

HarlemStage

Diverse Artists. Transformative Art.



BETH MORRISON PROJECTS
SONG CYCLES

TAMAR-KALI + YAZ LANCASTER +
TANYARADZWA TAWENGWA-NZOU MAMBANO



Friday–Saturday, October 28–29, 2022, 7:30PM
Harlem Stage Gatehouse

Address: 150 Convent Avenue at West 135 Street, New York, NY 10031
Phone: 212.281.9240 ext. 19 | Website: www.harlemstage.org



@harlemstage



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ABOUT THE EVENT

In a special collaboration with **Beth Morrison Projects**, one of the foremost creators and producers of new opera-theater and music-theater, we present an evening of song cycles by three power-house women and non-binary composers showcasing a diversity of musical languages.

New York native, **Tamar-kali**, is a second-generation, World Soundtrack Academy's award-winning musician with roots in the coastal Sea Islands of South Carolina. Violinist, vocalist, and steel pannist, **Yaz Lancaster**, is a Black transdisciplinary artist whose music is most interested in practices aligned with relational aesthetics and the every day; fragments and collage; and liberatory politics. **Tanyaradzwa Tawengwa-Nzou Mambano** is a Zimbabwean gwenyambira, scholar, composer, and singer whose creative practice centers African healing and self-liberation. Together, these ground-breaking artists have composed an evening of breathtaking and exhilarating performances.

Thank you for joining us!

Harlem Stage

PERSONNEL

MARIMUKA

Tanyaradzwa Tawengwa -Nzou Mambano Composer, Solo Voice, Mbira, Piano

Ouroboros, Articulated Objects

Yaz Lancaster	Composer
David Bloom	Music Director
Eliza Bagg	High Voice (main)
Sonya Headlam	Mezzo
Heather Jones	Alto
Andrew Noseworthy	Electric Guitar
Doori Na	Violin
Kal Sugatski	Viola
Laura Metcalf	Cello

Melanc'Holy, Erzulie's Kiss, Hollow

Tamar-kali	Composer, Mezzo Soprano, Guitar
Adam Rothenberg	Music Director
Mark Robohm	Drums
Catherine O'Malley	Bass
Jerome Jordan	Guitar
Thom Loubet*	Guitar
Doori Na	Violin 1
Sami Merdinian	Violin 2
Kal Sugatski	Viola
Laura Metcalf	Cello
MaKayla McDonald	Additional Voice
Heather Jones	Additional Voice

Production Team

Beth Morrison	Creative Producer
Taylor Edelle Stuart	Video Designer
Mandy Ringger	Lighting Designer
Jeff Davolt	Stage Manager
Brandon Kazen-Maddox	ASL Interpreter

Presented by Beth Morrison Projects and Harlem Stage.

*Commissioned by Beth Morrison Projects and Lynn Loacker.
Developed by Beth Morrison Projects. Co-Produced by Beth Morrison Projects and Harlem Stage.*

Additional production support was provided by Virginia B. Toulmin Charitable Foundation and Marian Godfrey.

This production is made possible, in part, by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature, as well as by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council.

*Additional video content by Tanyaradzwa Tawengwa.
Additional video content by Deborah Johnson.*

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Since 2006, **Beth Morrison Projects (BMP)** has been a tastemaker at the forefront of musical and theatrical innovation by supporting living composers and their collaborators during the creation of groundbreaking new works in opera-theatre and other kinds of vocal-theatre. “Responsible for a sizable portion of the strongest new opera mounted in the twenty-first century,” (*The New Yorker*) BMP encourages risk-taking in all its artists, resulting in provocative works that represent a dynamic and lasting legacy for a new American canon.

