

PROTOTYPE

OPERA | THEATRE | NOW

The premier festival of music-theatre
and opera-theatre

PROTOTYPE: OPERA | THEATRE | NOW ANNOUNCES EIGHTH ANNUAL FESTIVAL FEATURING SIX NEW PRESENTATIONS

ELLEN WEST

Ricky Ian Gordon + Frank Bidart
NYC Premiere | Operatic Poem

BLOOD MOON

Garrett Fisher + Ellen McLaughlin
World Premiere | Opera-Theatre

MAGDALENE

Danielle Birrittella + Zoe Aja Moore
World Premiere | Chamber Opera in 13 Movements

IRON & COAL

Jeremy Schonfeld
NYC Premiere | Semi-Staged Multi-Media Concert

CIÓN: REQUIEM OF RAVEL'S BOLÉRO

Gregory Maqoma and Nhlanhla Mahlangu
US Premiere | Dance / Music-Theatre

REV. 23

Julian Wachner + Cerise Lim Jacobs
NYC Premiere | Opera-Theatre

JANUARY 9-18, 2020

“A program so essential that it feels like it must have been around forever...Shifts the whole paradigm of what opera is and can be” –New York Observer

“One of the great things about being in New York City in January.” –Opera News

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: JULY 10, 2019

o·pe·ra :: /'äp(ə)rə/ :: a work, a labor {Italian, Latin} – from *operari*, *opus*, **op-*, “to work, produce in abundance.”

With its eighth innovative season in 2020, **PROTOTYPE: Opera | Theatre | Now** continues its rigorous exploration of *the work*, producing and presenting an abundance of provocative shows in the interstitial realms between music, operatic tradition, and theatre. This season, Beth Morrison Projects and HERE’s meteoric annual festival lands on stages across New York from January 9-18, presenting 6 works by 23 composers and librettists along with hundreds of collaborators – productions ranging from black-box chamber opera to multi-media rock concerts.

PROTOTYPE not only keeps its finger on the pulse of transformative creative practice, but also does what the best opera—and the best theatre—has always sought to do: bring into stark relief the relevant human questions of our time. Curated by Festival Directors **Jecca Barry**, **Kristin Marting**, **Beth Morrison**, and **Kim Whitener**, this year’s programming considers the aftermath of a political coup, grapples with kinship, identity, mental illness, eating disorders, sexuality and ethics, and intergenerational narratives surrounding concentration camps (now an allegory for the parallels in our own country). There has never been a more important time to ask our questions on the stage, in ever new and challenging ways, and this is one more reason to agree with *The Washington Post* that the festival represents “the best news in opera in New York”.

This year’s program leads with a NYC premiere of the “riveting one act opera” (*Wall Street Journal*) **Ellen West**, co-produced by Beth Morrison Projects and Opera Saratoga. Drawn from one of the earliest cases of existential psychoanalysis, with a score from composer Ricky Ian Gordon and text from poet Frank Bidart, the work juxtaposes fictitious journals of the eponymous West (played by Kiera Duffy) with clinical notes from her psychiatrist Ludwig Binswanger (played by superstar baritone Nathan Gunn). Emma Griffin directs, with music direction by Lidiya Yankovskaya.

A world premiere of **Blood Moon** (co-presented with Baruch Performing Arts Center and in partnership with Japan Society) combines elements of opera, choreography, puppetry, and a taiko-infused score in a meditative exploration of life and the possibility of atonement. Featuring a poetic score by Garrett Fisher, a libretto by Ellen McLaughlin, direction by Rachel Dickstein, and music direction by Steven Osgood, **Blood Moon** is produced and commissioned by Beth Morrison Projects.

