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Press Contact: Alanna Maharajh Stone
alannamaharajh@yahoo.com
917-359-4449

The Paul Dresher Ensemble, OPERA America's New Works Forum,
Ensemble Ipse & First Look Sonoma
present the NY Premiere of
Both Eyes Open



Friday, January 13, 2023 at 8pm
The Flea Theater

New York, NY November 16, 2022

The Paul Dresher Ensemble, OPERA America's New Works Forum, Ensemble Ipse, and First Look Sonoma present the New York premiere of *Both Eyes Open*, an experimental chamber opera by Brooklyn-based composer Max Giteck Duykers and Berkeley-based playwright Philip Kan Gotanda. Taking place on Friday, January 13th at The Flea Theater, this work investigates the psychic scarring that Japanese Americans experienced during World War II and suggests paths toward healing. *Both Eyes Open* is helmed by director Melissa Weaver and conductor Benjamin Makino, and features baritone Suchan Kim; soprano Zen Wu; tenor John Duykers; Ensemble Ipse: clarinetist Christa Van Alstine; violinist Esther Noh; pianist Geoffrey Burlison; and guest performer Joel Davel on marimba lumina. Designers are Kwame Braun, Matthew E. Jones, Shinichi Iova-Koga, and Maria Christoff.

Both Eyes Open tells a haunting love story and tale of perseverance about a Japanese American farmer, Jinzo Matsumoto, and his wife, Catherine, who are incarcerated in an American concentration camp during World War II. Before leaving their farm, they bury a Daruma Doll on their land. According to tradition, these papier-mâché idols are given when embarking on a challenging endeavor or making of a promise. One eye is painted on the doll to symbolize the commitment, and if success comes, the doll receives its second eye and is burned ceremonially to release its spirit.

At the concentration camp in Rohwer, Arkansas, Catherine dies in childbirth due to inadequate medical facilities. Jinzo begins to question his belief in America, and when forced to sign a questionnaire declaring his loyalty to this country, he signs no-no, refusing to serve in the U.S. armed forces. Because of his decision, Jinzo is labeled a No-No Boy and is transferred to Tule Lake, a high security prison camp for those deemed potential enemies of the state.

After the war, a new Executive Order is issued and Jinzo is free to return to his former life; he goes home to Stockton, California to see his old farm. He discovers the new owner is not a white farmer as he had assumed, but a Japanese American woman, whose husband had been killed fighting for the U.S. with the all-Japanese American 100th Battalion in Bruyères, France. She angrily berates Jinzo for being a No-No Boy – a traitor – and refusing to fight while her own husband fought and died for Jinzo’s right to live free.

Jinzo is broken. He has lost everything. He finds himself at the railroad tracks where he decides to end his life. Jinzo lies down on the tracks, when the Daruma Doll and the ghost of Catherine appear to guide him to a place of higher understanding. As the train strikes Jinzo, the world freezes. Silence, emptiness. *Ma*. We leave reality and enter the meta world of Daruma’s Bigger Mind, able to understand the entire trajectory of Jinzo’s life as a living history. We see the tumultuous world of today as a continuum of the “rich, rotting soil of fertile injustice.” The chorus sings, “What will it grow?”

Major funding for ***Both Eyes Open*** provided by: National Parks Service’s Japanese American Confinement Sites Program, California Humanities, J.A. Community Foundation, Jfund, New Music USA, Brooklyn Arts Council, OPERA America, and discretionary funds from the John A Hartford Foundation. This performance, part of OPERA America’s New Works Forum, was made possible, in part, by a generous and deeply appreciated grant from the Mellon Foundation.

Both Eyes Open was collaboratively developed by Max Giteck Duykers, Philip Kan Gotanda, and creative team members from 2012-2022; ten developmental workshops held at Western Michigan University, University of Nevada Las Vegas, U.C. Berkeley, and the Paul Drescher Studios in Oakland, CA. Premiered at the Presidio Theatre, San Francisco, June 2022.

Friday, January 13, 2023 at 8pm

The Flea Theater

20 Thomas Street, New York, NY 10007

Admission: \$30

Tickets: <https://tinyurl.com/32pbk2v3>

<https://www.beo-opera.com>



Max Giteck Duykers, Composer

Max Giteck Duykers is a composer whose work is dedicated to unusual beauty, unique forms, and collaborative projects. He frequently incorporates technology in performance in a manner which gives the performers room for individual expression. A veteran of multidisciplinary performance, Duykers is also interested in reworking developmental processes for artists to find their collective "sweet spot" and produce work which is personal, confronting, and starkly beautiful.

