

Berlin, April 2018 - Berlin-based composer and bass player, James Banner has been awarded the prestigious Elsa-Neumann Stipendium for his choral project *Voices of Berlin*, which aims to give a voice to the unheard voices within the Berlin community. Through the connective power of the human voice and spirit of improvisation, *Voices of Berlin* aims to tell the stories of Berlin's residents, new and old, raising an awareness of our common humanity, connecting people through stories and music, as well as preserving contemporary thoughts, life experiences and ideas for future generations in a unique historical and musical record. This distinctive snapshot of a vibrant and ever-changing city is a representation of timeless experiences that have a relevance not only today but for many years to come.

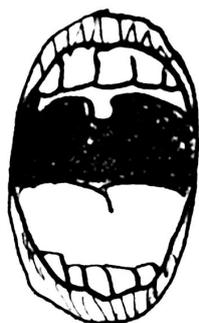
The project will start by conducting interviews with people in Berlin - focusing initially on social enterprises located between Hermannstraße and Karl Marx Straße - discovering the people behind these ventures and those who connect with them, gathering stories from both the present and Berlin's unique past which reflects this constantly diversifying city. The words will be recorded and will then be used to form the basis of music for choir and ensemble, creating an aural representation of these personal experiences.

The project is unique in its aims to produce a musical artwork which is relevant to the people of Berlin today, but which also provides a time capsule of the Voices of Berlin for generations to come.

The UK-born James Banner has lived in Berlin for the last three years, having originally moved here to study at the Jazz Institut Berlin, with renowned US musicians, professors Greg Cohen and John Hollenbeck. During his studies James produced a large-scale composition project inspired by the poetry of André Breton, and since his graduation he has become immersed in life in Berlin, as well as expanding his performance work across the city and around Germany. He has also been inspired by his outreach work with Yehudi Menuhin *Live Music Now* e.V. in Berlin and in the UK with organisations such as *Make The Paint Dance* and *Jazzlines*, which provide young people a platform from which to explore and express themselves through art and music.

"I have become fascinated by the unique stories and backgrounds of people in Berlin. This project offers me a opportunity to explore the diverse voices of my community, as well as create a musical work which reflects the lives and cultures of the people that live here." - James Banner

If you or someone you know would be interested in participating in *Voices of Berlin*, please contact us at info@voicesofberlin.de



Project supported by



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