

Brooklyn Academy of Music

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Silent Voices

BAM Howard Gilman Opera House | May 12 & 13 at 7:30pm

Running time: approx. one hour & 30 minutes, no intermission

Brooklyn Youth Chorus

Conceived and conducted by Dianne Berkun Menaker

Developed with and directed by Kristin Marting

Composers: **Jeff Beal, Mary Kouyoumdjian, Nico Muhly, Shara Nova, Toshi Reagon, Kamala Sankaram, Caroline Shaw, DJ Spooky**

Writers and Librettists: **Michelle Alexander, Hilton Als, Patricia Bell-Scott, Jackie Sibbles Drury, Pauli Murray, Shara Nova, Claudia Rankine, Toshi Reagon, Eleanor Roosevelt, George Savile, Caroline Shaw, Brooklyn Youth Chorus members**

Hosted by **Helga Davis**

Set and video design by **Peter Nigrini** and **Dan Scully**

Sound design by **Garth MacAleavey**

Lighting design by **Jeanette Yew**

Costume design by **Kate Fry**

Dramaturgy by **Peter McCabe**

Stage management by **Audrey Chait**

Season Sponsor:

**Bloomberg
Philanthropies**

Support for the Signature Artist Series provided
by Howard Gilman Foundation.

Performers

BROOKLYN YOUTH CHORUS

CONCERT ENSEMBLE

Dianne Berkun Menaker,
conductor
Molly Goldberg, chorus
manager

Sarah Abramson
Meaghan Accarino
Emily Ahn
Omilana Atkins
Josephine Attal
Naomie Azor
Maya Baijal
Elizabeth Balatski
Ariel Binns
Jeanne Bransbourg
Morgan Colton
Maya Yin Fahrer
Fannie Feynberg
Kierra Foster-Bagley
Maria Glyptis
Izabella Gozzo
Lindsay Guerrero
Erynn Gutierrez
Aemilia Harbutt
Natalie Hawkins
Julia Holman
Andrei Iosifescu
Tiara Jasey
Charlotte Knutsen
Olivia Knutsen

Joyce Kouassi
Meghan Kouassi
Taylor Lashley
Ona Linna-Hipp
Tess Lovell
Grace Lockett
Vivian Lukens
Frost Martin
Sophia Partow
Clara Rosarius
Margot Saganich
Maya Sequeira
Hannah Serrano
Madelaine Smith
Sophie Smith
Avery Soto
Sarah Sotomayor
Isabella Stevenson
Josette Tolliver-Shaw
Katrina Urda
Mariana Weaver
Aliyah Weiss

MEN'S ENSEMBLE

Kristopher Burke, conductor
Eric Williamson, chorus
manager

A.J. Aiken
Saddique Ango
Aldre Benjamin
Aryeh Blumenfeld

Tayjean Brown
Malik Carrington
Michael Cassidy
Caesar Castillo
Matthew Chiu
Christopher Conley
Caleb Cummings
Noah Epelbaum
Brandon Foster-Bagley
Daniel Grajales
Vincenzo James Harty
Anthony Hohn
Eduardo Liz
Noah Mattingly
Genesis Meulens-Dixon
Jacob Sutton
Julien Tornelli

INTERNATIONAL CONTEMPORARY ENSEMBLE

Brandon George, flute
Katie Shoepflin, clarinet
Ryan Muncy, saxophone
Rebekah Heller, bassoon
Dan Lippel, guitar
Jacob Greenberg, piano
Clara Warnaar, percussion
Erica Dicker, violin
Mariel Roberts, cello
Patrick Swoboda, bass

CREATIVE & PRODUCTION TEAM

Executive producer **Nunally Kersh**
Associate producer **Jennifer Cambras**
Production manager **Robert W. Henderson, Jr.**
Associate production manager **Dan Mullins**
Assistant director **Mahayana Landowe**
Lighting assistant **Christina Tang**
Costume assistant **Lily Shell**

Co-commissioned by Brooklyn Youth Chorus, Brooklyn Academy of Music, and WQXR, New York for the 2017 Winter/Spring Season.

In working with and developing the voice of countless young people through Brooklyn Youth Chorus, I have been continuously amazed at not just their artistry, but their intellectual curiosity. In the words of one chorister, “we can’t sing about important topics if we’re not going to talk about them.”

Indeed the *Silent Voices* project—aimed at giving voice, and amplifying the voices of those who feel unheard or marginalized—has created a forum for discussion that has deepened our understanding and ability to express through our music the passion we feel about these topics.

As part of the chorus’ 25th anniversary year, we celebrate the choristers themselves—giving them the opportunity to shape a multimedia choral music production that speaks directly to the concerns of these young people, living in our city and our time. The diverse choristers of Brooklyn Youth Chorus want to engage with each other, and with audiences, on the topics of race, gender, sexual identity, class, and economic disparity, and the place of immigrants and refugees in our communities. In the same way that these young musicians have cultivated their own voices as a foundation of their identity, they are here to stand beside, and stand up for, others that need support.

With *Silent Voices*, we are bringing our young people into the conversation; we are helping them explore the issues and problems that they face now and will inherit as they come of age. We have looked into the past—exploring the unusual and influential relationship between Pauli Murray and First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt that helped shape the course of civil rights—as well as responding to contemporary narratives from notables such as Claudia Rankine and Michelle Alexander. But most importantly, we are inviting the choristers themselves to share their personal experiences and testimonials, directly engaging with the audience in the first person.

An incredible team of composers and artists have helped develop and shape this project, each bringing a unique and important perspective to the work. The composers, as diverse as the issues themselves, have each chosen the themes for their own compositions and engaged the choristers in the development of their work. With our incredible director Kristin Marting, videographer and set designers Peter Nigrini and Dan Scully, and lighting designer Jeanette Yew, we will bring the BAM stage to life with sound and visuals and stories that engage in the moment and leave a lasting impression—creating music that matters!

