BMP: NEXT GEN

Discover the next generation of boundary-pushing opera-theatre composers!
Beth Morrison Projects & National Sawdust present

STREAMING THROUGH JUNE 26, 2021

BMP: NEXT GEN

produced by Beth Morrison Projects
presented by Beth Morrison Projects & National Sawdust

filmed live at National Sawdust, May 2021

featuring BMP: Next Gen’s 10 finalists:
Gabriel Fynsk, Elizabeth Gartman, Eli Greenhoe, Gabrielle Herbst, Jens Ibsen, Laura Jobin-Acosta, Maya Miro Johnson, Niloufar Nourbakhsh, Timothy Peterson, and Huan Sun

featuring
Contemporaneous;
David Bloom & Kamna Gupta,
Co-music Directors

BMP: Next Gen Panel
Jecca Barry, Executive Director, BMP
Priti Gandhi, Chief Executive Officer, Minnesota Opera
Christopher Koelsch, President & CEO, LA Opera
David T. Little, Composer
Beth Morrison, President & Creative Producer, BMP
Du Yun, Composer

BMP: Next Gen was made possible through commissioning and underwriting support from Elizabeth & Justus Schlichting. Additional support provided by the National Endowment for the Arts - Art Works. This program is supported, in part, by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council.
First launched in 2017-18, the BMP: Next Gen program was established to help BMP stay connected to a new generation of composers, singers and artists just coming out of school. BMP solicits scores from composers who are in a degree-granting program or within four years of graduating from one. BMP’s first generation of composers have gone on to be leaders of their generation – Du Yun, Ted Hearne, David T. Little, Missy Mazzoli, Nico Muhly, Paola Prestini, Kamala Sankaram, Julian Wachner, and others. However, BMP has forged a reputation for identifying talented young composers who are then nurtured and whose works are brought to the fore. In addition to working with new composers, BMP: Next Gen showcases singers, designers, and directors that BMP has never worked with before.

Aspiring composers from coast to coast are invited to submit vocal works up to ten minutes in length. BMP Creative Producer Beth Morrison and Executive Director Jecca Barry select ten first-round finalists from these applicants and then produce an evening of new music out of these submissions. Two composers are then chosen by a panel of invited professionals in the field for a second-round competition, returning the following year to each showcase a new and original 30-minute work. Ultimately, one of these two finalists will receive a commission for an evening-length work, including the development and World Premiere production of their project.

The first cycle of the BMP: Next Gen competition resulted in two 30-minute opera commissions by Emma O’Halloran and Michael Lanci which were presented at National Sawdust in Spring 2019. Emma O’Halloran was then selected to win an evening-length commission entitled Trade which will be paired with her 30-minute work, Mary Motorhead, to be premiered in January 2022 in a co-production with Irish National Opera.

This year, due to Covid-19 limitations, the BMP: Next Gen concert will take place digitally, filmed at National Sawdust in Brooklyn and streamed on May 27, 2021.

Beth Morrison Projects pays respect to the Canarsie and Munsee Lenape ancestors past, present, and future. We acknowledge that the work of BMP: Next Gen at National Sawdust is situated in Lenapehoking, the Lenape homeland.
Harp My Bones
I. Girl with Tongue Cut Out
II. Two Sisters
III. Becoming a Nightingale

Composed by Timothy Peterson
Text by Sara Fetherolf
Music direction by Kamna Gupta

Featuring
Sydney Anderson, Soprano
Milena Gligic, Piano

The Lord of the East

Composed by Huan Sun
Text by Huan Sun
Music direction by Kamna Gupta

Featuring
Fanyoung Du, Tenor
Milena Gligic, Piano
David Bloom, Piano Assistant

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Mukhannath Songs
I. Tuways

Composed by Jens Ibsen
Libretto by Majnun Layla
Translation by Geert Jan van Gelder
Music direction by Kamna Gupta

Featuring
Amal El-Shrafi, Soprano

Contemporaneous
Colin Davin, Electric Guitar
Amanda Gookin, Cello
Josh Henderson, Violin
Zach Ritter, Electronics
Finnegan Shanahan, Violin
Chelsea Wimmer, Viola

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Maiden Stone
Mvt. II: Z-Rod and Doorway

Composed by Gabriel Fynsk
Text by Gabriel Fynsk
Music direction by David Bloom

Contemporaneous
Amanda Gookin, Cello
Josh Henderson, Violin
Finnegan Shanahan, Violin
Chelsea Wimmer, Viola
Fanny Wyrick-Flax, Alto Flute
Molly Wyrick-Flax, Bass Clarinet

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when Icarus fell, was there a splash?

