

BANG ON A CAN

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Julia Wolfe's Pulitzer Prize-Winning Work *Anthracite Fields* Performed by the Bang on a Can All-Stars & Verdigris Ensemble

**SOLUNA International Music & Arts Festival
presented by the Dallas Symphony Orchestra**

Monday, April 15, 2019 at 7:30pm



Photo by Chris Lee of Julia Wolfe's *Anthracite Fields*

**Moody Performance Hall | 2520 Flora Street | Dallas, TX
Tickets: www.mydso.com or 214.TIX.4DSO**

More about Anthracite Fields: www.bangonacan.org/staged_productions/anthracite_fields

Dallas, TX — On **Monday, April 15, 2019 at 7:30pm**, New York's electric chamber ensemble, the **Bang on a Can All-Stars**, joins forces with the **Verdigris Ensemble** to perform Bang on a Can co-founder and Dallas Symphony Orchestra (DSO) composer-in-residence **Julia Wolfe's Pulitzer Prize-winning work *Anthracite Fields*** for the All-Stars and chorus as part of the **DSO's Nancy A. Nasher and David J. Haemisegger Family SOLUNA International Music & Arts Festival** at Moody Performance Hall (2520 Flora Street). The performance will be followed by a moderated discussion about the work, in the hall.

Julia Wolfe's haunting, poignant and relentlessly physical *Anthracite Fields* for the Bang on a Can All-Stars and chorus is an examination of the coal-mining industry so musically and socially provocative that it netted the 2015 Pulitzer Prize for Music. In *Anthracite Fields*, Wolfe draws on oral histories, interviews, speeches, geographic descriptions, local rhymes, and coal advertisements to create a work that gives an intimate look at a particular slice of American life. With visually stunning projections by scenographer Jeff Sugg and music that is at times elegiac, hard-driving, and tender, *Anthracite Fields* is a deeply moving oratorio which honors the people who persevered and endured in the Pennsylvania Anthracite coal region during a time when the industry fueled the nation. Mark Swed of *The Los Angeles Times* remarks, "[*Anthracite Fields*] captures not only the sadness of hard lives lost...but also of the sweetness and passion of a way of daily life now also lost. The music compels without overstatement. This is a major, profound work."

Named after the technical term for the purest form of coal, anthracite, *Anthracite Fields* was written after Wolfe did extensive research about the coal mining industry in an area very near where she grew up in Pennsylvania. She writes,

“In some ways the piece is a return to my small town Pennsylvania roots. In looking north – the left turn onto route 309, the road-rarely-taken – I delved into a local history.” She continues, “My aim with *Anthracite Fields* is to honor the people who persevered and endured in the Pennsylvania Anthracite coal region during a time when the industry fueled the nation, and to reveal a bit about who we are as American workers.”

Cited by the Pulitzer committee as, “a powerful oratorio for chorus and sextet evoking Pennsylvania coal-mining life around the turn of the 20th Century,” the work premiered at the Mendelssohn Club of Philadelphia in April 2014 followed by a performance at the NY PHIL BIENNIAL in May 2014. *The New York Times* wrote, “In Ms. Wolfe’s polished and stylistically assured cantata, the overall coherence of the musical material helped her expressions of outrage to burn cleanly and brightly.”

About Julia Wolfe: Julia Wolfe’s music is distinguished by an intense physicality and a relentless power that pushes performers to extremes and demands attention from the audience. She draws inspiration from folk, classical, and rock genres, bringing a modern sensibility to each while simultaneously tearing down the walls between them.

In addition to *Anthracite Fields*, recent projects include her evening-length *Steel Hammer* for the Bang on a Can All-Stars and singers which toured in an expanded theatrical form with director Anne Bogart and her SITI Company. In January 2019, the New York Philharmonic premiered *Fire in my mouth*, Wolfe's large-scale work for orchestra and women's chorus, continuing her interest in American labor history with the subject of women in New York's garment industry at the turn of the century. Upcoming projects include new works for SO Percussion, the Los Angeles Philharmonic, and the New World Symphony.

