White Snake Projects presents...

白蛇计划呈现...

Fractured Mosaics

碎影重构

a virtual opera that asks what it means to be Asian American

一个探讨亚裔美国人身份认同的虚拟歌剧

Premiering LIVE in cyberspace
March 30, April 1 & 3, 2023

在2023年3月30日、4月1日和3日
于网络世界首演

We are often fractured, but when we come together we form beautiful mosaics.

我们经常被打破，但是当我们走到一起时，
我们形成了一个美丽的马赛克

WHITE SNAKE PROJECTS

www.whitesnakeprojects.org

WELCOME

Dear Friends of White Snake Projects

We are immensely proud to bring you four teams of Asian American writers and composers and a cast of Asian Americans together in one opera - Fractured Mosaics - which showcases the brilliance of Asian artistry and creativity. So often, Asian Americans are lauded for our technical and scholastic competence, but dismissed as inferior on creative, artistic and interpersonal levels: Witness the fact that Asian Americans failed miserably on Harvard University's admissions criteria for "positive personality," likability, courage, kindness and being "widely respected."

The pandemic did not help matters. The fact that coronavirus originated in China tarred all Asians as virus vectors, spawning a surge of anti-Asian hate crimes, which continues today. Fractured Mosaics is our response to these vicious attacks.

The term "Asian American" is a social and political construct which groups together 20 different ethnic groups originating from more than half the earth's land mass. Though loosely bound by the color of our skin, we are not a monolith. Our different cultural and political histories are deeply embedded in our origin memories. We struggle to explain what it means to live in a yellow skin - a skin which is not dark enough to deserve protection from violence or discrimination; a skin which is not white enough to be accorded the privileges of whiteness. How do we explain the insidiousness of "yellow racism"? These four scenes by Asian American composer/writer teams bound together by musical interludes say what words can only say, inadequately. They show what we dream of, what we struggle with and how we triumph. We are often fractured; but when we come together, the fractured mosaics form something beautiful.

Cerise Lim Jacobs, Opera Maker + Founding Artistic Director

White Snake Projects, An Activist Opera Company

March 30th, 2022

Mellon Foundation · National Endowment for the Arts arts.gov · BCC Boston Cultural Council · Mass Cultural Council · The Alice M. Ditson Fund

ABOUT FRACTURED MOSAICS

Asian Americans are not a monolith.

Underlying the theme of ***Fractured Mosaics*** is that even the term "Asian American" is a social and political construct, completely missing the diversity of cultures and politics of the 20 different ethnic groups that are gathered under that umbrella — groups that are geographically spread over more than half the landmass of the Earth.

Fractured Mosaics is White Snake Projects' latest live virtual opera, created using the software plug-in Tutti Remote which was developed by White Snake Projects to make live, synchronous performances from remote locations possible.

"Banana Ketchup"
By Nilo Alcala and Deepali Gupta
When Simon, a young medical student of Filipino descent meets his biological mother for the first time, they bond over her home-made bottle of banana ketchup, the quintessential Filipino condiment.

"Norfolk"
By Randall Eng and Monique Truong
Eighty-nine-year-old Dr. Sing is transported from present-day Norfolk, Virginia, back to 1947 and to the Oriental Chop Suey Café, where he is once again a teenager, learning the harsher realities of being Chinese American in the American South and the power of dreaming.

"We Meet At The Water"
By Liliya Ugay and Sokunthary Svay
A daughter in NYC speaks with her mother in Cambodia through the water that separates them, and which will soon overcome Mother's village. A moving music-theatre piece exploring the impact of climate change on families around the world.

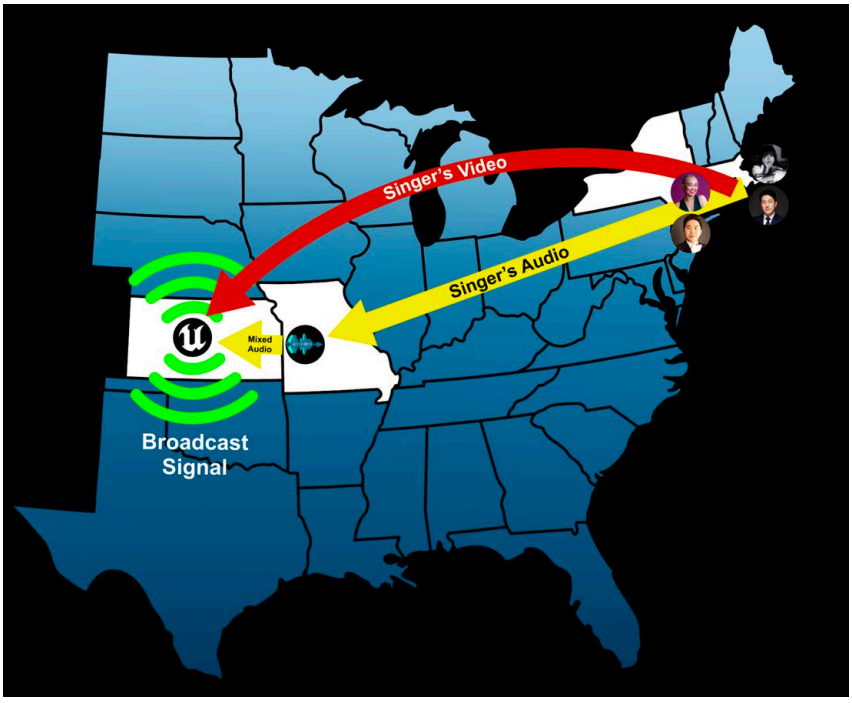
"Music Box Bird"
By Ben Kono and Cerise Lim Jacobs
Through the metaphor of two songbirds, an Asian American woman discovers her inner power to overcome her restrictive upbringing and free herself.

"INTERLUDES"
jason chu, Writer and Performer
Randall Eng, Composer

A LIVE Virtual Performance

This premiere uses cutting edge technology we invented to make a new performance genre, one that is not live in-person theater, or a movie or pre-recorded video, but one that is created especially for the small screen - LIVE digital performance with socially distant performers spread over the US.

You will see our singers, who are located in different parts of the country, performing live in real time in immersive 3D sets created with the game platform Unreal Engine. Their audio is synced and mixed through our new plug-in, Tutti Remote. The synced audio and video is then live broadcasted to your screen.



SINGER'S VIDEO (RED)

Our singers are staged in real time using green screens from their homes in Manhattan, Queens and Boston. Their video feeds steam live to our Broadcast Engineer in Kansas, who uses Unreal Engine to place them into the virtual stage.

SINGER'S AUDIO (YELLOW)

Their live singing is sent through Tutti Remote, an audio plug-in we invented to manage latency, to our Audio Engineer in Missouri. The audio is mixed in real time and transmitted to our Broadcast Engineer.

BROADCAST FEED (GREEN)

Our Broadcast Engineer then syncs the video and audio feeds and broadcasts the performance live to you, our audience.

