



# RWANDAN RECORDS

## WALKABLE MUSICAL THEATRE

Rwandan Records" premiered on 21st March 2019 as part of the "Find the File" festival (HKW). This work of walkable musical theatre by Jens Dietrich and Milena Kipfmüller featuring artists from Rwanda and Germany combines pre-colonial accounts with stories from the present. It is a cross between live concert, radio play and installation that invites audience members to immerse themselves in the stories shared by Rwanda and Germany. The Rwandan hip-hop artist Eric 1key and the Berlin-based composer Klaus Janek have created a soundscape of language, traditional sounds, electronic music, beats and field recordings.

### Online

» [hkw.de](http://hkw.de)

### TRAILER

» <https://vimeo.com/329607044>

### LONG DOC

» <https://photos.app.goo.gl/ShFkcGUGbsJbXR5>

### PHOTOS

» <https://photos.app.goo.gl/ShFkcGUGbsJbXR5>



Upon hearing the word Rwanda, most people probably think of the genocide that began 25 years ago in April. There has been massive economic development since then and the country now presents itself as an "African Tiger". But Rwanda's younger generation, like Germany's, has to grapple with a difficult legacy. Crossing magnificent visions of the future with yearnings for dispersed traditions, Dietrich and Kipfmüller, the Rwandan spoken word artist Eric Ikey and the Berlin-based composer Klaus Janek have developed "Rwandan Records" - a record label, sound studio, bar and archive of personal recollections. The project presents a new and unusual perspective on identity in a global context. In Rwanda and Germany, there is a similar interest in pop culture and the keywords used in public debate - identity, migration, community, integration, home, tradition and prosperity - are the same. But in Rwanda, they are associated with completely different visions and thus gain new, expanded meanings.

After recording many conversations with many people in Rwanda, Dietrich and Kipfmüller have created a heterogeneous ensemble of voices. This work of walkable musical theatre is at once sound installation and radio play, concert and staged space, whose acoustic architecture is shaped by the audience. The composition moves between different times and worlds, between traditional songs, pop music and electronic sounds. The voices of the ensemble and its stories become a moving live symphony. The audience's movements are tracked so that at the end visitors can download and take home with them a personal album of the stories that they heard.

Only the files that are listened to will be saved. The others will vanish. Individual decisions thus enable collective knowledge to be preserved or actively forgotten. A narrative that transcends genre and culture will emerge on the basis of a combination of different times, visions of the past and the future, as well as breaks in people's biographies.

Jens Dietrich works in Rwanda regularly. He was last there for the theatre production "Planet Kigali" that premiered in winter 2018 in Kigali and at Hamburg's Kampnagel theatre. Milena Kipfmüller won the Blind War Veterans' Radio Drama Prize for her radio version of the play "Hate Radio" and she and Klaus Janek won the 2018 Music Theatre NOW Award for their production "Musraropera". In 2007, Klaus Janek composed the techno opera "Afterhours" for one actor, 3 sopranos, 1 alto, 1 bass, 1 rock singer, a choir and a sequencer, which premiered at Berlin's Berghain club. Janek's music explores the boundaries between "serious" and "popular" music, performance and installation, noise and music, traditional and contemporary and analogue and digital.

## **Premiere**

21 March 2019, as part of the „Find the File“ festival (HKW), 5-8 PM

## **Additional Performances**

22 – 24 March 2019, Haus der Kulturen der Welt, 5-8 PM

**ARTISTIC DIRECTION & TEXT:** Milena Kipfmüller, Jens Dietrich **WITH:** Klaus Janek und Eric 1key **SPECIALIST COUNSELLING** Assumpta Mugiraneza **STAGE DESIGN** Jelka Plate **MUSIC & COMPOSITION** Klaus Janek **ASSISTANCE** Amina Nouns **LIGHT AND TECHNICAL DIRECTION** Chris Umney **PROGRAMMING** Marco Peise **PR** Yven Augustin **PRODUCTION MANAGEMENT** Annett Hardegen

**VOICES** Wesley Ruzibiza, Assumpta Mugiraneza, Eric 1key, Chris Schwagga, Hervé Kimenyi, Jean Marie Vianney Mushabizi, Deo Munyakazi, Yannick Kamenzi, Odette Mukakimenyi, Paul Ntakirutimana, Evariste Karinganire, Jean Marie Vianney Mushabizi.

**A PRODUCTION BY** Dietrich/Kipfmüller **IN CO-OPERATION WITH** *Haus der Kulturen der Welt* and the *Iriba Centre for Multimedia Heritage* Kigali **SPONSORED BY** Hauptstadtkulturfonds and the Goethe-Institut Kigali

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## **Interview with Milena Kipfmüller and Jens Dietrich, which will be published in the March/April edition of field notes:**

**field notes:** You recently went on a field trip to Rwanda where you recorded music and interviews. What does the country sound like?