—Dianne Berkun Menaker



Jeff Beal



Mary Kouyoumdjian



Nico Muhly



Shara Nova



Toshi Reagon



Kamala Sankaram



Caroline Shaw



DJ Spooky

Program

CAROLINE SHAW

“so quietly”

Text by **Shaw**

JEFF BEAL

“Hope”

Text by **Pauli Murray** from **Patricia Bell-Scott's** *The Firebrand and the First Lady*

JEFF BEAL

“Dear Mrs. Roosevelt”

Text by **Pauli Murray** and **Eleanor Roosevelt** from **Patricia Bell-Scott's** *The Firebrand and the First Lady*

SHARA NOVA

“Blind to the Illness”

Text by **Nova**

DJ SPOOKY

“Go Tell It”

Text by **Michelle Alexander** from *The New Jim Crow*

MARY KOUYOUMDJIAN

“I Can Barely Look”

Text by **members of Brooklyn Youth Chorus** edited by **Mary Kouyoumdjian**

JEFF BEAL

“Freedom Is a Dream”

Text by **Pauli Murray** from *Dark Testament and other poems*

JEFF BEAL

“Little Boy-Girl”

Text by **Pauli Murray** from **Patricia Bell-Scott's** *The Firebrand and the First Lady*

NICO MUHLY

“Advice to a Young Woman”

Text from *The Lady's New-Year's Gift*, attributed to **George Savile**, Marquis of Halifax (1633—95)

KAMALA SANKARAM

“Keeping the Look Loose”

Text by **Claudia Rankine**

JEFF BEAL

“Prophecy”

Text by **Pauli Murray** and **Eleanor Roosevelt**

TOSHI REAGON

“Building Brooklyn”

Text by **Reagon**

SHARA NOVA

“Let Freedom Ring”

Text by **Nova**

Notes are by composers and in program order.

so quietly

“so quietly” is an unfolding and an amplification of the voices of individuals who do not feel empowered to speak up, to contribute to a conversation, to perhaps point out an injustice or offer a solution. It could be a tendency to swallow words or backtrack when voicing an idea or opinion in a meeting, or a broader discomfort with engaging politically in society. This piece begins with text that is blurred, muted, and unsure of itself, eventually transforming into something focused, bright, strong, and joyfully outspoken.

Music by **Caroline Shaw**

Text by **Caroline Shaw**

Maybe maybe
Never you mind I
Maybe I could
If you maybe
Could
It would be
Something I
Wonder could
You maybe I could be

Never would I

I don't wanna be quiet

I'll just sit here
I won't just sit here and be quiet
I know I can make a difference
I will be

I'll just sit here so quietly
I won't sit here so quietly
I will be a difference in the room

I'm gonna be
Ever singing

Hope

I'm fascinated by Eleanor Roosevelt. She was a transformational figure in politics, redefining the role of a public woman, while championing the causes of justice and civil rights her entire life. I had been seeking for a way to celebrate her voice with a new generation of Americans. Finding the story of Pauli Murray's friendship and dialogue with Eleanor gave me a way into her which I saw as relatable, and full of emotional resonance. While coming from vastly different socioeconomic backgrounds, Eleanor and Pauli did share many similarities. Both lost parents at an early age, and both were ridiculed for their appearance as young women—not fitting the expected mold of female beauty.

Few of us have ever heard of Pauli Murray. She was a lawyer, poet, activist, and champion of civil rights. Through her life-long friendship with Eleanor Roosevelt, she was able to have the attention of one of the most powerful political leaders of her time, through the pivotal decades of civil and women's rights. It is through Pauli's personal and untold story, I saw a first-hand, bittersweet account of a woman who struggled with discrimination her whole life—a discrimination based on gender, race, and her sexuality. Her poetry and prose from the recent book *The Firebrand and the First Lady* is a treasure trove of insight into these struggles. Wanting to study for a masters in law, Pauli was first rejected from the University of North Carolina on her race, and then from Harvard on her gender. She eventually earned a masters from UC Berkeley and later became the first woman to receive her doctorate in law from Yale. This fall, Yale will open its newest resident college, named in honor of Pauli (a first). Pauli also lived as a gay woman during a time when such a lifestyle was not tolerated or remotely accepted. The text for "Little Boy-Girl" was taken from a letter she shared about her identity struggles with her Aunt Pauline. At the very end of her life, Pauli became the

first black woman to ever be ordained as an Episcopal priest, another first. Perhaps the most remarkable quality of her character was Murray's resilience against remarkable odds. Her poetry and writings reveal her honest and emotional reactions to injustice, but they are coupled with a transformational sense of will, hope, and faith in a better tomorrow, a better America. Pauli's "new America" is a nation we are still striving to become. These issues of gender, sexual, and racial bias are still with us today, and Pauli's words seem to jump off of the page from her past into our present. Not simply a historical relic, they stand as a call to action to examine our ongoing hopes to build a better, more just society.

Developing this work, and hearing the voices of narration coming from the young women of Brooklyn Youth Chorus, really brought this material to life for me.

Music by **Jeff Beal**

Text by **Pauli Murray**

Hope is a word in a tuneless ditty
A word whispered with the wind,
A dream of forty acres and a mule,
A cabin of one's own and a moment to rest,
A name and place for one's children
And children's children at last . . .
Hope is a song in a weary throat.
Give me a song of hope
And a world where I can sing it.
Give me a song of faith
And a people to believe in it.
Give me a song of kindness
And a country where I can live it.
Give me a song of hope and love
And a brown girl's heart to hear it.

Permission granted by the Pauli Murray Foundation for the text used from The Firebrand and the First Lady by Patricia Bell-Scott.

Dear Mrs. Roosevelt

Music by **Jeff Beal**

Text by **Pauli Murray** and **Eleanor Roosevelt**

Dear Mrs. Roosevelt...

"I was the girl who did not stand up when you passed through the Social Hall of Camp Tera during one of your visits in the winter of 1934. I am sending you a copy of a letter which I wrote to your husband, President Roosevelt, in the hope that you will try to understand the spirit and deep perplexity in which it is written."

Dear Mr. President,
Have you time?

"Have you time to listen to the problem of one of your millions of fellow citizens? I speak not only for myself but for 12 million other citizens..."

twelve million. Dear Mr. President,
these are the facts—

"I am a Negro, the most oppressed, most misunderstood and most neglected section of your population. Sometime ago I applied to the University of North Carolina for admission to their graduate school.