Magdalene, a Chamber Opera in 13 Movements, will also have its world premiere in 2020. A “wild meditation on transformation and desire” the piece is set to Marie Howe’s **Magdalene** poems. The work is collectively scored by 13 women: Leila Adu, Ruby Kato Attwood, Danielle Birrittella, Christina Courtin, Gabrielle Herbst, Molly Joyce, Emma O’Halloran, Gemma Peacocke, Kamala Sankaram, Bergrun Snæbjörnsdóttir, Annika Socolofsky, Gyda Valtýsdóttir, and Sheena Wenger, with additional music by Ellen Reid. Co-created by Danielle Birrittella (the featured performer) and Zoe Aja Moore, who directs, **Magdalene** is produced by PROTOTYPE on the HERE Mainstage.

The searing rock-opera **Iron & Coal**, called “gloriously spectacular and overwhelmingly beautiful” by DC Metro Theater Arts, has its NYC Premiere at co-presenter Gerald W. Lynch

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Theater at John Jay College of Criminal Justice, bringing to this personal and transformative opus the talents of Contemporaneous, MasterVoices, and the Brooklyn Youth Chorus (produced by Beth Morrison Projects). Composed and created by Jeremy Schonfeld and performed by him along with Lincoln Clauss and Rinde Eckert, *Iron & Coal* draws on Schonfeld's father's memoir about surviving internment at Auschwitz, *Absence of Closure*. This NYC Premiere is directed by Kevin Newbury with music direction and arrangements by David Bloom.

The U.S. Premiere of *Cion: Requiem of Ravel's 'Boléro'* brings this “breathtaking”, “intimate and heartfelt” work from South African choreographer Gregory Vuyani Maqoma to co-presenter's Joyce Theatre, conceived of by Maqoma in response to Zakes Mda's novel, *Cion*, and Ravel's *Boléro*, with music direction and arrangements by Nhlanhla Mahlangu. Described by Maqoma as “a lament, a requiem required to awaken a part of us, the connection to departed souls,” this powerful journey is a production of Vuyani Dance Theater.

Lauded as an “an endlessly unfolding chain of highly controlled polystylism” (*Boston Musical Intelligencer*) Julian Wachner's *REV. 23* is an exploration of an “unpublished” new chapter of the Book of Revelation. With an audacious libretto by Cerise Lim Jacobs, this new striking production by director James Darrah takes us on a fantastical journey through the myths of our collective unconscious. *REV. 23* brings Persephone, Lucifer, and others to life through an “endlessly creative score” (*Classical Voice North America*) featuring soprano Colleen Daly and baritone Alexander Elliott. Produced by Trinity Church Wall Street in a new production, *REV. 23* plays at co-presenter Gerald W. Lynch Theater at John Jay College of Criminal Justice and is conducted by Daniela Candillari.

TICKETING + RESOURCES

- Individual tickets for PROTOTYPE members go on sale October 1; ticket sales are open to the public October 15. Prices: \$35-\$75 | \$30 with PROTO Pack | \$60 with Premium PROTO Pack.
- For ease of planning, select preferred schedule via PROTOTYPE's interactive calendar: www.prototypefestival.org/shows
- High resolution photos, libretti, and more can be found in our press room: www.calliopePR.com/press-room

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SHOW LISTINGS

Ellen West

NYC Premiere | Operatic Poem

January 14 at 7pm *special PROTOTYPE benefit performance*
January 15, 17, & 18 at 8pm
\$35-\$75 | \$30 with PROTO Pack | \$60 with Premium PROTO Pack
Post-show conversation with the artists on Jan 15
Panel discussion with industry professionals on Jan 17

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 consider 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. *Ellen West* will be portrayed by Kiera Duffy and Binswanger/Frank will be portrayed by Nathan Gunn.

“Ricky Ian Gordon’s riveting one act opera...” —*Wall Street Journal*

“Seldom is opera so deeply personal... You want to turn away but you can’t.” —*Times Union*

“If the music of Ricky Ian Gordon had to be defined by a single quality, it would be the bursting effervescence... It’s caviar for a world gorging on pizza!” —*The New York Times*

Composed by **Ricky Ian Gordon**
Poetry by **Frank Bidart**
Directed by **Emma Griffin**
Music direction by **Lidiya Yankovskaya**

Kaye Playhouse at Hunter College | 75 minutes

Co-produced by Beth Morrison Projects and Opera Saratoga, Lawrence Edelson General and Artistic Director.

