

# Kassia

SONGS OF CARE

ichittissa, to jhoro ekhri Amartion mou  
plithi ke krimaton sou avissou? Til eklictinias  
psychosota tis mou? Mi me tin sin dhor!

# KASSIA

Burak Özdemir . Composition & Music Director

Bruno De Sa . Soprano

László Sandig . Choreography

Ensemble Musica Sequenza *on period instruments of the 9. century*

Byzantine composer and poet Saint Kassiani was born in Constantinople in the 9th century. She is considered to be the first female composer on the European continent. Her works played a significant role in music history, most specifically in the development of European church music. St. Kassiani was an emancipated woman; she refused the marriage proposal of the emperor Theophilus and founded her women's monastery, where she practiced poetry, music and art with other female artists. With her self-determined and extraordinary life, St. Kassiani appears as one of the earliest feminist figures of all time. Composer Burak Özdemir, together with his early music ensemble Musica Sequenza, take this power woman as the starting point for their operatic production: KASSIA.

St. Kassiani's music breaks today both cultural and geographical borders. Her original scores are now reimaged by composer and early music specialist Burak Özdemir. The work is orchestrated for voice, chamber orchestra and sound design. Berlin based early music orchestra Musica Sequenza performs on period instruments of the 9th century, such as byzantine kamancheh, gut strings, organ, percussions, flutes, lute and harp.

KASSIA is staged by dancer and choreographer László Sandig (Sasha Waltz & Guests). The title role is sung by the south American soprano Bruno De Sa. The dazzling portrait of St. Kassiani turns into an inter-disciplinary operatic performance piece, combining modern dance, historical performance, poetry and video art.

The work is based on St. Kassiani's original compositions, poems and her unique biography. Her art was heavily inspired by the eastern territories of Europe, where patriarchal and national politics were in constant crisis for centuries. Today, both Poland and Turkey are on the verge of leaving the Istanbul Convention for Women's Rights in Europe. The work aims to reinterrogate Kassiani's legacy as the "first feminist artist" in order to respeak her voice on the highly sensitive socio-political topics.

KASSIA was initially developed in 2021 in collaboration with the Women's Museum Istanbul, kainkollektiv, as well as scholars, activists and artists from Germany, Poland and Turkey. Within the 2021/22 cultural season, the project completed a Germany tour and visited Tak Theater Berlin, Kampnagel Hamburg, Theater am Ballsaal Bonn, Ringlokschuppen Mülheim and others.

[Musicasequenza.com/kassia](https://musicasequenza.com/kassia)

#kassiaopera