

# **Beth Morrison Projects Announces 2022-2023 Season**



In its 17th season, BMP presents a genre-defying lineup of opera projects across the U.S. and internationally

BMP welcomes three new board members: Morris Robinson, Kamala Sankaram, and Gregory Spears and new executive director, Sam Linden

**For Immediate Release - July 21, 2022 - (New York, NY) - Beth Morrison Projects (BMP)** announces its 17th season, with global, national, and regional premieres alongside revivals across the U.S., Europe, and Asia throughout 2022 - 23. BMP sets the stage for bold new works by a diverse group of artists/creators. BMP is also honored to announce three new board members - **Morris Robinson, Kamala Sankaram, and Gregory Spears**, and its new executive director **Sam Linden**.

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Said BMP founder **Beth Morrison** of the new season ahead: “I am deeply thrilled and honored to announce our new Executive Director, Sam Linden and our three new artist board members who are joining BMP. Sam’s deep experience in strategic planning and thinking will help to carry BMP into its next decade, as we continuously charge ourselves with being leaders in innovation and expansion of what our chosen art form can be. Morris Robinson, Kamala Sankaram, and Gregory Spears represent three of the most extraordinary artists working in opera today. I’m humbled that they will join BMP as we walk into the future together.”

**Nancy Sanders**, the Board Chair of BMP said “The Board of BMP is truly thrilled and excited to have Morris Robinson, Kamala Sankaram and Gregory Spears join us and the BMP family. Each of them brings unique experiences and perspectives that will help the Board and the company approach our work in new and important ways. We are all looking forward to greeting and working with them in person. I would also like to welcome Sam Linden as our new Executive Director. Sam brings a wealth of expertise and knowledge to the organization and we couldn’t be more delighted to have him join us as well. WELCOME TO YOU ALL!”



*Joining the BMP Board is both flattering and an honor! To be an integral part of such an innovative and progressive company that brings incredible art into the world, fills me with excitement and boundless anticipation. I'm eagerly looking forward to the wonderful things ahead!*

**Morris Robinson**

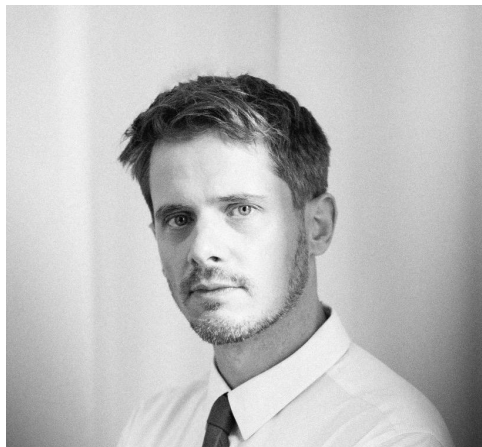
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*BMP was instrumental in supporting me at the very beginning of my career. I'm delighted to be able to return that support by joining the board.*

**Kamala Sankaram**

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*BMP has defined a generation of opera creators and set opera on a new path, and I proudly count myself as an artist moved and inspired by that vision. It's an honor to be able to join the board of an organization that has already had such a genre-defining impact.*

**Gregory Spears**

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*I am absolutely thrilled to be joining the BMP team at such an exciting time for the company, and the field as a whole. I am deeply inspired by Beth's extraordinary artistic vision, and am honored to have the opportunity to support BMP's industry-leading innovation.*

**Sam Linden**

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This season in New York, ***Song Cycles*** opens on October 28-29 at the Harlem Stage, showcasing three new song-cycles by three power-house composers Tamar-kali Brown, Yaz Lancaster, and Tanyaradzwa Tawengwa/Nzou Mambano. In January 2023, as part of the PROTOTYPE Festival, Du Yun's ***In Our Daughter's Eyes*** opens January 5 and Emma O'Halloran's double bill - ***TRADE/Mary Motorhead*** has its world premiere on January 7. *In Our Daughter's Eyes* is a one man opera starring Nathan Gunn and told through the perspective of a new father as he wrestles with truly becoming a man that his daughter would be proud of. *Mary Motorhead* portrays a convicted murderer pushed to the edge by circumstance, now finding the road back to herself. *TRADE* is the story of a rent boy and his closeted client in working-class Dublin, both trapped within their own lives. O'Halloran's double bill also plays at Los Angeles Opera April 27 - 30.

