

ANCRAM OPERA HOUSE

Jeffrey Mousseau & Paul Ricciardi
Directors

PRESENTS



PERENNIALS

June 17th & June 25th at 8pm

SUNWATCHER

June 18th & June 24th at 8p



NEW YORK
STATE OF
OPPORTUNITY.

**Council on
the Arts**

Ancram Opera House 2021 season is made possible by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and the New York State Legislature.

SUMMER PLAY LAB

We are thrilled to launch our 2021 season with the 2nd edition of *Summer Play Lab*. Debuting last year in the midst of the pandemic, SPL quickly emerged as a silver lining in our move to virtual programming and reflects our commitment to support the creation of innovative new performance.

For this year's program, we didn't necessarily intend to select two music-theatre projects but that is, indeed, where we arrived after a competitive selection process. Both teams are engaged in creating complex multi-layered works that fuse music, song, storytelling, movement, video and other visuals into a fluid hybrid performance. We are excited to share their earliest drafts and we can't wait to see where their continued work takes them.

We are also delighted to welcome playwright and director Georgina Escobar as Resident Respondent in a new key role we are initiating as part of this year's Lab. Georgina is serving as an observer during rehearsals, responding to questions posed by each team about what she experienced, and facilitating audience discussions with the artists.

Underlying AOH's mission is a goal to connect the performing arts with the everyday lives of those living in our region. To that end, we are thrilled to expand opportunities for audiences to engage directly with the artists participating in this year's SPL residency by offering free workshops in **Creative Movement** and **Collaborative Songwriting** (please check our website for more info). We believe that the arts provide an essential way for making sense of the tumultuous times in which we find ourselves today.

Kind regards,



Jeff Mousseau & Paul Ricciardi
Directors



PERENNIALS

Emergence Collective

While Emergence Collective has been writing and crafting together for a handful of years now, we were particularly struck by the ways live performance and theatre have needed to evolve since the pandemic, and gift us the opportunity to evolve as artists and makers during this time. Our group ethos has always been very much about *process* (in songwriting, composing, and in dialoguing with each other and our communities). Ancram's Play Lab description was alluring for this reason: inviting artists to develop works-in-progress in real time and space amidst the pandemic.

We wanted the chance to finally produce a product from our process, and to let it unfold organically in a space together for the first time since March 2020. Likewise, as other artists began to explore the medium of film in this time of social distance, we were inspired by projects like *My Joy is Heavy!* by The Bengsons, an autobiographical Youtube musical produced during Covid winter that aligned with the spirit of *Perennials*. We created this project to synthesize our canon of work, explore processes of healing, health and joy in the present climate, and as a compass towards our collective's next projects on survival.

About Emergence Collective

Emergence Collective is a songwriting initiative founded by four New York-based musicians, artists, activists and friends: Kate Douglas, Matthew Dean Marsh, Raina Sokolov-Gonzalez and Sylver Wallace. The collective formed in 2017 with a focus on "emergent strategy," as discussed by writer and social justice facilitator adrienne maree brown. Emergence Collective's work has been presented all over New York including Bard College, Rockwood Music Hall and SoFar Sounds live concert series.

The *Perennials* showing has a running time of 48 minutes.

BIOS

KATE DOUGLAS - Recent work includes *Against Women & Music!* with Grace McLean (The Civilians) and *The Ninth Hour* with Shayfer James (The Met Cloisters). Her work has been developed at The Orchard Project, New Victory Theater, Space on Ryder Farm, Rhinebeck Musicals and Goodspeed, among others. She is a Johnny Mercer Songwriters Project Fellow and is currently signed with Kobalt Music Publishing. Alongside her artistic practice, she is a Master Naturalist and Biodynamic Craniosacral Therapist. www.katedouglasprojects.com

