other tool of expression. We *must never ever:* ornament the music, change the tempo, play softer or louder than is written, play shorter or longer than is written, revoice a chord, add or remove instruments from the stage, move our bodies too much on stage, or operate our instruments or voices in *new* ways or *strange* ways at all. Imperatively we must *never ever ever* think about our music in *any* context, critical or cultural, other than the context set forth by this Emperor God. We *must not at any cost*: consider the audience. A limitation with profound negative effects on the next hundred years of the form, of which we get the most minute possible glimpse in the fact that the audience, and the performers, *must only* clap, or acknowledge one another even, at the time prescribed, and *only* at the time prescribed by the composer. In this rarified world of etiquette, indeed *everyone* is an outsider. Our highest divine aim *must* be to venerate only the composer for He is God on high, and any of our rejoicings must indeed be His rejoicings and foretold only by His will. Just in case we thought this was simply hegemonic, and not also at its core patriarchal, let's consider briefly Susan McClary's thesis about, eros, Beethoven and the inherent misogyny of Sonata Form (which I would extend moreso even to some turn of the 21st century forms that blatantly seek to control every aspect of a performer's body, like *New Complexity):*

"tonality itself – with its process of instilling expectations and subsequently withholding promised fulfillment until climax – is the principal musical means during the period from 1600 to 1900 for arousing and channeling desire."

Enter in the early 20th century: Jazz—with liberation as its tool for grappling with histories of oppression.

Enter, in the 1950s, 60s, 70s, and 80s, an alternative classical canon: Julius Eastman, Moondog, John Cage, Yoko Ono, Fluxus, Cornelius Cardew, Ann Southam, Fredric Rzewski, Pauline Oliveros, Alison Knowles, Louis Andriessen, Tom Johnson, Robert Ashley, Alice Coltrane, and Arthur Russell.

And we begin to see a distinct late 20th Century departure from that God-Emperor Composer framework. These genius artists, at long last, send Classical composition increasingly, at all of its levels, toward intersectionality. With the calling forth for context, for intense dialogues, and works directly about individual agency and equity: often, in the case of Eastman, explicitly so. After a hiatus of 200 years, the notes are again the performer's notes, not the composer's notes. (But yes, John Coltrane always wrote *Giant Steps* regardless of how it's played and who it is played by, but that's another essay altogether).



Arthur Russell, Score for "Instrumentals," 1975.
Courtesy of Steve Knutson/Audika Records.

This, often ecstatic, music springs forth *electric* from the circumstance and situation, with a devotion only to the circuit of the room. It *belongs* to the room. Its highest life: between people in a moment. Not between people and their god. (Even if it is often written in veneration to a god, but again, another essay).

I am not proposing here that these musics are a solution toward some utopia, but rather that they oppose our horrific moment in history, with that which is truly anathema to dystopia: curiosity and connection. While the god emperor has a new name, *we* have ancient underutilized viscous and sweet and daring tools to defeat his message. The reason why we love the music of Julius Eastman and Arthur Russell is because their, new again, radical frameworks of shared effort are an offering about freedom, creativity, fluidity, and beauty. Their monumental works are obelisks of seismic pathos toward liberation. For the moment, for the body, for the individual, for collective learning, and for collective empathy. They are a call to action for being together, and—in the end—for being together better. Within oneself and within society.

SETH PARKER WOODS

X ELIZABETH CLINE

ELIZABETH CLINE: *The Holy Presence* might seem like a natural choice given your Eastman scholarship and your work as a cellist, but what specifically drew you to this piece and the vision to record all ten cello parts?

SETH PARKER WOODS: This piece was my introduction to Eastman 15 years ago. I was living in Europe when a friend sent me the 1981 Kitchen recording. At the time, I was searching for multi-cello pieces and had never encountered anything like it. The density, the individuality of each part—it was raw and felt like the musicians were *playing for their lives*. As a cellist, you're used to pieces where we share similar parts of the lines or where there are simplified parts that serve as inner voices. It was polyphony reimagined for a monophonic instrument and a different way to think about a cello ensemble. And then over years of research, I realized how much this piece bridges Eastman's early and later work, holding essential elements of his aesthetic.