Presented by PROTOTYPE. Commissioned by Beth Morrison Projects and Opera Saratoga with generous leadership support from The Poetry Foundation, The Ted & Mary Jo Shen Charitable Gift Fund, David and Kiki Gindler, and The Francis Goellet Charitable Lead Trusts

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Blood Moon

World Premiere | Opera-Theatre

January 9, 12, 15 - 17 at 7:30pm

January 11 at 2pm

\$35-\$75 | \$30 with PROTO Pack | \$60 with Premium PROTO Pack

Post-show conversation with the artists on Jan 11

Panel discussion with industry professionals on Jan 16

In this poetic, opera-theatre work, three characters reckon with the past on the night of a full moon: a nephew who returns to the mountain-top where he left his aunt to die forty years earlier, the ghost of the aunt he abandoned, and the moon that presides over this night of reckoning. Choreography, puppetry and a taiko-infused score collide in this story of joy, regret, and atonement at the end of a life. Inspired by a Noh play, *Blood Moon* is a meditation on the end of life, the nature of joy, regret, and whether atonement is possible.

"Mr. Fisher has combined elements of opera, dance, Indian raga, Japanese Noh theater and more into fusions that have both a ritualistic intensity and an improvisatory freedom...a strong, unified and strikingly individual utterance of unambiguous beauty." —*The New York Times*

"Dickstein's true innovation is in the visual language she creates, a striking blend of movement and video projection that conveys a fragmented yet distinctly ancient world." —*The New Yorker*

"[McLaughlin] is a dramatist of courage, intelligence, wit and lyricism" —Tony Kushner

Composed by **Garrett Fisher**

Libretto by **Ellen McLaughlin**

Directed by **Rachel Dickstein**

Music direction by Steven Osgood

Baruch Performing Arts Center | 70 minutes

Produced and commissioned by Beth Morrison Projects

Co-presented with Baruch Performing Arts Center in partnership with Japan Society

Magdalene

World Premiere | Chamber Opera in 13 Movements

January 11, 13, 15 - 17 at 7:30pm

January 12 at 2pm

\$35-\$75 | \$30 with PROTO Pack | \$60 with Premium PROTO Pack

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Post-show conversation with the artists on Jan 13
Panel discussion with industry professionals on Jan 15

Magdalene is a chamber opera in thirteen movements: a wild meditation on transformation and desire scored by the collective voice of thirteen women. Set to Marie Howe's *Magdalene* poems, the opera invites an audience into the interior world of Magdalene, a woman alive now who strives to heal the unyielding split between the sacred and the sexual. Encountering her life in flashes - wandering through a hotel, lighting birthday candles, taking pills, making love in the ocean - Magdalene finds transcendence in the mundane to finally become the subject of her own story.

"...words and music are integrated into an ethereal multi-dimensional sensory exploration, that is both sonically and visually immersive....Birrittella takes the long view and infuses it with a sense of wonder." –*Fabrik Magazine*

"Danielle Birrittella is something of a nostalgic enigma..." –*The Line of Best Fit*

"...vocals deliver a delicacy that is emotionally tranquilizing" –*Georgie Magazine*

Co-created by **Danielle Birrittella** and **Zoe Aja Moore**

Music by Leila Adu, Ruby Kato Attwood, Danielle Birrittella, Christina Courtin, Gabrielle Herbst, Molly Joyce, Emma O'Halloran, Gemma Peacocke, Kamala Sankaram, Bergrun Snæbjörnsdóttir, Annika Socolofsky, Gyda Valtýsdóttir, and Sheena Wenger with additional music by Ellen Reid