The result is a completely live, virtual opera experience. We hope you enjoy seeing this powerful new work of LIVE music theatre!

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Stage Director: Laine Rettmer

Bringing to life new operatic work that strives to comment upon, invite conversation, and critique our world's systemic injustices has been a great privilege. From the beginning, when I was brought into the project, it seemed only fitting that work which hopes to engage the boundaries of empathy should also experiment and wrestle with form. In this way, White Snake's hybrid works of live virtual opera represent rare occurrences where form and content meet, merge, and influence each other to create new ways of thinking through performance. These stories, then, are not only acts of love, rebellion, and openness made in one of the oldest art forms but also point to the futurity of live art and the persistence of opera.

Not only have White Snake's overarching artistic and socially engaged goals been my guideposts as the director of Fractured Mosaics, but also the structure of the company has become a part of the work as well. Cerise Lim's invitation for mentorship and development with young animators is part of the process that has most astounded me. So much of what you will see tonight has been created by students or animators just out of educational programs. Working and collaborating with these talented and innovative new artists has provided unique and unusual solutions to the operas, and a few of these artists with their first professional opportunities. When I look at what we've made together, Fractured Mosaics represents, to me, a monumental effort in creativity and activism because the methodologies attempt to match the outcome. White Snake's process embodies its ethos by attempting to question top-down, and rigid structures of creation which we hope also come through in our story-telling.

- Laine Rettmer

CREATIVE'S NOTE

BANANA KETCHUP

Composed by: Nilo Alcala
Written by: Deepali Gupta

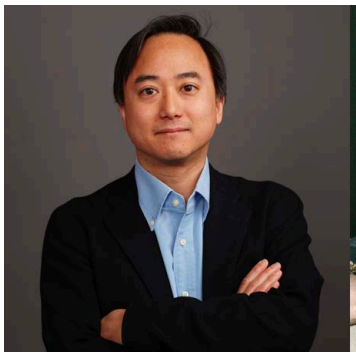
Simon, a medical student, and his biological Mom are meeting for the first time since he was a baby. Both have so many stories to tell, so many questions to ask. They have lived divergent, and individually intricate lives since they were separated.

The intricate yet delicate rhythms accompanying Simon and his Mom somehow illustrate their whole lives happening side by side, not exactly together, yet congruent and organically related. Contrasting rhythms as 3 against 2 or 4 against 3 seem to illustrate their different lives in parallel.

They bond over her homemade bottle of banana ketchup, the the most popular and truly Filipino condiment. Their separate stories converge in a 'double aria' while opening up about the lives they have lived, at the same time, singing in counterpoint to each other. At the end, they both sing "I hope to hear from you soon/I hope to see you soon" this time in synchronicity and perfect harmony.

- **Nilo Alcala**

CREATIVE'S NOTE



NORFOLK

Composed by: Randall Eng
Written by: Monique Truong

Norfolk is inspired by my dad's childhood in Virginia. Born in Norfolk in 1932, he went back to China at the age of 5, got stuck there during World War II, then returned to Virginia as a 15- year-old in 1947. He went on to serve in the Korean War, went to college and med school on the GI Bill, then became a doctor on Staten Island—in many ways the stereotypical American Dream.

My dad is now 91, and a few years ago I took him back to Norfolk and walked him around his old neighborhood to see what he might remember. The place that animated him the most was the site of the old Oriental Chop Suey Café, where he worked as a teenager. I tried to imagine what it was like for him to live in this tiny Chinese American community in the mid-century, segregated South, American by birth but not speaking English well, working in a restaurant that catered to white Virginians, and wanting nothing more than to escape to the movie theatre down the street and watch cowboy movies. The cultural contradictions and confusions that surrounded him became the starting point for Norfolk.

- Randall Eng

Centering voices found within the lesser-known, often-elided history of Asian Americans in the American South, "Norfolk" explores the borderland between loss and memory, practicalities and dreams, citizenship and belonging. Rooted in the early life of composer Randall Eng's father, the libretto is also informed by my own connections to the American South.

I've often described myself as being southern, twice over: I was born in South Vietnam, and upon coming to the U.S. as a refugee the first place I called home was a small town in North Carolina. There, I learned my first English words, including the racial epithets for those who looked like me in this country. While the former was a lifeline to another identity and a new life, the latter was a bewildering, difficult, and scarring lesson for a seven-year-old to learn. My relationship to this region still exists somewhere between these two poles: lifeline and scar. It is no surprise that my work as a novelist, essayist, and now librettist, has brought me back to the American South. This time, I'm honored to accompany a doctor who is time traveling—another term for remembering, yes?—back to 1947, back to the Southern city where he began to dream, differently.

- Monique Truong

CREATIVE'S NOTE

WE MEET AT THE WATER

Composed by: Lilaya Ugay
Written by: Sokunthary Svay

We Meet at the Water depicts the situation many of us, Asian immigrants, share - the separation with our parents who we have to leave on a different continent. The feeling of guilt that you cannot be there for your old parents, who devoted most of their best years in helping you to get a better place to live, is overwhelming. At the same time, there is a guilt that we share as Americans, being hugely responsible for causing global warming and what it does to small islands in Southeast Asia. This is the situation in which we find pregnant Nakry, who lives in New York, while her mother, Poeuv is about to drown on the island Kep-Sur-Mer in Cambodia. They speak to each other through Water - Water that connects the continents, Water that creates lives, Water that we cross as a Cambodian metaphor for giving birth.

- **Liliya Ugay**

Where will we be at the end of the world? "We Meet at the Water" is partly inspired by a speculative short story I recently published, with strong undertones about global warming, which takes places in Cambodia in 2050 AD. Liliya was touched by the connection between the female characters and so I made it into a mother-daughter story, partly inspired by our relationship with our own mothers. What are the sacrifices we make as mothers, daughters, and/or mothers-to-be? I imagined a fantastical story, with a Cambodian mother and daughter who were speaking to each other through the powers of the water. The mother was in the Cambodian seaside town of Kep sur-Mer and unable to be with her daughter because of visa issues. Meanwhile, her daughter was pregnant, but otherwise alone, in New York City. The water in this part of the world has risen over an inch within the past couple of decades; Kep is about to be swallowed up by a tsunami and the mother along with it. Knowing that this time is all they have, what are the last things they will say to each other?

- **Sokunthary Svay**

CREATIVE'S NOTE

MUSIC BOX BIRD

Composed by: Benjamin Kono
Written by: Cerise Lim Jacobs

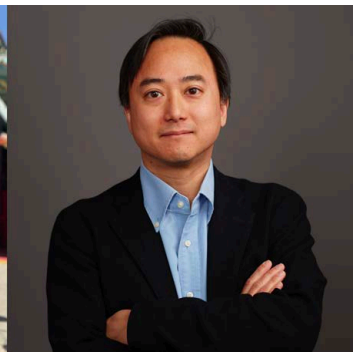
'Music Box Bird' is a metaphor exploring themes of cultural constraints, freedom and inner strength as represented by the story of two songbirds. In setting Cerise Jacobs' engaging libretto, I used the rhythms and pitches of field recordings from the Japanese Uguisu and the African Whydah bird as unifying themes throughout. I also explored the use of Japanese scales and utilized mezzo soprano Chihiro's superb knowledge of traditional Japanese singing technique to further ground the piece within its Asian roots before taking on more Western approaches as the story progresses. As with any writing project, I enjoyed the research and collaboration process, immersing myself in opera, traditional Japanese 'gagaku' music, and the music of West Africa. Ultimately, I filter these influences through my experience as a jazz musician, hopefully adding to my own personal sound as a composer. I hope you enjoy the opera 'Music Box Bird'!