EC: It does feel like the cellists are just *hanging on.* What creates that intensity? The difficulty, the pace?

SPW: The pace is relentless. It's high-octane. There are brief lulls, but there's always a motor pushing forward—pulling back, reaching, clawing. It's right on the heels of Stonewall, part of what I call his "queer series." So, I see it as protest music. It is connected to the ethos of being a guerrilla. As Julius said, he would step forward as if one [a guerrilla] if needed to be called to be one. It was about liberation and a gift in the name of this martyr.

EC: Yes, his dedication of this work to Joan d'Arc—her devotion, strength, and defiance. Does that resonate or carry a similar energy for you, that dedication?

SPW: Over time, I would ruminate on who he was and what he stood for, and what I've learned from interviews with people who knew him, and it is clear he was invested in liberation. And his queerness is deeply embedded in his work and life. His music made me push against my fears. I spent years playing old dead white men's music, which I connected to in some ways but felt restrained by in others. I was searching for something that would break me open. For some, that is drugs or sometimes a concert—something that makes you feel alive. This piece was raw and did that for me.

EC: Do you think "The Holy Presence" is something external that you're reaching for or something within you being revealed?

SPW: Both. Whether I am playing it alone with the recording or with nine other cellists, we are coming together for a mission. We are the army, in a way, an army plus these saints, which the first three cello parts represent. Then, there are tendrils of their identity that spread throughout the many other voices within the ensemble. We're pushing for liberation, for authenticity. This piece has been a beacon for me. I could have done this recording with nine other cellists. And I have performed it this way. But there are always conflicts of directionality. There are always conflicts of idea and aesthetics, but that's what you find in collaboration. I wanted to try to distill a singular vision.

EC: How did you approach embodying multiple parts in the piece? Was it a single presence, or was it ten distinct characters?

SPW: Both. The process started practically, designing the recording sequence with producer Lewis Pesacov. We recorded cello ten first, since it's the hardest part and it never stops. and we used it as an anchor. But as I moved through each part within the work, each voice, I realized I was confronting myself. There are so many chordal and locked positions that are very physical for the hand, everything's so close. You have to keep the ensemble together while all the parts swirl around you. The parts push and pull, requiring different colors and characters, and at times very different expressive energies. At times, I was near breakdown. It was like navigating a maze of mirrors, trying to stay the course.

EC: It's such a personal journey, the struggle between control and surrender, precision and expression. I can feel that driving force, that searching that is physical and emotional. Do you find yourself oscillating between a grounded state and a more transcendent aspect of performance and interpretation?

SPW: All the parts are so different yet share similarities. There's a way I come to the cello—a way my body naturally rests, holds itself, or how we hold each other. This connection, both conscious and subconscious, works for solo playing. But when I had to play all the other parts that still needed to feel virtuosic, that way of performing as a soloist didn't always translate. Sometimes, those parts required a certain stealthiness, even within high-energy moments. I had to adjust—finding a way to be both supportive and essential to the piece's identity. In the recording studio, that challenge became overwhelming at times. There were moments when I had to step away, grappling with my own imperfections while striving for excellence. It felt like an insurmountable mountain—something I'd never fully conquer, but I kept pushing. Chris [Rountree] calls this the "monk" in me.

EC: Yes, totally monkish in the discipline—the focus on the journey, the spiritual rigor. Did you anticipate that this process would confront you so deeply with the limitations of the body and the self? And how has this "self-collaboration" changed your practice or approach?

SPW: Recording forced me to accept imperfection. At that point, I had only played cello parts one and two. I had listened and studied the other parts, but I really had no idea what physically and emotionally goes into those different characters. When Wild Up announced the project, some people said it would be a "definitive" recording. That pressure—my own, from Eastman fans, from fellow cellists—was immense. It wasn't just recording my part; it was like recording an entire damn symphony. I was responsible for everyone's part within the story.

EC: Did that responsibly, and the depths you went to with learning and performing this piece take you to different places with your work and understanding of Eastman as a person or artist.