Poetry by **Marie Howe**

Directed by **Zoe Aja Moore**

Featuring **Danielle Birrittella**

Music direction by **Mila Henry** and **Marc Lowenstein**

HERE Mainstage Theatre | 70 minutes

Produced by PROTOTYPE

Iron & Coal

NYC premiere | Semi-Staged Multi-Media Concert

January 10, 11 at 8pm

\$35-\$75 | \$30 with PROTO Pack | \$60 with Premium PROTO Pack

Post-show conversation with the artists on Jan 10

A searing rock-opera, *Iron & Coal* zeros in on the relationship between a father and son in the shadow of the Holocaust. Tapping his father, an Auschwitz survivor, composer Jeremy Schonfeld weaves together his personal experiences with excerpts from his father's memoir *Absence of Closure*. The ghosts of a vanished world mix with the present, brought to life

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through animation, a rock band, and multigenerational choruses, to celebrate the indomitable spirit of our ancestors and the legacy we carry with us.

“The sheer magnitude of the concert event was enough to inspire wonder and awe.” –*DC Metro Theater Arts*

“Gloriously spectacular and overwhelmingly beautiful” –*DC Metro Theater Arts*

“Part rock anthem, part off-Broadway musical, part singer-songwriter opus, the stirringly wistful music regularly gathers swelling forcefulness, with snowballing orchestral textures and catchy, urgent rhythms.” –*Washington Post*

Composed, created, and performed by **Jeremy Schonfeld**
Directed by **Kevin Newbury**
Music direction and arrangements by **David Bloom**
Featuring **Contemporaneous**, **MasterVoices**, and **Brooklyn Youth Chorus**

Gerald W. Lynch Theater at John Jay College of Criminal Justice | 90 minutes

Produced by Beth Morrison Projects
Commissioned and developed by Strathmore and Beth Morrison Projects
Co-presented with Gerald W. Lynch Theater at John Jay College of Criminal Justice

Cion: Requiem of Ravel's Boléro

US Premiere | Dance/Music-Theatre

January 15 - 17 at 8pm
January 18 at 2pm and 8pm
\$10-\$75 | \$30 with PROTO Pack | \$60 with Premium PROTO Pack
Post-show conversation with the artists on Jan 10

Set in a graveyard filled with the persistent cries of visitors in mourning and the poignant music of Isicathamiya singers (an a cappella singing style originating from the Zulus), *Cion: Requiem of Ravel's Boléro* vividly elicits emotions associated with the loss of life. Physically charged and visually striking, the work is choreographed by South African native and internationally known choreographer Gregory Vuyani Maqoma. *Cion* draws inspiration from author Zakes Mda's novel *Cion* and Ravel's *Boléro* and is, in Maqoma's words, “a lament, a requiem required to awaken a part of us, the connection to the departed souls”.

“Intimate and heartfelt...” –*Culture Spot LA*

“...a breathtaking performance.” –*Artsvark* (South Africa)

“My advice is this, stop what you're doing and get tickets while you can.” –*Artsvark* (South Africa)

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Conceived and choreographed by **Gregory Maqoma**
Music direction and arrangements by **Nhlanhla Mahlangu**
Featuring **Vuyani Dance Theatre**

The Joyce | 60 minutes

Produced by Vuyani Dance Theatre
Co-presented with The Joyce

REV. 23

NYC Premiere | Opera-Theatre

January 17 at 8pm

January 18 at 3pm and 8pm

\$35-\$75 | \$30 with PROTO Pack | \$60 with Premium PROTO Pack

Post-show conversation with the artists on Jan 17

Lauded as an "an endlessly unfolding chain of highly controlled polystylism" (*Boston Musical Intelligencer*) Julian Wachner's *REV. 23* is an exploration of an "unpublished" new chapter of the Book of Revelation. With an audacious libretto by Cerise Lim Jacobs, this new striking production by director James Darrah takes us on a fantastical journey through the myths of our collective unconscious.