Composed by Maya Miro Johnson  
Text by Maya Miro Johnson  
Music direction by Kamna Gupta

Featuring  
Alize Rozsnyai, Soprano 

Contemporaneous  
Stuart Breczinski, Oboe  
Milena Gligic, Piano  
Amanda Gookin, Cello  
Evan Honse, Trumpet  
Zach Ritter, Electronics  
Finnegan Shanahan, Violin  
Pat Swoboda, Contrabass  
Cam West, Horn  
Fanny Wyrick-Flax, Flute

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The Last Seven Words of Christ

Composed by Laura Jobin-Acosta  
Text by Franciscan Friar Jacopone da Todi  
Music direction by David Bloom

Featuring  
Laura Jobin-Acosta, Soprano  
Ricardo Rivera, Baritone 

Contemporaneous  
Amanda Gookin, Cello  
Josh Henderson, Violin  
Finnegan Shanahan, Violin  
Pat Swoboda, Contrabass  
Chelsea Wimmer, Viola  
Fanny Wyrick-Flax, Flute  

Chorus  
Amal El-Shrafi  
Milena Gligic  
Sonya Headlam  
Charlotte Mundy

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Ashes

Composed by Gabrielle Herbst  
Text by Gabrielle Herbst  
Music direction by David Bloom

Featuring
Sonya Headlam, Soprano  
Charlotte Mundy, Soprano

Contemporaneous
Anna Bikales, Harp  
Milena Gligic, Piano  
Amanda Gookin, Cello  
Josh Henderson, Violin  
Zach Ritter, Electronics  
Fanny Wyrick-Flax, Flute  
Molly Wyrick-Flax, Clarinet

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[Weight]

Composed by Elizabeth Gartman  
Text by Susan Bywaters  
Music direction by David Bloom

Featuring
Shannyn Rinker, Soprano  
Zach Ritter, Electronics

Content Warning: This work discusses body dysmorphia, eating disorders, and self harm.

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AND IT IS NOW

Composed by Eli Greenhoe
Text by Howard Nemerov from the poem Moment
Music direction by Kamna Gupta

Featuring
Emily Donato, Soprano

Contemporaneous
Anna Bikales, Harp
Matt Evans, Percussion
Pat Swoboda, Contrabass
Chelsea Wimmer, Viola
Molly Wyrick-Flax, Clarinet/Bass Clarinet

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We The Innumerable

Composed by Niloufar Nourbakhsh
Text by Lisa Flanagan
Music direction by David Bloom

Featuring
Samina Aslam, Soprano
Sonya Headlam, Soprano
Bernard Holcomb, Tenor
Ricardo Rivera, Baritone

Chorus
Fanyong Du
Andrew Fuchs
Christopher Nazarian
Garrett Obrycki

Contemporaneous
Matt Evans, Percussion
Milena Gligic, Piano
Amanda Gookin, Cello
Maleki Hamidreza, Santur
Zach Ritter, Electronics
Finnegan Shanahan, Violin
Molly Wyrick-Flax, Clarinet

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THE FINALISTS

Gabriel Fynsk (b. 2001) is a Brooklyn-born and Scotland-raised emerging artist and composer whose music has been described as “remarkably unique and colorful” that requires “a sensitive and experienced ear”. Through his eclectic music, Fynsk aims to translate from intimate childhood experiences and his continuous study in philosophy, literature, and art. These influences emerged while growing up attached to the European Graduate School and embody the cultural and religious intersectionality between Judaism and ‘Scotticism,’ to the conceptions and presentations of innocence through the lenses of antiquity and psychoanalysis. Fynsk has previously worked with ensembles such as Ars Futura and the Converge Quartet and will be performed next year by the Orlando Philharmonic as a winner of the National Young Composer’s Challenge. He is currently studying with Bright Sheng in his second year of pursuing a B.M. in Composition at the University of Michigan.

