

St. Ann's Warehouse presents

Beth Morrison Projects and **HERE**

PROTOTYPE

Carmina Slovenica

Toxic Psalms


Ultimate Collective Experience

Performed by **Vocal Theatre Carmina Slovenica**

Directed by **Karmina Šilec**

North American Premiere

January 8-11, 2015

Produced and Co-Presented by  **carminaslovenica**

Performed by:

Ambrož Maja, Arnejčič Ana, Bočnik Tamara, Borec Saša, Borko Mojca, Borkovič Neža, Črnčič Jasmina, Dvornik Danaja, Germ Eva, Gostenčnik Anja, Gostenčnik Staša, Gril Rogina Kaja, Hanžič Nina, Lačen Alja, Lavrenčič Alenka, Lazar Petra, Novak Ana, Pečovnik Nika, Pušenjak Nina, Reljič Aina, Ritonija Sara, Sandrin Ana, Studen Ana, Stojkovič Melanija, Habjanič Sintija, Šimek Barbara, Topolovec Jera, Vidovič Ženet, Vinkovič Anja, Zidarič Mojca, Žnidar Anja

Costume Design: **Belinda Radulović**

Set Design: **Karmina Šilec**

Lighting Design: **Andrej Hajdinjak**

Sound Design: **Danilo Ženko**

Text extracts by:

Stanislaw Lem, Hanne Blank, Svetlana Makarovič, Hafiz, Jean Luc Nancy, Karmina Šilec, Ifigenija Zagoričnik, Drago Jančar

Pre-recorded sounds:

Dean Santomieri, Marko Hatlak, Musica Cubicularis, Karmina Šilec, Willi Bopp, Danilo Ženko, Big Band of Slovenian Army forces

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Indie Opera and New Music

HERE

ST. ANN'S WAREHOUSE

“I’ll tell you. You’re young, but you’re one of us, and I’m one of us, so I’ll tell you.”

8 Tableaux

1. *Molto Adagio: Banality of Evil*
2. *Individuum - Collectivum*
3. *Ghetto*
4. *The Subject Tonight*
5. *This Is My Body that Is Given to You*
6. *Relay of Youth*
7. *Riding Through the Marshes*
8. *Big Other*

ULTIMATE COLLECTIVE EXPERIENCE

Collective

Crowds stir ambivalent feelings in people. They attract us and turn us off at the same time.

We are attracted by their spontaneity, by the strong impulses that they can produce. They turn us off because of their uncontrolled behavior, their strong physical power and psychological pressures on individuals, etc. It seems that crowds carry in themselves a power and characteristics which far exceeds the mere sum of psychological and physical characteristics of the individuals within it. That is why it is tempting to worship images of large numbers of bodies. Simply because they are, when in a crowd, seductive as they collect power for everyone.

Something happens to individuals when they gather in a group. They think and act differently than they would on their own. Why do people in groups tend to suppress independent thinking and refuse to take responsibility for their actions? Why is true leadership suppressed and undermined when most people become members of a group? Is it just the concentrated physical energy of so many people gathered in the same space? Is it the collection of demands, wishes, feelings, and motivations of individuals gathered in a crowd? Is it some particular social influence which characterizes large groups of people that individuals simply have to yield to?

Chorus

“The chorus can take over from us and experience for us our innermost and most spontaneous feelings and attitudes.” - Slavoj Žižek

The Chorus manifests a collective body, and as an organism it reflects a human desire to merge. At the same time, it manifests social phantasms. The collective becomes an individual and an individual becomes a part of the collective. The sound of the multitude of voices—choir—the whole union of bodies in a crowd, creates an illusion of humanity as a single human being. At the same time, this monology (the Chorus works as a single character), the Chorus on stage (the Chorus works as a multitude), works as a mirror and partner of the audience. The Chorus admits that it is a simulation of the Crowd and is therefore the most genuine and the one most entitled to pass the message over to the crowd. The Chorus is not an individual that stepped out from the Crowd, but its direct extension, a social subconsciousness, a mirror of the Crowd. Chorus as a phenomenon serves as a ghost limb of the society. It is not there, since it is collectively excluded from the Masses as it is performing for them, but it is still felt as an emotion, as a cry of society. Chorus is people who are moved.

TOXIC PSALMS

Toxic Psalms are a reflection of the spiritual anguish of today.