SPW: Well, yes, like in the middle of the piece, everything empties in a way I hadn't noticed. We see this vast landscape, and within it, there are small, intimate moments. I always think of it as young Eastman showing up for elder Eastman. It makes me teary to think about it because it's the part of him that he couldn't show to anyone. It's the most vulnerable, the most raw, and the most simplified. It's not on the outside; it's embedded within the ensemble. You barely hear it because all these other cellos are jumping and screaming, but he places it right in the middle of everything. It's just these three voices turning with this beautiful, devotional, almost chant-like melody. They wade back and forth until the outer voices swallow them and continue outward. It speaks to his vulnerability and devotion at the time he wrote this. It's about identifying himself as one of those living on the fringes of society, but emboldened to be and do something extraordinary. This idea of "forothermore" is situated deep within the chaos and noise around. They carry such incredible stories and experiences.

EC: That interiority within the noise is profound. And that you had to reach your limits to receive it. Now that this recording is part of an exhibition, what do you hope people experience?

SPW: I welcome people to listen openly, to listen boldly, and not to come in with preconceived ideas. It is a gift to have this work parsed in such a way due to the installation's design that they can live with one of the stories or all ten stories or move between stories and see where they converge and diverge.

EC: And all the stories Eastman told and represented—people with the courage to fight, like Joan, like his own community.

SPW: Yes. This piece is grounded in a moment when people were fighting for their lives and their community. And he called upon himself in a way to reflect that sonically. So that that piece serves as a coven. I think back to Stonewall; night after night, it would be raided, but night after night, people of the queer community would return. To be in a community, to be seen, to be with people, to be as radical as possible, and to be the "forothermores". They wouldn't be pushed from the community they had to work so hard to cultivate and build. They ate their fear. They said, *enough.*

KATY DAMMERS

LOVE DANCING

> You caught me, caught me,
> love dancing
> –ARTHUR RUSSELL, from
> "Is It All Over My Face?" 1980

Listening to the music of Julius Eastman and Arthur Russell is an embodied, physical act for me. My heart races as soon as I hear the insistent cellos in *The Holy Presence of Joan d'Arc*, my hips start to swivel as the congas come through in "Is It All Over My Face?" and all feeling breaks loose when "Go Bang! (#5)" comes through—radiating inside and across my body in sustained ecstasy. Decades later this music continues to move generations in its deep grooves, persistent pushes, and flirtatious lyrics.

While Julius Eastman and Arthur Russell are known for their work in music, they both had a strong connection to dance throughout their lives: playing music for dance performances, composing music to accompany choreography, crafting popular music that people danced to in clubs, and making danceworks themselves. Considering the impact of dance within their practices helps to illuminate the somatic register of their music and the way it implicates the body—which feels particularly poignant in the wake of the loss of these two artists.

> I have sung, played, and written music for a very long time, and the end is not in sight. But now music is only one of my attributes. I could be a Dancer, Choreographer, Painter or any other kind of artist if I so wished.
> –JULIUS EASTMAN, from
> "Humanity and Not Spiritual Beings" 1981

This expansive articulation of Eastman's practice, which he included in a press release for a program at The Kitchen, is critical in understanding his commitment to movement within his interdisciplinary career. Eastman worked as a dancer, choreographer, accompanist for live performance, and composer for dances by artists including Karl Singletary, Christyne Lawson, Andy deGroat, and Molissa Fenley.

Eastman first encountered dance as a piano accompanist, and relied on this skill to supplement his income throughout his career. He worked as an accompanist at the Iris Barbura Dance Studio in Ithaca, NY during his adolescence—developing a fine attunement to the dancing body and the supportive rhythm and melody of music. Through connections at the studio he then went on to study ballet with choreographer Vergiu Cornea, the founder of Ithaca Ballet. Eastman relied on this solid training across his career, and Meredith

Arthur Russell, *Kiss Me Again*, 1979. Collection of Dave Muller

Monk noted that he gave ballet class to the other members of the ensemble of her piece *Dolmen Music* when on tour in Italy in 1980. Eastman was ultimately hired by the State University College in Buffalo in 1968 as a musical accompanist for dance, providing a critical entree to the musical community there and the Creative Associates, which he joined in September 1969.

