BETH MORRISON PROJECTS ANNOUNCES
“BMP: LIMITLESS” - NEW DIGITAL INITIATIVES

Beth Morrison Projects (BMP) continues to challenge the status quo of opera and music-theatre by nurturing new works from idea to realized vision. BMP offers presenters around the world cutting-edge productions from the best and brightest composers and their creative partners of this generation and the next. Now BMP is challenging the status quo of live performance, finding unique, innovative ways to redefine this moment in the performing arts.

BMP: LIMITLESS encompasses a series of new initiatives guided by impresaria Beth Morrison and BMP Executive Director Jecca Barry. The New York Times announced, “[BMP] deserves credit for envisioning new possibilities and finding ways to facilitate their realization.” BMP disrupts the model for contemporary performance by creating powerful, relevant, and visually arresting productions that appeal to new and experienced opera and music-theatre audiences.

Always a nimble organization on the leading edge of innovation in the field, BMP remains true to that core value in this moment of incredible upheaval worldwide. Undeterred by having its Spring season of ten productions on four continents canceled or postponed, BMP has jumped into the virtual space with “BMP: LIMITLESS,” which encompasses five digital endeavors - BMP: Opera of the Week; BMP: Producer Academy; pssst... (BMP: Digital Speakeasies), BMP: Beyond the Music, and 21c Liederabend, op. World Wide (digital). These initiatives encompass three realms: the artistic and producing realms that push boundaries of form, content and distribution, and the educational realm with the roll out of the BMP: Producer Academy.

For many of these initiatives, BMP is thrilled to engage with our artists to envision new works and new models for opera and music-theatre by nurturing pieces that integrate digital artistry designed specifically for the online experience and that invite audience participation as an integral part of the work. All artists will be commissioned by BMP to make and take part in these works.
BMP: Opera of the Week

Launched in mid-March, BMP: Opera of the Week shares a new work from the archive on BMP’s website each Thursday at noon, free of charge (www.bethmorrisonprojects.org). In addition, LA Opera is streaming works from the BMP-LA Opera partnership from the past five years, recently resulting in over 20,000 views for the streaming of the Pulitzer Prize-winning Angel’s Bone, by Du Yun & Royce Vavrek.

BMP will feature three final Opera of the Week events through early June:

Thursday, May 21, 2020 (currently running)
BROOKLYN BABYLON-
(Not an Opera but an extraordinary Jazz Big Band Music-Theater / Multimedia project)
Composed & Conducted by Darcy James Argue
Story & Visuals by Danijel Zezelj
Starring Darcy James Argue’s SECRET SOCIETY

Thursday, May 28, 2020
ELLEN WEST
Music by Ricky Ian Gordon / Poetry by Frank Bidart
Directed by Emma Griffin / Music Directed by Lidiya Yankovskaya
View a clip here: https://vimeo.com/393699834/a01ec44f72
Starring Jennifer Zetlan and Nathan Gunn

Thursday, June 4, 2020
LOVE FAIL
Music, Text & Direction by David Lang
Starring the Quince Ensemble

BMP: Producer Academy

BMP announces the inaugural BMP: Producer Academy. Beginning the second week of July 2020 with free sessions for the community, BMP will delve into a number of different topics aimed at helping artists and young producers bring works to the stage. An extension of BMP’s Next Gen program, which aims at identifying and shaping the next generation of composers for vocal theatre works, the BMP: Producer Academy will provide keen insights and skill development for the creation, development, and production of new performance works. At a time when live theatre is on pause, the BMP: Producer Academy offers an opportunity to build a skill set that will allow artists and producers to move forward quickly with their projects once the COVID-19 restrictions are lifted. This free series of workshops will cover a variety of topics including budgeting, the different phases of the production process,
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different types of producers, and insights into the producing and presenting industry. Enrollment is open to the general public. To sign up for the three-day course, please visit https://bmp-producer-academy.eventbrite.com

Following the free workshop, a more in-depth 8-week Academy commences for a selected group of 25 students that have a deeper interest and are looking for an alternative to a full degree program in arts administration. Opportunities for one-on-one mentoring, as well as the opportunity to interface with professional producers and presenters who will give feedback on pitch materials and projects, is part of the tiered structure of the Academy. Full details on the BMP website.

