

ISSUE
PROJECT
ROOM

EXPERIMENTS IN OPERA & ISSUE PROJECT ROOM PRESENT
'NEW SHORTS' FEATURING HOTEL ELEFANT

10 new opera shorts commissioned from 10 original voices in experimental music

Saturday, February 9, 2013 - 8pm
at The Actor's Fund Arts Center in Downtown Brooklyn

"united in an active effort to resist bottling up the notion of opera as one Authoritative and Unequivocal Thing" - Huffington Post

BROOKLYN, NY - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Experiments in Opera— a composer-led community of artists and musicians— has commissioned ten composers to each write a ten-minute opera to be premiered by the contemporary music ensemble Hotel Elephant. 'New Shorts', presented in collaboration with ISSUE Project Room on **Saturday, February 9, 2013** at the Actor's Fund Arts Center, features composers **Robert Ashley, Jason Cady, Joe Diebes, Ruby Fulton, Gabrielle Herbst, Mary Kouyoumdjian, Aaron Siegel, Justin Tierney, Leah Maria Villarreal, and Matthew Welch.**

The 'New Shorts' Project is the main production in Experiments in Opera's second season as a presenting organization, following a 2011-12 season that featured an Inaugural Concert at Le Poisson Rouge in Manhattan and a Spring Series over two nights at Roulette in Brooklyn. After sharing full productions of EIO founders Matthew Welch and Jason Cady, 'New Shorts' presents an opportunity to bring a diverse group of composers together to collectively develop the boundaries of opera at its most experimental. The partnership with Hotel Elephant as the 'house ensemble' for this wide-ranging evening provides an opportunity to expose a variety of compositional approaches and voices. 'New Shorts' includes several fully-staged presentations alongside concert presentations, and will be framed by video segments of each composer speaking about their ideas and processes.

The 'New Shorts' program includes:

Resonant Combinations, by **Robert Ashley**— one of a group of "sound-sketches" composed for the opera (in progress), *Quicksand*.

The Mother by **Jason Cady**— an aspiring singer/songwriter is mortified to discover that her recently retired mother has learned how to play guitar and is writing songs. Libretto by Jason Cady and directed by Louisa Proske.

WOW by **Joe Diebes**— a new opera based on the 1990 lip-synching scandal of international pop duet Milli Vanilli. Libretto by Christian Hawkey and directed by David Levine.

End Times by **Ruby Fulton**— an existential weather woman and an evangelical minister host TV shows at the end of the world. Libretto by Baynard Woods featuring Elisabeth Halliday and Robert Maril and directed by Britt Olsen-Ecker.

Bodiless by **Gabrielle Herbst**— Based on texts from French-Algerian author Helene Cixous, this work explores mythology, disguise, fakery, and authenticity through the lens of desire and altered states.

Libretto by Helene Cixous, featuring Gabrielle Herbst.

I am a Fish by **Mary Kouyoumdjian**— John Herrington has an epiphany one afternoon while verbalizing the sound of words that he may or may not be what he has always taken himself to be. Libretto by Hannis Brown.

The Collector by **Aaron Siegel**— A man rediscovers his childhood interest in stamp collecting, only to find that the hobby has different implications for his adult life. Libretto by Aaron Siegel and directed by Louisa Proske.

The God's Script by **Justin Tierney**— His pyramid crumbling, his civilization destroyed, an imprisoned Aztec mystic struggles to divine the word of God embedded in the living skin of a jaguar. Libretto by Jorge Luis Borges and featuring Dashon Burton.

A Window to a Door by **Leaha Maria Villarreal**— A girl in captivity begins another day. Libretto by Leaha Maria Villarreal.

The Three Truths by **Matthew Welch** — A tyrant robot imprisons a soothsaying robot and forces it to perceive the truth in order to enlighten the tyrant. Libretto by Matthew Welch, featuring Anne Rhodes and directed by Louisa Proske.

On **February 9, 2013 at 6:30 pm**, prior to the featured concert, **ISSUE Project Room** hosts a panel discussion with all 10 'New Shorts' Composers moderated by composer/conductor **James Holt**. Composers will have an opportunity to talk about their work, but also to engage with each other about the 'New Shorts' project and to comment on the work of their peers. Recordings from the performance will be released as a CD by LockStep Records, a Brooklyn-based independent label.

Event Details:

Experiments In Opera & ISSUE Project Room Present
'New Shorts' featuring Hotel Elefant
February 9, 2013 - 8:00 PM
Actors Fund Arts Center
160 Schermerhorn Street, Brooklyn, NY
Tickets: \$15 / \$12 members + students

For more information, including artist biographies and tickets, please [visit our website](#).

MEDIA CONTACT: Eve Essex, eve@issueprojectroom.org, 718.330.0313

EXPERIMENTS IN OPERA

Co-Founded by composers Matthew Welch, Jason Cady, and Aaron Siegel, Experiments in Opera is a composer- and performer-driven initiative, featuring recent and new works with unorthodox answers to

the traditional questions about how to connect words, story, and music. EIO's activities emerge from a pronounced need to nurture composers drawn towards extending their work beyond the standard concert experience and into the hybrid space of the theater, performance, installation, dance, and storytelling arts.

Experiments in Opera has featured work by its founders as well as work by French modernist Georges Aperghis, and the Brooklyn-based collaborative, Cough Button. For more information visit experimentsinopera.com

HOTEL ELEFANT

Formed in 2011 by composers Leah Maria Villarreal and Mary Kouyoumdjian, Hotel Elefant ambitiously presents new music through commissions, performances, and moderated discussions between composers, performers, and audiences. Committed to modern sounds and sonic explorations, this vibrant ensemble brings a keen awareness of today's music to the general public and highlights those living composers who are blurring lines, pushing boundaries, and fostering creativity.

With a flexible instrumentation of over twenty musicians, members of this progressive group have performed across the nation and around the world. Their music has taken them to destinations in Poland, Israel, and the U.K. and to such cities as San Francisco, Los Angeles, Boston, and Montreal. Each artist brings a unique perspective and passion to their field, working with such luminaries as the Bang on a Can All-Stars, Imani Winds, and the Chicago Opera Vanguard, among others. Valuing the development and expression of new music, these engaging performers come together under the auspices of Hotel Elefant.

ISSUE PROJECT ROOM

Founded in 2003, ISSUE Project Room is a pioneering nonprofit performance center, presenting projects by more than 200 interdisciplinary artists each year that expand the boundaries of artistic practice and stimulate critical dialogue in the broader community. ISSUE serves as a leading cultural incubator, facilitating the commission and premiere of more than 25 innovative new works each year.