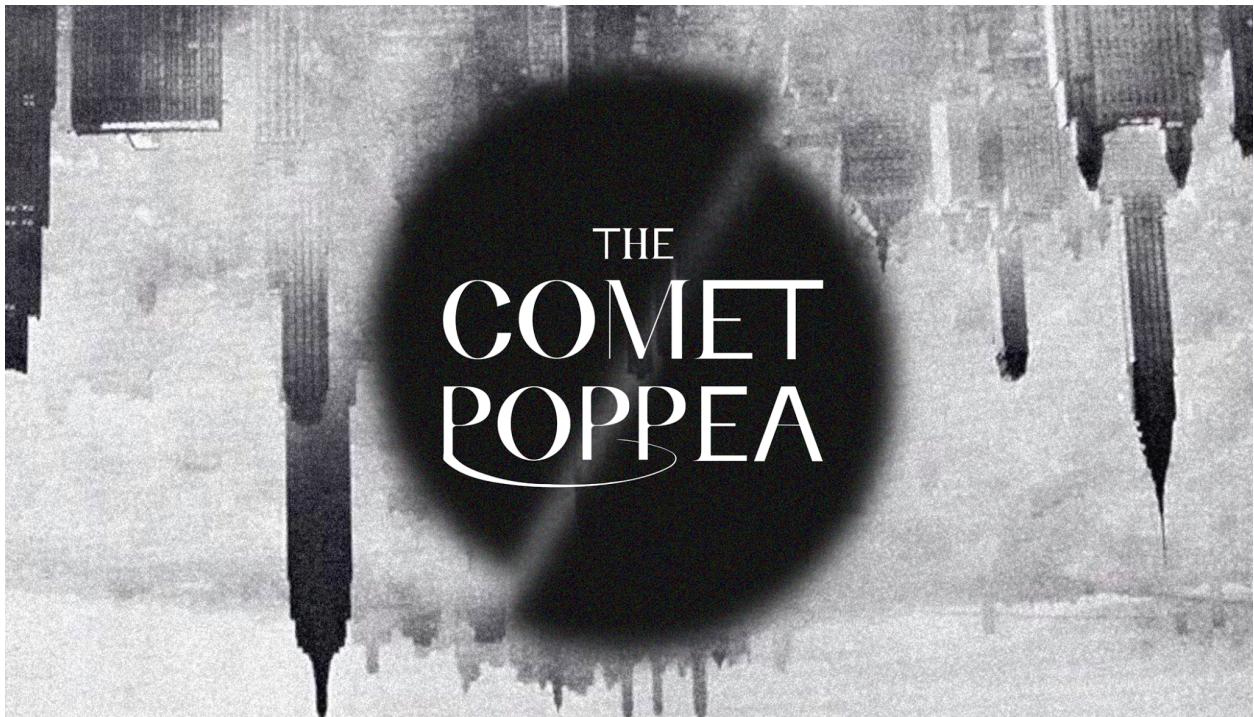

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

March 13, 2024

**MOCA & THE INDUSTRY PRESENT
THE WORLD PREMIERE OF *THE COMET / POPPEA***

June 14–23, 2024

The Geffen Contemporary at MOCA



LOS ANGELES, CA – The Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) and The Industry present the highly-anticipated world premiere of *The Comet / Poppea*, conceived by director **Yuval Sharon**, composed by **George Lewis**, with a libretto by poet **Douglas Kearney**. A virtuosic cast features countertenor **Anthony Roth Costanzo** (“Vocally brilliant and dramatically fearless,” *The New York Times*) and bass-baritone **Davóné Tines** (“One of the most powerful voices of our time,” *Los Angeles Times*).

The Comet / Poppea is realized through a landmark partnership among organizations across the United States, produced by **Anthony Roth Costanzo** and **Cath Brittan, The Industry, AMOC***

(American Modern Opera Company), and Curtis Institute of Music. The world premiere at WAREHOUSE at The Geffen Contemporary at MOCA features eleven performances, June 14–23, 2024.

Staged on a revolving turntable divided into two sides, *The Comet / Poppea* brings together seemingly disparate worlds that resonate across the centuries: *The Comet*, a science-fiction short story penned in 1924 by sociologist and Pan-Africanist civil rights activist W.E.B. Du Bois; and *L'incoronazione di Poppea (The Coronation of Poppea)*, an Italian opera by Claudio Monteverdi first performed in Venice in 1643.

“On a constantly rotating stage, two worlds unfold simultaneously, spinning like a top that creates a visual and aural spiral, inviting associations, dissociations, collisions, and confluences,” says director **Yuval Sharon**. “*The Comet / Poppea* begins as a critique of the institution of opera and ends as a justification of the art form’s radical potential: in the unexpected harmony to be discovered in juxtaposition and its ability to invite a contemplation of both timely and timeless struggles.”