Faculty for the Academy include Beth Morrison Projects’ staff and senior leadership: Beth Morrison, Jecca Barry, Brian Freeland, Kim Whitener, Robert Smith, and Ashley Peters.

**pssst… (BMP: Digital Speakeasies)**

Beth Morrison Projects announces **pssst…**, a series of digital speakeasies to enliven summer and fall evenings. During another challenging time in our history, Prohibition was the law of the land, and people sought sneaky ways to gather, socialize and imbibe together. In the late-night BMP COVID version, audiences are invited to sit together at BMP’s virtual bar, make a cocktail, have a chat with the bartender, and hear some music. Artist “directors”, visual artists, and musical guests will conjure an environment with thematic cohesion for each unique evening, and surprise audiences with an interactive experience. Featured artists will include: Danielle Birratella, Dollshot, Geoff Sobelle, Jennifer Charles, Jeremy Schonfeld, Jodie Landau, Joseph Keckler, Kamala Sankaram, Shayfer James, Sky-Pony/Lauren Worsham, Sol Ruiz, Timur, Todd Almond, and others.

The first digital speakeasy will take place live on **Thursday, June 25, 2020**. Additional performances will follow. Tickets will go on sale on June 1, and can be purchased at www.bethmorrisonprojects.org

**BMP: Beyond the Music**

Beth Morrison Projects invites audiences into **BMP: Beyond the Music**, a throwback to the days of MTV and VH1 when music videos releases were the center of the universe. BMP will host events that invite you into a composer’s studio, a visual artist’s process, and what happens when those two minds come together to create something reimagined. BMP is commissioning a group of visual artists to create new digital “Music Videos” for excerpts of arias and songs from the existing BMP canon.
The videos will be launched through conversations, listening parties and
discussions about the works, the process, and how this moment lends itself to
reimagining.

21c Liederabend, op. World Wide (digital)

Beth Morrison Projects announces the next installment of their on-going series,
the 21c Liederabend. This version: op. World Wide (digital), will launch in
September 2020.

Beth Morrison, in partnership with composer Paola Prestini, curated four 21c
Liederabends that were hosted at Galapagos Art Space (2009), The Kitchen
(2011), Brooklyn Academy of Music (2013), and the LA Phil (2016), all produced
by BMP and Prestini’s VisionIntoArt.

The Liederabend tradition began in the 19th century, a new form of
entertainment that also brought composers and poets together to share new
sounds and ideas. From a time when domestic music-making was status symbol,
to the present when our parlor pianos have been replaced by flat screen TVs,
the tradition of the Liederabend survives today in most conservatories,
allowing students of song to explore the repertoire of nineteenth century
tunesmiths like Schubert, Mendelssohn, Schumann and Brahms. “I was
interested in bringing the term and form Liederabend out of the insularity of
the conservatory and into the public experience,” says Beth Morrison, “I
wanted to update it to the twenty-first century by presenting music written by
living composers and adding a visual component by pairing composers with
designers, while still concentrating on music and words.” (OPERATURGY)

In response to the COVID reality that has shuttered theaters, this new opus will
be conceived for a digital medium to be consumed in the confines of one’s
home on a screen. In reflection of the world-wide pandemic, the curation of
the artists will also be world-wide. In the past, the focus of the 21c
Liederabend had been primarily on American composers. Op. World Wide
(digital) will cast the net wide and showcase the works of composers writing
from different countries on different continents around the world, creating
songs in response to the pandemic, and pairing them with designers who will
create unique visual worlds for each song.