"As you know, no Negro has ever been admitted to the University of North Carolina. You may wonder then, why I, a Negro knowing this fact did make application?

"My grandfather, a Union Army soldier, gave his eye for the liberation of his race. As soon as the war was over, he went to North Carolina under the Freedmen's Bureau, to establish schools and educate the newly freed Negroes. From that time on, my entire family has been engaged in educational work in that state. Those of us who have degrees, and yet feel inadequacy of information and formal training, [now] find it impossible to go further and obtain our Master's Degree. It is the task of enlightened individuals to bring the torch of education to those who are not enlightened. There is a crying need for education among my own people..."

There is a crying need,
a crying need for education
among my own people.
no one realizes this more than I do
my whole being cries out
against inequality and injustice

"But the un-Christian, un-American conditions in the South make it impossible for me and other young Negroes to live there, and continue our faith in the ideals of democracy and Christianity. We cannot endure these conditions. Our whole being cries out against inequality and injustice. We are forced to ride in prescribed places in the busses and streetcars of those very cities you passed through in our beloved Southland.

"When your party reached the station at Durham yesterday, you must have noticed a sign which said 'White,' and then a fence, then another sign which said 'Colored.' Can you, for one moment, put yourself in our place and imagine the feelings of resentment, the protest, the indignation. The outrage that would rise within you to realize that you, a human being, with the keen sensitivities of other human beings were being set off in a corner, marked apart from your fellow human beings?"

"I have read the copy of the letter you sent me and I understand perfectly, but great changes come slowly. I think they are coming however, and sometimes it is better to fight hard with conciliatory methods. The South is changing, but don't push too fast."

Dear Mrs. Roosevelt

"There is a great change in youth, for instance, and that is a hopeful sign. Very sincerely yours,
Eleanor Roosevelt."

Permission granted by the Pauli Murray Foundation for the text used from The Firebrand and the First Lady by Patricia Bell-Scott.

Blind to the Illness

This music was written in the summer of 2016, in response to the many killings of blacks in America. At the time of this composition, Alton Sterling and Philando Castile were the most recent deaths that were highly publicized. My sorrow led me to research and I came across a teacher, Jane Elliot, who conducts an experiment called the “Blue-Eyes-Brown-Eyes” exercise. After watching a classroom session with her, my eyes were further opened to my own assumptions, power I took for granted, my racism, and my biases. Other readings relevant to the music were *I, Racist* by John Metta, *White Fragility* by Robin DiAngelo, and *The New Jim Crow* by Michelle Alexander. Let the change begin in me.

Music by **Shara Nova**

Text by **Shara Nova**

power to ignore
power to walk away
power to defend
power to drive as fast as I can
power to pretend
power to see myself reflected
power to get in
power to believe I can do anything

I do not worry at night
I do not worry by day
I do not think about these things
I just go on my way
I see no color
how about you

but I'm blind to the illness
I was born inside this building
and I want to see the sun

I want out of the building getting out of this
building
I'm going blind
going blind with that illness
I wanna see color

Nature is the truest law on all the sun does shine
In every part of the one the other is entwined
Oh! The sun 'n me are made of the same thing
Everything so beautifully in color

Go Tell It

Can a chorus sing data? Can people use the arts to give us a glimpse of how much potential there is in the human spirit when facts, information and education are available? My composition “Go Tell It” is a Gospel themed choral work that explores the links between the songs W.E.B. Dubois celebrated in African-American folk culture in his *Souls of Black Folk* with an additional sense of how data and information shape and mold our perceptions in a contemporary 24/7 media landscape. I asked renowned author and historian Michelle Alexander to use her book *The New Jim Crow* as a template for a libretto and the rest—hip-hop, techno, dubstep, trap, etc.—the sound of the contemporary African American experience—came into a synthesis. “Go Tell It” is a hybrid work. It explores the collision of several cultures: European engagements with polyphony and African-American explorations in polyrhythm. The end result is a composition as much about data as it is about the choral experiment.

Music by **DJ Spooky**

Text by **Michelle Alexander**

Even at the height of Jim Crow segregation—when black men were more likely to be lynched than to receive a fair trial in the South—lawyers wouldn’t try to advocate for blacks unless they knew for sure, only if they knew if they had respectability.

Go tell it on the distance from stigmatized elements. Politics distancing themselves from any elements that stigmatized community.

Go tell it on the mountain, over the hills and everywhere. Go tell it on the mountain our new Jim Crow is born.

Rosa Parks was not the first person to refuse her seat. Rosa Parks. Claudette Colvin. Mary Louise

Smith. They had to be above it, above reproach in every way.

Go tell it on the mountain, our new Jim Crow is born.

A rising tide lifts all the boats. Go tell it on the mountain, over the hills and everywhere. Go tell it on the mountain, our new Jim Crow is born.

Despite these inconvenient truths, though, we can press on.

We can continue to ignore those labeled criminals in our litigation and media advocacy and focus public attention on more attractive plaintiffs—like innocent doctors and lawyers stopped and searched on freeways, innocent black and brown schoolchildren attending abysmal schools, or innocent middle- and upper-middle-class black children who will be denied access to Harvard, Michigan, and Yale if affirmative action disappears.

We can continue on this well-worn path. But if we do so, we should labor under no illusions that we will end mass incarceration or shake the foundations of the current racial order.

We may improve some school districts, prolong affirmative action for another decade or two, or force some police departments to condemn racial profiling, but we will not put a dent in the prevailing caste system.

We must face the realities of the new caste system and embrace those who are most oppressed by it if we hope to end the new Jim Crow.

Based on the book *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* Copyright © 2010, 2012 by Michelle Alexander. Reprinted by permission of The New Press. thenewpress.com

I Can Barely Look

"I Can Barely Look" is an exploration of how we, particularly youth, sympathize with the Syrian refugee crisis. Members of the Brooklyn Youth Chorus were presented with a collection of media-circulated photos of Syrian refugees and were asked to respond to a series of questions about the photos. Pulling from a range of responses, their words were then used to create the libretto for this work. This piece is dedicated to my family who sought refuge in Syria during the Armenian genocide, to those who have left home for a more hopeful future, and to those—both young and old—who have the ability to help.