The word “toxic” derives from the Greek *toxon* (meaning weapon, bow), while the word “psalm” derives from *psallein*, meaning “playing” (an instrument) as well as “to snatch,” “steal,” or “remove.” “Toxic Psalms” metaphorically means to draw a poisonous bow, which is being played on “in gloria” to move “something away”—tense psalms that are about to be released. At the centre of the project is the shaman idea: everyone and everything that man creates can be turned against him if used without respect for life. To have control over something matterless, we control it with the knowledge about it and so gain power over it. The almost sinister thought, “I’ll tell you. You’re young, but you’re one of us, and I’m one of us, so I’ll tell you,” gives the *Toxic Psalms* its tone. Death speaks and murderous plague intones in the background of the whole concert arch. Scenes move between different spiritual worlds of the past and the present. The setting is an imaginary world moving among the shadows of our ancestors and is a reflection of modernity at the same time. Through music the project reflects Palestine, Syria, Pussy Riot, weapons, concentration camps, blood feuds, extinctions, contaminations of religions, and human brutality. The life of a man is changed into a drama here and now: men killing for the glory of their psalms. The author’s poise is not one of an agitator—stirring the feeling that “something has to be done”—it is rigorously contemplative. Despite this “detachment,” the violence in *Toxic Psalms* is politically stressed and religiously marked. Religion is one of the main reasons for murderous violence in the world. But true morality requires us to accept full responsibility for our actions without hiding behind the figure of the big Other or in the anonymity of a group.

Music

Adventurous juxtaposition of music from the Medieval to the present with fascinating sounds of extended vocal techniques

Jacob Cooper: *Stabat Mater Dolorosa / The Sorrowful Mother Stood (excerpt)*

Bronius Kutavičius: *Paskutines pagoniu apeigos / Last Pagan Rites*

Karin Rehnqvist: *Puksanger / Timpanum songs (excerpt)*

Liga Celma: *Sauceja dziesma / A Song*

Tellu Virkkalla: *Tuullet / Winds*

Sergei Rachmaninoff: *Bogoroditse Devo / Rejoice, O Virgin*

John Pamintuan: *De profundis / From the Depths*

Lojze Lebič: *Mozaiki / Mosaics*

Sarah Hopkins: *Past Life Melodies*

Syrian orthodox (arr. K. Šilec): *Wa habibi / My Beloved*

Boaz Avni: *Kyrie eleison / Lord, Have Mercy on Us*

Veljo Tormis: *Raua needmine / Curse upon Iron (excerpt)*

Giovanni Pergolesi: *Sancta Mater Speciosa / The Beautiful Mother Stood (from Stabat Mater)*

A Post-Show Conversation about *The Power of the Collective Voice* will follow the January 10, 3pm show. *The Power of the Collective Voice* will feature vocal theatre innovator Karmina Šilec, Dianne Berkun-Menaker of the Brooklyn Youth Chorus, Corinna Skema Snyder of the East European Folklife Center, with Amanda Angel of WQXR/ Operavore moderating. They will be discussing the collective voice as the ultimate shared human experience.

CHOREGIE

Theatre of Voices

Choregie is a performance in the “no-man’s-world,” a world that is not a world of music, drama, or dance; it is a scenic adventure.

Choregie focuses on the creation process that brings the musical notion of composing to the theatrical aspects of performing and staging. In Choregie, a “meta composition” is created by positioning different music materials into a bigger composition. Treatment of voice, movement, light, image, sound, gesture and other elements of theatrical production is mostly based on musical principles and compositional techniques, and so musical thinking applies to the performance as a whole. Different elements in the performance merge into one (movement, singing, word, visual), all means are used either in a balance or in favor of one; a fusion of all this gives very different semantic directions. Inside this field a dialogue starts between the sound and the space, between the space and the performers, between the performers and the audience, between the audience and the sound. Sound and image carry different meanings and with this coexistence a third meaning can be achieved. In such a creative process we are interested most in the things that do not only have an unambiguous meaning. Sometimes we simply don’t want to narrow down a text (either music or words) to one meaning only. It seems exciting to allow the familiar (or unfamiliar) materials, on which a Choregie project is built, the possibility to discover in them always and again new perspectives, various levels and even layers. Such exploring always becomes an open process. The music itself becomes interesting also in other ways as it gains references to a non-musical world. The basic disposition of Choregie is music which refers to other fields, music which reacts to other fields.

What is also interesting in the Choregie concept is the vocal exploration being carried out by the singers. The process of working could be called a Voice Laboratorium, or even better a Voice Exploratorium; voice is namely in the center of research. In the performance, the voice is impersonated and becomes an independent manifestation, a personality or personalities. At the same time, the voice becomes, embodies, and transforms into a completely different character, a different spirit. It has a direct link to the whole specter of emotions. A psychoanalytical language of sounds is built, as the sounds create a “sound landscape” which controls the theatre or concert stage. By following innovations in terms of comprehending beauty and the depth of the meaning of vocal music, our projects represent a rich presentation of various sound colors.

Each new project is an expedition into the field of the unknown and the unexplored. Artistically, we parallel different types of music and various musical eras; by merging the ethnic, the early and the contemporary we try to create new, exciting musical contexts.

