

OPERA AMERICA'S
**CREATORS IN
CONCERT**

KAMALA SANKARAM

The National Opera Center

Thursday, October 19, 2017 | 7:00 p.m.

Leela Subramaniam, soprano

Lucy Dhegrae, mezzo-soprano

Blythe Gaissert, mezzo-soprano

Adrian Rosas, bass-baritone

Mila Henry, piano

Jeff Hudgins, alto saxophone/clarinet

Ed Rosenberg, tenor saxophone/clarinet

Josh Sinton, baritone saxophone/bass clarinet

THE NATIONAL OPERA CENTER
AMERICA

PROGRAM

The Far Shore (2014)

Based on text by Mirabai

Commissioned by Sing for Hope and recorded for *An AIDS Quilt Songbook*

Lucy Dhegrae, mezzo-soprano
Mila Henry, piano

Enchantress (2014)

Libretto by Rob Handel

Commissioned by American Lyric Theater

Scene 2: “La-BOR-a-t’ry”

Lucy Dhegrae, mezzo-soprano
Adrian Rosas, bass-baritone
Mila Henry, piano

Thumbprint (2014)

Libretto by Susan Yankowitz

Commissioned by Beth Morrison Projects and HERE Arts Center for the PROTOTYPE Festival

“Mukhtar’s Aria”

Leela Subramaniam, soprano
Mila Henry, piano
Jeff Hudgins, clarinet
Ed Rosenberg, clarinet
Josh Sinton, bass clarinet

Looking at You (work in progress)

Libretto by Rob Handel

Funded, in part, by OPERA America’s Opera Grants for Female Composers program, supported by the Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation

Act 1 , Scene 2: “Scrolling back”

Blythe Gaissert, mezzo-soprano
Mila Henry, piano
Jeff Hudgins, alto saxophone
Ed Rosenberg, tenor saxophone
Josh Sinton, baritone saxophone

Act 2, Scene 1: "Interrogation"

Lucy Dhegrae, mezzo-soprano
Blythe Gaissert, mezzo-soprano
Adrian Rosas, bass-baritone
Leela Subramaniam, soprano
Mila Henry, piano
Jeff Hudgins, alto saxophone
Ed Rosenberg, tenor saxophone
Josh Sinton, baritone saxophone

Conversation with Marc A. Scorca, OPERA America President/CEO

PROGRAM NOTES

The Far Shore: Based on the poem *We Will Not* by the 16th-century Hindu mystic poet Meera Bai (Mirabai), *The Far Shore* addresses the frailty of life.

La-BOR-rat'ry: Ada, Countess of Lovelace, must decide whether to conform to her role as a woman in Victorian society or to follow her passion for numbers and help Charles Babbage on his new Analytical Engine.

Aria: Mukhtar Mai, the illiterate victim of an honor crime, has defied societal convention to bring her attackers to court. After meeting a female justice minister, she realizes the burden of her illiteracy.

Scrolling Back: On the first day of Dorothy's dream job as CTO of a major social media company, she learns that Ethan, her former lover who vanished six months ago, has become the world's most famous whistleblower. Alone at home, she scrolls back through their text messages, searching for a clue as to what happened.

Interrogation: Dorothy has been apprehended by government agents. In an undisclosed location, they question her about Ethan's whereabouts.

ABOUT THE COMPOSER

Praised as “strikingly original” (*The New York Times*) and a “new voice from whom we will surely be hearing more” (*Los Angeles Times*), **Kamala Sankaram** has received commissions from Washington National Opera, Houston Grand Opera, Beth Morrison Projects, PROTOTYPE Festival, Opera on Tap, Opera Memphis and the Brooklyn Youth Chorus, among others. She is the recipient of a Jonathan Larson Award from the American Theatre Wing, and has received grants from OPERA America, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Kevin Spacey Foundation and the MAP Fund. Residencies and fellowships include the MacDowell Colony, the Watermill Center, the Civilians, HERE Arts Center, CAP21, Con Edison/Exploring the Metropolis, the Hermitage and American Lyric Theater. As a resident artist at HERE Arts Center, Sankaram created *Miranda*, which was the winner of the New York Innovative Theatre Award for Outstanding Production of a Musical. Her opera *Thumbprint*, written with librettist Susan Yankowitz, premiered in the 2014 PROTOTYPE Festival and was featured on NPR, Agence France Presse and other media outlets around the world. *Thumbprint* has since received productions at LA Opera and Opera Ithaca.