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, 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.” The 2014 bi-coastal expansion to Los Angeles sprang from growing partnerships with institutions such as LA Opera, the LA Phil, Ford Theatres, and RVCC. BMP is a National Sawdust Artist in Residence.
www.bethmorrisonprojects.org

ABOUT THE WORK

MARIMUKA

BY TANYARADZWA TAWENGWA – NZOU MAMBANO

Titled after the Zimbabwean word for the wilderness, a foreign land you travel to in search of better opportunities for you and your family. This song cycle is dedicated to the approximately 5 million Zimbabweans who have left their motherland to work in the diaspora and are responsible for the livelihoods of their families. This song cycle is also dedicated to any who have ever been denied a visa to see a loved one, and to anyone who has been called an Alien in a foreign land. Scored for mbira, piano, and solo voice, this song cycle evokes the folk music of Zimbabwe.



TANYARADZWA TAWENGWA– NZOU MAMBANO

COMPOSER, SOLO VOICE, MBIRA, PIANO

Tanyaradzwa Tawengwa – Nzou Mambano is a Zimbabwean gwenyambira, scholar, composer, and singer whose creative practice centers African healing and self-

liberation. Tanyaradzwa’s music is grounded in the ancestral, Chivanhu canon taught to her by the generations of Svikiro (spirit mediums) and N’anga (healers) in her bloodline. Her internationally performed opera “The Dawn of the Rooster” tells of the stories of her family during Zimbabwe’s Liberation Struggle of 1965-1980 and features Mbira dzaVadzimu, a sacred Zimbabwean instrument used in mapira ceremonies to commune with the ancestors. Tanyaradzwa is currently a Hodder Fellow at Princeton University and has held residencies as a Toulmin Creator with National Sawdust and as the inaugural Creative-in-Residence with Castle of Our Skins.

OUROBOROS

BY YAZ LANCASTER

This song cycle uses poetry by Laura Henriksen, supplemented with Yaz Lancaster’s own words, to explore the themes of recurrence and cosmic return. Yaz Lancaster uses electronics, strings, guitar, and three high voices to weave a powerful score rich with imagery.



YAZ LANCASTER COMPOSER

Yaz Lancaster (they/them) is a Black transdisciplinary artist most interested in practices aligned with relational aesthetics and the everyday; fragments and collage; and liberatory politics. Yaz performs as a

violinist, vocalist, and steel pannist in a wide variety of settings from DIY and popular music to chamber ensembles; and their work is presented in many different mediums and collaborative projects. It often reckons with specific influences ranging from politics of identity and liberation, to natural phenomena and poetics. Yaz has had the privilege and opportunity to create with artists like A Far Cry, ContaQt (with Evan Ziporyn), Contemporaneous, Donia Jarrar, JACK Quartet, Leilehua Lanzilotti, Skiffle Steel Orchestra, and Wadada Leo Smith. They are in post-genre duo laydøwn with guitarist-producer Andrew Noseworthy; write for ICIYL; and are the visual editor at Peach Mag. Yaz holds degrees in violin and poetry from NYU; and they love chess, horror movies, and bubble tea.

BIOGRAPHIES

DAVID BLOOM

MUSIC DIRECTOR — OUROBOROS

David Bloom (he/him) is a conductor equally at home in orchestral repertoire, opera, new music, 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 of Present Music, he brings “breathtaking and inspired programming” (Shepherd Express) to Milwaukee’s long-running new music ensemble. Bloom dedicates his work to collaborating with artists and communities to inspire creativity, empathy, and joy.

ELIZA BAGG

HIGH VOICE (MAIN)

Eliza Bagg is an LA-based experimental musician, working primarily as a vocalist in contemporary classical music along with producing her own work. She has collaborated with prominent experimental artists, from performing in Meredith Monk’s opera *Atlas* with the LA Philharmonic to touring with Roomful of Teeth, playing the role of Ape in Michael Gordon’s *Acquanetta* to singing chamber motets by John Zorn to working collaboratively with Ted Hearne on his theatrical song cycle *Dorothea*. Her singing has been called “ethereal” by *The New York Times* and “gossamer” by *The New Yorker*.