Music by **Mary Kouyoumdjian**

Text by **members of Brooklyn Youth Chorus**

edited by **Mary Kouyoumdjian**

Bright red shirt, blue shorts

Black and orange sneakers

Waves wash over him

Face-down

A small child in the sand

One boy, one girl

Crying, push against crowds

Trying to break through

Armed policemen with shields

Let the children through

People are yelling

People are pushing

People are yelling:

"Let them through"

Grown men, policemen

Standing near him making notes

Walk away, keep your distance

Don't touch the dead child at your feet

I live with a bright future

I feel uncomfortable

I feel nervous

When we try to understand

We see the world with hatred

Ignorance, bliss

A little girl smiles

An officer crouches down to meet her gaze

She holds her hands out

He holds one hand out

Can I play with you?

Can I feel?

Can I feel hopeful?

Can I look closer?

Can I look?

The world is becoming very dark

And I can barely look

Please keep going

Leave your home and don't look back

You're safe here

May God bless you

I'm sorry you've lost part of yourself

I'm sorry this is the side of humanity you see

There's still goodness in this world

I wish I could help you

That there was more that I could do

But I can barely look

I can't look

How fearful the world can be

Look how fearful the world can be

I'd say nothing

I feel nothing

I'd just walk away

Freedom Is a Dream

Music by **Jeff Beal**

Text by **Pauli Murray**

Freedom is a dream
Haunting as amber wine
Or worlds remembered out of time.
Not Eden's gate, but freedom
Lures us down a trail of skulls
Where men forever crush the dreamers—
Never the dream.
Freedom is a dream
Haunting as amber wine
Or worlds remembered out of time.

Little-Boy Girl

Music by **Jeff Beal**

Text by **Pauli Murray**

This little “boy-girl”
This little “boy-girl” personality
little boy
little girl
little girl
little boy
as you call it Aunt Pauline
as you call it jokingly
gets me into trouble.
And to try to live
by society’s standards
always causes me such inner conflict
that at times it’s almost unbearable.
I don’t know whether I’m right (or)
whether society, (or) some medical authority is
right—

I only know...what makes me happy.
“This conflict rises up to knock me down at every
apex I reach
(in my career and because) the laws of society
do not protect me,
I’m exposed to any enemy or person
who may (or may not) want to hurt me.”
This little “boy-girl” personality
This little “boy-girl” personality
little boy
little girl
little girl
little boy

*Permission granted by the Pauli Murray
Foundation for the text used from The Firebrand
and the First Lady by Patricia Bell-Scott.*

Advice to a Young Woman

"Advice to a Young Woman" is a piece in two sections. The first section deals with eye contact: an obsessive, minuscule way of policing women's behavior. Careless glances, up-close observation: all of this translates into a neurotic, pointillistic, and focussed series of pulses. The choir sings in near unison—aggressive, prescriptive. The piece suddenly cross-fades into a joyful and ecstatic image of a young woman dancing for pleasure. The music here is lightly swung, carefree, and never strays from a single key. Because the most carefree fun I know how to have is to sing with friends in canon, there is a two-part canon here. This piece is dedicated to the Brooklyn Youth Chorus, with whom I have worked for many years. I tried, here, to play to their strengths: astonishingly precise teamwork, combined with a joy in music-making.

Music by **Nico Muhly**

Text from *The Lady's New-Year's Gift*, attributed to **George Savile, Marquis of Halifax** (1633—95)

... it must engage you to have a perpetual Watch upon your Eyes, and to remember, that one careless Glaunce giveth more advantage than a hundred Words note enough considered; the Language of the Eyes being very much the most significant, and the most observed.

... It is better for a Woman never to Dance, because she hath no skill in it, than to do it too often, because she doth it well.

Keeping the Look Loose

I believe in the transformative power of music. The act of listening creates real physical changes in the body. A musical rhythm can change your heartbeat. A harmonic progression can create chills. These visceral, physical responses have the potential to unlock deep-seated emotions and to open up new perspectives on the world. In "Keeping the Look Loose," I wanted to follow the beautiful contours of Claudia's writing, and to let that guide the music. For me, this piece follows the speaker's journey from a sense of discomfort in the body to a final freeing of their inner gaze. This is why I decided to score the piece for a capella voices and body percussion. The unaccompanied chorus both propels and comments on the journey, creating melody and accompaniment. The body percussion draws on a variety of musical traditions that feature the strength of the body, including bharatanatyam, flamenco, and step.

Music by **Kamala Sankaram**

Text by **Claudia Rankine**

Why isn't my expectation me? Strapped in with vulnerability, dressed against self doubt, as the culture turns every conversation visual, it looks as if when my looks don't reflect you, no one, including me, will say beautiful. We need to keep our look loose.

Every time I look back you are looking without seeing the me that is me. Even as I turn the corner, you are defining me. Whatever I am wearing I am also wearing you. Shake out your stare; keep the eyes soft.

Who I am is who to see, so keep your look loose.

All this vulnerability is the saddest thing circling and though it shouldn't be, your gaze describes me to me. Why do I see through you rather than through me? Why can't I keep the look loose.

It's as if when you look my way you know more about me than I know about me. When did I part ways with myself? You say handsome exists as an opposite, You say beauty isn't what is seen in me. Loosen up or lose me. Keep the look loose.

When did lovely begin to resist me? Being me can't mean I am running Away from a world full of magnificence when magnificence is named for me. Let me have that thing, let me have me. Let's keep the look loose.

It's my promise to me. The culture's been winding me up, now I'm getting wound up for me, I'm climbing inside the look, making room for me. I'm keeping the look loose.

To love what is born not made, to be in my body as me. I want to be exposed without the daily shame given to me by our culture's games. I want to finally uncover my face and see that the sweetness of me is the sweetness of you keeping the look loose.