Du Bois’s short story *The Comet*, which composer **George Lewis** describes as “a kind of proto-Afro-futurist text,” is set in New York City during the 1920s after a comet hits the earth and seemingly leaves a black man and white woman as the only survivors, while *The Coronation of Poppea* unfolds amid social divisions in ancient Rome. “Many parallels between these two cities have been considered over the centuries, so that pairing comes with a kind of doubling,” says Lewis. “*The Comet / Poppea* plays with that dynamic: the two stories start to unfold in parallel worlds of time and space. As the piece goes on, those two worlds start to leak into each other. Drawing on Du Bois’s own concept of double consciousness, the opera is structured around a number of these doublings.”

“*The Comet / Poppea*, MOCA’s second collaboration with The Industry, demonstrates the possibilities of live art, positioning opera as an accessible and progressive platform for social and political discourse,” says MOCA Associate Curator, **Alex Sloane**.

Tickets for *The Comet / Poppea* go on sale Tuesday April 23, 2024 at 10am PST for MOCA, The Industry, and AMOC* members, and Thursday April 25, 2024 at 10am PST for the general public.

In addition to the performance presentations, a program of public talks featuring members of the cast and creative team will take place within the set throughout the run of the show. Please visit moca.org for more information.

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The Comet / Poppea

Friday, June 14, 2024, 8pm; world premiere and reception

Saturday, June 15–Sunday, June 23; various times

Full performance schedule and details available at moca.org.

WAREHOUSE at The Geffen Contemporary at MOCA

152 North Central Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90012

Tickets:

World Premiere: \$200, including a special post-performance reception

All other performances: \$40 (\$35 for MOCA, The Industry, and AMOC* members; \$25 for students)

Credits:

Concept and direction: Yuval Sharon

Music composition (*The Comet*): George Lewis

Libretto: Douglas Kearney** based on a short story by W.E.B. Du Bois

Music composition (*L'incoronazione di Poppea*): Claudio Monteverdi

Libretto: Giovanni Francesco Busenello

Scenic design: Mimi Lien

Lighting design: John Torres

Costume design: Oana Botez

Sound design: Mark Grey

Dramaturgy: Robert Gooding-Williams and Wendy Heller

Cast:

Appearances by cast members in different performances will be announced in advance.

Jim / Mercury

Julia

Nero / Julia's Father

Poppea

Ottavia / "Friend" / Fortune

Seneca

Love / Nellie

Ottone / Virtue

Davóne Tines*** / Cedric Berry**

Kiera Duffy / Laurel Irene

Anthony Roth Costanzo*** / Eric Jurenas

Nardus Williams / Joanna Lynn-Jacobs

Whitney Morrison / Laurie Gardiner

James Hayden**

Joelle Lamarre / Lindsay Patterson Abdou

Amanda Lynn Bottoms

Instrumentalists

Double Bass`

Percussion

Harpsichord

Viola

Flute

Doug Balliett***

Matt Cook

Gabriel Crist

Miranda Cuckson***

Emi Ferguson***

Violin
Piano
Cello
Baroque Cello
Theorbo

Keir GoGwilt***
Richard Valitutto
Coleman Itzkoff***
Eric Tinkerhess
Jason Koji Yoshida

** *The Industry Company Member*

*** *AMOC* Company Member*

Wonmi's WAREHOUSE Programs is organized by Alex Sloane, Associate Curator, and is produced by Amelia Charter, Producer of Performance and Programs with Michele Huizar, Programming Assistant, The Museum of Contemporary Art Los Angeles.

Wonmi's WAREHOUSE Programs is founded by Wonmi & Kihong Kwon and Family.

ABOUT THE MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART

Founded in 1979, MOCA is the defining museum of contemporary art. In a relatively short period of time, MOCA has achieved astonishing growth; a world-class collection of nearly 8,000 objects, international in scope with deep holdings in Los Angeles art; hallmark education programs that are widely emulated; award-winning publications that present original scholarship; groundbreaking monographic, touring, and thematic exhibitions of international reputation that survey the art of our time; and cutting-edge engagement with modes of new media production. MOCA is a not-for-profit institution that relies on a variety of funding sources for its activities.

ABOUT THE INDUSTRY

The Industry is a Los Angeles-based opera company that expands on the operatic form, challenging its orthodoxies while creating bold, interdisciplinary, and collaborative performances. Led by its Artist Director Cooperative of Ash Fure, Malik Gaines, and founder Yuval Sharon, the organization prizes site-specific approaches in dialogue with our cultural landscape, creating new relationships among artist, spectator, and community. During the past decade, The Industry's productions have taken place in locations ranging from Los Angeles Historic Park, where *Sweet Land* meditated on American mythologies around manifest destiny; to Mt. Wilson Observatory, where *Star Choir* envisioned a new species whose telepathic powers make possible a new model for society. Such efforts have gained The Industry renown as "the coolest opera company in the world" (KUSC) as it stands on "the leading edge of operatic innovation" (*Wired Magazine*).

ABOUT AMERICAN MODERN OPERA COMPANY

AMOC* (American Modern Opera Company), founded in 2017 by Matthew Aucoin and Zack Winokur, builds and shares a body of collaborative work. As a group of dancers, singers, musicians, writers, directors, composers, choreographers, and producers united by a core set of values, AMOC* artists pool their resources to create new pathways that connect creators and audiences in surprising and visceral ways.