- **Benjamin Kono**

Music Box Bird is a metaphor for the syndrome that many Asian (and non-Asian) women suffer from: Wind us up and we perform obediently according to cultural, patriarchal and societal expectations. We are caged in our own minds and only we, with a little help from our friends, can set ourselves free. As an Asian woman born and raised into a patriarchal Chinese family where being female was secondary, in British colonial Singapore where being a person of color was secondary, and in a Methodist Mission School where independent thinking was secondary, setting myself free was a long and arduous process. It is still ongoing. . . Music Box Bird is a call to action to my sisters, particularly my Asian sisters, to dare to spread our wings and to sing for ourselves.

- **Cerise Lim Jacobs**

CREATIVE'S NOTE



INTERLUDES

Written & Performed by : jason chu
Composed by : Randall Eng

Asian American experience is myriad, at once immensely personal and shared nationwide. To create work encompassing our complexities was daunting - and immensely worthwhile.

"Asian American" is often erroneously imagined as a limiting descriptor, a label reducing our diversities to a single racialized particle. But this very phrase was created as a statement of self-determination. In 1968, a group of Bay Area students planted a flag, declaring their solidarity with one another and the various communities tied to the postcolonial world. They would be "Oriental" no more - instead, "Asian American". Asian America thus stands from its core against global imperialism and for alliances between those communities with "nothing to lose but our chains".

I created the rap interludes presented in *Fractured Mosaics* with this in mind. Though we - multiracial, adopted, multigenerational East, Southeast, and South Asian Americans - are unmistakably diverse, we are drawn together by a shared yearning for self-determination, to break beyond the boxes of a colonizing mentality that imagines us as subaltern humanity. To be Asian American is to participate in the individual and shared struggle for self-determination, to seize the freedom to own and tell our stories in our own voices.

- **jason chu [Rapper/Activist/Educator]**

The process of creating the five Interludes was unlike any collaboration I've had before. I've worked with a lot of librettists in the past, but never with a rapper like the phenomenal jason chu. For this project, jason created recordings of himself rapping over tracks, then deleted those tracks and sent me the recordings of just his unaccompanied voice. Stripped of musical context, jason's powerful vocal delivery became the lodestone for these pieces, and the range of emotions—pain, anger, pride, an optimistic embrace of the future—spoke deeply to my own feelings about being Asian American today. I composed directly to jason's a cappella recordings, trying to honor the musicality of his vocal performance, but scoring the orchestra to reflect my own responses to the issues and feelings he so vividly describes. Together, we have created a series of joint missives to the Asian American community, a reflection on where we are, how we got here, and where we could be going.

- **Randall Eng**

FEATURING

(in alphabetical order)

CAST

Chihiro Asano (Mezzo-Soprano)
We Meet At The Water - *Nakry*
Music Box Bird - *Uguisu*

Junhan Choi (Baritone)
Norfolk - *Richie*

Ziwen Xiang (Tenor)
Banana Ketchup - *Simon*
Norfolk - *Young*
We Meet At The Water - *Water*
Music Box Bird - *Whydah*

Angela Yam (Soprano)
Banana Ketchup - *Eleanor*
Norfolk - *Rose*
We Meet At The Water - *Poeuv*

Orchestra

Tianhui Ng (Music Director)

Angela Santiago (Victory Players Ensemble Manager)

Elly Toyoda (Violin / Viola)

Clare Monfredo (Cello)

Eric Schultz (Flute / Clarinet)

Nathan Ben Yehuda (Piano)

CREDITS

COMPOSER & LIBRETTIST TEAM

COMPOSER (BANANA KETCHUP)
NILO ALCALA

LIBRETTIST (BANANA KETCHUP)
DEEPALI GUPTA

COMPOSER (NORFOLK)
RANDALL ENG

LIBRETTIST (NORFOLK)
MONIQUE TRUONG

COMPOSER (WE MEET AT THE WATER)
LILIYA UGAY

LIBRETTIST (WE MEET AT THE WATER)
SOKUNTHARY SVAY

COMPOSER (MUSIC BOX BIRD)
BENJAMIN KONO

LIBRETTIST (MUSIC BOX BIRD)
CERISE LIM JACOBS

WRITER & PERFORMER (INTERLUDES)
jason chu

COMPOSER (INTERLUDES)
RANDALL ENG

CREATIVE TEAM

CREATOR + OPERA MAKER
CERISE LIM JACOBS

STAGE DIRECTOR
LAINE RETTMER

MUSIC DIRECTOR
TIANHUI NG

PROJECTIONS DESIGNER
NUOZHOU WANG

ANIMATOR
PAOLA ALMONTE

3D MODELERS
MENGLIU LU
SENIA NOVAK

PRODUCTION & TECHNICAL TEAM

DIRECTOR OF INNOVATION
CURVIN HUBER

PRODUCTION MANAGER
HAN HULING

TECHNICAL DIRECTOR / BROADCAST ENGINEER
GREG MCGUIRE

AUDIO ENGINEER
JON ROBERTSON

ASSISTANT AUDIO ENGINEER
HANNAH ZIMMERMAN

UNREAL TECHNICAL ARTIST
EDUARDO BERGANZA

STAGE MANAGER
MILAN ELDRIDGE

ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER
LYNDSEY HAWKES

CONSULTANT
ERIC HUNG

ARTS ADMINISTRATOR
STEPHEN JACKSON

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER
WHITE SNAKE PROJECTS

COMMISSIONED BY **WHITE SNAKE PROJECTS**

CAST

Chihiro Asano

We Meet At The Water **-** *Nakry*
Music Box Bird **-** *Uguisu*

Mezzo-Soprano **Chihiro Asano** from Tokyo, Japan, graduated with her Master of Music degree in Vocal Pedagogy from NEC in 2022. Her staged performances include opera, chamber works, and contemporary experimental music. Most recently, she was seen playing Hiroko Watanabe in Jack Perla's An American Dream and Ljubica in Ana Sokolović's SVADVA. Other leading opera roles include Carmen in Carmen, Maddalena in Rigoletto, Dame3 in The Magic Flute, and Whitch2 in Dido and Aeneas. In addition to performance, Chihiro is also passionate about teaching and voice science. In August 2021, she presented her research on the Japanese female voice in Anime at the Pan American Vocology Association (PAVA) Conference.