Elizabeth Gartman (b. 1996) is a soprano and composer based in New York City. She is committed to the contemporary dramatic stage as both a composer and performer. Her compositional works are based on tangible, melodic themes and are often through-narratives commenting on the current social sphere. Gartman’s compositions have been featured across the country from Los Angeles (Songfest), to New York City (Manhattan School of Music), Burlington (New Music on the Point), and near Sheboygan, Wisconsin – Gartman’s hometown. Her voice has reached a similar span of audiences as both a principal and ensemble singer in opera, as well as a concert soloist. Gartman’s achievements have earned her the Theodore Presser Music Award and recognition as an ASCAP finalist, among other awards. Gartman is in current pursuit of her Masters of Music Degree in Composition at the Manhattan School of Music under professors Susan Botti (composition) and Lucy Shelton (voice).

Eli Greenhoe (b. 1994) is a composer, songwriter, and guitarist hailing from Brooklyn, New York. His concert works have been commissioned and performed by such artists and ensembles as loadbang, Bergamot Quartet, Aki Takahashi, S.E.M. Ensemble, and George Manahan, among others. His music has been programmed at the Bang on a Can, Chatter, Yellow Barn, Ostrava Days (CZ), and Tokyo to New York (JP) festivals. In 2018 he was awarded a Charles Ives Scholarship from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. A performing songwriter since age 10,
Greenhoe has led bands in New York City and elsewhere nearly his entire life. Greenhoe is also active in interdisciplinary collaboration: most recently he scored Sanctuary, a film by Max Bowens, which was selected to be screened at the 2020 Maryland Film Festival. Greenhoe is currently pursuing a DMA at the Yale School of Music, where he completed his M.M. in 2018.

Gabrielle Herbst (b. 1986) is a composer and vocalist seeking honesty and intimacy in her music. She’s received commissions from Roulette, the Jerome Foundation, Nouveau Classical Project, Duo Noir, Experiments in Opera, Fresh Squeezed Opera, and contributed to the opera Magdalene for PROTOTYPE: Opera | Theatre | Now, with residencies including Watermill Center, Exploring the Metropolis, and Atlantic Center for the Arts. Her compositions have been presented at National Sawdust, The Stone, Issue Project Room, HERE Arts Center, MATA, and Lincoln Center Atrium. Her album Sympathy was released on Software Recording Co. Tour highlights included David Byrne’s Meltdown Festival, London, Pop Kultur Festival, Berlin, Andy Warhol Museum, Muziekgebouw, Amsterdam, The Great Escape, UK, The Wick presented by Pitchfork, and a series at Roulette with Missy Mazzoli curated by Meredith Monk. Her album, Empty Me, was released on Double Double Whammy. She graduated from Yale School of Music with an M.M. in composition.

Jens Ibsen, composer/tenor, is a multidisciplinary artist whose vocal talents have led him to performances from Dubai to Shanghai, with stops along the way on German television, at Carnegie Hall, and the UN. Ibsen was a principal soloist and the first African-born member of the world-renowned Vienna Boys Choir. As a composer, Ibsen’s works span from solo repertoire to orchestral works, as well as electroacoustic music. At Pepperdine University, Ibsen was one of the three Pickford Composers commissioned to write music for silent film for the Mary Pickford Foundation’s Up Against the Screen project in 2015. Ibsen has also produced site-specific performances in the Bay Area during his tenure with the Museum of Joy as their musician-in-residence. Ibsen performs in New York and San Francisco as a freelance vocalist, singing everything from early music to world premieres with ensembles such as The Choir of Trinity Wall Street and OS Ensemble.

Laura Jobin-Acosta is a motivated and passionate composer. She recently graduated with her master’s degree in classical composition from SUNY Purchase Conservatory of Music, where she studied with Laura Kaminsky and Kamala Sankaram. Jobin-Acosta is a 2021 IDEA Opera Resident Artist hosted at the National Opera Center. Jobin-Acosta realized her compositional skills by attending the Walden Creative Musicians Retreat in 2017, where she wrote a piece for Mivos Quartet that
was premiered. While still in graduate school, she was commissioned to compose *The Seven Last Words of Christ* by Calvary-St. George Episcopal Church in Manhattan. Jobin-Acosta’s unique multi-cultural upbringing and singing background is reflected in her music, which can be described as beautiful, weird, and full of dialogue. She has significant local and international singing experience that expands to Munich, Vienna, and Israel, and regularly performs new music in New York City, where she resides.