“[21c Liederabend]...a succinct definition of just what song is: a personal
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT OPERAS OF THE WEEK

Brooklyn Babylon

Composed & Conducted by Darcy James Argue  
Story & Visuals by Danijel Zezelj  
Performed by Darcy James Argue’s Secret Society  
Co-commissioned by Brooklyn Academy of Music

Brooklyn Babylon is a multimedia performance that uses live instrumental music, animation, and live painting as its language of expression and communication. All three elements are presented onstage simultaneously, and work in concert to present the central narrative: a story about the highest tower in the world being constructed in the heart of futuristic Brooklyn. The main character, an old carpenter named Lev, is commissioned to create an elaborate carousel to crown the top of the monumental building. The unexpected ending follows Lev’s realization that the construction of the tower has destroyed the neighborhood that he has lived in and loved all his life.

Ellen West

Music by Ricky Ian Gordon  
Poetry by Frank Bidart  
Directed by Emma Griffin  
Music Direction by Lidiya Yankovskaya  
Starring Jennifer Zetlan and Nathan Gunn  
Co-commissioned and co-produced by Opera Saratoga

A remarkable new opera, Ellen West, plunges into the emotional, psychological, and physical challenges of a woman struggling with perceptions of her body, her relationship with food, and the world closing in around her. Inspired by one of the earliest cases of existential analysis, poet Frank Bidart and composer Ricky Ian Gordon examine the lives of psychiatrist Ludwig Binswanger and his patient, Ellen West. Bidart’s poem, which serves as the primary source for the opera’s libretto, juxtaposes the clinical observations of Binswanger with fictitious entries of Ellen’s journals, illuminating her deeply personal struggles.

love fail

Music, Text & Direction by David Lang  
Starring Quince Contemporary Vocal Ensemble

love fail is an evening-length theater work from Pulitzer Prize-winning composer David Lang. Sung by the genre-bending Quince Contemporary Vocal Ensemble, love fail is a tour de force of storytelling, weaving together snippets
of medieval courtly love narratives, short stories by MacArthur Fellowship Award-winning author Lydia Davis, scraps from the libretto of Wagner’s opera *Tristan and Isolde*, and text by Lang himself. Out of these sources, Lang has conjured a single story in which two unnamed lovers meet each other, love each other, and lose each other - not necessarily in that order.

**ABOUT BETH MORRISON PROJECTS**

“Beth Morrison is her own genre.” – *Opera News*

“Contemporary opera mastermind...” – *The LA Times*

"More than any other figure in the opera industry, Beth Morrison has helped propel the art form into the twenty-first century." – *Opera News*

Since 2006, Beth Morrison Projects (BMP) has been an industry disruptor and tastemaker at the forefront of musical and theatrical innovation by commissioning, developing, producing and touring the groundbreaking new works of living composers and their collaborators, which take the form of opera-theatre, music-theatre, and vocal-theatre. BMP encourages risk-taking and the result is provocative works that represent a dynamic and lasting legacy for a new American canon.

The 2014 bi-coastal expansion to Los Angeles sprang from growing partnerships and relationships with institutions such as LA Opera, the LA Phil, Ford Theatres, Center Theatre Group and RVCC. During the 2018-19 and 2019-20 season, BMP will have produced 185 performances on 5 continents. BMP’s commitment to cutting edge musical expression has created “its own genre” (*Opera News*) of originality. In 2013, Beth Morrison Projects and HERE Arts Center co-founded the PROTOTYPE Festival: Opera/Theatre/Now, which showcases contemporary opera-theatre and music-theatre projects over ten days each January. The New Yorker recently wrote that the festival is “Essential to the evolution of American Opera,” and *The New York Times* called the festival “Bracingly innovative... a point of reference.”

Always on “the edge of innovation” (*Opera News*), BMP has developed a trailblazing program, BMP: Next Generation, to identify and foster the next generation of opera composers. This crucial initiative is a prime example of the transformative and boundary-shattering programming for which BMP has been known for over a decade. Other current and upcoming projects include works by composers Ricky Ian Gordon, Ted Hearne, Mary Kouyoumdjian, David T. Little, Elvis Perkins, Emma O’Halloran, Ellen Reid, Huang Ruo, Sarah Kirkland Snider, Du Yun, and more, with directors James Darrah, Lee Sunday Evans, Emma Griffin, Patricia McGregor, Michael Joseph McQuilken, and Ashley Tata.

May 27, 2020