During his time with the Creative Associates in Buffalo he went on to create his own dance-works, including *The Moon's Silent Modulation* in 1970. A work for three dancers (Debbie Abrams, Mary Fulkerson, and Karl Singletary) accompanied by orchestra and voice, Eastman crafted the choreography, music, and libretto for this piece presented at Domus on April 19, 1970. In an interview in the *Buffalo Courier Express* Eastman described the work as an allegory about the "ego mechanism" between the moon and the sun as they orbited around the earth, ultimately noting that "no superior persons or beings can be identified." Notably the first musical composition where Eastman employed graphic notation, Karl Singletary remembered Eastman using a notation system to sketch out choreography in relationship with the music. During this time Eastman also created works for Singletary to perform including *Mumbaphilia* (1972), and together they organized a program for Singletary's Buffalo Inner-City Ballet Company called *U.S.A.: Black Music and Dance* in 1973 that included Eastman's piece *Wood In Time*—a work for metronomes and choreography.

Eastman later collaborated with choreographer Andy deGroat in New York City several times—ultimately developing some of his most influential works including *Crazy N–*, *Evil N–*, and *The Holy Presence of Joan d'Arc* as commissioned compositions for his dances. Their first piece together entitled bushes of conduct premiered at the Dance Umbrella Festival in New York City in 1979, and was accompanied by sections of Eastman's piano pieces *Crazy N–* and *Evil N–*. De Groat described his working relationship with Eastman as based on "mutual respect and peaceful coexisting" and noted that while Eastman would occasionally visit rehearsals, the choreography and music were created independently. A work for seven dancers with live musical performance by Eastman and others—critic Julinda Lewis Williams noted in Dance Magazine that "the series of repeated movements—lunges, turns in passe position with fists clenched, pivots with the leg in attitude—is performed with an easy insistence that compliments but does not mimic the harsh aggressiveness of Eastman's music."

deGroat and Eastman worked together again in 1981 on *GRAVY* (a medicine of spaces), a dance performance presented at The Kitchen for eight dancers with Eastman's composition *The Holy Presence of Joan d'Arc* for ten cellos. Rehearsal footage from The Kitchen, shown in the exhibition, shows a driving piece with

stag leaps and running patterns that in some moments mimic the repetitive, insistent cellos of Eastman's composition; and at other times take up a single cello solo. Nancy Goldner, writing a review in the *Soho Weekly News*, noted that, "Unlike many of his contemporaries, deGroat is eager to capture not only meter but the atmosphere of the music. Daringly, he'll take music at its face value. What one hears is what one sees: stage leaps to stag leap music, walks in exact accordance with the force of the beat." Indeed, the driving quality of Eastman's music as cello sections are repeated and layered at the beginning of this piece is mirrored in the opening choreography, though the dance later diverges as more cello parts emerge. Ultimately an abstract, more formal dance composition (without narrative), the work evokes the complexity of bodies in motion; while the presence of a cloaked figure at its conclusion seems to forebode some dark ending. Eastman's intense, focused compositions ultimately provoke a sense of driving, powerful movement that is mirrored in the dance itself.

> If you make what you think is serious music and you put a beat to it good enough to move the body, it will absolutely be dismissed by the serious music establishment.
> -ARTHUR RUSSELL, as recounted by PETER ZUMMO

Some of Arthur Russell's most celebrated music during his lifetime was constructed for a dance context—singles with rhythmic beats and catchy grooves that were played at popular clubs like The Gallery, The Loft, and Paradise Garage as part of the rise of disco music. Russell first encountered these environments through Louis Aquilone in 1976, traveling with him to The Gallery—a private party organized by Nicky Siano. Siano remembers that, "Arthur could not dance. He was very awkward on the dance floor. I don't understand how someone who's such a great musician could feel the pulse and miss it with his hands and his legs, but he missed it all the time." While Russell himself was not much of a dancer, he was curious about the power of dance music—both to provoke feelings of transcendent community and release, and to potentially provide financial stability through commercial recognition. Russell went on to work with Siano on his first dance single "Kiss Me Again" as Dinosaur in 1978. This funky 12" with performances by Wilbur Bascomb, Allan Schwartzberg, David Byrne, Peter Gordon and Peter Zummo along with vocals by Miriam Valle evokes the flirtatious nature of dancing in the club, with its lyrics "give me love again" noting the desire that propelled much of the evenings at The Gallery. Other disco pieces like Russell's "Is It All Over My Face?" released as Loose Joints in 1980 took up desire more directly—with lyrics coyly questioning if an expression of love, or its aftermath, were visible.