**Maya Miro Johnson** is an interdisciplinary creator who considers her work philosophy not constrained to logic and reason: • Exorcising hereditary ghosts • Corroding supremacy paradigms • Affirming proletariat value of the quotidian/enigmatic • Manipulating dualities. Recipient of both Schuman & Surinach Prizes in the 2020 BMI Student Composer Awards, Johnson made her professional debut in 2019 with a commission from the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra. Next season includes record label debuts with Inna Faliks & HOCKET; works for Zeitgeist, loadbang, Johnny Gandelsman, David Michalek, B.K. Zervigon & J.T. Hassell; & an artist residency at the Sarasota Music Festival*. Maya has studied at NYO-USA, Luna Composition Lab, BUTI, Fresh Inc Festival, soundSCAPE Performance/Composition Exchange, Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music, & Aspen Conducting Academy*. She currently holds the Tureck Bach Research Institute Fellowship at the Curtis Institute of Music. With oboist & composer Sarrah Bushara she forms the performance art duo.

Described as “stark” by WNPR and “darkly lyrical” by *The New York Times*, a winner of the Second International Hildegard commission award and a 2019 recipient of Opera America’s Discovery Grant, **Niloufar Nourbakhsh**’s music has been performed at numerous festivals and venues including Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, and the Kennedy Center. A founding member and co-director of Iranian Female Composers Association, Nourbakhsh is a strong advocate of music education and equal opportunities. She is currently a Teaching Artist at Brooklyn Music School, an adjunct faculty at Molloy College, and a co-director of Peabody Conservatory Laptop Ensemble, while finishing her doctorate at Stony Brook University.

**Timothy Peterson**’s music has been performed in the US, Europe, and Australia at venues ranging from art galleries and distilleries to concert halls such as Lincoln Center. His vocal works have been presented by New Opera West, N.E.O Voice Festival, Calliope’s Call, Hartford Opera Theater, and One Ounce Opera. A 2018 fellow at the Bang on a Can Summer Music Festival at MASS MoCA, Peterson holds an M.M. in Composition from the University of Southern California and undergraduate degrees in composition and comparative literature from the University of Michigan. Upcoming events include residencies at Blue Mountain Center and the Kimmel Harding Nelson...
Center for the Arts, the West Coast premiere of his trio Talk It Out at the 2021 HEAR NOW Music Festival, and a world premiere by the New Sounds Quartet commissioned by the Gabriela Lena Frank Creative Academy of Music.

**Huan Sun** is a contemporary music composer who is inspired by Chinese ancient culture (literature, visual art, and music), Peking Opera, Chinese folk music and Western music. Her musical style transcends the boundaries of ancient and modern; east and west. Huan Sun's chamber art song won the first prize in The 9th Yanhuang Art Song Composition Competition. Her first orchestral work *The Garden of Arcadia* has been premiered and performed by China Youth Symphony Orchestra. Huan Sun was born in Qinhuangdao, China in 1994. She had a strong interest in music at a very early age. She received a Bachelor degree from the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing. Huan Sun moved to the United States to further her education, entering the composition program at the Mannes School of Music with a merit scholarship, under the study of Dr. Huang Ruo.