Across the US, BMP will bring productions to Seattle, Philadelphia, and Virginia. On October 1 at Opera Philadelphia as part of their Festival O22, David T. Little's ***Black Lodge*** will open. *Black Lodge* uses industrial rock and opera to take viewers through a Lynchian escape room, and questions what it ultimately takes to face ourselves. ***Train with No Midnight***, a series of

vignettes that dances between comedy, commentary and communion, composed and performed by Joseph Keckler, opens on November 28 at On the Boards in Seattle. On March 23 at Virginia Tech, Huang Ruo's *Book of Mountains and Seas* will be performed. *Book of Mountains and Seas* is a 21st-century adaptation through the lens of our modern-day relationship with the natural world.

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## New York Performances

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*Beth Morrison Projects and Harlem Stage presents*

### **SONG CYCLES**

*October 28-29, 2022 at Harlem Stage*

**Composer:** Tamar-Kali

**Composer:** Yaz Lancaster

**Composer:** Tanyaradzwa Tawengwa/Nzou Mambano

Join us for an evening of song cycles by three power-house women and non-binary composers showcasing completely diverse musical languages: electro-acoustic, rock-infused, and Zimbabwean folk inspired. It's a night not to be missed!

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Co-produced by Beth Morrison Projects and Harlem Stage. Commissioned by Beth Morrison Projects and Lynn Loacker. Developed by Beth Morrison Projects. Additional production support was provided by Marian Godfrey. This production is made possible, in part, by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature.

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**TRADE/MARY MOTORHEAD**

*January 7-14, 2023 at Abrons Arts Center*

*PROTOTYPE Festival 2023*

**Composer:** Emma O'Halloran

**Librettist:** Mark O'Halloran

**Director:** Tom Creed

**Music Director:** Elaine Kelly

**Mary:** Naomi Louisa O'Connell

**The Older Man:** Marc Kudisch

**The Younger Man:** Kyle Bielfield

In the compelling monodrama *Mary Motorhead*, a convicted murderer invites us to hear her secret history—the disappointments and betrayals that shaped her life—in the hope that it may shine some light upon the darkness of her actions. Mezzo-soprano Naomi Louisa O'Connell stars as the woman pushed to the edge by circumstance, now finding the road back to herself.

*TRADE* is the story of a rent boy and his closeted client in working-class Dublin, both trapped within their own lives. Meeting secretly in a cheap hotel, they wrestle with their own inner demons and their need for each other. Three-time Tony nominee Marc Kudisch (star of LA Opera's *Wonderful Town* and *anatomy theater*) portrays a family man whose world is crumbling apart, with international recording artist Kyle Bielfield as a young hustler determined to take charge of his future.

Produced by Beth Morrison Projects. Co-commissioned by Beth Morrison Projects, Irish National Opera, Trinity Wall Street, and Nancy & Barry Sanders. Additional production support was provided by Virginia B. Toulmin Charitable Foundation, Antonia & Vladimir Kulaev Cultural Heritage Fund, Inc, Elizabeth Greenberg, Culture Ireland, and Charlotte Isaacs.



## IN OUR DAUGHTER'S EYES

*January 5-15, 2023 at Baruch Performing Arts Center*  
*PROTOTYPE Festival 2023*

**COMPOSER:** Du Yun

**LIBRETTIST & DIRECTOR:** Michael Joseph McQuilken

**CREATED WITH AND FEATURING:** Nathan Gunn

**CONDUCTOR:** Kamna Gupta

Told through the perspective of a new father, *In Our Daughter's Eyes* shows the journey of the protagonist as he wrestles with truly becoming a man that his daughter would be proud of. He imparts passages from the journal he keeps — a gift for his unborn daughter — as the moments of this journey unfold before him. The story traces his wife's joyful and fraught pregnancy, the legacy of the family's past, and his personal demons that he vows to vanquish before assuming the role of a father. Along the way, mounting complications take the story through unexpected and sobering turns that test our flawed hero as he discovers a strength of self and purpose that he never imagined possible. This moving and heartfelt one-man opera reunites Pulitzer Prize-winning composer Du Yun, Beth Morrison Projects, and multidisciplinary librettist & director Michael Joseph McQuilken after their lauded co-creation of Pulitzer Prize-winning *Angel's Bone* in 2016.

