

PRESS RELEASE

16 October 2025

15 and 16 November 2025, 7-8:30 Uhr, Hall 2, Tickets: 20/ reduced 10 Euro

Continuing the Musical Dialogue: lauten compagney BERLIN meets Wagogo Drums from Tanzania in Musical Belongings IV

When a spike lute from Tanzania enters into dialogue with a European bass lute from the 16th century, surprising soundscapes emerge. With WAGOGO DRUMS: TANZANIA, lauten compagney BERLIN – recently awarded the Opus Klassik as “Ensemble of the Year” – brings together musicians from Tanzania and Europe at the Humboldt Forum. The concert forms part of the acclaimed Musical Belongings series, which has been running since 2023 in cooperation with the Stiftung Humboldt Forum and the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin.

The Musical Belongings series by lauten compagney BERLIN provides a platform at the Humboldt Forum for international artists to explore new forms of musical dialogue – beyond conventional labels such as “world music” or “early music.” The concerts engage directly with the collections of the Ethnologisches Museum and the Museum für Asiatische Kunst, which include numerous instruments as well as the Phonogramm Archive with historical recordings from around the globe.

The new program WAGOGO DRUMS: TANZANIA focuses on musical traditions from both Tanzania and Europe. In a week-long workshop and two concerts, the polyphonic vocal and percussion culture of the Wagogo from Dodoma (Tanzania) encounters Renaissance dances from European countries that once acted as colonial powers in the region that is now Tanzania – Portugal, Great Britain, and Germany. The result reveals how seemingly distant musical traditions share common principles such as rhythmic repetition, dialogic structure, and complex polyphony.

Among the most renowned representatives of Wagogo music is the Zawose family, who have preserved and evolved the musical heritage of their community for generations. Hukwe Zawose (1940–2003) is regarded as the most important traditional musician of 20th-century Tanzania and the founder of an entire musical dynasty. His daughter Pendo and granddaughter Leah now perform internationally as The Zawose Queens, combining polyrhythmic overtone singing with the sounds of the ilimba and ngoma. His son Sinaubi Zawose continues the legacy in his own distinctive way – as a virtuoso on the zeze, a fourteen-string spike lute that he brings into the contemporary moment. He is joined by Lucas Ubi Zawose (ilimba, chilimba, chizeze) and Bahati Zawose (percussion).

In dialogue with lauten compagney BERLIN, a musical experiment unfolds – between past and present, tradition and innovation. It is a meeting of equals that makes connections audible and reimagines the European concept of “early music.”

As part of the Musical Belongings series at the Humboldt Forum, lauten compagney BERLIN will also present Punta meets Polly on November 14, 2025, at the Tage Alter Musik festival in Herne – a reinterpretation of The Beggar’s Opera infused with Caribbean rhythms, featuring a countertenor in the role of Pirate Jenny.

Contributors:

The Zawose Queens, Pendo Zawose – Overtone Singing, Ilimba (lammellophone),
Ngoma Drums

The Zawose Queens, Leah Zawose – Overtone Singing, Ilimba (lammellophone), Ngoma
Drums

Sinaubi Zawose – Zeze (gourd spike lute)

Lucas Ubi Zawose – Ilimba (lammellophone), Chilimba, Chizeze

Bahati Zawose – Percussion

Wolfgang Katschner – Musical Direction

Christian Filips – Music Dramaturgy

lautten compagney BERLIN is one of Germany's most renowned and innovative Baroque ensembles. Whether performing as a chamber group or opera orchestra, it consistently pushes boundaries under the artistic direction of Wolfgang Katschner – driven by infectious musical energy and bold concepts that seek out new sounds and interdisciplinary encounters.

In 2025, the ensemble was honored for the second time with the *Opus Klassik* award as "Ensemble of the Year." Their album *Timeless*, which combines Early Baroque music with works by Philip Glass, received the ECHO Klassik in 2010. The Rheingau Music Prize, awarded in 2012, also recognized the ensemble's pioneering concert programming.

MUSICAL BELONGINGS VI

lautten compagney BERLIN meets Wagogo Drums from Tanzania
15 and 16 November 2025, 7:00–8:30 PM, Hall 2 Tickets: €20 / reduced €10

Programme and Tickets: humboldtforum.org/en/lautttencompagney

Press Images: humboldtforum.org/en/press

The project TALKING DRUMS 2025 is funded by the 'Exzellente Orchesterlandschaft Deutschland' program of the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media (BKM).

One building, four partners: This diversity is founded on the collaboration of our partner institutions. The Humboldt Forum is a collaboration between the Stiftung Humboldt Forum im Berliner Schloss; the Stiftung Preussischer Kulturbesitz for collections from the Ethnologisches Museum and the Museum für Asiatische Kunst of the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin; the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin for the Humboldt Lab; and the Stadtmuseum Berlin for the BERLIN GLOBAL exhibition.

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