**THE TEAM**

**David Bloom** (Music Director) is a conductor equally at home in opera, new music, and orchestral repertoire, noted alike for his “rockstar energy” (*Urban Milwaukee*) and “graceful sensitivity” (*I Care If You Listen*). He is founding Co-Artistic Director of Contemporaneous, a 23-member New York-based ensemble which he has led in performances lauded as “ferocious and focused” (*The New York Times*). Also Co-Artistic Director Present Music, he brings “breathtaking and inspired programming” (*Shepherd Express*) to Milwaukee’s long-running new music ensemble. He has conducted over 300 world premieres in such venues as Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, MoMA, and Park Avenue Armory, working with artists such as the Bang on a Can All-Stars, The Crossing, David Byrne, Helga Davis, Kronos Quartet, Courtney Love, NOW Ensemble, and Dawn Upshaw and composers Donnacha Dennehy, Du Yun, Michael Gordon, Judd Greenstein, Nathalie Joachim, David Lang, Tania León, and Julia Wolfe. His 2020 debuts with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, International Contemporary Ensemble, String Orchestra of Brooklyn, and Eurasia Consort were cancelled due to the global health crisis. Especially active as an opera conductor, among the productions Bloom has led are Philip Glass’s *Les enfants terribles* for Opera Omaha, Michael Gordon’s *Acquanetta*, Jeremy Schonfeld’s *Iron & Coal*, and Todd Almond’s *Kansas City Choir Boy* for Beth Morrison Projects, Kamala Shankaram’s *Miranda* in virtual reality for Tri-Cities Opera and Opera Omaha, Matt Marks’s *Mata Hari* for PROTOTYPE
Bloom has recorded for the Sony Masterworks, Cantaloupe, New Amsterdam, Innova, Starkland, and Navona labels. He is Artistic Advisor of activist orchestra The Dream Unfinished, conducting instructor at New York University, and conductor of new music youth orchestra Face the Music. davidbloomconductor.com

Kamna Gupta (Music Director) is an American Prize-winning conductor experienced in operatic, orchestral, and choral repertoires. She is especially passionate about new opera: in 2020 she made her Canadian debut with Tapestry Opera where she conducted Rocking Horse Winner by Gareth Williams and Anna Chatterton, whose recording was recently featured on CBC Music's Saturday Afternoon at the Opera. She also conducted the American Lyric Theater workshops of The Selfish Giant by Clarice Assad and Lila Palmer, and recorded the piece under the auspices of Opera Saratoga in 2021. In the spring of 2021, Ms. Gupta will serve as associate conductor for the Seattle Opera workshop of Arkhipov, a new opera by Peter Knell and Stephanie Fleischmann. In the summer of 2021, she will return to The Glimmerglass Festival to work on Il trovatore, The Knock (Vrebalov / Brevoort world premiere), and a concert of musical theater selections. In the summer of 2020, Ms. Gupta was slated to return to The Glimmerglass Festival to conduct Così?, a modern adaptation of the beloved classic (canceled due to COVID-19). Additional recent company credits include the Royal Opera in Versailles, The Glimmerglass Festival, Beth Morrison Projects, Sarasota Opera, Opera Saratoga, and the American Lyric Theater. Quite active internationally, Gupta's orchestral credits include performances in Germany, Russia, and the Czech Republic, a special highlight was leading the Leipzig Barockorchester in an all-Bach program. Additional highlights include her work with the New York Youth Symphony as an apprentice conductor, and her role as a Conducting Fellow at the Atlantic Music Festival where she recorded many contemporary works by living composers. Gupta received her Master of Music in Orchestral Conducting from Arizona State University, and her Bachelor of Arts in Music from Princeton University, where she graduated cum laude.

Jennifer Fok (Lighting Designer), she/they, is a Chinese-American lighting designer based in New York City. Her design collaborations center around reimagining classics, exploring new work, and collaborating with interdisciplinary arts in movement, dance, and music. Select designs have been seen at Long Wharf Theatre, Lincoln Center Education, Flint Repertory Theatre, Detroit Public Theatre, The Know Theater Of Cincinnati,
The Kitchen Theatre, HERE Arts Center, Portland Stage, The New School For Drama, Bates Dance Festival, NCPA Beijing, Flynn Space, Ars Nova, Luna Stage, Theatre At Monmouth, and Company One Boston. She received her BFA In Theatre Production and Design from Ithaca College. www.jenniferfok.com