Also a performer, Kamala has been hailed as “an impassioned soprano with blazing high notes” (*The Wall Street Journal*). She has performed and premiered pieces with Beth Morrison Projects, Anthony Braxton and the Wooster Group, among others, and is the leader of Bombay Rickey, an operatic Bollywood surf ensemble whose debut was named Best Eclectic Album by the Independent Music Awards Vox Pop. Bombay Rickey’s operacabaret on the life of Yma Sumac premiered in the 2016 PROTOTYPE Festival and was most recently presented in London at Tête à Tête’s Cubitt Sessions. Bombay Rickey has been

selected for Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation’s 2017–2018 touring roster, and the group will release its sophomore album in spring 2018.

In addition to her musical pursuits, Sankaram has been a voice actor on Comedy Central’s *Superjail!* and Cartoon Network’s *Golden Age*. She holds a Ph.D. in cognitive psychology from the New School for Social Research, for which she received the Irvin Rock Memorial Award for Outstanding Dissertation.



DARIO ACOSTA

ABOUT THE PERFORMERS

“Vocal versatility and an omnivorous curiosity” (*The New York Times*) are the hallmarks of mezzo-soprano **Lucy Dhegrae**, a passionate vocalist with a flexible technique. She has performed with the International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE), the Albany Symphony and Talea Ensemble, among others. Dhegrae, who is “everywhere new music is being sung” (*New York Classical Review*), regularly premieres new vocal works and operas, and has worked closely with such composers as Unsuk Chin, Jason Eckardt, Susan Botti, Aleksandra Vrebalov and Sky Macklay. Her opera premieres include *Trillium J* by Anthony Braxton, *Andy: A Popera* (Opera Philadelphia/Bearded Ladies Cabaret), *A Marvelous Order* by Judd Greenstein and *The Force of Things* by Ashley Fure. As a “soprano and raconteur” (*The New Yorker*), she directs Resonant Bodies Festival, a festival of contemporary vocal music that takes place in New York City and beyond, which she founded in 2013.

Mezzo-soprano **Blythe Gaissert** has established herself as a fresh and exciting artist in great demand in the United States and abroad for opera, concert and recital engagements. In the 2017–2018 season, Gaissert will be creating the role of Walker Loats in Mikael Karlsson’s cutting-edge one-woman opera *The Echo Drift* at the PROTOTYPE Festival; reprising the role of Hannah After in *As One* with San Diego Opera and Lyric Opera of Kansas City; and singing Hester Prynne in the professional premiere of *The Scarlet Professor* at Amherst College, Sadie in the New York premiere of Ricky Ian Gordon’s *Morning Star* with On Site Opera, and *CAPTCHA* by Robert Paterson with American Modern Ensemble at Carnegie’s Weill Hall. She is also a member of the alt/classical/rock group The Knells, which will be releasing its second album in fall 2017.

Hailed by *The New York Times* as “a stalwart bass-baritone with a burnished voice” and by *Opera News* as a “mellifluous bass-baritone [with] theatrical flair,” **Adrian Rosas** is an emerging young artist with “impressive experience and talent” (*The Boston Globe*). Rosas has performed with opera companies such as Seattle Opera, Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, Opera Saratoga, Houston’s Opera in the Heights and Michigan Opera Theatre. As a champion of contemporary music, he has had the opportunity to work on a variety of new works, including Peter Ash’s *The Golden Ticket*, Robert Xavier Rodriguez’s *Frida*, Petr Kotik’s *Master-Pieces* and Matthew Aucoin’s *Whitman*, as well as newly written operas with the American Lyric Theater in New York and with the Ostrava Center for New Music in the Czech Republic. Equally versed in concert and oratorio work, he has performed at Carnegie Hall, Merkin Concert Hall and Alice Tully Hall.

Praised by *Opera News* as a “gleaming, pitch-perfect soprano” and *The Wall Street Journal* as “piercingly lovely,” soprano **Leela Subramaniam** is turning heads with her rapid ascent to opera stardom. After winning the prestigious Opera Foundation Björn Eklund Scholarship, Subramaniam was invited to join the Bavarian State Opera Studio in Munich for the 2015–2016 season, appearing with the company as Miss Wordsworth in *Albert Herring*, Barbarina in *Le nozze di Figaro*, Papagena in *Die Zauberflöte*, the Dew Fairy in *Hänsel und Gretel*, and Countess Ceprano in *Rigoletto*. Last season, she made her debut with the Gärtnerplatztheater in Munich in Purcell’s *King Arthur*, as well as her LA Opera debut as Annu in Kamala Sankaram’s *Thumbprint*. For the 2017–2018 season, she joins the Metropolitan Opera to cover Papagena in *Die Zauberflöte*, Flower Maiden I in *Parsifal* and Kate Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly*.