Russell's work with dance music set him apart from many of his peers at The Kitchen who were focused on experimental, new music compositions. During Russell's performance of *24→24 Music* presented at The Kitchen in 1979 with vocals and piano by Julius Eastman some audience members began to dance at the back—disrupting the more serious listening environment that characterized music at the experimental venue. Describing his work as "bubblegum pop music," Russell was intrigued by this intersection between experimental compositional strategy and the implication of the body more common in popular music. Russell's commitment to blurring and intersecting seemingly disparate parts of the music community was exemplified in his 1981 album *24→24 Music* released under the name Dinosaur L by Sleeping Bag Records, which included pieces "#5 (go bang)" and "#3 (in the corn belt)" that were later remixed and celebrated as dance tracks. Francois K's remix of "Go Bang! (#5)" was a sensation, inciting what Will Socolov remembers as incredible nights of dancing at The Loft. Larry Levan, founder of Paradise Garage, later remixed "In the Corn Belt," emphasizing Eastman's drawn out vocals into an ecstatic mix of Midwest roots, minimalism, and disco.

Arthur Russell also collaborated with choreographers across his career, working as both accompanist and composer for experimental dance pieces. He played music for Merce Cunningham's classes at Westbeth Art Studios (a location that was particularly convenient given his shared basement studio with Peter Zummo in the same building) and performed cello for Trisha Brown's 1985 piece *Lateral Pass*. He also made original compositions for choreographers Diane Madden, Alison Salzinger, and Ishmael Houston Jones—often performing behind the audience amidst what Salzinger described as "the usual cloud of amplification and echo devices." Russell also worked with performance artist and choreographer John Bernd—allowing him to use his score for *Medea* for his 1983 piece *Little America*, and later playing live for a later performance where Bernd performed naked, revealing his body covered with psoriasis as he battled AIDS before passing away as one of the first choreographers to die from AIDS in 1988. In 1993, following his own death from AIDS, Russell received a posthumous "Bessie" Award celebrating his work in dance "for a brave, cross-pollination adventure in music-making, an eloquent voice and swashbuckling bow and cello, for a life as remarkable for its generosity towards its artistic peers as for its own discoveries; for a life cut unbearably short, lived deep in the unfolding secrets of the art."

> Is it all over my face?
> I'm in love dancing
> It's bringin' out the sane
> -ARTHUR RUSSELL, from
> "Is It All Over My Face?" 1980

Dance was a critical part of Julius Eastman and Arthur Russell's practices, and one that must be considered as part of a complex understanding of their work. It was an important financial support—providing steady supplementary employment as accompanists, significant commissions to enable the creation of new compositions, and the ultimately elusive possibility of commercial success. Dance was also an important site of social space, gathering diverse community together for ecstatic, spiritual, and permissive gatherings. Dance was also a vector for desire, supported and enabled in sex-positive, queer spaces. Ultimately, dance was liberatory—enabling Eastman and Russell to collide and cross worlds; break down barriers amidst race, gender, and sexuality; and enable a different kind of transmission through physical sensation propelled by music.

Working on this exhibition I've often taken breaks to feel the music of Julius Eastman and Arthur Russell—spinning through in the gallery, moving in my seat as I write accompanying text, and dancing with others. This embodied approach has both been practical—I'm always at my best when I'm in motion—and intentional—as I've sought a kind of tangible relationship with these deceased artists who continue to have such personal, intense impacts on our work and lives today. As we mourn their loss, I'm grateful to also be able to celebrate and experience them through their work as it is performed, heard, and felt.

Following are excerpts from the oral history interviews conducted by Katy Dammers and Mark McNeill as they researched the *JULIUS EASTMAN AND ARTHUR RUSSELL: WORLD OF ECHO* exhibition curation. These reflections are offered in hopes of expanding perspectives on Julius Eastman and Arthur Russell through the voices and memories of people who were close to them.