Ziwen Xiang

Banana Ketchup **-** *Simon*
Norfolk **-** *Young*
We Meet At The Water **-** *Water*
Music Box Bird **-** *Whydah*

Tenor **Ziwen Xiang**'s voice has been described as possessing a remarkably sweet, spinning, warm tone, ideal for the lyric stage.

This September he sang Arturo in Lucia di Lammermoor with New York City Opera. His 2021-22 season began with a concert of Opera Favorites around the U.S. This season, he will also debut as Don Ottavio in Don Giovanni with the Mid-Atlantic Orchestra and Seton Hall University, perform the Bach Magnificat and Vivaldi Gloria RV588 with the Taghkanic Chorale in NY, and in January debut as Ferrando in Cosi fan tutte at Grand Rapids Opera.

Last season witnessed Xiang's film debut as Rodolfo in Puccini's La Boheme, produced by More Than Music Ltd of Hong Kong and his debut with the Phoenicia Festival of the Voice as Beppe in Pagliacci. Further, in August he was proud to sing the Star Spangled Banner for a N.Y. Mets game. Ziwen made his New York City Opera debut in their world premiere of Stonewall, by Ian Bell and Mark Campbell and his debut with the Metropolitan Opera Guild's "Members Lecture Performances" he sang Rinuccio in Gianni Schicchi.

Junhan Choi

Norfolk **-** *Richie*

Praised for his "splendid baritone voice, rich and rounded", baritone **Junhan Choi**, a native of South Korea. Mr. Choi has performed in numerous operas, oratorios and concerts with such companies as Boston Lyric Opera, Teatro Nuovo, Odyssey Opera, Boston Opera Collaborative, MassOpera, and Naples Philharmonic. In the 2022-2023 season, engagements included his role Adonis in Venus and Adonis with Cambridge Chamber Ensemble, baritone solo for Duruflé's Requiem with Naples Philharmonic, BWV 140 and Hyden's Lord Nelson Mass with Commonwealth Chorale, and Bach's Mass in B minor with Upper Valley Baroque.

Mr. Choi is a prize winner in many international competitions, such as the 54th Vi as International Voice Competition(Spain/Three Extraordinary Prizes - Mercedes Vi as, Victoria de los ngeles, Franz Schubert), the Berliner International Music Competition(Germany/ Golden Medal), Talents of the World International Voice Competition(1st Place), MassOpera's Vocal Competition(1st Place), Rochester International Vocal Competition(4th Place and Audience Favorite) and St. Botolph Emerging Artist Grant for excellence in music.

He holds a Master's degree and a Graduate Diploma with a Presidential Scholarship from New England Conservatory of Music.

Angela Yam

Samiir's Feast *Fiona/ Fosiya*

Angela Yam joins the New York City Ballet in Summer 2022 as the Soprano Soloist (Mendelssohn: *A Midsummer Night's Dream*). With Opera Saratoga, Yam performed as Johanna (Sondheim: *Sweeney Todd*), the Soprano Soloist (Rossini: *Petite messe solennelle*), and covered Elder (Lembit Beecher: *Sky on Swings*).

Yam's 2022-23 season includes the live premiere of Breyer's *Requiem* at Carnegie's Stern Hall, the Soprano Soloist in Koffinke's *The Five Elements*, Ellis Ludwig-Leone's *The Night Falls* (co-produced by the American Opera Project, BalletCollective, and PEAK Performances at Montclair State University as part of the Guggenheim Works & Process art series), and *Fractured Voices*, a new opera with White Snake Project in response to the rise in anti-Asian hate crimes.

In the 2021-22 season, Yam joined Santa Fe Opera as an Apprentice Singer, performing Cobweb (Britten: *A Midsummer Night's Dream*) and covering Agave (John Corigliano: *Lord of Cries*, world premiere). Yam debuted as a "wickedly funny and talented" Clorinda (Rossini: *La Cenerentola*) with Fargo-Moorhead Opera, also performing Bastienne (Mozart: *Bastien & Bastienne*) and Jazz Trio (Bernstein: *Trouble in Tahiti*).

A California native, Yam made her professional debut with Opera Modesto as Mary Crawford (Dove: *Mansfield Park*). She holds a Graduate Diploma from the New England Conservatory (2021), where she performed as Blanche de la Force (Poulenc: *Dialogues of the Carmelites*), the Coloratura Soprano (Argento: *Postcard from Morocco*), Calisto (Cavalli: *La Calisto*), and the Soprano Soloist (Haydn's *Die Schöpfung*).

ORCHESTRA

Elly Toyoda

Violin / Viola

Dr. **Elly Toyoda**, a native of Osaka, Japan, has performed in major festivals in Asia, Europe, and North America. She holds her Bachelor's degree from Oberlin Conservatory, where she studied with Marilyn McDonald on both modern and baroque violin, was elected membership to the National Music Honor Society for her academic and artistic achievements, and studied for a semester in Vienna, Austria, supported by the Thomastik-Infeld City of Music Scholarship and the Fine Arts Scholarship. She earned her Master's degree from the Yale School of Music, where she studied with Syoko Aki, served as concertmistress of the orchestra, was a finalist of their concerto competition, and received the school's Alumni Prize. She earned her Doctor of Musical Arts degree from Rutgers University, where she studied with Yura Lee, wrote her doctoral thesis Musical Paradoxes in the Violin Works of Olivier Messiaen, and graduated with the Irene Alm Memorial Prize and the Music Department Award, the school's highest honors, in recognition of excellence in performance and scholarly research.

Dr. Toyoda currently serves as Visiting Assistant Professor of Violin at the Sunderman Conservatory of Music at Gettysburg College, and as a Part-Time Lecturer teaching 20th and 21st-century Performance Practice at Rutgers University.

Eric Schultz

Flute / Clarinet

Eric Schultz is an international prize-winning clarinetist. As 1st-prize winner of the American Protégé International Competition, he will be performing in a solo recital at Carnegie Hall next season. He is also a 1st-prize winner of the Brussels Grand Prize Virtuoso International Competition, and recipient of the prestigious Rislov Foundation grant for excellence in classical music, awarded for his performance of Carl Nielsen's Clarinet Concerto. He has performed with The Chelsea Symphony in New York City, and has performed in venues across North America and Europe with conductors such as Jens Georg Bachmann, Larry Rachleff, Bruno Weil, James Burton, Mischa Santora, and Henry Charles Smith.

Additionally, he performed woodwinds in the orchestra for Nice Work If You Can Get It, the Tony Award-winning Broadway Musical on National Tour, and has performed at many international festivals, including Mozarteum Salzburg, Prague Summer Nights, and AlpenKammerMusik. As an advocate for new music and founding clarinetist of the Victory Players ensemble, he is particularly passionate about commissioning and premiering new music. As part of the ensemble's commitment to the outreach of new music, the group performs this music for young people and does masterclasses in local schools. Schultz is Assistant Professor of Music at Coastal Carolina University, where he teaches studio woodwinds, woodwind methods, and chamber music. He completed his Doctor of Musical Arts degree in clarinet performance at Stony Brook University.