Prophecy

Music by **Jeff Beal**

Text by **Pauli Murray** and **Eleanor Roosevelt**

I sing of a new American
Separate from all others,
Yet enlarged and diminished by all others.
I am the child of kings and serfs, freemen and slaves,
Having neither superiors nor inferiors,
Progeny of all colors, all cultures, all systems, all beliefs.
I sing of a new American
"The minute we deny any rights... to any citizen,
we are preparing the way for the denial of those rights to someone else. When will we act to prevent human misery rather than avenge it?"
I have been enslaved, yet my spirit is unbound.
"I would like to hear the voice of the American people ring out loud and clear,

proud and self-confident, saying: "This is what we are doing. This is what we believe..."
I have been cast aside, but I sparkle in the darkness.
I have been slain but live on in the river of history.
I seek no conquest, no wealth, no power, no revenge:
I seek only discovery
Of the illimitable heights and depths of my own being.
I sing, I sing,
"This is the kind of world we want.
This is the kind of world we intend to work for.
Because, and never doubt it, given a chance to see both sides honestly...
all men who care about freedom will know where they belong."
I sing, I sing of a new American
American, American, I sing
I sing

Building Brooklyn

This song is a part of a bigger exploration on the building of Brooklyn entitled *Working on a Building*. The shifting, moving, and displacement of people. The recreating of infrastructure that could hold diverse communities, people of different races, religions, classes exchanged for an almost one-class system that dissolves long-standing vibrant and diverse communities. A look at how money and technology meet to own what you need and offer it back to you at a price one may or may not be able to afford.

Because the chorus wanted to sing about the issues they as young people are experiencing—gentrification, criminalization of communities, systemic racism—I thought of looking at how we got here and the ways over time we have settled people in and out of Brooklyn and how we create economic challenges around where people live, creating a system of constant struggle around the basic need for shelter and security would fit in. I was not surprised to learn that this tension and stress is happening across all incomes.

Music by **Toshi Reagon**

Text by **Toshi Reagon**

I am Here...

Mine...

I I I came first...

You You You were first?...

I'm coming From there to here...

Nobody has ever gone away

Oh my baby—it's time to go

These lands around us want us no more

I don't know what they'll do without you and me

Make the same of every street corner so their reflection they'll see

I've worked all day and—I'm doing right

But I got no place for us to sleep tonight

Rents and incomes changed in our urban areas 1960, New York City had a median rent of \$568 Median household income was at \$44,948 in 1960 and had increased to \$53,013 in 2013 —only an 18 percent increase. 46 percent difference

Can't find old trees for new ones they've found
But you can't take no shelter on that ground
We bent the sunlight upon this place
But we treated like strangers

Rents and incomes changed in our urban areas 2013, New York City the median rent \$934— A 64 percent—in our urban area
That growing rent-to-income discrepancy has led 30 percent of New Yorkers to be severely burdened by their rent—across all incomes.
[rents and incomes changed in our urban areas]
That growing rent-to-income discrepancy has led-30 percent of New Yorkers to be severely burdened by their rent—across all incomes.

No there never was a building
No there never was a building here
No there never was a park
There never was
No this never was a school yard
Nobody taught here
No
It's always been a bridge
It's always been a bridge
It's always been a bridge

No we don't have no service
This building closed here
No we don't have no service
this building closed
No we don't have
No Pastries,
No Shirts,
No milk,
no staples,
No gas,
No rain gear,
or shoes
Or detergent.
Just write us, Just write us, Just write us,
Just write us

We can bring
We can bring
We can bring It all to your house
Tell us where you live, Tell us where you live
Never mind
We already know

She	lives	House
They	live	House

Notes & Lyrics

He lives House
We live House
I live House
Nobody is ever done away...

I have grown dependent on you
You have been there in my unknowing

Things happen that I love and it's because of you
This is the most
This is the widest
This is the most expansive and I thank you
I thank you

Let Freedom Ring

Grieving the death of a loved one, a survivor searches for a response to violence by turning to the principles of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., naming injustice and actively participating in nonviolent resistance. Drawing further strength from thoughts of the Statue of Liberty, the survivor recalls the inscription at her base, a message of inclusivity, an offer of refuge, and an embrace of all.

Music by **Shara Nova**

Text by **Shara Nova**

brother gone to air, now i to stone.
pillow broke beneath my troubled pose
sleep does not spare me from the outside
light force your way to my eye
Fear you are contagious,
can one speak
can one speak with words
can one speak with words of love
can one
can one speak
can one speak with words of peace
can one
name justice name king?
justice is our king

I could fall toward the masses when I see
the vile deeds against what nature has decreed:
Sun shine on all! Rain fall!

Earth give us space to be! Air give me breath
to be
Let freedom ring!

have you seen the lady?
She said she spoke for us
standing copper tarnished reminding all of us:
Give me the tired, Give me the poor,
Give me the masses reaching for the shore.
Give me the tired, Give me the poor,
Give me the tempest
Give me the tired, Give me the poor,
Give me the masses reaching for the shore.
Give me the tired, Give me the poor,
Open up the golden door!

Let freedom ring!

BROOKLYN YOUTH CHORUS

Named WQXR's 2016—17 artists-in-residence and celebrating its 25th anniversary, Brooklyn Youth Chorus is a collective of young singers and vocal ensembles re-envisioning choral music performance through artistic innovation, collaboration, and their distinctively beautiful sound. *The New York Times* has hailed the Chorus as “remarkable young singers,” who perform “with confidence, energy and tenderness. The sheer beauty of their singing [is] captivating.” This March, the Chorus released its first solo recording, *Black Mountain Songs*, which premiered at the 2014 BAM Next Wave Festival.

With an incredibly versatile range and repertoire, Brooklyn Youth Chorus combines intensive voice training and music study with exceptional performance experiences. The Chorus has appeared with acclaimed orchestras and conductors, including the New York and Los Angeles philharmonics, and London and Atlanta symphonies, and under the batons of Alan Gilbert, Gustavo Dudamel, and Esa-Pekka Salonen. Additionally, the Chorus has performed with major recording artists such as Barbra Streisand, John Legend, and Grizzly Bear.

The Chorus has been touted by *The New York Times* as a “consistently bold organization” that regularly commissions and presents new music in genre-defying forms. The Chorus' repertoire includes more than 100 original works and world premieres. The Chorus won a Grammy Award in 2005 with the New York Philharmonic for the world premiere live recording of John Adams' *On the Transmigration of Souls*.