Bagg’s compositional work is grounded in the human voice mediated by technology, as she combines virtuosic singing with electronic processing. As a vocalist, Bagg has soloed with major symphonies including the CSO, the BSO, the New York Phil, and the LA Phil, has performed at venues from Walt Disney Hall and Elbphilharmonie Hamburg to Iceland Airwaves, and has performed with opera companies such as The Industry, Beth Morrison Projects, Re:Naissance Opera and The American Opera Project.

SONYA HEADLAM

MEZZO

Praised for her “expressive” singing and the “personal connections” she forms with her audience (Cleveland Classical), soprano **Sonya Headlam** delights audiences in “dramatically engaged” performances with “sensitive phrasing” (Chicago Classical Review) in repertoire ranging from the Baroque period to the 21st century. Highlights of the 2022–23 Season include Tyshawn Sorey’s *Monochromatic Light (Afterlife)* with the Choir of Trinity Wall Street at the Park Avenue Armory, and Handel’s *Messiah* with the Philadelphia Orchestra. Sonya holds a Doctor of Musical Arts degree from Rutgers University, Mason Gross School of the Arts, where she has also held a visiting scholar appointment conducting research on the eighteenth-century composer Ignatius Sancho.

HEATHER JONES

ALTO

A 2021 finalist in the American Traditions Vocal Competition and winner of the Sherrill Milnes American Opera Award, **Heather Jones (they/them)** is gaining recognition for their astute interpretations of new and early music. Season highlights: Hannah After in Laura Kaminsky’s *As One*, Dido in Purcell’s *Dido and Aeneas*, a recital with ChamberQUEER for Trinity Wall Street’s *Concerts at One* series, and a workshop of *Expostulations of Mary* with the LA-based experimental ensemble Wild Up. Heather has produced film, dance, and visual art pieces and regularly collaborates with Opera Philadelphia, Trinity Wall Street, Voices of Ascension, ChamberQUEER, Aural Compass Projects, the Savannah Voice Festival, and Spoleto Festival USA. heatherjonesmezzo.com

BIOGRAPHIES

ANDREW NOSEWORTHY

ELECTRIC GUITAR

Andrew Noseworthy (he/him/his) is a multidisciplinary artist whose music reflects upon the acceptance/rejection of “locality” while drawing from lived experiences of isolation within his hometown of Labrador West and the tight-knit arts community of St John’s His artistic intentions are focused on building sustainable relationships through communal collaboration. Recent collaborators include The Metropolis Ensemble, The 21C Guitar Conference, Angie Moon Dance Theatre, Saman Shahi, India Gailey, Yang Chen, Tim Brady/Bradyworks, Phong Tran, Adam Cuthbért, SlowPitchSound, Greg Bruce, The St John’s International Sound Symposium, Bekah Simms, Tanea Hynes and Andrea Lodge. He is a member of the post-genre duo laydøwn (with Yaz Lancaster) and the Toronto-based ensemble Contaqt. With Aeryn Santillan, he is a co-founder of the experimental hardcore duo this place is actually the worst and independent digital label people | places | records. Andrew is currently a PhD in Music Composition candidate at Western University under the tutelage of Paul Frehner.

DOORI NA

VIOLIN

Doori Na, a San Francisco native, took up violin at the age of four and began his studies with Li Lin at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. In the fall of 2018, he made his debut with The San Francisco Symphony performing Bach’s Double Violin Concerto with Itzhak Perlman and Michael Tilson Thomas. Currently living in New York City, Mr. Na plays with numerous ensembles around the city. He has played with the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra with tours in the US, Japan, and Europe performing in venues such as Carnegie Hall in New York and the Musiverien in Vienna.

KAL SUGATSKI

VIOLA

Kal Sugatski performs regularly with Pittsburgh Symphony, NYCBallet, International Contemporary Ensemble, NJSO, and on Broadway. They have also appeared with Stevie Wonder, Ben Folds, Norah Jones, Andrea Bocelli, and The National. Their playing can be heard on over 50 recordings and soundtracks, including Judas and the Black Messiah, and other grammy-winning albums.