An album of his music featuring **Ensemble Ipse**, was released on **New World Records** in May 2019, with producer **Judith Sherman**. Of the album, Kathodik.it writes "[Duykers is] an absolutely original voice within the varied horizon of contemporary music." Duykers was also recently commissioned by the **National Parks Service**, **New Music USA** and the **Jerome Foundation** to create a chamber opera for tenor, soprano, baritone, electro-acoustic percussionist (performing the *Marimba Lumina*) and mixed ensemble with the **Paul Dresher Ensemble**. Featuring a libretto by acclaimed playwright and filmmaker **Philip Kan Gotanda**, the piece is a comment on the internment of Japanese Americans during WWII.

The piece has been workshopped across the U.S. over the past several years, and was premiered at San Francisco's Presidio Theatre in June 2022. The piece has also been generously supported by **New York State Council on the Arts**, The **Brooklyn Arts Council**, **California Humanities**, and the **JA Community Foundation**.

His numerous other commissions and premieres include the **Avian Orchestra**, The **Stony Brook Symphony Orchestra**, the **Oakland Youth Orchestra**, the **Seattle Chamber Players**, **Third Angle New Music**, The **BEO String Quartet**, The **Glass Farm Ensemble**, **PUBLIQuartet**, **Anti-Social Music**, The **Stony Brook Contemporary Chamber Players**, and numerous individual performers. Duykers' *Glass Blue Cleft* was recently released by the **Escher String Quartet** on **Bridge Records**. Of the piece, **Three Village Patch** writes "[Glass Blue Cleft] is a piece for lovers of the string quartet, those amazed by how fiery and how dulcet these four-stringed instruments can range in expression." This and other pieces have been featured at music festivals throughout the U.S. and abroad, including the **Seattle Chamber Players'** Icebreaker IV, curated by The New Yorker's **Alex Ross**.

Duykers is a founder and co-director of **Ensemble Ipse**, a contemporary music performance group based in NYC. Ipse's mission is to find common threads in works whose stylistic profiles appear, on the surface, as divergent. We present recent music that transcends aesthetic categorization and strive to create a forum for composers and sound artists on the edges of the mainstream of contemporary music, as well as those who have been traditionally underrepresented, including women, LGBTQIA+, and BIPOC. Since forming in 2016, Ipse has premiered 42 works, 14 of them commissions, performed works from numerous calls for scores for emerging composers from around the world, received grants from the **New York State Council on the Arts**, the **Brooklyn Arts Council**, **New Music USA**, the **Queens Council on the Arts**, **NET/TEN**, and the **Alice M. Ditson Fund of Columbia University**, as well as numerous donations from its large donor network.

Duykers has also been commissioned to compose music for over 35 theatrical, dance, film, and multimedia projects in the New York City area. With the theater group **Prototype** he was an artist-in-residence at **HERE Arts Center** in 2002-2004, and in 2000-2001 he worked for **Philip Glass' The Looking Glass Studios** and **Dunvagen Music Publishers**, where he did studio recording, Pro-Tools post-production, music sequencing, music copying and music editing for the **Philip Glass Ensemble**, film scoring projects, and operatic works. He received a BM from **Oberlin Conservatory** where he studied composition with **Randy Coleman**, and has recently completed his Ph.D. at **Stony Brook University** where he studied with **Sheila Silver**. At Stony Brook he was also honored with the **2012 Ackerman Award for Excellence in Music**. He lives in Brooklyn with his wife Rebecca and sons Quinlan and Liev. <https://www.jealousgods.com>