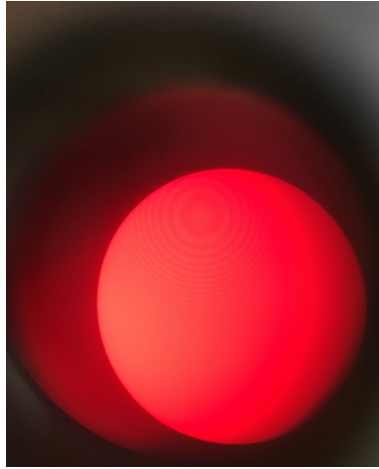
MATTHEW DEAN MARSH is a composer, performer, and writer based in New York City. Matthew's collaboration with David Cale, *We're Only Alive for A Short Amount of Time*, recently made its debut at The Public & Goodman Theaters, winning the Jeff Award for Best New Musical. His compositions have sounded at Madison Square Garden, Barclays Center, TriBeCa Film Festival, Radio City Music Hall, Lincoln Center, The Public Theater, MassMOCA, The Goodman Theater in Chicago, and The White House.

RAINA SOKOLOV-GONZALEZ is a singer/composer based in Brooklyn, New York. Rooted in Jazz and R&B, Raina's cross-genre style is built from the bottom up with improvisation as a starting point for her songs. With over 600k streams on Spotify and a budding global audience, RSG has packed rooms at prestigious venues such as Brooklyn Bowl, SOB's, Rockwood Music Hall, MoMA PS1 and many others. Working with artists such as William Parker, RSG has deep ties to the NYC music scene.

SYLVER WALLACE is investigating the ways we perform on and off the stage in music, media and fashion. She is passionate about listening and communication. Recent credits include: Andrew Rannells *Live! At Lincoln Center*, Courtney Love and Todd Almond *Kansas City Choir Boy*, David Cale, Julie Klausner and Trevor Bachman (residents at Joe's Pub), Raina Sokolov-Gonzalez (Rockwood Music Hall resident), and Shaina Taub (Suffragists at MASS MoCA Sundance Institute Theatrelab). MA Sound Studies (Northwestern University, 2022).

SUMMER PLAY LAB **Resident Respondent**

GEORGINA ESCOBAR is a queer Mexican playwright and maker of sci-femme narratives, ultra-humanistic mythos, and frontera-funk stories. She works textually and visually with plasticity, the impossible, and the Latin American perspective. Residencies include MacDowell, Djerassi, Fornés Workshop, and she is the recipient of the Darrell Ayers Playwriting and Outstanding Service to Women on the Border national awards. Her work has been featured in the *Kilroy's List*, *50PP*, and *The Mix*, and in print in *The Texas Review*, *Lxs Bárbarxs*, *McSweeney's*, and *New Passport Press*. Her work appears in *Scenes for Latinx Actors*, *Lighting The Way*, and *El Fuego: Fueling the American Theatre with Latinx Plays* (upcoming). Her plays have been seen across the USA, México, Denmark, and Sweden. Artistic homes and presenters include INTAR, New York Children's Theatre, Dixon Place, Clubbed Thumb, Lincoln Center, Bushwick Starr, Two Rivers, Milagro, Aurora Theatre, and the University of Texas at El Paso.



SUNWATCHER

Tidtaya Sinutoke, Isabella Dawis, Nana Dakin, Ikumi Kuronaga

Sunwatcher, a Noh-inspired musical, is the story of astronomer Hisako Koyama (1916-1997) – intertwined with the ancient Japanese myth of the sun goddess Amaterasu, in a retelling inspired by the structure of classical Noh theatre. Hisako was a woman with no formal scientific training – also a survivor of the 1945 U.S. air raid of Tokyo, the deadliest bombing in history – who managed to rise to the stature of Galileo. She did so by drawing the sun in painstaking detail every day for 40 years, a landmark achievement for solar science. *Sunwatcher* is a celebration of Hisako's extraordinary dedication to ordinary observation, reminding us how seemingly small acts can have an immense impact over time and space.

Our video presentation is a visual springboard into the first 20 minutes of *Sunwatcher*, where the music and characters are brought to life by singers, dancers and images of mythology, science, and WWII Tokyo.