"The impression I had of Arthur right away was that he was very serious about music. I could tell that he wasn't just fooling around. It was very focused and very intense." -BILL RUYLE

"Julius really was deeply devoted to music, very objective about it. Meaning that if he didn't respect something, he knew it. He was very rigorous about quality music." -MEREDITH MONK

"They were both high level professionals—they really appreciated the high level of musicianship that they both worked with." -PETER GORDON

"Julius was so precise and passionate. We all thought minimalism was cool. It's a little dry, it's about form, playing with numbers and stuff. Julius did that too, but he brought this passion, which I just always loved. Maybe that was part of his demise, he was so passionate." -ROBERT EEN

"We hit it off because Arthur and I both had a shared interest in both pop music and new music. Certainly that's very common now, but at the time it was really very rare. Things were very siloed—you were in either one scene or the other. We'd be listening to music—stuff that other people weren't really taking seriously like instrumental pop music, what at the time they would call semi-classical. There was a lot of condescension towards what was happening in pop and this was an interest that we both shared." -PETER GORDON

"Julius really was on a level all his own in terms of his performance energy. His capability vocally and compositionally, was just huge. He was really interested in performing, and so I think the downtown venues really worked because he was interested in doing these smaller, more experimental concerts, and that really served him." -ROBERT EEN

"Julius had a big impact because he was such a meticulous performer, and also such a meticulous composer. I saw Julius as being quality control for the whole scene, bringing that sense of diligence and fine musicianship, very definite in terms of articulation and not being about compromise. Don't be afraid to explore where you were wanting to go—let it all hang out. His pieces were razor sharp." -PETER GORDON

"His voice was the driver. There was nothing like Julius's voice. The presence that was brought on by hearing his voice really amplified any physical appearance." -CAROL PARKINSON

"Julius was interested in the saints. He had a religious fervor, and an interest in the mysticism of Christianity." -ROBERT EEN

"It was kind of funny, this white guy from Iowa playing cello, telling me that he was into hip hop. He wanted to do dance. He wanted to do something different than what he had been doing." -MUSTAFA K. AHMED

"Julius auditioned for the Met. He did "the witches song" from Dido and Aeneas in his falsetto. And then I think he sang a bass aria. And they're like, 'What do we do with this guy?' He had already recorded *Eight Songs for a Mad King*, but they literally didn't know what to do with him. But I loved it, because I needed the bass and I needed the falsetto, so it was perfect." -MEREDITH MONK

"One day I walked into a record store and there was Arthur on the cover of New Music Express in his cap and his dance club outfit. And I was like, wow, what doesn't Arthur do? He's all over the place, and all of it was cool." -DAVID LINTON

"I noticed that I didn't see Arthur. Arthur used to show up to all the concerts {at The Kitchen} and the next time he came into The Kitchen and hung out in the back office I said, 'Arthur – where have you been?' and he said, 'Well, Rhys, there's this dance music scene that's going on, there's this place called Paradise Garage and it's like a temple of music.'" -RHYS CHATHAM

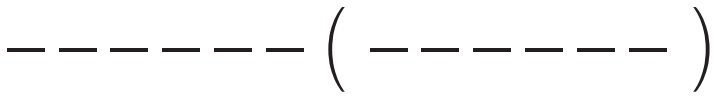
"Long after Arthur and I were working together he'd come back from some experience uptown and he said, "Well, if you make what you think is serious music and you put a beat to it good enough to move the body, it will absolutely be dismissed by the serious music establishment." -PETER ZUMMO

"Even before Francois K mixed "Go Bang! (#5)", they played it at The Loft and people were going nuts. Arthur was in Willie (Will Socolov, Sleeping Bag Records) and my ears saying, "oh, we should do this, we should change that." I went to Willie and said, "No, don't change it"—because people were going crazy. So Willie took it away from him again and handed it to Francois who mixed it. And you know, the rest was history." -NICKY SIANO