Clare Monfredo

Cello

Clare Monfredo is New York City-based cellist committed to chamber music and collaboration across the arts. Clare has performed extensively at home and abroad, including as a guest with Ensemble Intercontemporain on tour in Europe and as part of the Lucerne Festival, Kurt Weill Fest, Cello Akademie Rutesheim, International Sommerakademie Wien, and the Aldeburgh Festival. Her US festival experience includes summers at the Tanglewood Music Center, Norfolk Chamber Music Festival, Music Academy of the West, Piatigorsky International Cello Festival, and Chamber Music Northwest. As a fellow at the Tanglewood Music Center, Clare was the winner of the Karl Zeise Memorial Cello Award and worked closely with distinguished artists such as Yo-Yo Ma and Emanuel Ax.

In 2016–17 she studied in Leipzig, Germany with Peter Bruns on a Fulbright Scholarship. Clare received her Master's of Music degree from Rice University as a recipient of the three-year Graduate Artist Award granted to her by the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation. She also graduated with distinction from Yale University with a Bachelor of Arts in English. Clare is currently the recipient of the five-year Graduate Fellowship as a DMA student at the CUNY Graduate Center and teaches at Hunter College. She is a member of the Victory Players new music ensemble based in Holyoke, the Brooklyn-based Sprechgesang artist collective, and a Center for Musical Excellence young artist.

Nathan Ben-Yehuda

Piano

Nathan Ben-Yehuda was born in Los Angeles and has been studying piano since he was four years old. He most recently was a winner of the 2017 Yamaha Young Performing Artist award, and has also received 3rd prize in the Seattle International Piano Competition. He has worked closely with such composers as George Lewis, Kaija Saariaho, Oliver Knussen and Thomas Ades. Nathan has held a fellowship at the Tanglewood Music Center, where he performed in a variety of new music and chamber music groups, and took part in a complete performance of Olivier Messiaen's Catalogue d'Oiseaux alongside pianist Pierre-Laurent Aimard, and performed Nancarrow Studies on two pianos with composer/pianist Thomas Ad s. He has been featured in live broadcasts on BBC Radio 3 "In Tune" as well as on WMHT Radio. He recently was one of two pianists invited to the Taos School of Music, directed by Robert McDonald, and perform as part of their young artist chamber music series. He is also the pianist for the Victory Players, a recently formed new music ensemble based in Holyoke, MA. Most recently, Nathan became a permanent member of Los Angeles based music collective Mixtape Series, who's mission is to collaborate with and blend together works by musical artists of many different backgrounds to create seamless programming. Nathan completed his Undergraduate study at the Royal Academy of Music in London, with Professor Hamish Milne, and his masters degree at the Juilliard School with Joseph Kalichstein and Jerome Lowenthal. He currently studies with Shai Wosner and Richard Goode at Bard College as part of their Advanced Performance Fellowship.

COMPOSER & LIBRETTIST TEAMS

Nilo Alcala

Composer
(Banana Ketchup)

Trailblazing composer and artist **Nilo Alcala** is carving a legacy for Philippine Arts internationally. He is the first Philippine-born composer to receive the COPLAND HOUSE Residency Award (2017), as well as to be commissioned by Grammy-winner Los Angeles Master Chorale. He is also the first Filipino-American artist to be featured as MUSICAL AMERICA WORLDWIDE'S Artist of the Month, and be awarded THE AMERICAN PRIZE in the Professional Division, Major Choral Works Category. He has received two *ANI NG DANGAL* (Harvest of Honor) awards from two Philippine Presidents.

His commissions include San Bernardino Symphony Orchestra, Asia-Europe Foundation; Andrea O. Veneracion International Choral Festival; Korean Ministry of Culture; National Music Competition for Young Artists, Philippines; Manila Symphony Orchestra, and many other ensembles. Notable collaborations include performances by the World Youth Choir, San Francisco Girls Chorus, and the South Dakota Symphony Orchestra. Alcala's virtuosic choral works have been performed by numerous winning ensembles in prestigious competitions and festivals in Asia, Europe, Africa, and the Americas. He was member and composer-in-residence of the Philippine Madrigal Singers (UNESCO Artist for Peace). An Asian Cultural Council grantee, Alcala was a Billy Joel Fellow at Syracuse University where he received the Irene L. Crooker Music Award.

Deepali Gupta

Librettist
(Banana Ketchup)

Deepali Gupta is a performance artist, composer, and playwright. Her work circulates ideas surrounding madness and creativity as they relate to the colonized and feminized body. She is the daughter of Kashmiri and Bengali immigrants, and writes in (dis)order to upheave and unravel both lived and inherited traumas. Her art is made in an effort to enact transformational justice and reach abolitionist futures. Her work has been presented by The Public Theater, Lincoln Center Theater, Ars Nova, The Bushwick Starr, Target Margin Theater, and The Poetry Project. She has collaborated with theater and media companies such as Piehole, New Saloon, and Tender Claws on acclaimed and award-winning projects; including Ski End, Minor Character, and The Under Presents. She is an Affiliated Artist with Target Margin Theater, and a member of the New Georges Jam.

Randall Eng

Composer
(Norfolk & Interludes)

RANDALL ENG's music lies at the intersection of opera, music-theatre, and jazz. His operas *Florida* and *Henry's Wife* have been presented by UrbanArias, Lyric Opera Cleveland, New York City Opera's VOX Festival, The American Opera Project, the Virginia Arts Festival, and the Center for Contemporary Opera.

His latest opera is *Before the Night Sky*. A contemporary re-telling of the Greek myth of Castor and Pollux collided with the stories of their twin sisters Helen of Troy and Clytemnestra, *Before the Night Sky* was featured at OPERA America's New Opera Showcase and is in development at The American Opera Project.

Recent non-theatrical works include *Harbor*, a song for soprano and orchestra created with U.S. Poet Laureate Tracy K. Smith for the Boston Pops; the choral work *Remain*, a setting of an immigration rights pamphlet for MasterVoices Chorale; and *Miracles*, a setting of a Walt Whitman poem for Mirror Visions Ensemble.

He has been awarded grants, prizes, and residencies from the Civitella Ranieri Foundation, the Montalvo Arts Center, the Ucross Foundation, the John Duffy Composers Institute at the Virginia Arts Festival, Tapestry Opera, and New Dramatists.

Randall is a graduate of Harvard University, Cambridge University, and NYU/Tisch's Graduate Musical Theatre Writing Program, where he is now an Associate Arts Professor. Together with stage director Sam Helfrich, he founded and leads the Tisch Opera Lab.