**Contemporaneous** is an ensemble of 23 musicians whose mission is to bring to life the music of now. Recognized for a “ferocious, focused performance” (*The New York Times*) and for its “captivating and whole-hearted commitment” (*I Care If You Listen*), Contemporaneous performs and promotes the most exciting work of living composers through innovative concerts, commissions, recordings, and educational programs. Based in New York City and active throughout the United States, Contemporaneous has been presented by such institutions as Lincoln Center, Park Avenue Armory, PROTOTYPE Festival, Merkin Concert Hall, MATA Festival, St. Ann’s Warehouse, and Bang on a Can and has worked with such artists as David Byrne, Donnacha Dennehy, Iarla Ó Lionáird, Dawn Upshaw, and Julia Wolfe. Contemporaneous has premiered more than 150 works, and with its newly-launched program Contemporaneous IMAGINATION, the ensemble champions large-scale works, curated from an open call for artists to submit ideas for projects that take risks and defy constraints. The ensemble has recently released the first season of its new podcast Imagination Radio, which explores the significance of creativity and music in our lives through dialogues with composers, scientists, a cartographer, and a BASE jumper. Contemporaneous has recorded for the New Amsterdam, Cantaloupe, Innova, Roven, and Navona labels. Contemporaneous also leads participatory programs for public school students in the communities where the ensemble performs. These workshops are designed to instill a passion for new music and to convey the power of careful listening and meaningful expression through music. The ensemble has held residencies at such institutions as City University of New York, the University of New Orleans, Williams College, and Bard College, where the group was founded in 2010. Contemporaneous is a federally tax-exempt not-for-profit organization, supported by a dedicated community of listeners.
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 PROTOTYPE: 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 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.

In May 2020, with the global pandemic inhibiting a full production and touring schedule, and guided by impresaria Beth Morrison and BMP
Executive Director Jecca Barry, BMP launched a series of new digital initiatives, “BMP: LIMITLESS,” encompassing Operas of the Week (streaming last summer), Digital Speakeasies (live last summer), the upcoming (early summer) 21c Liederabend, op. World Wide (digital), three filmed projects currently in development, and BMP: Producer Academy, which has had two 8-week cohorts between August and December. This highly successful educational endeavor for the company will continue with ongoing intensive workshop offerings and individualized coaching. This Spring BMP is shooting an evening-length film of David T. Little’s opera Black Lodge, and will join Music Academy of the West in residence this summer.


Beth Morrison Projects Staff
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This elite group of project-based supporters give between $10,000 - $35,000 depending on specific project needs. They are given access to the artists behind the BMP catalogue of works.

INDUSTRY DISRUPTORS
$5,000 or more. Benefits are customized and as creative as the art we produce.

AGENTS FOR CHANGE
$1-$4,999. Receive customized benefits and “behind the scenes” experiences.

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Julie Maykowski
Director of Development
juliem@bethmorrisonprojects.org
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21c LIEDERABEND, OP. WORLDWIDE (DIGITAL)

Streaming and Broadcast Premiere on Sunday, June 27 at 8PM EST
Nationwide Free and On-Demand at bethmorrisonprojects.org, live.nationalsawdust.org, and allarts.org
On the ALL ARTS app or the ALL ARTS TV Channel

Creative direction by BETH MORRISON & PAOLA PRESTINI
Co-commissioned & co-produced by Beth Morrison Projects & National Sawdust
Co-presented with ALL ARTS

Featuring new works by Holland Andrews, Amyra Leon, Lido Pimienta, Paola Prestini, Theodosia Roussos, and Diana Syrse

with visuals by Katrina Reid, Paul Notice, Bradley Credit, Natalie Frank, Erin Pollock, Hana Kim, and Mathilde Lavenne
LIBRETTOS
I. Girl with Tongue Cut Out

Moondown, emerging sound, wet hemmed and mussel-loaded, she. Me. Squatted on an outcrop, pries shells and sucks the guns clean, spit-flavored pinkgray comfort to the molars, who miss their mouth-pet, eely, fattened by daily peaseandthankyous learned at a governess’s knee, prattle and hymn, gossip, give-us-this-day—all gone. The teeth, naked fossils, chew cold sea-meat. It senses salt. Meaning the mouth. She. me.

II. Two Sisters

You snip your hair to make a mourning-brooch, pretending it’s from my corpsebraid instead, as I weave you a message thread by thread.

One moonless night you wake undressed before the mirror, humming the song about the drowned sister, and other, who held down her head,

while elsewhere, thread by thread, I make for you what’s left of me: hair and grief and tuneless humming, a counterpane for your son’s bed.

Soon you will come crown me in strangle-vine, wearing a dancing gown, holding a butcher knife, and take my hand if I live, and harp my bones

if I’m dead. Restore me thread by thread.