She has written a major body of work for strings, from quartets to full orchestra. Her quartets, as described by *The New Yorker*, "combine the violent forward drive of rock music with an aura of minimalist serenity [using] the four instruments as a big guitar, whipping psychedelic states of mind into frenzied and ecstatic climaxes." Wolfe's *Cruel Sister* for string orchestra, inspired by a traditional English ballad, was commissioned by the Munich Chamber Orchestra and received its U.S. premiere at the Spoleto Festival. *Fuel* for string orchestra is a collaboration with filmmaker Bill Morrison, and *Spinning* is a multi-media work written for cellist Maya Beiser with visuals by Laurie Olinder. She has collaborated with theater artist Anna Deveare Smith, choreographer Susan Marshall, visual designer Jeff Sugg, and director François Girard, among others. Her music has been heard at venues throughout the world, including the Brooklyn Academy of Music, Lincoln Center, Carnegie Hall, the Sydney Olympic Arts Festival, Muziekgebouw (Netherlands), Barbican Centre (UK), Settembre Musica (Italy), Theatre de la Ville (France), among others. Her music has been recorded on Cantaloupe Music, Teldec, Universal, Sony Classical, and Argo/Decca.

Wolfe was a 2016 MacArthur Fellow and was a recipient of the 2015 Herb Alpert Award in Music. She is co-founder/co-artistic director of New York’s legendary music collective Bang on a Can, and she is Artistic Director of NYU Steinhardt Music Composition. Her music is published by Red Poppy, Ltd. (ASCAP) and is distributed worldwide by G. Schirmer, Inc.

About the Bang on a Can All-Stars: Known worldwide as some of the best contemporary musicians, the Bang on a Can All-Stars formed in 1992 and are recognized for their ultra-dynamic live performances and recordings of today’s most innovative music. Freely crossing the boundaries between classical, jazz, rock, world and experimental music, this six-member amplified ensemble has consistently forged a distinct category-defying identity. With a massive repertoire of works written specifically for the group’s distinctive instrumentation and style of performance, the All-Stars have become a genre in their own right.

Performing throughout the U.S. and internationally, the All-Stars have shattered the definition of what concert music is today. The group’s celebrated projects include their landmark recording of Brian Eno’s ambient classic *Music for Airports* and Terry Riley’s *In C*, as well as live performances with Philip Glass, Meredith Monk, Don Byron, Iva Bittova, Thurston Moore, and others. The All-Stars have worked in unprecedented close collaboration with some of the most important and inspiring musicians of our time, including Steve Reich, Ornette Coleman, Burmese circle drum master Kyaw Kyaw Naing, Tan Dun, DJ Spooky, and many more. The All-Stars were awarded *Musical America*’s Ensemble of the Year and have been heralded as “the country’s most important vehicle for contemporary music” by the *San Francisco Chronicle*.

Recent project highlights include *Road Trip*, an immersive and visually stunning concert collaboratively-composed by Michael Gordon, David Lang, and Julia Wolfe to commemorate the 30+ year journey of Bang on a Can; the premiere performances and recording of Julia Wolfe's Pulitzer Prize winning *Anthracite Fields*; *Field Recordings*, a major multi-media project featuring over 30 commissioned works by Tyondai Braxton, Mira Calix, Anna Clyne, Bryce Dessner, Michael Gordon, Jóhann Jóhannsson, David Lang, Christian Marclay, Steve Reich, Caroline Shaw, Julia Wolfe; the world premiere and album release of *Cloud River Mountain*, a collaboration featuring Chinese superstar singer Gong Linna; and more. The All-Stars record on Cantaloupe Music and have released past recordings on Sony, Universal, and Nonesuch.

About Verdigris Ensemble: Founded in 2017, Verdigris Ensemble has quickly established itself as “one of the most innovative chamber choirs...a major artistic force” (Theaterjones) and called “a group to watch” offering “accomplished performances” (Dallas Morning News). Verdigris gathers Dallas's best vocal talent to engage a modern audience with an ancient art form. In collaboration with creatives from Dallas and beyond, Verdigris weaves intricate choral programs into cross-disciplinary experiences.