Monique Truong

Librettist
(Norfolk)

Based in Brooklyn, New York, **Monique Truong** is a Vietnamese American novelist, essayist, and librettist who has collaborated with composers Joan La Barbara, Shih-Hui Chen, Francisco J. Nú ez, and Randall Eng. Her novels are *The Sweetest Fruits* (Viking Books, 2019), *Bitter in the Mouth* (Random House, 2010), and *The Book of Salt* (Houghton Mifflin, 2003). She is a recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship, American Academy of Arts and Letters' Rosenthal Family Foundation Award, U.S.-Japan Creative Artists Fellowship, PEN/Robert Bingham Fellowship, Princeton University's Hodder Fellowship, New York Public Library's Young Lions Award, John Gardner Fiction Book Award, and John Dos Passos Prize for Literature, among others. She received her B.A. from Yale and J.D. from Columbia Law School.

COMPOSER & LIBRETTIST TEAMS (cont.)

Liliya Ugay

Composer
(We Meet At The Water)

Described as "particularly evocative," "fluid and theatrical... the music [that] makes its case with immediacy" as well as both "assertive and steely," and "lovely, supple writing", music by **Liliya Ugay** has been performed in many countries around the globe by the Washington National Opera, Nashville Symphony, Albany Symphony, American Composers Orchestra, New England Philharmonic, Yale Philharmonia, Next Festival, Norfolk Festival Choir, Aspen Contemporary Ensemble, Molinari Quartet, Victory Players, and Paul Neubauer among others. Her compositions have been featured at the Aspen, Norfolk, Cultivate, MIFA, American Composers, Chelsea, New York Electroacoustic Music, June in Buffalo, and Darmstadt New Music festivals, as well as the 52nd Venice Biennale. She has received awards from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, ASCAP, Yale University; in 2019 she was a finalist for the Rome Prize. As a pianist she promotes the music of repressed Soviet composers in her concert series Silenced Voices. Originally from Uzbekistan, Liliya serves as Assistant Professor of Composition at the Florida State University. She holds MM and DMA degrees from Yale; among her mentors are Aaron Kernis and Martin Bresnick.

Sokunthary Svay

Librettist
(We Meet At The Water)

Sokunthary Svay was born in a refugee camp in Thailand shortly after her parents fled Cambodia after the fall of the Khmer Rouge regime. They were sponsored to come to the United States and resettled in the Bronx where she grew up. A founding member of the Cambodian American Literary Arts Association (CALAA), she has received fellowships from the American Opera Project, Poets House, Willow Books, and CUNY, as well as commissions from Washington National Opera, the Asian American Writers' Workshop, White Snake Projects, and ISSUE Project Room. In addition to publishing a poetry collection, *Apsara in New York* (Willow Books, 2017), Svay has had her writing anthologized and performed by actors and singers. Svay's first opera, *Woman of Letters*, set by composer Liliya Ugay, received its world premiere at the Kennedy Center in January 2020 as part of the American Opera Initiative. A recent recipient of the OPERA America IDEA grant, her second opera with Ugay, *Chhlong Tonle*, received its premiere in March 2022. She is a doctoral candidate in English at the CUNY Graduate Center.

Benjamin Kono

Composer
(Music Box Bird)

New York City-based musician **Ben Kono**'s woodwinds have graced the recordings and performances of jazz legends Bob Berg, Michael and Randy Brecker, Freddie Hubbard, Wynton Marsalis, Christian McBride and David Liebman; composers Darcy James Argue, Miho Hazama and Ted Nash; and superstars Patti Austin, Hugh Jackman and Natalie Cole among others. He is a member of the John Hollenbeck Large Ensemble, the BMI Jazz Composers Orchestra, the Ed Palermo Big Band, Remy Le Boeuf's *Assembly of Shadows*, and has held chairs in many Broadway productions including the eleven-year run of *Jersey Boys*. As a composer and bandleader, his own critically acclaimed ensemble *The Ben Kono Group* is twice recipient of the Chamber Music America New Jazz Works Grant, and has presented concerts and clinics throughout the United States. Mr. Kono appears on over a hundred recordings and for his contributions to these projects he is a Grammy® Award winner. As an educator he has served on faculties at University of North Texas, Morgan State University, Queens College, City College of New York, and is currently a teaching artist for the New York Pops Orchestra.

Cerise Jacobs

Librettist
(Music Box Bird)

Cerise Lim Jacobs forges new American opera from her past in multicultural Singapore, her sojourns around the world, and her acute awareness of the social issues of our time, creating original libretti that range from the mythological to the topical. She co-founded White Snake Projects, an activist opera company which focuses on social justice issues by telling stories of communities that have been traditionally marginalized. Under Cerise's leadership, White Snake Projects has pursued civic practice as an integral part of its artistic work.

Cerise's first opera, Madame White Snake, composed by Zhou Long, won the 2011 Pulitzer Prize for music. Jacobs has gone on to create many original operas exploring subjects like immigration, mass incarceration, domestic violence, disability, and religious pluralism, collaborating with many composers including Paola Prestini, Julian Wachner, Jorge Sosa, Mary Prescott, David Sanford, Mary Watkins and Leila Adu-Gilmore. Her most recent opera, Alice in the Pandemic with Jorge Sosa, has been acquired by the Library of Congress Performing Arts COVID-19 Response Collection. Cerise has been named a 2017 Mover & Shaper by Musical America, an award given to music professionals driving the performing arts towards a future shaped by their vision, and one of Boston's 100 Most Influential People of Color in 2018.

COMPOSER & LIBRETTIST TEAMS (cont.)

jason chu

Performer & Writer (interludes)

jason chu speaks hope and healing in a broken world, blending high energy performances with thoughtfully crafted lyricism. As a Chinese American kid in suburban Delaware, he found a vocabulary for racial identity and liberation in rap music and hip-hop culture. Touring extensively, jason brings a clear-eyed social and historical consciousness to stages and classrooms around the country and globally.

jason is a 2022 Artists at Work Fellow at the Japanese American National Museum. His work has been presented on the National Mall in Washington DC and curated by the Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs and in the Chinese American Museum. His music has been heard on Warrior (HBO Max), Tetris Beat (Apple Arcade), Snowpiercer (TNT), and Wu Assassins (Netflix).

CREATIVE TEAM

Laine Rettmer

Stage Director

Laine Rettmer is an opera director and video artist whose work has been presented nationally and internationally. Their stage productions have been praised as "wickedly smart" and "devastatingly funny" by *The New York Times*. Recent awards include two National Endowment for the Arts Grants and three MAP Fund grants for the multimedia production Standby Snow: Chronicles of a Heatwave and the experimental musical Ellis. They have been awarded numerous residencies and fellowships, including the Robert Wilson's Watermill Foundation and an invited guest residency at the Vermont Studio Center. They hold a BFA in direction from New York University and an MFA in digital media from the SMFA at Tufts. They are currently the Assistant Professor in Residence in the Photography Department at the Rhode Island School of Design and, in the fall, will serve as interim Graduate Program Director.

