

The **Kukuruz Quartet** is equally at home on theatre stages, concert halls, in clubs, bars and studios. It was founded in 2014 in a corn field – “Kukuruz” means corn in several languages, and the Swiss-German expression “Mais machen” (literally “to make corn”) means to stir up mischief. The four pianists were first seen and heard making their contribution to a production by musician and theatre director Ruedi Häusermann at the Zurich Schauspielhaus. The quartet was performing on four so-called “well-prepared one-hand pianos”, having spent long sessions exploring different preparations and constructions. From the outset, the group has been engaged with classical music, jazz and improvisation. In the same year it was founded, Kukuruz also started its involvement with Julius Eastman and his musical works. The pianists went on an extensive tour through Switzerland, Germany and Holland, where they performed in concert halls, clubs, bars and breweries and made Eastman’s pieces accessible to a wide audience.

In 2017, their performance at documenta 14 in the Megaro Mousikis concert hall in Athens – where they exchanged their rickety instruments for concert grand pianos – earned a standing ovation. They performed Eastman’s “Evil Nigger”, “Gay Guerrilla”, “Buddha” and “Fugue no. 7”. Back in Zurich in November 2017, the quartet presented their Eastman programme on their pianos at the Schlosserei Nenniger as part of the unerhört! Festival. The recording of these four Eastman piano pieces followed in November 2017 on four Steinway D pianos in the main hall of the historic Radiostudio Zürich. It is now released on [Intakt Records](#). In the summer of 2018, Kukuruz will take Julius Eastman’s work on a “guerrilla tour” through Switzerland, transporting its own pianos. The tour will take the quartet to several juvenile offender institutions, where they will play together with inmates. They will also perform in hospitals, thrift shops, clothes stores, galleries, bars and of office buildings. The Kukuruz Piano Quartet features 4 pianists on the unfamiliar combination of 4 upright or 4 grand pianos and sheds new light on the music of Julius Eastman.

The Kukuruz Piano Quartet is a close-knit group of divergent artistic personalities, emergent from training in disparate musical fields: Simone Keller is a versatile pianist in contemporary and classical music, Philip Bartels is an experimental theatre stage director, Duri Collenberg studied composition in Amsterdam und Lukas Rickli has broad experience in improvisation.