"Go Bang! (#5) was the peak record for Larry Levan—Larry adored that record. There were numerous nights where The Garage had these confetti machines that Larry would shoot off at the peak of the night and I remember more than once that "Go Bang! (#5)" was that record when the confetti went off. He would work that record. It was incredible." -WILL SOCOLOV

"The first time I met Julius was at Arthur's apartment. They were there in their own world, talking about different things that they wanted to do, records, recordings or whatever." -WILL SOCOLOV

"I wanted to see if we could put together Euripides' *Medea* with music. I was interested in doing the ancient text, and all of this was interesting to Arthur when I met him. I usually work very quickly to make a structure or a form for a work and Arthur was working with that. Arthur was quite slow. I showed an example of the music to Jean-Pierre Roseman, who was head of the Opera House in Lyon, and he was interested. So we were encouraged to go forward. He had the idea to perform it with an opera singer, Yvonne Kinney is her name and she was more of a Mozart singer. In any case, he wanted to cast her. I know the end result was they didn't feel that what Arthur was doing was right for Yvonne. I know it was rather complicated at the time, the situation with Arthur, but artistically, musically, I had absolutely no problem." -ROBERT WILSON



"Julius's manner of conducting was a riveting performance that was very clear, but, above all, Julius was a performer. It was amazing to watch him conduct." -RHYS CHATHAM

"For Julius it was a lot more like being a traffic cop in terms of—when things come in, bringing things up and down. How did the players respond to that? It was really, I think, the difference between chamber music and orchestral music." -PETER GORDON

"It was a lesson to all of us in terms of performing. When Julius was performing he was so concentrated, there were no distractions. He was an amazing performer." -ROBERT EEN

"We didn't always know what Arthur was doing. Once we got on stage there might be a set list. We'd go into one of those small downtown joints and we'd have a list of 10 songs, but not really know when he'd gone on to the next one. That was part of the charm of it. He was often creating these composed on-stage events." -PETER ZUMMO

"Arthur would call me up and say, "Mustafa, come down! I want you to play something." And I would come to the house and he would have some drumbeats set up on the table and there was very little of anything else. No lyrics, no song name, no concept. And basically he said to me, "Mustafa, I want you to just do your thing." And that's what I would do. I never knew what he was going to do or where those songs came from until maybe years later." -MUSTAFA K. AHMED

"He was always recording, especially on the full moon. He was always trying to find the right mix, the right drum sound, listening to the rough mixtapes and making those choices." -PETER GORDON

"Meredith Monk was looking for a singer in her new piece and she asked about Julius and how to get in touch with him and I said, 'I think I can probably get in touch with Julius.' I put up signs in the East Village and posted them on the lampposts saying, 'Julius, call Rhys.' And sure enough, two days later I got a phone call." -RHYS CHATHAM

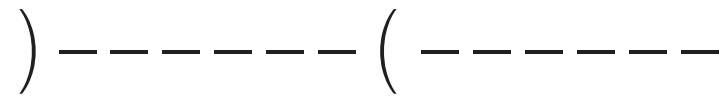
"I loved singing with him. He was very present. Very, very, very supportive. In terms of music, he was very pure, a pure intention of making something that was really powerful or lyrical." -MEREDITH MONK

"We were in Verona on tour with Meredith Monk and we had a night off so we went to go see the 12 cellists of the Berlin Philharmonic play a concert in a beautiful outdoor cloister. It was fantastic and we both really enjoyed it. Julius then said, 'I'm going to write a piece for cello orchestra,' and that became his Saint Joan piece {*The Holy Presence of Joan d'Arc*, 1981}." -ROBERT EEN

"We wanted to be really anti-super cool—we wanted to be who we were. I was in a sleeping bag in my apartment and the Otis Redding song "Papa's Got a Brand New Bag" came on and we both had the radio on at the same time, listening to this song. And I said to Arthur, 'Well, Papa's got a brand new bag, but I'm in a sleeping bag,' and he just went crazy. He goes, 'That's it! We're going to call it Sleeping Bag Records.' Of course at first I was like, 'No, dude, that's too far.' And then I thought about it for a while and I said, 'You know what? It's great!'" -WILL SOCOLOV