Tianhui Ng

Music Director

Tianhui Ng is the Music Director of White Snake Projects, where he has led more than 40 premieres since 2020, including Cerise Jacobs and Jorge Sosa's Alice in the Pandemic which was chosen by the Library of Congress for their special collection recognizing the production as one of the most significant works of art in America during the pandemic. Known for his thoughtful, sensitive work with singers and composers, Tian has led performances of unusual firsts like Irin Ajo, a new Yoruba opera, by Nigerian-American composer, Olabode Amojola and José Javier Pe a Aguayo's Prints of Lost Breath which connects the #BLM protests in Loisa, Puerto Rico with the Bomba. This season, Tian looks forward to the release of his first album with the Lviv National Philharmonic of Ukraine on Nimbus, a series of performances with the Victory Players in collaboration with New England Public Media on National Public Radio and the Public Broadcasting Service, and his debut with the New England Philharmonic.

CREATIVE TEAM (cont.)

Nuozhou Wang

Projections Designer

Nuozhou Wang is a filmmaker and a video artist based in US. She has designed projection for various opera productions and has directed, cinematographed, and created visual effects for numerous films and videos. Her work, featuring women characters invariably, explores gender, class, and sexuality. Nuozhou has engaged in the creation of works presented at various venues including the Museum of Modern Art, Pioneer Works, and Art Basel. Her works have aired on WCVB and have been featured in Broadway World, The Boston Globe, Vogue, Boston Musical Intelligencer, South China Morning Post, NIKKEI Asia, etc. Nuozhou received her BFA in Sculpture from Rhode Island School of Design.

Mengliu Lu

3D Modeler

Mengliu Lu is a 3D artist, who is passionate about bringing concept sketches to life in 3D using various digital design tools. She has multiple years of experience working on different VR, PC, and mobile game projects. Her enthusiasm for building new skills and exploring new possibilities has helped her develop her own techniques and processes in creating 3D art without limit. After successful completion of her Bachelor of Arts degree in Interactive Media: Game Art at Becker College, Mengliu is now pursuing a Master's degree of Fine Arts in Interactive Media at Clark University. She specializes in 3D modeling, sculpting, texturing, rigging and animation. Her work includes in-game assets (both hard-surface and organic), characters, environment art, and animations. Believing in the power of visual designs to communicate ideas and deliver messages, she is so thrilled to be part of the team.

Paola Almonte

Animator

Paola Almonte is an Animation major at Lesley University of Art and Design. She aims to become a Professional 3D Computer Animator/Generalist in her career by working on film, video game development and app development. Paola has worked on 3D programs like Maya, Blender, Motionbuilder, and UnReal Engine, specializing in Character Animation, with skills in 3D modeling, texturing, rigging, and rendering. She has also worked on Motion Capture technology, transferring the animation data into a 3D character model.
Paola is currently a mentor at a Summer Internship called Innovators for Purpose, teaching young students how to 3D model, add materials/textures, set up a rig for animation, using a 3D program called Blender. The students will import the 3D models that will be used in an AR app/website.

Senia Novak

3D Modeler

Born and raised in Russia, **Senia Novak** is a 3D generalist based in Boston, MA. She is a 3D modeler, animator, lighting & rendering artist, graduating from LA+D.

PRODUCTION TEAM

Curvin Huber

Director of Innovation

Curvin Huber holds an MFA in illustration, an MS in interactive technology, and a BA in sculpture. He is currently a Design Professor at Lesley Art + Design where he specializes in lighting, shading, and rendering. Curvin is currently conducting research into the usage of real-time gaming technologies for live performance productions. Additionally, Curvin has been active as a design consultant and researcher working on simulation projects for numerous federal government agencies such as the Center for Disease Control, the Department of Defense, and the National Security Agency as well as visualization projects for marketing agencies and manufacturing companies.

Han Huling

Production Manager

Han Huling is thrilled to be working with White Snake Projects again! Hannah earned their BFA in Technical Theatre and Design in 2011 from Wichita State University. Originally from Franklin, MA, they traveled all over the US, making theatre as a Stage Manager, Technician and Production Manager. When they are not at WSP, they work at Harvard University as the Production Coordinator at Memorial Hall. In their precious free time, they enjoy camping and pampering all their fur children.

Greg McGuire

Technical Director & Broadcast Engineer

Greg McGuire (Broadcast Engineer) Greg is a veteran entertainment professional having worked on numerous plays, musicals, television shows, movies, concerts, and more around the country over the last 20 years. He recently relocated from the Greater New York Area to the Heartland. This is Greg's first production with White Snakes Projects and he is excited to be working with them and helping support their mission.

Jon Robertson

Audio Engineer & Tutti Remote Inventor

Jon Robertson is a composer and sound designer based in Kansas City; an adjunct instructor at Missouri Western State University Cinema and Music Technology departments, he has previously taught at University of Missouri-Kansas City and the Kansas City Art Institute. He composes for film and theatre, as well as working as a recording engineer and sound designer. He currently works with theatres and production companies creating high-quality audio content for online media during the COVID-19 era.

PRODUCTION TEAM (cont.)

Milan Eldridge

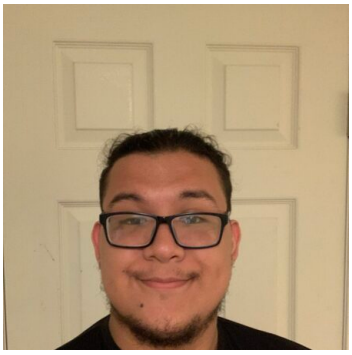
Stage Manager

Milan Eldridge is a stage manager, theater designer and filmmaker who is fascinated by the ways these different disciplines can interact, inform, and influence each other. She is passionate about exploring real-world themes and events through attentive storytelling. Milan enjoys learning more about how cyberspace can integrate with and spawn innovations in the art sphere. Her previous work with White Snake Projects includes *A Survivor's Odyssey* (Stage Manager) and *Sing Out Strong: Remembered Voices* (Stage Manager). Recent stage management work includes *The Toni Morrison Project* (Stage Manager; McCarter Theatre), *Felon: An American Washi Tale* (Assistant Stage Manager; Princeton University), *Adamandi* (Assistant Stage Manager; Princeton University), and *Horsemanship* (Stage Manager; Princeton University). Milan is on the Programming Committee for the Bridgeport Film Festival and is an Associate Digital Producer for MELA Arts Connect. She is honored to continue to have the opportunity to support the White Snake Projects activist mission.

Lyndsey Hawkes

Assistant Stage Manager

Lyndsey is a Freelance Theatre Professional in the Central MA area. She received a B.A. (Theatre Arts) from Clark University in 2019. Recent credits include *Julius Caesar* (Ensemble, THT Rep), *A Christmas Carol* (Child Wrangler, THT Rep) *The Fantasticks* (Assistant Director, Studio Theatre Worcester), and *Seussical the Musical Jr.* (Director, Luther-Burbank Middle School Drama). In her free time, she works in retail, takes voice lessons, and enjoys hiking and sightseeing. She is thrilled to be working with White Snake Projects for the first time, and thanks her parents and partner, Aaron, for their unwavering support of her artistic endeavors.