*In Our Daughter's Eyes* is dedicated, in loving memory, to Stuart Nelson. Commissioned by Beth Morrison Projects, Trinity Church Wall Street, Linda & Stuart Nelson, the Arthur F. & Alice E. Adams Charitable Foundation, the Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation, OPERA America, and Francis Goelet Charitable Lead Trusts. This production is made possible, in part, by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature. The commissioning of Du Yun for *In Our Daughter's Eyes* received funding from OPERA America's Opera Grants for Female Composers program, supported by the Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation.



## LOS ANGELES PERFORMANCES

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### **TRADE/MARY MOTORHEAD**

*April 27-30, 2023 at Los Angeles Opera*

**Composer:** Emma O'Halloran

**Librettist:** Mark O'Halloran

**Director:** Tom Creed

**Music Director:** Elaine Kelly

**Mary:** Naomi Louisa O'Connell

**The Older Man:** Marc Kudisch

**The Younger Man:** Kyle Bielfield

West Coast premiere by LA Opera. Produced by Beth Morrison Projects.

Co-commissioned by Beth Morrison Projects, Irish National Opera, Trinity Wall Street, and Nancy & Barry Sanders. Additional production support was provided by Virginia B. Toulmin Charitable Foundation, Antonia & Vladimer Kulaev Cultural Heritage Fund, Inc, Elizabeth Greenberg, Culture Ireland, and Charlotte Isaacs.

## US Performances

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### **BLACK LODGE**

*October 1-2, 2022 at Opera Philadelphia  
Part of Festival O22*

Film Screening with Live Performance and Musicians

**Composer:** David T. Little

**Librettist:** Anne Waldman

**Screenplay & Director:** Michael Joseph McQuilken

**Featuring** Timur and the Dime Museum, Isaura Quartet with Opera Philadelphia Quartet, Jennifer Harrison Newman

Trapped in a nightmarish Bardo, a place between death and rebirth, a tormented writer (Timur) faces down demons of his own making. Forced to confront his darkest moment in his life, he mines fractured and repressed memories for a way out. The woman (Jennifer Harrison Newman) is at the center of all the writer's afterlife encounters. She is the subject of his life's greatest regret, and she materializes

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everywhere in this Otherworld. The writer cannot detach any thoughts of his life from her. Inspired by the complicated mythology of the surrealist writer William S. Burroughs (Naked Lunch), *BLACK LODGE* uses dance, industrial rock, classical string quartet and opera to take viewers through a Lynchian psychological escape room, and questions what it ultimately takes to face ourselves.

Opera commissioned by Beth Morrison Projects and the Allen R. and Judy Brick Freedman Venture Fund for Opera. Film commissioned by Beth Morrison Projects, Opera Philadelphia, the Allen R. and Judy Brick Freedman Venture Fund for Opera, David & Kiki Gindler, Charlotte Isaacs, and Thomas H. Platz with additional support provided by the Howard Gilman Foundation. Developed by Beth Morrison Projects, California Institute for the Arts, HERE Arts Center, and REDCAT. Additional production support provided by David & Kiki Gindler, Charlotte Isaacs, and Thomas H. Platz. This program is supported, in part, by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council.



## **TRAIN WITH NO MIDNIGHT**

*November 28 - December 3, 2022 at On the Boards in Seattle*

**Composer & Performer:** Joseph Keckler

**Music Arrangement:** Matthew Dean Marsh, Michael Hanf And Dan Bartfield

**Lighting Design:** Ayumu Poe Saegusa

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**Sound Design:** Charles Hagaman

**Video Design:** Lianne Arnold

Joseph Keckler and an intimate musical ensemble lead the audience through a series of vignettes, each like a stop on a late-night train– from Paris to Hamburg, Michigan to Times Square and the symbolic space of The Crossroads, a place of danger and possibility. *Train with No Midnight* dances between comedy, commentary and communion. The score features smoky pop songs, propulsive invocations, and leaps into the operatic realm.

Commissioned, developed, and produced by PROTOTYPE. A Co-Production of Beth Morrison Projects and HERE. Co-Commissioned with Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago and Hopkins Center for the Arts at Dartmouth College.

This project was made possible by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature, and by public funds from The New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council.