"Well, it was an assignment for The Face magazine—a British style music street magazine. When the magazine came out it ran full page. I went 'round to meet Arthur on St. Mark's Place, saying to him, "We made full page, it's so exciting!" And I think, honestly, he was absolutely horrified because he was so shy." -JANETTE BECKMAN

"At his memorial service I wrote a piece that was based upon his initials – CAR. Charles Arthur Russell, the guy who met us one place and took us somewhere else." -MUSTAFA K. AHMED



"I saw Julius when he was living in a kind of a tent settlement in Tompkins Square Park. Somehow we started talking about music, and he remembered Arthur. I mentioned that Arthur's music was becoming more popular, and he just said, "Oh, yes, he's a very talented young man." -BILL RUYLE

"Arthur told me this early on in our relationship, which was profound. He said that music has a healing force. You can play music and you can take someone out of their world and bring them to another place. It was such an important thought, and one that has never left me." -WILL SOCOLOV

WORLD OF ECHO: Julius Eastman and Arthur Russell
March 15–May 4, 2025

> *What I am trying to achieve is to be what I am to the fullest—Black to the fullest, a musician to the fullest, and a homosexual to the fullest.*
>
> —Julius Eastman

World of Echo: Julius Eastman and Arthur Russell reconsiders the legacies of maverick artists Julius Eastman and Arthur Russell via their collaborations, independent musical careers, and the continued impact of their work today.

Meeting in New York City in 1975, Russell and Eastman worked together as curators, conductors, musicians, singers, advocates, and friends across each other's projects. These collaborations are reflected in the experimental composition "Instrumentals," the opera *Medea*, the performance and record *24 to 24 Music*, and the celebrated disco single "Go Bang! #5" Both were classically trained: Eastman as a singer and pianist, Russell as a cellist. The two artists traversed spaces and genres, performing with orchestras including Los Angeles Philharmonic, at alternative art spaces like The Kitchen and national interdisciplinary museums like the Walker Art Center, and in dance clubs like Paradise Garage and The Loft. Both queer men fiercely dedicated to their artistic practice, Eastman and Russell utilized language—both in titles and lyrics—to suggest liberatory possibilities, from Eastman's driving repetition, to Russell's layered tenderness.

Conceived for REDCAT and the result of both scholarly research and oral histories, this exhibition weaves together rarely seen archival material from Eastman and Russell's lives, brought together with works by contemporary artists that respond to their legacies through a committed, embodied study of their approaches. Instigating this approach is the installation *The Holy Presence of Joan d'Arc,* in which Wild Up cellist Seth Parker Woods presents his recording of all ten cello parts of Eastman's 1981 masterwork. Acknowledging that Eastman and Russell's acclaim has only increased following their all-too-early deaths, this show grapples with the tension of loss and continued resonance.

The contemporary artists included in the exhibition who contend with the legacy of Julius Eastman and Arthur Russell include: Devendra Banhart, Julia Holter, Roberto Carlos Lange, Justen Leroy, Kyle Marshall, Missy Mazzoli, Moor Mother, Dave Muller, Seth Parker Woods, Ethan Philbrick, Adee Roberson, Christopher Rountree, claire rousay, Kristi Sword, Adam Tendler, Davóne Tines, Jeremy Toussaint-Baptiste & LaMont Hamilton, Wild Up, Saul Williams, Matt Wolf, richard valitutto, and Andrew Yee.

Building on Wild Up's Julius Eastman Anthology project, REDCAT's commitment to experimental interdisciplinary practice, and LA Phil Insight's contextual explorations of music and culture—this landmark collaboration is presented as part of the broader *To the Fullest* festival celebrating the work of Julius Eastman and Arthur Russell.

Curated by Katy Dammers, Deputy Director and Chief Curator, Performing Arts REDCAT with:

Elizabeth Cline, Executive Director, Wild Up
Talia Heiman, Assistant Curator, REDCAT
Mark McNeill, Creative Producer, LA Phil
Christopher Rountree, Artistic Director, Wild Up
Julia Ward, Senior Director, Programming, LA Phil

Exhibition Design: ELLA
Sound Design: Jake Viator

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-JULIUS EASTMAN ARTHUR-RUSSELL