Eduardo Berganza

Unreal Technical Artist

My name is **Eduardo Berganza** and I'm a student at Lesley University majoring in GameArts but I am currently working an internship as a technical artist for White Snake Projects. I love drawing, 3D Modeling, and I enjoy art overall. I one day want to explore other fields around my skills and learn from these experiences.

Eric Hung

Consultant

Eric Hung is Executive Director of the Music of Asian America Research Center (MAARC), and Adjunct Lecturer at the University of Maryland. His research on Asian American music, music and archives, music and trauma, community engagement, and public musicology has been published in leading journals, edited books, and encyclopedias. He is also an active pianist and conductor who has performed in Germany, Austria, Hong Kong, Australia, and throughout North America. Prior to joining the nonprofit world full-time, he was a tenured professor at Westminster Choir College of Rider University. He is co-director of the Westminster Chinese Music Ensemble and a long-time member of New York–based Gamelan Dharma Swara. Hung holds a Ph.D. in musicology from Stanford University and an MLIS in Archives and Digital Curation from the University of Maryland.

WHITE SNAKE PROJECTS'
FREE TICKET PROGRAM

ANYONE SHOULD BE ABLE TO GO TO THE OPERA

Anyone who wants to go to the opera should be able to. TAP, White Snake Projects' Ticket Access Program, is central to our vision of social activism and inclusion. Through TAP. we give away free to tickets to anyone who needs one. If you need a TAP ticket, please email info@whitesnakeprojects.org. We rely on everyone else to buy a ticket at the prices listed in recognition of the investment White Snake Projects has made to create opera of the 21st century for all audiences.

LEARN MORE AT
www.whitesnakeprojects.org/our-story/ticket-access-program/

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About White Snake Projects

White Snake Projects is an activist opera company founded and led by an immigrant woman of color. We integrate social activism with original opera of the highest production values, partnering with other activists to cross-promote important social issues and opera, and redefining how opera is made by involving young people from our community. Inspired by the legendary White Snake demon who becomes human to experience the intense and transformational power of human life, we're investing in American composers adept at telling the myth-based stories that live in our collective imaginations through music. We believe in making art accessible to all and and offer free tickets to anyone who needs one.

Learn more at whitesnakeprojects.org

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What's Next for White Snake Projects?

Show Out Boston! (April 28th, 2023)

Show Out Boston! is White Snake Projects' dynamic youth arts community engagement program featuring Area 51, Boston Arts Academy, Boston Children's Chorus, Boston Music Project, Transformative Culture Project, The Record Co, Zumix, Hyde Square Task Force, Origination and other organizations from across the city, including Dorchester, Roxbury, Mattapan, Hyde Park, Jamaica Plain, and East Boston.

When
April 28, 2023
6:30pm - Food and Gallery
7:30pm - Performance
9:00pm - After Party at Suya Joint

Where
Hibernian Hall
182 Dudley St.
Nubian Square, Roxbury MA

Reserve your FREE tickets as seating is limited. For more information visit
www.whitesnakeprojects.org

Cosí! Men Are Like That (May 7th & 8th, 2023)

Have you ever wondered what would happen if the tables were turned on the men in Mozart's "Cosí Fan Tutte" (Women Are Like That)? Join us for an evening of food, wine, conviviality and the world premiere of "Cosí! Men Are Like That" and find Out!

When
May 7th & 8th, 2023

Where
La Voile Restaurant
1627 Beacon St. Brookline , MA

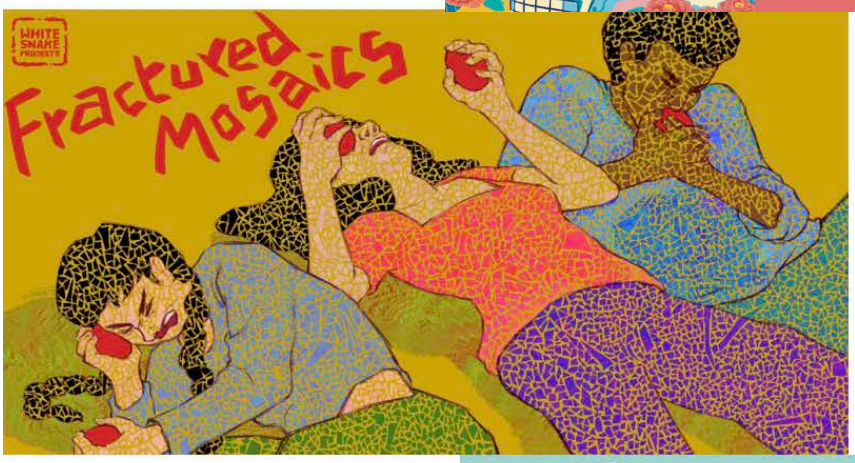
For more information visit

WHITE SNAKE PROJECTS

2022-2023 SEASON

COSMIC COWBOY

LET'S CELEBRATE



FRACTURED MOSAICS

COSÌ! MEN ARE LIKE THAT

"A remarkable new environment for operatic experimentation"
THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

"A stellar libretto, polished performances, and a cohesive, engaging visual world... this should not be ignored."
BROADWAY WORLD

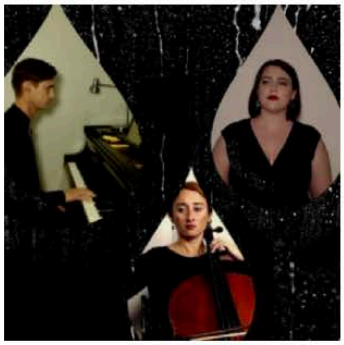
A LOOK BACK AT ALICE IN THE PANDEMIC

Alice in the Pandemic takes a deep dive down the rabbit hole into the elasticity of time, the unmooring of life, the heroism of doing one's job, and the reconciliation of mother and daughter. The production uses newly developed technology which enables singers at remote locations to sing synchronously together as they interact with each other and their 3D avatars who lip sync in real time to live performance.

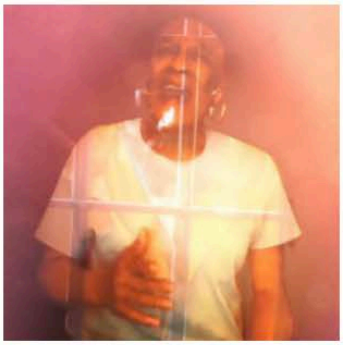
A LOOK BACK AT OUR OPERAS

DEATH BY LIFE

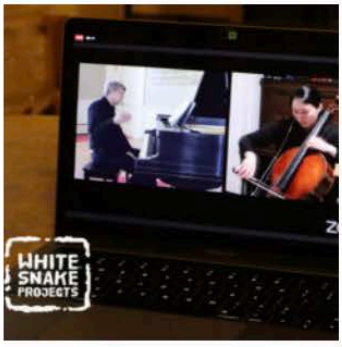
SING OUT STRONG SERIES



SOS: Remembered Voices



SOS: Incarcerated Voices



SOS: Essential Voices