Philip Kan Gotanda, Librettist

Over the last four decades, librettist **Philip Kan Gotanda** has specialized in investigating the Japanese American family writing a cycle of works in theater, film, song and opera that chronicle Japanese America from the early 1900s to the present. Mr. Gotanda holds a law degree from Hastings College of Law and studied pottery in Mashiko, Japan with the late Hiroshi Seto. Mr. Gotanda is a respected independent filmmaker. His 3 films: *Life Tastes Good*, *Drinking Tea*, *The Kiss*, all have been official entries at the Sundance Film Festival. Mr. Gotanda adapted his play, *The Wash*, into a feature film, directed by Michael Toshiyuki Uno. *The Wash* is one of the first films about the Asian American family to have a theatrical release. A CD of Mr. Gotanda performing his original songs in a 1980 concert with violinist DH Hwang is now available at Yokohama, Ca. Records. Mr. Gotanda wrote the oratorio for the Kent Nagano piece, *Manzanar: An American Story*, an orchestral work about the World War II incarceration of Japanese Americans. Mr. Gotanda is a Guggenheim recipient. He is presently an inaugural recipient of the Dramatists Guild 2021 Playwrights Legacy Initiative, a two-year award acknowledging Mr. Gotanda's body of work in American Theater. Mr. Gotanda is a professor with the Department of Theater Dance and Performance Studies at the University of California at Berkeley. He resides at the Berkeley Art Plant in the Hills with his wife, Alameda Arts Commissioner, Diane Takei Gotanda. <https://www.philipkangotanda.org>



Melissa (Missy) Weaver, Director

Director **Melissa Weaver** has directed the collaborative creation of more than forty original music theater works. As General Director of First Look Sonoma, with partner, tenor John Duykers, Missy is currently developing text for *Heart of the Great Divide* with composer Philip Aaberg. Weaver was a founding member of Bay Area's George Coates Performance Works, the Paul Drescher Ensemble and of Main Stage West, where she recently

directed Stef Smith's *Swallow* and S. Massicotte's *Mary's Wedding*. She directed and designed original operatic works for the Paul Dresher Ensemble, Long Beach Opera, and West Edge Opera. She directed Rinde Eckert's *The Gardening of Thomas D.*, Virko Baley's *Holodomor. Red Earth Hunger* at Kiev Opera and the Gerald Lynch Theater; and directed Kurt Rohde's *Bitter Harvest*, a farmer's oratorio with Kent Nagano and the Berkeley Symphony Orchestra. Weaver collaborated with Amanda Moody on *Serial Murderess*, on *Caliban Dreams*, and on *D'Arc, woman on fire*, with music by Jay Cloidt. With music by Miguel Frasconi, she wrote and directed *Trespass Knot* and *Hand to Mouth*, also with ***Both Eyes Open*** "visual alchemist" Matthew E. Jones. Weaver was an artist-in-residence at CalArts from 2000-05, directing 5 original pastiche operas.

<https://www.firstlooksonoma.com/aboutus>



Benjamin Makino, Conductor

From complex contemporary and twentieth-century scores to core traditional repertoire, conductor ***Benjamin Makino*** has been recognized for his nuanced and thoughtful interpretations of broad and varied repertoire.

Throughout his career, his work has been affiliated with some of the companies most recognized for innovation. Following the success of the first 30 Days of Opera festival, Makino was named Music Director of Opera Memphis, a position he held for four seasons. During his tenure the company rose to national and international prominence, praised for its innovative community engagement programs, experimentation, and groundbreaking commissioning projects.

Beyond working with Memphis' largest performing arts organizations, Makino was deeply involved with the Memphis Slim Collaboratory, a membership-based community recording studio in the historic Soulsville Neighborhood, home of Stax Records and the Stax Music Academy.

In 2014 he was identified by Opera America as a future leader in the field of Opera in the United States. In 2015, in recognition of his contributions to the City of Memphis, he was named one of the *Memphis Business Bureau's* 40 Under 40. He currently lives in Porterville, California with his wife, jazz musician Sarah Rector, who heads the music program at Porterville College.

<https://benjaminmakino.com>



Suchan Kim, Baritone - "Jinzo Matsumoto"

Suchan Kim is a native of Busan, South Korea. He holds a Bachelor of Music from Korea National University of Arts, Master of Music and Professional Studies Diploma from Mannes College the New School for Music.