"Wachner's endlessly creative score moved with integrity and versatility among styles, not only rock, jazz, and bluesy settings, but affecting chamber music." —*Classical Voice*

"... bursting with innuendo and cheeky wit..." —*New England Theatre Geek*

"Wachner is both an unapologetic modernist and an open-minded eclectic - his music has something to say." —*American Record Guide*

Composed by **Julian Wachner**

Libretto by **Cerise Lim Jacobs**

Directed by **James Darrah**

Music direction by **Daniela Candillari**

Gerald W. Lynch Theater at John Jay College of Criminal Justice | 120 minutes

Produced by Trinity Church Wall Street

Co-presented with Gerald W. Lynch Theater at John Jay College of Criminal Justice

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ABOUT HERE

Since 1993, HERE has been one of New York's most prolific producing and presenting organizations, and today stands at the forefront of the city's presenters of new multi-genre art. HERE's aesthetic represents the independent, the innovative, and the experimental. HERE is committed to providing boundary breaking artists including those working in music-theatre and opera-theatre with commissioning, development, and producing support. Premieres developed and produced at HERE include Kamala Sankaram's first opera *Miranda*, Yoav Gal's *Mosheh*, Stefan Weisman & David Cote's *The Scarlet Ibis*, Paul Pinto's *Thomas Paine in Violence*, and Leah Coloff's *ThisTree*. In 2013, HERE joined forces with Beth Morrison Projects to found the PROTOTYPE festival. In addition, HERE has developed such acclaimed works as Eve Ensler's *The Vagina Monologues*; Basil Twist's *Symphonie Fantastique*; Young Jean Lee's *Songs of The Dragons Flying to Heaven*; Trey Lyford and Geoff Sobelle's *all wear bowlers*; and Taylor Mac's *The Lily's Revenge*. Most recently, HERE commissioned and developed Taylor Mac's *Gary: A Sequel to Titus Andronicus*, which made its Broadway debut to critical success in 2019 and was nominated for 7 Tony Awards. HERE has garnered 18 Obies, 2 Bessies, 5 Drama Desk Nominations, 4 Doris Duke Awards, and 2 MacArthur Fellowships. www.here.org

ABOUT BMP

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. "More than any other figure in the industry, Beth Morrison has helped to propel the art form into the 21st century (Opera News)." BMP encourages risk-taking in all its artists, resulting in provocative works that represent a dynamic and lasting legacy for a new American canon. Over the past five years alone, BMP has produced works in 43 venues in 22 cities around the world. 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 ARTISTIC DIRECTORS

Kristin Marting is HERE's Founding Artistic Director and a director of hybrid work based in NYC. She cultivates artists and programs all events for two performance spaces for an annual audience of 30,000. She co-created and curates HERE's Artist Residency Program. Under her leadership, HERE has garnered sixteen OBIE Awards, two OBIE Grants and a CUNY Booth Award for artistic achievement, two Berilla Kerr Awards, four NY Innovative Theatre Awards, two Bessie Awards, one Pulitzer nomination, six Drama Desk nominations, two MacArthur "Genius Grant" Fellowships and most recently, seven Tony nominations. She has created and directed 29 works for the stage (nine original hybrid works, six opera-theatre and music-theatre works, nine adaptations of novels & short stories and five classic plays) and is currently developing *Looking at You* with Kamala Sankaram and Rob Handel. Other recent projects include *Silent*

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Voices at BAM, *Assembled Identity* with Purva Bedi and Mariana Newhard, *IDIOT* with Robert Lyons; and *Bombay Rickey*, an opera cabaret also in Prototype. She has lectured and been a guest artist at Bard College, Brown University, Columbia University, Harvard University, NYU and Williams College. She regularly serves on grant panels for TCG, DCA, NEA and NYSCA, among others. She was recently named a nytheatre.com Person of the Decade for outstanding contribution, a Leader to Watch by Art Table, and honored with a BAX10 Award.