Kal is organizing/curating experimental outdoor concerts in beautiful spaces centered around queer composers and composers of color for their newest project Vigorous Tenderness (ig: @vigorous.tenderness). They were a 2021-2022 season musician with the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra. In their spare time Kal is a long-distance hiker, ocean swimmer, and nature enthusiast.

LAURA METCALF

CELLO

Cellist **Laura Metcalf**, renowned worldwide as a passionate solo and chamber musician, has been acclaimed for her “brilliant” playing (Gramophone Magazine) and described as “a cellist whose passion for music is as evident as her artistry and talent” (I care if you listen). She has performed throughout the US and on six continents, including South Africa, Nepal, Argentina, Qatar, Mongolia, India, Japan, Korea, New Zealand, Kazakhstan, and Australia. Laura’s debut solo album on the Grammy-winning label Sono Luminus, reached #7 on the Billboard Charts, and was called “a way forward for classical music” by AllMusic. As a sought-after chamber musician and collaborator, Laura is drawn to projects that push boundaries and expand the definition of classical chamber music. As the cellist of groundbreaking string quintet Sybarite5, the first-ever string quintet to win the Concert Artists Guild competition and reach #1 on the Billboard Classical Charts, she toured extensively for over a decade, performing in Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, Library of Congress, and countless other major venues.

ABOUT THE WORK

MELANC'HOLY, ERZULIE'S KISS, HOLLOW BY TAMAR-KALI

Published between 1920 and 1926 the collection of poems this song cycle features reflects a range of contemplation and emotion not commonly associated with the so called 'fairer sex' during this time period. These works by Gwendolyn Bennet, Jessie Redmond Fauset and Lola Ridge stand out in their stark beauty. Fierce, deep and full of dark complexities; they seed fertile ground for Tamar-kali's compositional style. Featuring her 5 piece alt rock outfit + a string quartet and written for mezzo soprano; this song cycle stands firmly at the intersections of all that has influenced and inspired the artist's practice and being.



TAMAR-KALI COMPOSER, MEZZO SOPRANO, GUITAR

Brooklyn born and bred artist **Tamar-kali** is a second-generation musician with roots in the coastal Sea Islands of South Carolina. As a composer, Tamar-kali has defied boundaries to craft her own unique

alternative sound. 2017 marked her debut as a film score composer. Her score for Dee Rees' Oscar-nominated *MUDBOUND*, garnered her the World Soundtrack Academy's 2018 Discovery of the Year Award and has been classified by Indiewire as one of the 25 Best Film Scores of the 21st Century. 2019 was a hallmark year for her work as a composer. In addition to debuting her 1st symphonic commission, she scored 4 films total; 3 which were featured at the Sundance Film Festival 2020. They include Dee Ree's *THE LAST THING HE WANTED*, Kitty Green's *THE ASSISTANT* and Josephine Decker's psychological drama *SHIRLEY*; the latter whose soundtrack was named *The Guardian's* Contemporary Album of the Month in June 2020. The 4th film was the documentary *JOHN LEWIS: GOOD TROUBLE*.

BIOGRAPHIES

ADAM ROTHENBERG MUSIC DIRECTOR - MELANC'HOLY

Pianist, conductor, and music director **Adam Rothenberg** is a versatile young artist who has performed throughout North America and Europe in a wide array of projects, including solo recitals, chamber music, orchestral concerts, opera, and musical theatre. Recent concert engagements include serving as pianist and music director for Patti LuPone in *Songs from a Hat* (Lincoln Center Theatre), as well as cabaret shows with such artists as Matt Doyle, Christopher Fitzgerald, and Hannah Corneau. He was the Assistant Conductor of the Broadway revival of *Company* and the Associate Conductor of the 2018 national tour of *Miss Saigon*. Other recent theatre and opera credits include *Chicago* (Broadway), *Sweeney Todd* (Off-Broadway), *West Side Story* (Philadelphia Orchestra), *A Quiet Place* (Tanglewood Music Center), and *Die lustigen Weiber von Windsor* (Juilliard Opera). Hailed by Opera News as a pianist of "jaw-dropping virtuosity," Adam has performed with the New York Philharmonic at David Geffen Hall and the Juilliard Orchestra at Carnegie Hall, as well as art song recitals in Alice Tully Hall, at Caramoor, and the Barbican Centre in London. He is passionate about pushing the boundaries of classical music and bridging the gap with other genres and art forms. A native of Syracuse, NY, he holds degrees from Northwestern University and the Juilliard School, where he was the proud recipient of a Kovner Fellowship.