Our collaborations with performers and designers on this video have enabled us to share our visions for this story with an audience, and we hope it helps you to imagine what the stage production will be like.

Development of *Sunwatcher* has been supported through residencies and workshops at: Ancram Opera House, The Civilians' R&D Group, The Johnny Mercer Writers Grove at Goodspeed Musicals, New England Conservatory Entrepreneurial Musicianship Alumni Award, Rattlestick Playwrights Theater Global Forms Festival, The Weston Playhouse's *Songs For Today*.

The *Sunwatcher* showing has a running time of 20 minutes.

Special Thanks

National Museum of Nature and Science (Tokyo, Japan), Nautilus Music-Theater (St. Paul, Minnesota, USA), Regional Observatory for the Public (Chachoengsao, Thailand), Prof. Deborah Brevoort, Prof. Richard Emmert, Prof. Thomas Hare, Dr. Hisashi Hayakawa, Dr. Toshihiro Horaguchi, Prof. Martha Johnson, Dr. Delores Knipp, Ben Krywosz, Prof. Huixin Liu, Mayo Miwa, Takashi Nakajima, Jennifer Weir.



BIOS

TIDTAYA SINUTOKE (Composer) is a Thailand born, NYC-based composer. Composition credits: *Half the Sky* (The 5th Avenue Theatre's First Draft Commission & 20/21 Digital Season, Weston-Ghostlight New Musical Award, Richard Rodgers Award finalist); *Sunwatcher* (The Civilians R&D Group, Ancram Opera House, Rattlestick Playwrights Theater Global Forms Festival); and *Dear Mr. C.* recipient of a 2017 Jonathan Larson Grant, and a 2020 Billie Burke Ziegfeld Award. MFA: NYU. tidtayasinutoke.com

ISABELLA DAWIS (Bookwriter/Lyricist) is a Filipina-American playwright and performer. With Tidtaya Sinutoke: *Half the Sky* (5th Avenue Theatre Radio Play/First Draft Commission, Weston-Ghostlight New Musical Award, Theater Mu's New Eyes, Theater Latté Da's NEXT, Rhinebeck Writers Retreat) and *Sunwatcher* (Civilians' R&D, Goodspeed's Johnny Mercer Writers Grove, Rattlestick Playwrights Theater Global Forms, Weston Playhouse's Songs for Today). B.M. piano performance, University of Minnesota; Classical Voice, New England Conservatory. isabelladawis.com

NANA DAKIN (Director) is a Thai American director of new work, classics and devised performance based in New York City. Her work pursues social equity by examining the way culture is constructed and unsettling dormant biases. Recent: *Sorry/ Not Sorry* (Ars Nova ANT FEST), *Love Letter to a Seed* (Clubbed Thumb Winterworks), *White Pearl* (Royal Court Theatre). Upcoming: *Mammelephant* (Theater Row). MFA: Columbia University. nanadakin.com

IKUMI KURONAGA (Creative Producer/Cultural Consultant) is a Japanese producer based in NYC. Her focus is on producing global projects to connect people through storytelling. After lead producing original shows in Japan, she moved to NYC as a U.S.-Japan Creative Artists Fellow. Some of her Tony-winning Broadway shows include *Angels in America* (Neil Simon Theatre), *Oklahoma!* (Circle in the Square Theatre), *Tootsie* (Marquis Theater), *Frozen* (St. James Theatre).

CREATIVE TEAM

Video & Production Designer: Suzu Sakai

Audio Mixer: Megumi Katayama

Singers

Gemma Nha (Hisako)

Isabella Dawis (Sun/Chorus)

Francesca Dawis (Sunspot/Chorus)

Dancers

Natsuko Hirano (Hisako)

Akiko Aizawa (Sun/Amaterasu)

Kazue Peck (Sun/Sunspot)

Coming up next at AOH!

*LIVE at The Hilltop Barn
Roeliff Jansen Park*
July 10 at 7pm

This summer's reading features Dave King's
O. Henry Award-winning story, *The Stamp Collector*.