ABOUT THE PERFORMERS

Lauded for her “sublime” playing (*Feast of Music*), pianist **Mila Henry** is an integral member of New York’s contemporary opera and music-theater community. She has performed at LA Opera (*Thumbprint*, Beth Morrison Projects), Opera Philadelphia (*We Shall Not Be Moved*) and the Library of Congress (*Fierce Grace: Jeannette Rankin*, OPERA America); served as vocal director for Ripe Time’s Obie-winning *The World is Round* (BAM); and was assistant conductor for American Opera Projects’ premieres of *As One* (BAM) and *The Blind* (Lincoln Center Festival). She is currently the head of music for American Opera Projects’ Composers and the Voice fellowship program. Her versatility has allowed her to assist in a variety of roles, in a range of styles, with collaborations taking her to The Stone, National Sawdust, 54 Below and the Apollo Theater, and alongside Either/Or, The Curiosity Cabinet, Hotel Elefant and the Opera Cowgirls. She lives in Brooklyn.

Jeff Hudgins, a transplanted Texan whose music has been described as “somewhat menacing” (*New York Music Daily*), is a founding member of Bombay Rickey. He has toured in the U.S. and Europe; has premiered works John Zorn, Tim Berne and John Harbison; and has performed in Kamala Sankaram’s award-winning steampunk murder mystery opera, *Miranda* (2012). He most recently appeared in Yara Travieso’s multimedia show *La Medea* (2017). In addition to Bombay Rickey, Hudgins writes for the New York City-based groups Anti-Social Music and Opera On Tap, and performs with Matt Bauer and Lizzie & The Makers, among many others. When Sankaram revealed her plans to perform the works of Yma Sumac in the inaugural form of Bombay Rickey, she found an immediate and enthusiastic band member in Hudgins, who has added Mediterranean and Balkan flair to the ensemble. Bombay Rickey is working on the follow-up to their debut record, 2014’s award-winning *Cinefonia*.

Ed Rosenberg is a composer and saxophonist based in NYC. He lives in Queens with his wife and two cats.

Josh Sinton is a Brooklyn-based baritone saxophonist, bass clarinetist and creative musician. He is part of the renaissance of creative activity that has been happening over the past 10 years in Brooklyn that includes musicians such as Mary Halvorson, Nate Wooley, Travis Laplante, John Zorn, Vijay Iyer, Nico Muhly, Andrew D’Angelo, Megan Schubert and Ingrid Laubrock. Currently he leads the innovative Steve Lacy-repertoire band Ideal Bread (with Kirk Knuffke, Tomas Fujiwara and Adam Hopkins), as well as the trios Musicianer (with Chad Taylor and Jason Ajemian) and Predicate Trio (with Christopher Hoffman and Tom Rainey). He also regularly performs solo material on the baritone saxophone. He is a long-standing member of the Nate Wooley Quintet and Anthony Braxton’s Tri-Centric Orchestra, and he spent many years as a member of Darcy James Argue’s Secret Society.

JOIN US FOR THESE FUTURE EVENTS AT THE NATIONAL OPERA CENTER:

CONVERSATIONS | ANTHONY ROTH COSTANZO

Tuesday, November 14, 2017, 7:00 p.m.

Countertenor Anthony Roth Costanzo — described as having “an instrument of inexorable beauty...virtuously seamless, robust and ethereal” by *Opera News* — will sit down with OPERA America President/CEO Marc A. Scorca to discuss his remarkable career. This season, Costanzo appears in the title role of *Giulio Cesare* at Houston Grand Opera, the Boy in *Written on Skin* at Opera Philadelphia and Orfeo in *Orfeo ed Euridice* at Florida Grand Opera.

EMERGING ARTIST RECITALS | SONGFEST'S MARC AND EVA STERN FELLOWSHIP AWARDEES

Thursday, December 7, 2017, 7:00 p.m.

Join us for this recital featuring up-and-coming young talents from SongFest, which offers two distinct training programs: a summer institute held each June at the Colburn School in Los Angeles and a recently established winter intensive in California's Carmel Valley. SongFest attracts students from some of the nation's top music conservatories, as well as an internationally distinguished roster of artist teachers.

CREATORS IN CONCERT | PAUL MORAVEC

Wednesday, February 7, 2018, 7:00 p.m.

Pulitzer Prize winner Paul Moravec, whose music has been described as “tuneful, ebullient and wonderfully energetic” (*San Francisco Chronicle*), will present excerpts from his vocal works and offer reflections on his creative process. Among his recent successes is the opera *The Shining*, with a libretto by Mark Campbell, which premiered at Minnesota Opera 2016.

Register for future events at operaamerica.org/Onstage.

Speak to an OPERA America staff member if you have questions about any of our events or if you are interested in becoming a member.

Be a part of the conversation.

#OAOnstage

NYC Cultural
Affairs

**THE AMPHION
FOUNDATION, INC.**

The Aaron Copland
Fund for Music 

Onstage at the Opera Center is supported in part by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council, and by grants from the Amphion Foundation and the Aaron Copland Fund for Music.