## **BOOK OF MOUNTAINS AND SEAS**

*March 24th, 2023 at VA Tech*

**Composer & Librettist:** Huang Ruo

**Director & Production Design:** Basil Twist

**Lighting Design:** Ayumu Poe Saegusa

**Featuring:** Ars Nova Copenhagen

*Book of Mountains and Seas* is a work of vocal-theater for 12 singers, two percussionists, and puppets. It is inspired by the ancient Chinese compilation of early myths of the same title, which was first transcribed in 4th century B.C. Over the years, these mythological stories have become part of Chinese written and oral history, shifted and reshaped to match contemporary times. *Book of Mountains and Seas* is a 21st-century adaptation through the lens of our modern-day relationship with the natural world. The creation stories conjure a sense of respect and awe for the environment, and the water stories challenge us to be good stewards of the natural resources we have been given.

This production is dedicated, in loving memory, to Stuart Nelson.

Commissioned by Beth Morrison Projects, Ars Nova (Copenhagen), Moss Arts Center at Virginia Tech, Toronto Soundstreams, Koorbiennale, Hong Kong New Vision Festival, and Linda & Stuart Nelson. Additional support provided by the Francis Goelet Charitable Lead Trusts, Jim Henson Foundation, Helen and William Little, and the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature. Produced by Beth Morrison Projects, The Big Sing, Ars Nova Copenhagen, and Soundstreams.



## INTERNATIONAL PERFORMANCES

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### **BOOK OF MOUNTAINS AND SEAS**

*July 3rd, 2022 at The Big Sing in Amsterdam*

**Composer & Librettist:** Huang Ruo

**Director & Production Design:** Basil Twist

**Lighting Design:** Ayumu Poe Saegusa

**Featuring:** Ars Nova Copenhagen

This production is dedicated, in loving memory, to Stuart Nelson.

Commissioned by Beth Morrison Projects, Ars Nova (Copenhagen), Moss Arts Center at Virginia Tech, Toronto Soundstreams, Koorbiennale, Hong Kong New Vision Festival, and Linda & Stuart Nelson. Additional support provided by the Francis Goellet Charitable Lead Trusts, Jim Henson Foundation, Helen and William Little, and the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature. Produced by Beth Morrison Projects, The Big Sing, Ars Nova Copenhagen, and Soundstreams.

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## About Beth Morrison Projects

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Beth Morrison Projects (BMP) is one of the foremost creators and producers of new opera-theatre and music theatre, with a fierce commitment to leading the industry into the future, cultivating a new generation of talent, and telling the stories of our time.

Founded by “contemporary opera mastermind” (*LA Times*) Beth Morrison, who was honored as one of Musical America’s Artists of the Year/Agents of Change in 2020, BMP has grown into “a driving force behind America’s thriving opera scene” (*Financial Times*), with *Opera News* declaring that the company, “more than any other... has helped propel the art form into the twenty-first century.”

Operating across the US and internationally, with offices in Brooklyn and Los Angeles, BMP’s unique model offers living composers the support, guidance, and freedom to experiment, allowing them to create singularly innovative and impactful projects. Since forming in 2006, the company has commissioned, developed, produced and toured over 50 works in 14 countries around the world, including the Pulitzer Prize-winning chamber operas *Angel’s Bone* and *p r i s m*.

In 2013, BMP co-founded the PROTOTYPE Festival with HERE Arts Center, which has been called “utterly essential” (*The New York Times*), “indispensable” (*The New Yorker*), and “one of the world’s top festivals of contemporary opera and theater” (*Associated Press*).

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## About Morris Robinson

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Grammy Award Winner **Morris Robinson** is considered one the most sought-after basses performing today. With regular appearances at the Metropolitan Opera, (MET) he made his debut in the 2002 production of *Fidelio*. Other featured MET appearances