Kim Whitener is the former Executive Director of HERE from 2007-2018, working in partnership with Founding Artistic Director Kristin Marting to co-curate and co-produce HERE's producing and presenting programs, as well as other special projects. She is currently an independent creative producer, working in the contemporary opera-theatre, music-theatre, and other multi-genre landscapes through her company, KiWi Productions. Prior to joining HERE, Kim spent six years as an independent creative producer with KiWi, working with a range of US artists in the contemporary theatre, dance-theatre, and multi-media worlds, including The Builders Association, Big Dance Theater, Martha Clarke, Richard Foreman's Ontological-Hysteric Theater, 33 Fainting Spells, among others. She was Managing Director of The Wooster Group for four years, and held other theatre management and producing positions in NY (Playwrights Horizons), Boston (Suffolk University/Boston Music Theatre Project), and Philadelphia (American Music Theatre Festival) with a specialty in new music-theatre. She has served on many grant panels and taught seminars nationally and internationally on production, management, and development of projects for touring. kiwi-productions.com

Beth Morrison, the opera-theatre producer lauded as a "contemporary opera mastermind" (LA Times) and "a powerhouse leading the industry to new heights" (WQXR), is President and Creative Producer of Beth Morrison Projects. Beth created Beth Morrison Projects (BMP) in 2006 to identify and support the work of emerging and established living composers. BMP is celebrated as an industry disruptor and tastemaker at the forefront of musical and theatrical innovation by commissioning, developing, producing and touring the groundbreaking new works of these 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. *Opera News* has noted: "More than any other figure in the opera industry, Beth Morrison has helped propel the art form into the twenty-first century." In 2013 Beth co-founded the PROTOTYPE Festival with HERE, which has become "essential to the evolution of American opera" (*New Yorker*). Beth served a founding tenure as Producer for the Yale Institute for Music Theatre, as well as Producer for New York City Opera's VOX: Contemporary American Opera Lab. She is currently an advisory board member of National Sawdust and Brooklyn Youth Chorus, as well as a board member of the international competition, Music Theatre Now and Voices 21C, a social justice choir. Morrison is frequently asked to give lectures at conservatories across the country, including Mannes School of Music, NYU, Manhattan School of Music, Arizona State University, University of Illinois Champaign Urbana and more. Beginning in the 2019/2020 season, she will be a lecturer at Yale School of Drama. Morrison is also in demand as a speaker both nationally and internationally and has delivered key note speeches for Classical:Next and Opera Europa among others. She holds a Bachelor of Music from Boston University, a Master of Music from Arizona State University, and a MFA from Yale School of Drama.

Jecca Barry is an opera, theatre, music & collaborative performance producer. She currently serves as Executive Director of Beth Morrison Projects and Co-Director of PROTOTYPE Festival. Following undergraduate and graduate degrees in avant-garde flute performance (Royal

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Northern College of Music; New York University), Jecca discovered her passion for producing through working with arts groups in Paris. During that time she co-created & performed experimental performance works that combined media & classical music, touring them to Amsterdam, London, and New York. In New York, Jecca co-founded the Empire State Sinfonia, and produced large-scale orchestra performances at venues around New York City, including Alice Tully Hall. She has developed, produced and toured theatre works by acclaimed theatre artist Geoff Sobelle (*The Object Lesson*; *HOME*) to festivals & theatres around the world, including Australia, New Zealand, Hong Kong, Edinburgh, and Taiwan, among many other locations. Jecca also has expertise in finance, including work as a business manager to high net worth clients & businesses at Spielman, Koenigsberg & Parker, LLP, and non-profit women's rights advocacy at Huairou Commission and GROOTS International.

CREDITS

PROTOTYPE: Opera/Theatre/Now receives major funding from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and other leadership support from the Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation. Additional support is provided by The Amphion Foundation, BMI Foundation, Gladys Kriebel Delmas Foundation, Alice M. Ditson Fund of Columbia University, Jean and Louis Dreyfus Foundation, Fresh Sound Foundation, Howard Gilman Foundation, Francis Goelet Charitable Lead Trusts, Antonia & Vladimir Kulaev Cultural Heritage Fund, Samuel I. Newhouse Foundation, OPERA America, The Reed Foundation, and The Ted Snowdon Foundation. Additional support is provided by the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council, and the New York State Council on the Arts, with the support of Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Legislature. PROTOTYPE receives generous corporate support from Meyer Sound.