The Chorus has appeared at important contemporary music festivals including the Ecstatic Music Festival, MusicNOW, 21c *Liederabend*, Barbican Mountain and Waves Festival, and the PROTOTYPE Festival. Founded by Artistic Director Dianne Berkun Menaker,

Brooklyn Youth Chorus' program encompasses over 650 students in its after-school and public school outreach programs at its Cobble Hill headquarters and locations in Bedford-Stuyvesant, East Flatbush, Red Hook, and Sunset Park, Brooklyn. brooklynyouthchorus.org

DIANNE BERKUN MENAKER is the founder and artistic director of Brooklyn Youth Chorus. Under her visionary leadership, the Chorus has become one of the most highly regarded ensembles in the country and has stretched the artistic boundaries for the youth chorus. Hailed by *The New York Times* as “a remarkable choral conductor,” Berkun Menaker has prepared choruses for performances with acclaimed conductors Alan Gilbert, Marin Alsop, James Levine, Gustavo Dudamel, Robert Spano, and others. Most notably, she prepared the Chorus for its 2002 debut with the New York Philharmonic in John Adams' *On the Transmigration of Souls*, the recording for which the Chorus won a Grammy Award in 2005. Berkun Menaker is the creator of the Chorus' Cross-Choral Training® program, a proven holistic and experiential approach to developing singers in a group setting encompassing both voice and musicianship pedagogy.

KRISTOPHER BURKE conducts Brooklyn Youth Chorus' Men's Ensemble and several training ensembles. In addition, he conducts public school outreach programs, bringing Brooklyn Youth Chorus' unique Cross-Choral Training to New York City public schools. While under his direction, the Men's Ensemble has performed at the United States Capitol Building, the National Hispanic Caucus' Annual Awards Gala, Kings Theatre, and WQXR's The Greene Space. Burke received his BM in music education from Shepherd University and a MM in vocal performance from Shenandoah Conservatory. He has also studied with conductor Rudolph Palmer and voice teachers Barbara Stenger and Dr. Byron Jones.

KRISTIN MARTING is a director of hybrid work based in NYC. She has constructed 27 stage works, including 12 original hybrid works, eight reimagings of novels, and seven classic plays. Marting has directed 17 works at HERE and also premiered works at 3LD, Ohio Theatre, and Soho Rep. Her work has toured to 7 Stages, Berkshire Festival, Brown, MCA, New World, Painted Bride, Perishable, UMass, Moscow Art Theatre, and Oslo. She has directed workshops for Clubbed Thumb, New Georges, Playwrights Horizons, Public Theater, Target Margin, and others. Select residencies include Bard, Cal Arts, LMCC, Mabou Mines, MASS MoCA, NACL, Orchard Project, Playwrights Center, and Williams. Marting was named a nytheatre.com Person of the Decade, a Woman to Watch by ArtTable, and received a BAX10 Award. Marting is co-founder and artistic director of HERE, where she directs projects, cultivates artists (including 17 OBIE Award winners), and programs two performance spaces for an annual audience of 30,000.

HELGA DAVIS served as a principal actor in the 25th-anniversary international revival of Robert Wilson and Philip Glass' seminal opera *Einstein on the Beach*, including at BAM in 2012. Among the many collaborative and works written for her are *Faust's Box* by acclaimed Italian contemporary music composer Andrea

Liberovici; *Oceanic Verses* by Paola Prestini; *Elsewhere* by Missy Mazzoli; *You Us We All* by Shara Nova (My Brightest Diamond) and Andrew Ondrejcek (2015 BAM Next Wave); *The Blue Planet* by Peter Greenaway; and *Yet Unheard*, a tribute to Sandra Bland by Courtney Bryan, based on the poem by Sharan Strange. Her work *First Responder* was conceived and performed at MASS MoCA in response to Nick Cave's *Until*. As part of her 2017 residency at National Sawdust, she created *Requiem for a Tuesday* with bass-baritone Davone Tines and dancer/choreographer Reggie Gray and is working on a CD release with visionary performance artist Yuka Honda. She is host of the *HELGA* podcast on WQXR's Q2 music.

HILTON ALS became a staff writer at *The New Yorker* in 1996, a theater critic in 2002, and chief theater critic in 2013. His first book, *The Women*, a meditation on gender, race, and personal identity, was published in 1996. His most recent book, *White Girls*, discusses various narratives around race and gender and was nominated for a 2013 National Book Critics Circle Award in Criticism. Als is a professor at Columbia University's Writing Program, and his work has appeared in *The Nation*, *The Believer*, and *The New York Review of Books*. He won the 2017 Pulitzer Prize for criticism and lives in New York City.

THE INTERNATIONAL CONTEMPORARY ENSEMBLE (ICE) is an artist collective committed to transforming the way music is created and experienced. As performer, curator, and educator, ICE explores how new music intersects with communities across the world. The ensemble's 35 members are featured as soloists, chamber musicians, commissioners, and collaborators with the foremost musical artists of our time. A recipient of the American Music Center's Trailblazer Award and the Chamber Music America/ASCAP Award for Adventurous Programming, ICE was also named the 2014 Musical America Ensemble of the Year. The group currently serves as artists in residence at Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts' Mostly Mozart Festival, and previously led a five-year residency at the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago. Read more at iceorg.org.

JEFF BEAL is a four-time Emmy Award winning composer known for his genre-defying musical fluidity. His film scores have received critical acclaim, while he remains a respected composer in the concert, theater, and dance worlds. Beal's evocative score and theme for the Netflix drama *House of Cards* received four Emmy Award nominations, winning for score. Other lauded series include *Monk* (USA) and HBO's *Rome* and *Carnivale*. Film scores include documentaries *Blackfish*, *Queen of Versailles*, and dramas *Pollock* and *Appaloosa*. Beal's concert works have been performed by the St. Louis, Rochester, Pacific, Munich, and Detroit symphonies. Commissions include works for the Los Angeles Master Chorale, Smuin Ballet, Ying Quartet, and Grammy-winning guitarist

Jason Vieaux. Beal recently conducted the world premiere of *House of Cards in Concert* with the National Symphony Orchestra. He also recently conducted the Boston Symphony and Boston Pops Esplanade Orchestras in the recording and concert premieres of his film score *BOSTON*, a feature length documentary about the Boston Marathon.