III. Becoming a Nightingale

Throat-first and inarticulate, I wing out of the warp/weft of my human body—hollow-boned, heart squeezed to a bean, released from the jewelry-box larynx,

all song, I made fine silk of every shut-up-and-take it; I wove a map of who I had once been, my hands at the shuttle, all inarticulate fury, kerosene

and match—wildfire, the me of me transforming. Unraveling from my loom-body (throat-first) I find a flightpath (all inarticulate) out of it (over the rockers where waves break, where they’ve broken all this spring as I watched) and go—(all song).
Coat of blue cloud, skirt of white rainbow,
I gather my reins and my chariot sweeps aloft.
I take up my long arrow and shoot at the Heavenly Wolf (name of a baleful star),
Then draw toward me the Dipper (name of four stars in Ursa Major)
and pour out for my self a drink of cassia (to celebrate his victory).
And bow in hand plunge into the abyss,
Am lost in mirk and darkness as I start on my journey to the East.
I draw a picture of her in the dust and cry, my heart in torment.
I complain to her about her: for she left me, love-sick, badly stricken.
I complain of all the passion I have suffered, with a plaint towards the dust.

*Love makes me want to turn to Layla’s land, complaining of my passion and the flames in me.*

I make rain fall upon the dust from my eyes’ clouds; my heart is in distress and grief.
I complain of my great passion while my tears are flowing, streaming.
I’m talking to her picture in the dust: as if the dust were listening to me,

*As if I were near her, complaining to her of my plight, while talking to the dust.*

No one returns an answer to my words, not even the reproacher answers me.
So I turn back, hope dashed, tears flowing down as if from showering clouds,

*Truly, madly possessed by her, my heart in torment for the love of her.*
In through the arch
Comes the wind
With an offering.
A cloven man
Who bears what he sees
To see what he bears:
The road, the future.
In time, he extends
A vain proposition:
The road for the bannock
Like the axe for the tree
An inevitable race,
And exchange in craft.
Her past for her future
Both made in stone.
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doesn’t matter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doesn’t matter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nothing really matters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matter to whom?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I went</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crazy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To go see</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crazy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crazy</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Cuz I'm special...? (x3)
When I want when I want (x4)
I want when I want I
Wanna wanna wanna wanna
Wanna (x10)
Gotta
Need to
Go now
You need
I went when I went
Crazy
Want them to talk or to walk
Want them to see
Want them to stop

Stop (x10)
Wait (x2)
Wait...
Stop want
Stop
Want (x2)
Stop
Want
Stop (x2)
Wait (x2)
Stop (x2)
Wait
Want (x3)

Wanna be up there
Down below Everywhere
Why me/cuz I'm special/when I want/when I want/you need/I went/when I went/crazy/for ya/about ya/for ya/want you to see/want you to stop/stop/stop/stop/stop/what/what is this thing/my god/are you trying to/kill me/say what's in this drink
Want (x4)
Must want have must
Long term
Game plan
End game
My god
End-
End of the line
End of the line
Plans astray (x6)
Astray (x4)
Bombs away!

Why not?
THE LAST SEVEN WORDS OF CHRIST

Stabat Mater vs. 1-4 (out of 20)
by Franciscan Friar Jacopone da Todi
(1230-1306)
translation by Edward Caswell (1814-1878)

1. Stabat mater dolorósa
   juxta Crucem lacrimósa,
   dum pendébat Fílius.
   At the Cross her station keeping,
   stood the mournful Mother weeping,
   close to her Son to the last.

2. Cuius ánimam geméntem,
   contristátam et doléntem
   pertransít gládium.
   Through her heart, His sorrow sharing,
   all His bitter anguish bearing,
   now at length the sword has passed.

3. O quam tristis et afflícta
   fuit illa benédícta,
   mater Unigénti!
   O how sad and sore distressed
   was that Mother, highly blest,
   of the sole-begotten One.