**JOSEPH
KECKLER**

LIVE at The Circa 1799 Barn
July 24 at 8pm

vening with virtuoso Joseph Keckler, known
for his expressive and powerful voice, sharp
prose and absurdist operatic monologues.

*LIVE at The Hilltop Barn
Roeliff Janse Park*
July 24 at 7pm

With each edition of *Real People*, local residents
share their stories with the community.



LIVE at various Ancram locations
Aug 12 - 15

Three original short plays performed at
secret outdoor locations near the Opera House.



The Angram Opera House presents a mix of contemporary theatre, alternative cabaret, storytelling and community programs. Located in a former grange hall in rural Columbia County, AOH offers a unique opportunity to directly engage, up close with visionary theatre artists at the top of their field, yet rarely seen in our region.

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ABOUT ANCRAM OPERA HOUSE

AOH offers an annual season of theatre, cabaret, literary, storytelling and community programs.

AOH's theatre productions include *Homebody* (Berkshire Theatre Critics Award for Outstanding Solo Performance); *We're Gonna Die*; *The Brother's Size* (Berkshire Theatre Critics nominations for Outstanding Ensemble and Outstanding Play); the American premiere of *In Praise of Elephants*, *Performing Olana*, an original site-specific piece staged at Olana; *Aunt Leaf*, also presented in Aguascalientes, Mexico and, most recently, reprised as part of Festival Universitario de Teatro, Baja California, Mexico; and the premiere of a new musical adaptation of *The Snow Queen*.

As an incubator of new performance, AOH hosts *Summer Play Lab* which supports the creation of innovative productions by theatre-makers including Heather Christian and Frank Boyd and presents early editions of new, alternative cabaret performances with acclaimed artists such as Taylor Mac in *Holiday Sauce* which went on to NYC's Town Hall and San Francisco's Curran Theater, Diana Oh who was subsequently produced at The Bushwick Starr in Brooklyn, and Stew and longtime collaborator Heidi Rodewald in *Staged Dives* which was then performed at Joe's Pub in NYC.

Crystal Radio Hour features new short stories written by Hudson Valley and Tri-state regional writers, including Jo Ann Beard, Wesley Brown, David Rabe and Courtney Maum, that are read by professional actors.

Community engagement is very much at the heart of AOH's programming. *Real People Real Stories* (RPRS), presented twice a year, features local residents sharing personal, authentic narratives. *Local Characters* showcases community members in fun, free-wheeling short form conversations. AOH leads storytelling workshops for young people at the Northeast Community Center and 5th and 6th graders at the Taconic Hills School. For adult learners, AOH also offers free writing and theatre-making workshops each year.

AOH MISSION

Ancram Opera House creates meaningful encounters through the performing arts that forge connection. Through its productions, AOH offers a unique opportunity to directly experience, up close, visionary theatre artists at the top of their field yet seldom seen in the region. AOH's community-based arts and storytelling programs with local residents encourage day-to-day participation in the performing arts. AOH seeks to foster a sense of place for a rural region and contribute to a healthier and happier community.

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Geroge Wiggers
Doug Wingo
Karen Zier & Walter Williamson
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List as of June 16, 2021. If we inadvertently omitted your name or there is a correction to it, let us know and please accept our apologies. We are grateful to all of our supporters.



To help bring performances and educational programs to the region, we invite you to become a Friend of the Ancram Opera House. We need the help of individuals like you who understand what it means to have an arts and culture space like this in Ancram.

Friends of Ancram Opera House will be thanked in printed programs, and also receive invitations to special Friends' events. Most importantly, by becoming a Friend of AOH, you join a very special group of individuals ensuring that our activities can benefit all in the area through a range of community arts programs.

Ancram Opera House is a 501c3 nonprofit organization; contributions are tax-deductible as allowed by law. All funds raised go directly to support annual programming costs. Thank you for whatever you can do!

Yes, I'd like to become a friend of Ancram Opera House!

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