MARY KOUYOUMDJIAN is a composer with projects ranging from concert works to multimedia collaborations. As a first generation Armenian-American and having come from a family directly affected by the Lebanese Civil War and Armenian Genocide, she uses a sonic palette that draws on her heritage, interest in music as documentary, and a background in experimental composition to blend the old with the new. She has received commissions for such organizations as Kronos Quartet, Carnegie Hall, Alarm Will Sound, American Composers Forum/JFund, International Contemporary Ensemble, REDSHIFT, Music of Remembrance, Friction Quartet, and Experiments in Opera. Her documentary work was recently presented by the 2016 New York Philharmonic Biennial, and residencies include those with Alarm Will Sound, Roulette/The Jerome Fund, Montalvo Arts, and Exploring the Metropolis. Kouyoumdjian is pursuing her DMA in composition at Columbia University, and holds an MA from New York University and a BA from UC San Diego. She is a co-founder of New Music Gathering. marykouyoumdjian.com

DJ SPOOKY (aka Paul D. Miller) is the executive editor of *Origin Magazine* and is a composer, multimedia artist, editor, and author. His DJ Mixer iPad app has seen more than 12 million downloads. In 2012, he was the first artist-in-residence at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. He has produced and composed work for Yoko Ono, Thurston Moore, and scores of artists and award-winning films. Miller's work as a media artist has appeared in the Whitney Biennial; the Venice Biennial for Architecture; the Ludwig Museum in Cologne, Germany; Kunsthalle, Vienna; The Andy Warhol Museum in Pittsburgh; and others. His book *Sound Unbound*, an anthology of writings on electronic music and digital media, is a best-selling title for MIT Press. Miller continues his globe-trotting series of live events playing at festivals from France to Japan to Mexico City, performing solo, with chamber groups, and with orchestras, and giving talks at prominent universities and conferences.

NICO MUHLY is an American composer and sought-after collaborator whose influences range from American minimalism to the Anglican choral tradition. The recipient of commissions from the Metropolitan Opera, Carnegie Hall, St. Paul's Cathedral, and others, he has written more than 80 works for the concert stage, including the forthcoming opera *Marnie*. Muhly is a frequent collaborator with choreographer Benjamin Millepied and, as an arranger, has paired with Sufjan Stevens, Antony and the Johnsons, and others. His work for stage and

screen includes music for the 2013 Broadway revival of *The Glass Menagerie* and scores for films including the Academy Award-winning *The Reader*. Born in Vermont, Muhly studied composition at The Juilliard School before working as an editor and conductor for Philip Glass. He is part of the artist-run record label Bedroom Community, which released his first two albums, *Speaks Volumes* (2006) and *Mothertongue* (2008). He lives in New York City.

SHARA NOVA (formerly Worden), born in "the diamond state" of Arkansas to a family of musical traveling evangelists, moved across America throughout her youth, then went on to study classical voice at the University of North Texas. After moving to New York City she assembled her chamber pop band My Brightest Diamond in 2001, subsequently releasing four albums on Asthmatic Kitty Records. Nova has composed works for yMusic, Brooklyn Youth Chorus, Young New Yorkers' Chorus, Brooklyn Rider, Nadia Sirota, and Roomful of Teeth, among others. Her baroque chamber p'opera *You Us We All* premiered at the BAM Next Wave Festival in October 2015. Many composers, songwriters, and filmmakers have sought out Nova's voice, including David Lang, David Byrne, The Decemberists, Bryce Dessner, Steve Mackey, Sarah Kirkland Snider, Sufjan Stevens, and Matthew Barney. Nova is a Kresge Fellow, Knights Grant recipient, and a United States Artist fellow.

TOSHI REAGON is a talented, versatile singer, composer, musician, curator, and producer with a profound ear for sonic Americana—from folk to funk, from blues to rock. While her expansive career has landed her comfortably in residence at Carnegie Hall, the Paris Opera House, and Madison Square Garden, you can just as easily find Reagon turning out a music festival, intimate venue, or local club. She is a recipient of a NYFA Award for Music Composition, a national Women's History Month Honoree, and was the music director for the national Women's March on Washington in January. Reagon's current touring projects include *Celebrate the Great Women of Blues and Jazz*, a 16-piece all women's ensemble of some of New York's best instrumentalists and vocalists. She is currently developing an opera based on Octavia E. Butler's novel *Parable of the Sower*, debuting fall 2017.

KAMALA SANKARAM has been praised as “strikingly original” (*The New York Times*) and “an impassioned soprano with blazing high notes” (*The Wall Street Journal*). Recent commissions include by Houston Grand Opera's Opera to Go, Washington National Opera's American Opera Initiative, Beth Morrison Projects, HERE Arts Center, and Opera Memphis. Awards, grants, and residencies include: Kevin Spacey Artist of Choice, Jonathan Larson Award, NEA ArtWorks, MAP Fund, Opera America,

NY IT Award for Outstanding Production of a Musical, the Civilians, HERE, American Lyric Theater, the MacDowell Colony, and the Watermill Center. She has performed and premiered pieces with Beth Morrison Projects, Anthony Braxton, and the Wooster Group, among others. She is currently the leader of Bombay Rickey, an operatic Bollywood surf ensemble whose debut album was named Best Eclectic Album by the Independent Music Awards Vox Pop. Sankaram's opera *THUMBPRINT* will receive its West Coast premiere at LA Opera this June. kamalasankaram.com

CAROLINE ADELAIDE SHAW is a New York-based musician. She is the youngest-ever winner of the Pulitzer Prize for Music, for her enigmatic composition *Partita for 8 Voices*. Her career defies categorization—she performs as a violin soloist, chamber musician, and as a vocalist in the Grammy-winning ensemble Roomful of Teeth. Recent commissions include works for Carnegie Hall, Guggenheim Museum, St. Paul Chamber Orchestra with Jonathan Biss, and mezzo-soprano Anne Sofie von Otter. She also frequently collaborates with Kanye West. Currently a doctoral candidate at Princeton, Shaw also studied at Rice and Yale. She loves the color yellow, otters, Beethoven opus 74, Mozart opera, the smell of rosemary, and the sound of a janky mandolin.