MAKAYLA MCDONALD VOICE

Soprano **MaKayla McDonald** is an active performer of opera, art song, and new works. In late summer, MaKayla joined New Muses Project at the Kaufman Music Center as a soloist for a concert of "hidden gems of choral and chamber music." MaKayla recently sang with ChamberQUEER for their Pride Festival at National Sawdust. Last Summer, she returned to Iowa for a Juneteenth Concert with Cedar Rapids Opera Theatre. In early 2022, she worked with the American Opera Project + New York University/Tisch for their Opera Lab; a semester-long project which pioneers new works by emerging composers and librettists. In February 2022, MaKayla was hosted by Butler University, Jordan College of the Arts as a guest artist for their Black History Month Arts Celebration, A Jubilee!

BIOGRAPHIES

SAMI MERDINIAN

VIOLIN

Argentinian violinist **Sami** has recently been the soloist with the Montevideo Philharmonic, the Argentine National Symphony, The Gangneung Philharmonic in South Korea, Philharmonia of the Nations, Buenos Aires Philharmonic, and Rochester Philharmonic.

Sami is a member of award-winning string quintet Sybarite5, performing recently at Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, and touring throughout the United States, Canada, Asia and South America.

Highly sought-after as tango violinist, Mr. Merdinian has performed and recorded with some of the most prominent artists of the genre and has received a Grammy Nomination.

Mr. Merdinian has been a prize winner in several international competitions including a Gold Medal in the XII International Young Solo Instrumentalists Competition in Argentina, and the New Talent Competition in Slovakia. He has also received the Rising Star Award by Tiffany & Co., and was named Outstanding Artist of the Year by the Argentinian Press. In addition, Sami is co-host of *Down the Pit* Podcast.

JEROME JORDAN

GIUITAR

Jerome Jordan has played and sang with Tamar-Kali, Funk Face, The Screaming Headless Torsos/Strawberry Acid Lab, Puzzlehead featuring Ted Leo, N'Dea Davenport, Martin Luther and more. Jerome Jordan also played and sang with Columbia recording artist Jeni Fujita, Island/Def Jam/American recording artist Saul Williams, Sony Independiente recording artist D.J. Punk Rock, Jive recording artist Mystikal, Atlanta artist Joi and GZA of the Wu Tang Clan. He has played guitar on recordings for Mary J. Blige, Brand New Heavies, Soul II Soul, Cleopatra, Big Pun, Ginuwine, Mark Morrison, The Wu Tang Clan, Dead Prez and the list continues.

MARK ROBOHM

DRUMS

Having played with various artists (like Alicia Keys & Jay Sean) and toured nearly every continent, sleeping on endless couches along the way, **Mark** has played on stages varying from Madison Square Garden to Zucchini Fest in the backwoods of Vermont. He has been playing with Tamar-Kali since his musical puberty – meeting her when they were both playing with other bands at the Atlanta Olympics. A connection was made resulting in his first audition when moving to NYC as a drummer in the late 90s... and here we are a few decades later.

THOM LOUBET

GIUITAR

Thom Loubet started playing at the age of six on a guitar made by his father, and spent his youth playing in the Blues bars of Albuquerque NM. At Wesleyan University he made his first commercial recording as part of Anthony Braxton's ensemble and graduated in 1996 with High Honors in Music and American Studies, and won the Leavell Prize for outstanding work as a Music major. In 2002, Mark, Jason, John and Thom formed The Citizens, an Avant-Rock band, and in the last twenty years we've recorded seven albums. Thom currently tours with the fabulous Alice Smith and Tamar-Kali.

