

Monheim Triennale

July 1st – 4th 2021 *The Prequel*

Monheim Triennale: Escalator Over The Hill

May 20th 2021

Due to the pandemic, the first edition of the Monheim Triennale has been postponed until June 2022. Instead, **'The Prequel'** will be held from **01 to 04 July 2021**.

'The Prequel' is neither meant as a substitute nor a compromise. 'The Prequel' tells the story of how it could have been one year before the originally planned festival start in 2020: 16 artists meeting in Monheim am Rhein. They get to know each other, they get to know the city, they develop projects together and last but not least: They make music together. 'The Prequel' will be smaller than the Triennale originally planned for this year, it will be more intimate and with a unique artistic profile. 'The Prequel' will be a laboratory, a workshop, a think tank where the future is imagined.

However, 'The Prequel' will also provide insights into the past. One of the works in the spotlight this year marks the **50th anniversary** of its creation. It is **'Escalator Over The Hill' (EOTH)**, the era-defining **masterpiece by Carla Bley**.



Carla Bley in 'Escalator Over The Hill'

Recorded between 1968 and 1971, EOTH 2021 celebrates the 50th year of its completion. For artistic director Reiner Michalke the work is not only a milestone in his own musical socialisation, but also an important step towards the emergence of the core idea of the Monheim Triennale:

"Escalator has accompanied me since my early youth and in a way, it anticipated the idea for the Monheim Triennale. Carla Bley's consistent handling of musical material, her fearless suspension of all genre boundaries between classical, jazz and rock, and her sure instinct for artistic personalities have given rise to a musical work that I believe, and hope will go down in eternity."

"The work as a whole seems simultaneously to assimilate and annihilate rock gestures, jazz harmonies, and classical structures. By nature of its absolute autonomy, 'Escalator over the Hill' also seems to thumb its nose at all musical authorities and institutions, particularly the recording industry. In this sense it is perhaps the quintessential anti-establishment statement of its time." (Beal, Amy C. 2011. Carla Bley (American Composers). University of Illinois Press, 2011.)

What do the invited 'The Prequel' artists think of the idea of paying tribute to 'Escalator Over the Hill' this year? The amazing thing: Whereas they all know Carla Bley, who celebrated her 85th birthday last week, only a few knew 'Escalator'. Those who have subsequently heard the piece are enthusiastic and toying with the idea of doing something with it.

It is not yet possible to say whether and, if so, how this enthusiasm will be expressed in the context of 'The Prequel', but the Monheim Triennale bows to Carla Bley, her oeuvre and 'Escalator Over The Hill'.

Material on 'Escalator Over The Hill' is available on the festival's website. In particular, an 84-minute documentary of the 1970/71 recording sessions by the late filmmaker Steve Gebhardt. This documentary was shown publicly once at the Locarno Film Festival 1999. As there are still negotiations with the copyright owners about the publication of the film, the Monheim Triennale asks for a short message if you are interested. The required password will then be sent.