COMPANY BIOGRAPHIES

CREATORS

Karmina Šilec (*Director*) has brought freshness and originality to the world of vocal music and theatre, opening new spaces of expression, persuasiveness, intensity of experience, and communication. Her projects are provocative and daring; her ideas break taboos, both of society and music. With her Choregie concept and its innovative interventions, she has opened wider artistic spaces and set trends worldwide. She is an Artistic Director of Carmina Slovenica and Choregie – New Music Theatre, and conductor, stage director, set designer, and choreographer. She works with the most prominent

festivals and artists worldwide and is considered a creative phenomenon. Karmina Šilec has received more than 20 of the highest international awards, among them the prestigious ITI - Music Theatre Now award in the category Music beyond Opera and the Robert Edler award for her contribution to the world choir movement. As conductor, she has projects with various ensembles: the Carmina Slovenica choir, the Radio Slovenia Symphony Orchestra, the Slovenian National Opera and Ballet, the Slovenian National Project Choir, the jKebataola! ensemble, and many ensembles worldwide.

Her ensemble Carmina Slovenica has been invited to art events of the highest esteem such as the World Music Days, Ruhrtriennale, Festival d'Automne á Paris, Moscow Easter Festival, Dresdner Musikfestspiele, Ruhrtriennale, Melbourne Festival, the European Symposium on Choral Music, Steirischer Herbst, Holland Festival, America Cantat, Choir Olympics, etc.

Carmina Slovenica holds a central position internationally in the vocal music scene. The company has done concert tours worldwide, won many top awards at international competitions, participated in various international projects, and received excellent reviews of the ensemble's performances by musical experts and critics ... all these achievements speak for themselves and confirm the ensemble's remarkable reputation.

The performances of Carmina Slovenica's incredible musical narrative are distinguished for precise vocal discipline, youthful energy, musical and scenic imagination, and artistic persuasiveness. In selecting the repertoire, its groundbreaking exploration of voices as an instrument, as eloquent language in and of itself, expands the boundaries of vocal concert performances, creating landscapes of sound. Staged performances of Carmina Slovenica can best be described as virtuosic: with impeccable intonation, clear sound, brilliant movement, free of obstacles, almost auto-hypnotic—defined by a flow of energy of an utterly disciplined and ambitious ensemble. With this concept of vocal theatre, the ensemble has performed on stages worldwide: Tokyo Metropolitan Art Space, Grand St. Petersburg Philharmonic Hall, Esplanade Singapore, Teresa Carreño Theatre Caracas, Hong Kong Cultural Centre, RadialSystem Berlin, San Francisco Symphony Hall, Teatro Colon Buenos Aires, Théâtre de la Ville Paris, and Auditorium Rome, among others.

Carmina Slovenica performs with an artistry that inspires audiences and critics alike and it stands as a model in the international choir movement.

DESIGNERS

Belinda Radulović (*Costume Design*) was first engaged in fashion and presented her creations at the prominent fashion markets in New York, Milan, and Turin. Nowadays she is active as a costume designer for the performing arts (theatre, opera, dance, film). Her costumes have been awarded on many occasions and have been shown at several exhibitions, including the prestigious Prague Quadrennial.

Andrej Hajdinjak (*Lighting Design*) is one of the most important Slovenian artists in the field of lighting design. He has collaborated on more than 200 drama, dance, ballet, opera, and concert productions in Slovenia and abroad. He was awarded the Borštnik Award for lighting design in theatre performance. He focuses mainly on lighting design in the performing arts, consulting, training, and implementation of other stage events.

Danilo Ženko (*Sound Design*) is a Slovenian record producer and live-sound engineer. He works as a sound designer at concerts, in theatres, and the biggest open air events in Europe, working with top artists such as Ricardo Mutti, BB King, Ray Charles, Paquito de Rivera, Stephano Grapelli, Lester Bowie, Lalo Schifrin, Jose Carreras, and many others. He is also a mentor in a private audio engineering school.

PROTOTYPE

PROTOTYPE: Opera/Theatre/Now is the annual festival of visionary opera-theatre and music-theatre works by pioneering contemporary artists from New York City and around the world, co-produced each year by HERE and Beth Morrison Projects. The festival is the only one of its kind in the United States – presenting both fully produced presentations and work-in-progress showings of original genre-bending works by both emerging and career artists from the contemporary classical opera-theatre and music-theatre idiom. Launched in January 2013, PROTOTYPE has since produced and presented a combined 12 genre-defying works by some of the field's most dynamic and inventive composers and librettists including Mohammed Fairouz, David T. Little, Kamala Sankaram, Suzan Yankowitz, 33 1/3 Collective, Paola Prestini, Rinde Eckert, Du Yun, Vaiva Grainyte, Lina Lapelyte, Jonathan Berger, Dan O'Brien, Gregory Spears, Sky-Pony, and Timur and the Dime Museum. PROTOTYPE works have been remounted at and toured to a combined more than 30 subsequent venues and festivals around the world, and the festival was recently recognized for being “suddenly indispensable” (*New Yorker*) and as one of the 10 Best Classical Performances of the Season, “an extravaganza of lyrical and high-tech miniatures...show[ing] how much life there is in New York's underground opera scene” (*New York* magazine).