PRODUCTION & DESIGN TEAM

PETER NIGRINI (set and video design) is one of Broadway's leading projection designers who for the past 15 years has been a pioneer in the integration of digital projection technology and live theater. Designs include *Real Enemies*, which premiered in the 2015 Next Wave Festival; *Dear Evan Hansen*; *Amélie*; the David Byrne musical *Here Lies Love*; Will Eno's *Wakey Wakey*; *Fela!*; *An Act of God*; *Grounded* at the Public Theater; and Robert Woodruff's adaptation of Dostoyevsky's *Notes from Underground*, first produced at Yale Repertory Theatre and remounted at La Jolla Playhouse and Theatre for a New Audience. In addition to his work in the theater, he also designs in other mediums, including the Grace Jones *Hurricane* tour. He is also a founding member and the sole designer for Nature Theater of Oklahoma. This summer he will premiere a new production of *Lucia di Lammermoor* for Santa Fe Opera.

DAN SCULLY (set and video design) Recent work includes *If/Then* (national tour), *Rocky* (Broadway), *Jedermann* (Salzburg Festival), *Untitled America* (Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater), *A Charlie Brown Christmas* (New York Pops), *The Orchestra Moves!* (Carnegie Hall), and *When the Wolves Came In* (Kyle Abraham/

Abraham.In.Motion); and projects at Trinity Repertory Theater, La Jolla Playhouse, Asolo Rep, Cleveland Playhouse, ARS NOVA, and GEVA Theater.

GARTH MacALEAVEY (sound design) cut his teeth (and ears) as an engineer on the New York City contemporary music scene (Le Poisson Rouge, VisionIntoArt/National Sawdust, Beth Morrison Productions, MATA). He specializes in concert amplification and sound design for both traditional and experimental music performance. An avid musician, MacAleavey's career in audio was strongly influenced by his time as a student of avant garde percussion at UCSC under the tutelage of Willie Winant. MacAleavey's recent credits include the sound design for *FLEXN* directed by Peter Sellars at the Park Avenue Armory, engineering Jeff Zeigler/Andy Akiho/Roger Bonair-Agard at the Prospect Park Bandshell for Celebrate Brooklyn, and mixing Alarm Will Sound with Dance Heginbotham in Seoul, Korea. His past credits include Kronos Quartet, Philip Glass Ensemble, Terry and Gyan Riley, David T. Little, Steve Reich, Paul Simon, Atoms for Peace, Erykah Badu, Brooklyn Philharmonic, and many more.

JEANETTE OI-SUK YEW (lighting design) is a lighting designer for theater, opera, dance, music performances, and installation. Her designs were described as “clever” and “inventive” (*The New York Times*). She has designed for productions at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, BAM, St. Ann’s Warehouse, Manhattan School of Music, and internationally in Havana, Prague, Lima, Edinburgh, Shanghai, and Tokyo. She designed Tan Dun’s *Water Passion*, *Mysterium Novum* with the Nouveau Classical Project, *The Idiot* with Kristin Marting and Robert Lyons, Sam Falls’ *September Spring*, Aya Ogawa’s *Ludic Proxy* (Bel Geddes Design Enhancement Award), HK Gruber’s *Gloria—A Pig Tale* with Alan Gilbert and Doug Fitch, Schubert’s *Fierrabras* with Leon Botstein, Aaron Siegel’s *Brother Brother*, Company XIV’s *Rococo Rogue* and *Nutcracker Rogue* (received various Drama Desk nominations), and Matthew Paul Olmos’ *So Go the Ghosts of Mexico Part One* (Best Lighting Design nomination). She is a recipient of the NEA/TCG Career Development Program.

KATE FRY (costume designer) designs costumes for opera, theater, film, and dance. Her work explores clothing as poetry, to illustrate the complex nature of identity as both individual and contextual within society. Recently, Fry’s designs have been shown with the Los Angeles Philharmonic (composer Jacob Cooper) and at the Spoleto Festival USA (*The Little Match Girl*, a collaboration with puppeteer Mark Down and director Phelim McDermott). Beyond the stage, Fry’s work ranges from fine art—teaming up on French artist Julien Previoux’s project *What Shall We Do Next* (winner of the Prix Marcel Duchamp), to film and television, most recently designing costumes for a 1960s era television pilot, *The Picture* (directed by David Winkler). Fry’s work has been shown at The Public Theater, New York City Center, Grand Palais Paris, 3LD, La MaMa, HERE Arts Center, Walt Disney Concert Hall, REDCAT, Prototype Opera Festival, The Bootleg Theater, Honor Fraser Gallery, Prague Quadrennial, and the Tribeca Film Festival. She earned an MFA from California Institute of the Arts.

PETER McCABE (dramaturg) is resident dramaturg at HERE Arts Center. His credits include *Don Christobal* by Erin Orr and Rima Fand, *Send for the Million Men* by Joseph Silovsky, and *Casablacabox* by Reid and Sara Farrington all at HERE. He received a Jerome Grant to write and produce the live radio/theater event *Stanford White: Murder, Love, and Insanity in the Guilded Age* for Clocktower Radio. Presently he is working on *Get Jack* by Damien Gray and Kip Winger, a revenge drama about the ghosts of Jack the Ripper's victims; adapting his third *Emperor and the Queen* play into the burlesque opera with Kamala Sankaram; and developing a new unannounced cabaret show with Damien Gray. As a producer, with his

wife Hillary Richard, their production of the rock and roll musical *Lizzie Borden* was nominated for three Drama Desk Awards and has spawned over a dozen additional productions. He lives in Brooklyn with his wife and three daughters.

NUNALLY KERSH (executive producer) is an independent producer in the contemporary performing arts sector, working with a wide variety of institutions and artists. Prior to working independently, she served as executive producer of Spoleto Festival USA in Charleston, SC for more than 15 years. Before relocating to Charleston, she worked with a variety of New York-based cultural organizations including the Lincoln Center Festival, PS 122, BAM, and the French Cultural Services.

Brooklyn Youth Chorus

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