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include Sarastro in *Die Zauberflöte* (both in the original production and in the children's English version), Ferrando in *Il Trovatore*, the King in *Aida*, roles in *Nabucco*, *Tannhäuser*, and the new productions of *Les Troyens* and *Salome*. He has also appeared at the San Francisco Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Dallas Opera, Houston Grand Opera, Boston Lyric Opera, Pittsburgh Opera, Opera Philadelphia, Seattle Opera, Los Angeles Opera, Cincinnati Opera, Boston Lyric Opera, Opera Theater of St. Louis, Teatro alla Scala, Volksoper Wien, Opera Australia, and the Aix-en-Provence Festival. His many roles include the title role in *Porgy and Bess*, Sarastro in *Die Zauberflöte*, Osmin in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, Ramfis in *Aida*, Zaccaria in *Nabucco*, Sparafucile in *Rigoletto*, Commendatore in *Don Giovanni*, Grand Inquisitor in *Don Carlos*, Timur in *Turandot*, the Bonze in *Madama Butterfly*, Padre Guardiano in *La Forza del Destino*, Ferrando in *Il Trovatore*, and Fasolt in *Das Rheingold*. A native of Atlanta, GA, Mr. Robinson is a graduate of The Citadel, received his musical training from the Boston University Opera Institute and is an alumnus of the young artist training programs at the Metropolitan Opera, Opera Theatre of St. Louis and Wolf Trap. In addition to his busy performance schedule, in 2015 he was appointed Artist in Residence with Atlanta Symphony Orchestra and currently serves as Artistic Advisor to the Cincinnati Opera, Artist in Residence at Harvard University and sits on Atlanta Opera's Artistic Advisory Council.

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## About Kamala Sankaram

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Praised as “one of the most exciting opera composers in the country” (*The Washington Post*), composer **Kamala Sankaram** moves freely between the worlds of experimental music and contemporary opera. Recent commissions include works for the Glimmerglass Festival (where she will be the 2022 Composer-in-Residence), Washington National Opera, the PROTOTYPE Festival, and Creative Time, among others. Kamala is known for her operas fusing Indian classical music with the operatic form, including *Thumbprint*, *A Rose*, *Monkey and Francine in the City of Tigers*, and the forthcoming *Jungle Book*. Also known for her work pushing the boundaries of the operatic form, recent works include *The Last Stand*, a 10-hour opera created for the trees of Prospect Park, Brooklyn, *Only You Will Recognize the Signal*, a serial space opera performed live over the internet, *Looking at You*, a techno-noir featuring live datamining of the audience and a chorus of 25 singing tablet computers, all decisions will be made by consensus, a short absurdist opera performed live over Zoom, and *The Parksville Murders*, the world's first virtual reality opera. Previous awards, grants and residencies include: Composer-in-Residence at the Kaufman Music Center, Jonathan

Larson Award, NEA ArtWorks, MAP Fund, Opera America, HERE Artist Residency Program, the MacDowell Colony, and the Watermill Center.

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## About Gregory Spears

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**Gregory Spears** is a New York-based composer whose music has been called "astonishingly beautiful" (*The New York Times*), "coolly entrancing" (*The New Yorker*), and "some of the most beautifully unsettling music to appear in recent memory" (*The Boston Globe*). He has been commissioned by The New York Philharmonic, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Cincinnati Opera, Houston Grand Opera, Seraphic Fire, The Crossing, Volti, BMI/Concert Artists Guild, Vocal Arts DC, New York Polyphony, The New York International Piano Competition, the JACK Quartet, and The New York Youth Symphony among others. His latest opera *Castor and Patience* was written in collaboration with former U.S. Poet Laureate Tracy K. Smith and commissioned by Cincinnati Opera for their 100th Anniversary in 2020. (The premiere has been rescheduled for summer 2022 due to COVID-19.) In the 2021-2022 season the New York Philharmonic premiered a new work by Spears also written in collaboration with Smith for countertenor and orchestra. Spears' 21-movement solo piano cycle *Seven Days* was released in the form of a custom designed app produced by the 92NY in fall 2021.

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## About Sam Linden

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**Sam Linden** (he/him) comes to BMP from TDC, a Boston-based nonprofit consulting firm working across the arts and culture sector. There, his client work included shepherding business planning processes, grantmaking strategies, financial turnarounds, and large-scale mergers for performing arts institutions, funders, museums, and arts service organizations. Prior to TDC, Sam was the Associate Director of Marketing and Communications at Yale Repertory Theater. Earlier in his career, he held roles in strategy, marketing, and operations at LaPlaca Cohen, Center Theater Group, the Yale Cabaret, and various community-based arts education organizations. Sam holds a BA with honors in music from Harvard University, an MFA



in Theater Management from the Yale School of Drama, and an MBA from the Yale School of Management. As a composer, lyricist, and librettist, he is an alumni of the BMI Lehman Engel Musical Theater Workshop. He lives in Brooklyn with his partner Andrew and their rescue cat, Latke, where he is an avid museum-goer, a former classical saxophonist, and a singer in the New York City Gay Men's Chorus.