ABOUT CURTIS INSTITUTE OF MUSIC

At Curtis, the world's most talented young musicians develop into exceptional artists, creators, and innovators. With a tuition-free foundation, Curtis is a unique environment for teaching and learning. A small school by design, students realize their artistic potential through intensive, individualized study with the most renowned, sought-after faculty. Animated by a learn-by-doing philosophy, Curtis students share their music with audiences through more than 100 performances each year, including solo and chamber recitals, orchestral concerts, and opera—all free or at an affordable cost—offering audiences unique opportunities to participate in pivotal moments in these young musicians' careers. Curtis students experience a close connection to the greatest artists and organizations in classical music, and innovative initiatives that integrate new technologies and encourage entrepreneurship—all within a historic campus in the heart of culturally rich Philadelphia. In this diverse, collaborative community, Curtis's extraordinary artists challenge, support, and inspire one another—continuing an unparalleled 100-year legacy of musicians who have led, and will lead, classical music into a thriving, equitable, and multidimensional future. Learn more at Curtis.edu.

Yuval Sharon is the founder and co-Artistic Director of The Industry in Los Angeles and the Gary L. Wasserman Artistic Director of Detroit Opera. In 2023 he was named the Director of the Year by *Musical America*, and in 2017 he was honored with a MacArthur Fellowship and a Foundation for Contemporary Art grant for theater. He was the first American ever invited to direct at Bayreuth, and is the recipient of the 2014 Götz Friedrich Prize in Germany for his production of John Adams's *Doctor Atomic*. With The Industry, Sharon has directed and produced new operas in moving vehicles, operating train stations, Hollywood sound stages, and various "non-spaces" such as warehouses, parking lots, and escalator corridors. Between 2016 and 2019, Sharon was the first Artist-Collaborator at the Los Angeles Philharmonic, creating nine projects that included newly commissioned works, site-specific installations, and performances outside the hall.

Countertenor **Anthony Roth Costanzo** began performing professionally at the age of 11 and has since appeared in opera, concert, recital, film, and on Broadway. He was recently awarded a Grammy, an Honorary Doctorate from the Manhattan School of Music, a visiting fellowship from Oxford University, and the History Makers Award from the New York Historical Society. In Spring 2024 he will be a distinguished visiting scholar at Harvard. After starring in the Metropolitan Opera's *Akhnaten* in 2022, this season he returns in another title role as Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice*. In 2024 he will also appear as Jonathan in the world premiere of *The Righteous* at Santa Fe Opera; return to the Teatro Real; make his debuts at the Paris Opera and the Wigmore Hall in London; give solo recitals at the Kennedy Center and Boston's Jordan Hall; and appear in Carnegie Hall with the Met Chamber Orchestra. As a producer, he has created projects for organizations including Opera Philadelphia, The New York Philharmonic, The BBC Proms, WQXR and St. Ann's Warehouse.

George Lewis is an American composer, musicologist, computer installation artist, and trombonist. At Columbia University, he is the Edwin H. Case Professor of American Music and serves as Area Chair in Composition and Faculty in Historical Musicology and Artistic Director of the International Contemporary Ensemble. Lewis is a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the American Academy of Arts and Letters and the British Academy, is a member of the Akademie der Künste Berlin, and was

honored as a 2002 MacArthur “genius” Fellow. Lewis has been a member of the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians (AACM) since 1971. He is widely considered a pioneer of interactive computer music, developing programs that improvise together with human musicians. He has received honorary doctorates from the University of Edinburgh, New College of Florida, Harvard University, and the University of Pennsylvania, among other academic institutions.

Poet, interdisciplinary writer and performer **Douglas Kearney** grew up in Altadena, California. He earned his BA from Howard University, his MFA from the California Institute of the Arts, and is a graduate and fellow of Cave Canem. Kearney’s full-length poetry collections include *Fear, Some* (2006), *The Black Automaton* (2009), which was chosen by Catherine Wagner for the National Poetry Series, and *Patter* (2014). He has also published many chapbooks. His poetry has appeared in several anthologies, including *The Ringing Ear: Black Poets Lean South* (2007), *Spoken Word Revolution Redux* (2007), *Dark Matter: Reading the Bones* (2005), and *Role Call: A Generational Anthology of Social and Political Black Art & Literature* (2002). Kearney’s honors include a Whiting Writers Award, a Pushcart nomination, and commissions for new work from Minneapolis’s Weisman Art Museum and New York’s Studio Museum. In 2007, he was named a Notable New American Poet by the Poetry Society of America. Kearney has also received fellowships and scholarships from the Idyllwild Summer Arts Poetry Workshop, Cave Canem, the Callaloo Creative Writing Workshops, and the Bread Loaf Writers’ Conference. He is the recipient of the Foundation for Contemporary Arts’ Cy Twombly Award. He teaches at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities.

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