**Milena:** Something like a cross between cautious and polite. On the big squares, there are no loud conversations, no shouting, but instead you hear steady, quiet individual conversations. Even construction noise seems to be dampened. From the hills, you can hear motorbikes rattling up steep roads, and from time to time, even though there aren't many mosques, you can hear the call to prayer. Because of the quiet atmosphere, you're tempted to listen more keenly, you become curious.

**field notes:** What can we expect from "Rwandan Records"?

**Milena:** You'll be immersed in a universe of captivating sounds and stories. There will be several stations at which you can meet unusual people. The audience members themselves decide whom they want to accompany, which subjects to follow up on. The protagonists are either exploring the past or trying to escape it. As their different lives come together, you'll want to get an idea of the bigger picture which will lead you to the next station.

**field notes:** The project is based on your work with people in Rwanda. How did you integrate your encounters there into your work at HKW?

**Jens:** I've already worked on many projects with artists from Rwanda. So we knew many of the people whose voices and music are now part of the project. Thus, the audience members will experience this relationship of trust as they listen. Additionally, we're trying to make sure that the project will also be staged in Kigali. Eric 1key, a Rwandan artist and MC, will be in Berlin and he and the German composer Klaus Janek will provide live music.

**field notes:** At the heart of the project lies the responsibility of the individual for the collective writing and processing of history. How does this manifest itself in the work?

**Jens:** The audience members can orient themselves in the space using a map and then choose which stations to take in. They can follow a particular story and completely ignore another one. This enables them to understand that their own choices decide how much of the larger picture they will take home with them. And that what they take back with them is perhaps that which has most to do with them.

**field notes:** The project has involved artists from Rwanda, Belgium and Germany. What impact did the former colonial powers Germany and Belgium have on Rwanda's present?

**Jens:** The colonisation of Rwanda took place relatively late and at first at least it was somewhat restrained, but nonetheless at the beginning of the 20th century Germany had an influence on domestic policy because it supported the king against internal opponents. What was decisive was the Christianisation of Rwanda and the racist ideology that Europeans brought with them. The idea that there are two ethnic groups and that one is superior to the other was one of the key factors in the genocide. One of our interview partners told us that there is now a post and a pre-genocide generation, and that the latter was on the search for its identity, which encompasses the pre-colonial era.

**field notes:** Audience members can set off the whole system. What does this mean exactly?

**Milena:** Each audience member can use his/her phone to set the system of stories in motion. They can switch on tracks that can be listened to and combined with live music. At the same time, this creates a personal track-list which they can take home with them as their own personal version of the story.

**field notes:** The project is part of the discursive music "Find the File" festival, which is about exploring musical heritage in the digital era. How would you describe your contribution to this question?

**Jens:** Rwanda has experienced many radical upheavals. The latest is the digital revolution that is having even more of an impact there than in Europe. The post-genocide generation is very much geared towards the US and to Rwanda's East African neighbours and music from Nigeria and Congo. A 23-year-old told us that he was worried that the new generation was forgetting its own past, and yet was desperately seeking its identity at the same time. "Rwandan Records" gives an insight into this search. Digitalisation allows access to an archive of Rwandan culture, of old recordings, of the stories of the elders. And it's always up to the individual to put together their own picture from different pieces of the puzzle.

**field notes:** Why did you choose Germany and Rwanda, two countries with particularly difficult pasts?

**Jens:** In both Germany and Russia, there is a feeling that the past is somehow toxic, that identity is a problematic concept. In both countries, there has been a big need to open up and to take a positive view of globalisation. I was fascinated by the emotions of our interview partners, which they initially hid between a seemingly calm composure, I saw parallels with Germany, this is why the stories and music have a pull that cannot be escaped.



### **Biographies of those involved**

**Milena Kipfmüller** was born in Brazil, Porto Alegre and grew up in Göttingen and São Paulo. She studied oboe and piano (São Paulo/USP), musicology and history of arts (Uni Heidelberg) and finished her diploma in applied theatre studies in Gießen and Paris in 2009, where she studied with Heiner Goebbels, Xavier Le Roy, Mathilde Monnier, Antonio Araújo and where

she focused on sound, radioplays and dramaturgical work. Currently she lives in Berlin and works internationally as a freelance director, soundartist, dramaturge and producer working as well with GobSquad, matthaei&konsorten, Sophiensaele and the International Institute of Political Murder/Milo Rau. Her works blend different medias together and approach often political and current questions. She was scholarship holder on the program for young European curators and producers (Festival in Transition), founded and curated a residency space for artistic experiments that run between 2012-14. Her radioplay "Hate Radio" about the Rwandan genocide won the Hörspielpreis der Kriegsblinden 2014. Since 2014 she is working with Klaus Janek in the duo "sounding situations" where sound, composition and words as musical material are substantial part of staging a performative situations. Current works deal with the topics of radio opera in public space and experimental music theater. Since 2016 collaboration with the author Maren Kames, which will be broadcast in the summer of 2019 at SWR as a radio play. The last musical theater production "Musraropera", which premiered at the Musrara Mix Festival in Jerusalem, was named one of the top 10 international productions in 2018 by the Music Theater NOW competition.