4. Quae mærébat et dolébat,
   pía Mater, dum vidébat
   nati pænas ínclyti.
   Christ above in torment hangs,
   she beneath beholds the pangs
   of her dying glorious Son.
ASHES

anxiety
   fear...
   anxiety
   fear...

anxiety

see

anxiety
   fear...

you

we are here.

what does fear sound like?

what does anxiety feel...
   feel like?

vulnerability
   fear...
   vulnerability...

struggle...

fear be fear
   vulnerability

fear
   here

anxiety...
   vulnerability...

free...
If I eat less, I’ll weigh less, so I’ll eat less.
If I drink less water, I’ll weigh less, so I’ll drink less water.
If I shave my head, I’ll weigh less, so I’ll shave my head.
If I cut off my finger, I’ll weigh less, so I’ll cut off my finger.
If I cut off my leg, I’ll weigh less, so I’ll cut off my leg.
If I eat nothing, I’ll weigh nothing, so I’ll eat nothing.
If I am not, I’ll weigh not, so I will not.
Now, starflake frozen on the windowpane  
All of a winter night, the open hearth  
Blazing beyond Andromeda, the sea-  
Anenome and the downwind seed, O moment  
Hastening, halting in a clockwise dust,  
The time in all the hospitals is now,  
Under the arc-lights where the sentry walks  
His lonely wall it never moves from now,  
The crying in the cell is also now,  
And now is quiet in the tomb as now  
Explodes inside the sun, and it is now  
In the saddle of space, where argosies of dust  
Sail outward blazing and the mind of God  
The flash across the gap of being, thinks  
In the instant absence of forever: now.
Scene 2: Ashura

(The light shifts to daytime and the call to prayer, Azan, fills the streets, people converge together on the stage revealing signs that read “Where is my vote?” and large green banners. All of the protesters are in different levels of disguise, obscuring their face from police)

MOAZZEN
Allahu akbar

CHORUS/MEZZO PROTESTOR/ROYA/SIAVASH
(humming & vocalizing)

Ashad o An La
Elaha El Allah
Ashad o Anna
Mohammadan Rasul Allah

CHORUS
Where is my vote?
Theft is their Pride
Disgrace, disgrace, reform.
Let us count!
We are the people!

ROYA
Where is my vote?

SIAVASH
Let us count!

MEZZO
Count my vote!

(crowds gather for Iranian Freedom Song)

MEZZO & MOAZZEN
Sar ooumad zemestoun
shekofteh baharoun
gole sorkhe khorshid baz ooumad o
shab shod gorizoun

ROYA
Kuha lalezaran

ROYA & MEZZO PROTESTOR
Laleha bidaran
tu kuh ha daran
gol gol gol aftabo mi karan

ROYA
Where is my vote?
Where is my vote?
Where is my vote?
Where is my vote?

MEZZO
Tuye kuhestoun
delesh bidare
Tofang o gol o gandom
Dare mikare

SIAVASH
Sar ooumad zemestoun
shekofteh baharoun
kuha lalezaran
laleha bidaran

BASS
Where is my vote?
Where is my vote?
Where is my vote?
Where is my vote?

WE THE INNUMERABLE
ROYA & MEZZO
Tuye sinash jan jan jan

BASS
Ye jangal setare dare, jan jan
Ye jangal setare dare

ROYA & MEZZO
Where is my vote?

SIAVASH
Where is my vote?

(Gunshots)
(The protestors scatter and flee, rhythmic panting & panic, individuals out of step)

(A single gunshot. Roya & Siavash fall to the ground. Other protestors exit. Siavash is wounded.)

(The sounds of Basiji/Militia men on motorcycles charge the protestors and scatter them)
(Chorus of Militia men enters)

CHORUS (T/B)
Death, death, death to seditionists!
Death, death, death!

BASS
You animals! Spies! The enemy!

TENOR
Pieces of dirt and dust! We will crush each one!
We will kill and destroy you
Death to seditionists!

ROYA (coaxing)
Siavash, Sia, Sia, get up!
Siavash- We have to run!
Someone! Please! Someone-Siavash!
(scream) No!
(Roya is dragged offstage by two enforcers.)

(Siavash coughs and sputters on the ground as an enforcer stands over him with a shotgun trained on him. Siavash dies.)
Translations for the Iranian Freedom Song **Sar Oumad Zemestoun**

The Winter Is Over

The winter has come to an end, the spring has blossomed
The red flower of the sun has risen once again, the night has escaped
The mountains are covered with tulips, the tulips are awake
They are planting sunshine in the mountains, flower by flower
In the mountains, his/her heart is awake,
he/she is bringing flowers and bread and will defend
In his/her heart life, life, life
In his/her heart, he/she has a forest of stars