FREE DRINK

WITH THE PURCHASE OF A CHEESE FLIGHT WHEN YOU PRESENT YOUR TICKET STUB





Founded in 2006, Beth Morrison Projects encourages risk-taking, creating a structure for developing new work that is unique to each artist, which gives them the time and space to experiment and push boundaries. Noted as a composer's producer, "Beth Morrison, of Beth Morrison Projects, has been gathering strength for several years, producing some of the most exciting music-theatre projects in the city" (*The New Yorker*). To date, the company has commissioned, developed, and produced more than thirty premiere opera and music-theatre works that have been performed around the globe. *The New York Times* recently said, "The production of new [opera] works in the city still falls mostly to the tireless Beth Morrison and her Beth Morrison Projects..." *The Wall Street Journal* wrote, "Ms. Morrison may be immortalized one day as a 21st-century Diaghilev, known for her ability to assemble memorable collaborations among artists." Current and upcoming projects include works by composers Darcy James Argue, Mohammed Fairouz, Du Yun, Ted Hearne, David Lang, David T. Little, Zhou Long, Keeril Makan, Missy Mazzoli, Paola Prestini, Kamala Sankaram, Scott Wheeler and more, with directors Julian Crouch, James Darrah, Rachel Dickstein, Daniel Fish, Yuval Sharon, and Robert Woodruff. Projects have been performed in American and international venues, including Brooklyn Academy of Music, The Kitchen, Performance Space 122, Lincoln Center, The Walker Art Center, The Barbican, The Holland Festival, The Operadagen Festival, The Beijing Music Festival, The New York Musical Theater Festival, and more.

BMP is generously funded by The Aaron Copland Fund for Music, Alice M. Ditson Fund, The Amphion Foundation, Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, Charles & Cerise Jacobs Charitable Trust, The Fan Fox and Leslie R. Samuels Foundation, MAP Fund/Creative Capital, The Mid-Atlantic Arts Foundation, The National Endowment for the Arts, New Music USA, New York State Council on the Arts, Opera America, and the Puffin Foundation.

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HERE

fresh. adventurous. unexpected.

Home to New York City's most imaginative live performance experiences, HERE produces work that is affordable, challenging, and alternative. We give audiences the chance to be part of something new and fresh. Our artists work across disciplines, disrupting conventional expectations as they cast new molds of collaborative works. This eclecticism makes HERE undefinable at its core, and entirely unforgettable.

Since 1993, HERE has been one of New York's most prolific producing organizations, and today it stands at the forefront of the city's presenters of daring new hybrid art. HERE supports multidisciplinary work that does not fit into a conventional programming agenda. Our aesthetic represents the independent, the innovative, and the experimental: HERE has developed such acclaimed works as Eve Ensler's *The Vagina Monologues*; Basil Twist's *Symphonie Fantastique*; Basil Twist and Joey Arias' *Arias with a Twist*; Young Jean Lee's *Songs of the Dragons Flying To Heaven*; Trey Lyford & Geoff Sobelle's *All Wear Bowlers*; Faye Driscoll's *837 Venice Boulevard*; Taylor Mac's *The Lily's Revenge*; Robin Frohardt's *The Pigeoning*; and original musical and dance works created and directed by HERE Co-Founder and Artistic Director Kristin Marting.

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HERE's programming is made possible with public funds from: the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council; the New York State Council on the Arts, with the support of Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Legislature; and the National Endowment for the Arts. With additional support provided by The Katharine S. and Axel G. Rosin Fund of The Scherman Foundation; The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation New York Theater Program; the Mental Insight Foundation; The MAP Fund, supported by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation; Mertz Gilmore Foundation; Peg Santvoord Foundation; Jerome Foundation; The Shubert Foundation; Bloomberg Philanthropies; The Fan Fox & Leslie R. Samuels Foundation; Venturous Theater Fund of the Tides Foundation; American Express; Blackstone Charitable Foundation; Con Edison; Goldman Sachs Gives; Jim Henson Foundation; The Scherman Foundation; The Durst Organization; the Foundation for Contemporary Arts; the Leon Levy Foundation; the Joseph and Joan Cullman Foundation for the Arts; Time Warner, Inc.; Axe-Houghton Foundation; Barbara Bell Cumming Foundation; Select Equity Group; the A.R.T./New York Creative Space Program, supported by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation; and HERE's generous community of individual donors.



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