CATHERINE O'MALLEY

BASS

Catherine O'Malley has been a gun for hire bassist since the tender age of 18, cutting her teeth as a pit musician in regional NY musical theater. Since then, she toured extensively as the bassist on the National Tour of Networks *Beauty and the Beast* and has performed in numerous Tamar-Kali's projects for the last 8 yrs.

BIOGRAPHIES

TAYLOR EDELLE STUART

VIDEO CONTENT DESIGNER

NYC: *My Cousin Nelu...* (Ars Nova), *Self Defined Circuits* (HERE), *RANSOM* (Pinkhouse Productions), among others. Regional: *A Doll's House* (The Wallace Theater), *Curious Incident...* (Connecticut Rep.), *Mumburger* (Carnegie Stage). Associate: *I Hate Memory* (Joe's Pub), *The Conversationalists* (Bushwick Starr), *The Talmud* (Target Margin Theater). Upcoming: Associate video design for *Becky Nurse of Salem* (Lincoln Center) and *The Outsiders* (La Jolla Playhouse). Additionally, Taylor has directed off-Broadway, was recently a member of The Mercury Store Directing Lab (under advisement of Leigh Silverman & Aya Ogawa), and is a director on the short film series *Boy Shorts*.
@tayloredelle/www.tayloredellestuart.com



AMANDA K. RINGGER

LIGHTING DESIGN

Amanda K. Ringger has been designing locally, nationally, and internationally for more than 20 years with artists such as Faye Driscoll, Doug Elkins, Cynthia Oliver, Darrah Carr, Jennifer Archibald, Alexandra Beller, Deborah Lohse, Donnell Oakley,

LMnO3, Molly Poerstel, Leslie Cuyjet, Kota Yamazaki, Sean Donovan and Sebastián Calderón Bentin, Laura Peterson, Julian Barnett, and cakeface, among many others. She received a BA from Goucher College in Baltimore, MD, and an MFA from Tisch School of the Arts at New York University. She is the recipient of a 2009 Bessie Award for her collaboration on Faye Driscoll's *837 Venice Boulevard* at HERE Arts Center.

BRANDON KAZEN-MADDOX

ASL ARTIST & INTERPRETER

ASL Artist and Interpreter **Brandon Kazen-Maddox (they/ them)** is a Grandchild of Deaf Adults (GODA), a third generation native signer and co-founder of Up Until Now Collective. Brandon works as an actor, dancer, acrobat, filmmaker and ASL and Deaf Culture Consultant and is based in NYC. For more information, please email them at bkm286@nyu.edu and visit www.upuntilnowcollective.com.

PRAISE FOR THE COMPOSERS

In [Tamar-Kali's] lyrics and her own personal style, she blends feminist politics and Afrocentricity in a way that gives her hard rock sound a soulful edge.

—NPR

Lancaster seems to have multiple idioms at their disposal, ready to drag and drop them together into new forms.

—Washington Post

Tawengwa, a composer, vocalist, multi-instrumentalist, and scholar, combines classical Zimbabwean music with Western classical music to create a unique brand of cross-pollinated, hybrid music.

—I Care If You Listen

OUR SUPPORTERS



This program is supported, in part, by public funds from The New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in Partnership with the City Council.

Harlem Stage's Programs are made possible by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature.

This project is supported in part by an award from the National Endowment for the Arts.



ABOUT HARLEM STAGE

Harlem Stage is the performing arts center that bridges Harlem's cultural legacy to contemporary artists of color and dares to provide the artistic freedom that gives birth to new ideas.

For nearly 40 years our singular mission has been to perpetuate and celebrate the unique and diverse artistic legacy of Harlem and the indelible impression it has made on American culture. We provide opportunity, commissioning, and support for artists of color, make performances easily accessible to all audiences, and introduce children to the rich diversity, excitement, and inspiration of the performing arts.

We fulfill our mission through commissioning, incubating, and presenting innovative and vital work that responds to the historical and contemporary conditions that shape our lives and the communities we serve.

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