About Bang on a Can: Bang on a Can is dedicated to making music new. Since its first Marathon concert in 1987, Bang on a Can has been creating an international community dedicated to innovative music, wherever it is found. With adventurous programs, it commissions new composers, performs, presents, and records new work, develops new audiences, and educates the musicians of the future. Bang on a Can is building a world in which powerful new musical ideas flow freely across all genres and borders. Bang on a Can plays “a central role in fostering a new kind of audience that doesn't concern itself with boundaries. If music is made with originality and integrity, these listeners will come.” (*The New York Times*)

Bang on a Can has grown from a one-day New York-based Marathon concert (on Mother's Day in 1987 in a SoHo art gallery) to a multi-faceted performing arts organization with a broad range of year-round international activities. “When we started Bang on a Can, we never imagined that our 12-hour marathon festival of mostly unknown music would morph into a giant international organization dedicated to the support of experimental music, wherever we would find it,” write Bang on a Can Co-Founders Michael Gordon, David Lang and Julia Wolfe. “But it has, and we are so gratified to be still hard at work, all these years later. The reason is really clear to us – we started this organization because we believed that making new music is a utopian act – that people needed to hear this music and they needed to hear it presented in the most persuasive way, with the best players, with the best programs, for the best listeners, in the best context. Our commitment to changing the environment for this music has kept us busy and growing, and we are not done yet.”

Current projects include the new **LOUD Weekend** music festival at MASS MoCA and in New York City; **The People's Commissioning Fund**, a membership program to commission emerging composers; the **Bang on a Can All-Stars**, who tour to major festivals and concert venues around the world every year; recording projects; the **Bang on a Can Summer Music Festival at MASS MoCA** - a professional development program for young composers and performers led by today's pioneers of experimental music; **Asphalt Orchestra**, Bang on a Can's extreme street band that offers mobile performances re-contextualizing unusual music; **Found Sound Nation**, a new technology-based musical outreach program now partnering with the State Department of the United States of America to create **OneBeat**, a revolutionary, post-political residency program that uses music to bridge the gulf between young American musicians and young musicians from developing countries; cross-disciplinary collaborations and projects with DJs, visual artists, choreographers, filmmakers and more. Each new program has evolved to answer specific challenges faced by today's musicians, composers and audiences, in order to make innovative music widely accessible and wildly received. Bang on a Can's inventive and aggressive approach to programming and presentation has created a large and vibrant international audience made up of people of all ages who are rediscovering the value of contemporary music.

About the Dallas Symphony Orchestra: The Dallas Symphony Orchestra, under the direction of Music Director Designate Fabio Luisi, presents the finest in orchestral music at the Morton H. Meyerson Symphony Center, regarded as one of the world's premier concert halls. As the largest performing arts organization in the Southwest, the DSO is committed to inspiring the broadest possible audience with distinctive classical programs, inventive pops concerts and innovative multi-media presentations. In fulfilling its commitment to the community, the orchestra reaches more than 211,000 adults and children through performances, educational programs and community outreach initiatives. The

DSO's involvement with the City of Dallas and the surrounding region includes award-winning multi-faceted educational programs, community projects, popular parks concerts and youth programming. The DSO has a tradition dating back to 1900, and it is a cornerstone of the unique, 68-acre Arts District in downtown Dallas that is home to multiple performing arts venues, museums and parks, the largest district of its kind in the nation. The DSO is supported, in part, by funds from the Office of Cultural Affairs, City of Dallas.

About SOLUNA: The Nancy A. Nasher and David J. Haemisegger Family SOLUNA International Music & Arts Festival, presented by the Dallas Symphony Orchestra, showcases internationally-acclaimed guest soloists, visual artists and performing artists alongside leading Dallas-based companies and ensembles. An annual, multi-week interdisciplinary event, SOLUNA stages performances and exhibitions at venues, prominent galleries and performance spaces throughout Dallas. SOLUNA aims to steward authentic collaborations within the Dallas Arts District and serve as a magnet for artists and performers around the world. By incorporating strong educational and science components, audiences are invited to experience music and art and interact with their Dallas community in new and exciting ways.

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