Roles: Don Giovanni/Leporello (Don Giovanni), Count/Figaro (Le Nozze di Figaro), Guglielmo (Cosi Fan Tutte), Papageno (Die Zauberflöte), Hoël (Le Pardon de Ploërmel), Dandini (La Cenerentola), Germano (La Scala di Seta), Tobia Mill (La cambiale di matrimonio), Enrico (Lucia di Lammermoor), Belcore (L'Elisir d'amore), Giorgio Germont (La Traviata), Ford (Falstaf), Marcello/Schaunard (La Bohème), Yamadori (Madama Butterfly), Silvio (I Pagliacci), David (L'Amico Fritz), Tarquinius (The Rape of Lucretia), Salieri (Mozart and Salieri), Dancaïre (Carmen), Jailer (Dialogues of the Carmelites), Simeon (L'Enfant Prodigue), Father(Thumbprint), King Solomon(Shulamit). Venue: Merola Opera Program, Metropolitan Opera Education, Metropolitan Opera Guild, Carnegie Hall, Dallas Opera's The Hart Institute for Women Conductors, Phoenicia International Festival of The Voice, Sarasota Opera, Opera in Williamsburg, Bare Opera, Teatro Grattacielo, New Rochelle Opera, New Amsterdam Opera, Opera Vezimra, Decameron Opera Coalition, Teatro Lirico D'Europa, The Palmetto Opera, Opera Ithaca, Lyric Chamber Music Society of New York, Jamestown Concert Association, NYU IMPACT Conference, National Theater of Korea, Seoul Arts Center. Awards: Opera Award – Mannes Opera, Eastern District Winner – MONCAuditions. <https://www.suchankim.com>



Zen Wu, Soprano - "Catherine Matsumoto"

Zen Wu (she/her) is a soprano and multi-instrumentalist from the San Francisco Bay. She started her career with the San Diego Opera as a member of the chorus and educational outreach program and has since established herself in New York as a genre fluid opera singer who also works in new music, sacred repertoire, and recorded media. Offstage Zen is a passionate advocate of Asian American stories in the arts and a vocal critic of orientalism and other racist practices in the Western music canon. After a 2020-2021 hiatus from staged music, she returned to opera in 2022 as First Soloist in the Czech premiere of Luigi Nono's *Prometeo* and is thrilled to be joining the brilliant cast of *Both Eyes Open* for its east coast premiere in 2023. <https://www.zenopera.com>



John Duykers, Tenor - "The Daruma Doll"

John Duykers is Co-Founder of First Look Sonoma with Melissa Weaver. He has sung in more than 100 contemporary operas, including 50 plus world premieres with companies including, The Lyric Opera of Chicago, San Francisco Opera and Royal Opera Covent Garden. Duykers created the role of Mao Tse Tung in John Adams' *Nixon in China* in which he performed worldwide and for the Grammy and Emmy Award winning PBS Great Performances series. He sang for the premiere of Philip Glass' *White Raven, In the Penal Colony* and the title role of *Galileo Galilei*; and, Paul Dresher's solo opera, *The Tyrant*. Other credits include Libby Larsen's *Everyman Jack*, Lou Harrison's *Young Caesar*, Ann LeBaron's *Crescent City*, Erling Wold's *Sub Pontio Pilato* and *Mordake*, Allan Shearer's *The Dawn Makers*, Don Davis' *Rio De Sangre*, Thomas Sleeper's

Xenia, Virko Baley's *Holodomor*, Lisa Scola-Prosek's *The Daughter of the Red Tzar*, Miguel Frasconi's *Trespass Knot* and *Hand to Mouth*, Sheli Nan's *SAGA of the 21st Century Girl*. He worked closely with Amanda Moody and Clark Suprynowicz on *Caliban Dreams*; and, again with Moody and Kurt Rohde on *Bitter Harvest*. <https://www.johnduykers.com>



Ensemble Ipse

Ensemble Ipse is a 501(c)(3) contemporary music ensemble dedicated to showcasing the wide variety of practices in the current new music scene. The ensemble presents concerts of recent music that transcends aesthetic categorization and strives to create a forum for composers and sound artists on the edges of the mainstream of contemporary music. With this in mind, Ensemble Ipse is committed to performing and commissioning the music of emerging composers, as well as composers who have been traditionally under-represented in the larger new music community, including women, BIPOC, and LGBTQ+.

Since forming in 2016, Ipse has premiered 42 works, 14 of them commissions, held numerous calls for scores for emerging composers, received support from the New York State Council on the Arts, New Music USA, the Queens Council on the Arts, the Brooklyn Arts Council, Network of Ensemble Theaters, and the Alice M. Ditson Fund of Columbia University, and released an album on New World Records in May, 2019. **Photo: Reuben Radding**

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