**Jens Dietrich** studied Applied Theatre Studies in Giessen under the director and composer Heiner Goebbels. During and after his studies, he worked at Richard Foreman's Ontological Theater in New York as well as at the Bühnen der Stadt Köln and the Theater Freiburg. Since 2004 he works as a freelance dramaturge for various international theatre productions. 2009 he joined the International Institute of Political Murder (founded by Milo Rau) and worked as a dramaturge and producer of the productions "The Last Hour of Elena and Nicolae Ceausescu" and "Hate Radio" that toured world-wide. In 2013 he was curating the "Moscow Trials", a re-staging of three court trials against Russian artists in the Sakharov Centre in Moscow. In 2014 / 2015 he worked together with Yolanda Gutiérrez on „Political Bodies“, a piece about the protest movement Y'en a marre in Senegal. In 2017 he co-directed the audio play „Kunst im Verhör“ with and about the Russian artist Petr Pavlensky and curated the talk series "Novy Mir" with Konstantin Bogomolov at the Territory Festival in Moscow. In 2018, together with Dorcy Rugamba and Yolanda Gutiérrez, he realized the project "Planet Kigali".

Originally from Bolzano in Italy, the composer and double bass player **Klaus Janek** has lived in Berlin since the mid-1990s. He is known for his particular musical approach, which combines the act of composing with performative action. He merges acoustic double bass with electro to create his own musical language. Janek's music explores the boundaries between "serious" and "popular" music, performance and installation, noise and music, traditional and contemporary and analogue and digital. In 2007, Janek composed the first techno opera "Afterhours" which premiered at Berlin's Berghain. In his work, he keenly analyses the interface between aesthetics and discourse. He has performed at concerts and festivals in the EU, the US, Canada, Japan, Switzerland, the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS),

China, Malaysia and Brazil. He has composed for and performed in dance, theatre and radio productions, and carried out research into music as an expression of the phenomenon of time. In his desire to expand musical material, the reciprocity of drones and melodic fragmentation are a key element. Based on the characteristics and musical function fulfilled by the double bass as an instrument, Janek's music supports the access of co-artists and listeners to a fine-tuned, sensitive and complex world of perception.

Janek, whose works will be released on a 5-part LP called "almenrauschen" in 2019, co-founded the [sndng sttns] ensemble with Milena Kipfmüller. He also co-founded grapesshade with Ingo Reulecke and Biliana Voutchkova and macchina som allstars with Lukas Matthaei and Milena Kipfmüller. He is a member of the Ensemble Extrakte (artistic director Sandeep Bhagwati), Meg Stuart/Damaged Goods and matthaei&konsorten. Janek's compositions have been performed on stages all over the world, including at the Louvre in Paris, Berlin's Berghain, at the transmediale festival in Berlin, at Transart Bolzano, at White Nights Montreal, in Tel Aviv, Casino, at ImPulsTanz in Vienna and the Vision Festival NYC. Janek has been a guest lecturer at universities all over the world. Thanks to residencies, he has spent time in Brazil (Vila Sul), Belgium (Q-02), Israel (Musrara Art School) and NYC. He received a grant from the Robert Bosch Foundation and funds from the departments of culture in Berlin and Bolzano. He has worked with Bill Dixon, Valerio Tricoli, Johannes Bauer, Cristian Vogel, Borah Bergmann, Yan Jun, Clayton Thomas, Brendan Dougherty, Axel Dörner, Michael Vorfeld, Robin Hayward, Peter Kowald, Chris Douglas, Butch Morris, Hilary Jeffery, Meg Stuart, Frank Willens, Hauke Heumann, Clara Cornil, Thierry Niang/Patrice Chereau, Nils „Storm“ Robitzky and many more.

**Eric 1key** is an author, musician, singer and blogger and one of Rwanda's best-known artists. He publishes his works in English, French and Kinyarwanda. In 2014 he produced his debut album "Entre 2" in Kampala / Uganda. 1key used his own biography between Congo and Rwanda to portray today's cosmopolitan Kigali.

**Jelka Plate** is visual artist and stage/costume designer from Berlin. She studied free art and stage design at the Hochschule für bildende Künste in Hamburg. She was a board member of the association „Die Mission - Künstlerische Massnahmen gegen die Kälte“, initiated by Christoph Schlingensief. Since then she has been interested in projects at the interface of art and politics. She develops her installations and performances on the basis of interviews and staged situations. She has been invited by Museum Ludwig Cologne, Kunsthaus Dresden, Deveron Arts Scot-land and Goethe Institut Ouagadougou. She makes stage and costume pictures for productions at Deutsches Theater Berlin, Sophiensaele Berlin, HAU Berlin, Theaterdiscounter Berlin, Kampnagel Hamburg, Luzerner Theater and has worked with directors such as Monika Gintersdorfer, Ulf Otto, Vanessa Stern, Tobias Rausch, Clement Layes, Bernadette LaHengst and has been part of the artistic team of Hajusom - transnational arts for many years.