
LINCOLN CENTER'S
**SUMMER
FOR THE
CITY**

JUNE 11 – AUGUST 9, 2025

RUN AMOC* FESTIVAL

JUNE 18, 19, 20 AT 8:30 PM

JUNE 20 & 21 AT 3:00 PM

THE COMET / POPPEA

NEW YORK PREMIERE

DAVID H. KOCH THEATER

90 minutes, no intermission

Performed in English and Italian with English supertitles

Concept and Direction Yuval Sharon

The Comet **Composer** George Lewis

The Comet **Libretto** Douglas Kearney (based on a short story by W.E.B. Du Bois)

L'incoronazione di Poppea **Composer** Claudio Monteverdi

L'incoronazione di Poppea **Libretto** Giovanni Francesco Busenello

Music Director Marc Lowenstein

Scenic Design Mimi Lien

Lighting Design John Torres

Costume Design Oana Botez

Sound Design Mark Grey

Dramaturgy Robert Gooding-Williams and Wendy Heller

Produced by Anthony Roth Costanzo and Cath Brittan, AMOC* (American Modern Opera Company), The Industry, Curtis Institute of Music, Yale Schwarzman Center, and Michigan Central Art

Ottone / Virtue Amanda Lynn Bottoms

Poppea Kearstin Piper Brown

Nero / Julia's father Anthony Roth Costanzo*

Julia Kiera Duffy

Seneca Evan Hughes

Love / Nellie Joelle Lamarre

Ottavia / "Friend" / Fortune Whitney Morrison

Jim / Mercury Davóné Tines*

Percussion Jonny Allen*
Double Bass Doug Balliett*
Viola Miranda Cuckson*
C Flute, Piccolo, Bass Flute Emi Ferguson*
Harpsichord Elliot Figg
Violin Keir GoGwilt*
Cello Coleman Itzkoff*
Theorbo Paul Holmes Morton
Piano Richard Valitutto
Baroque Cello Adam Young

* AMOC* Company Member

The Comet, composed by George Lewis with Libretto by Douglas Kearney, was commissioned by AMOC* and premiered at MOCA Geffen in June 2024.

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Premiere Producer Brian Sea
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Technical Director Andy Campbell
Stage Manager Samantha Greene
Assistant Stage Managers Mickey Action and Mark Osgood
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Associate Music Director Mila Henry
Associate Lighting Designer Jackson Funke
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The AMOC* and Lincoln Center presentation of *The Comet / Poppea* is produced in collaboration with THE OFFICE performing arts + film.

The Comet / Poppea is made possible with generous support from Lead Sponsor Ellen Michelson. Additional major support for *The Comet / Poppea* is provided by Founding Sponsors: Carol Stein, Diamonstein-Spielvogel Foundation, Jeff Goodby, and T. June & Simon K.G. Li Charitable Fund.

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DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Two seemingly incongruous stories... two radically different musical voices... two visions of social striving that at first glance appear to have nothing to do with each other. 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. *The Comet / Poppea* begins as a critique of the institution of opera, but by the end, it affirms everything unique to opera: the creation of an ambiguous space that enchants through juxtaposition, where the classic and the contemporary collide.

Two previous projects by The Industry led to the creation of *The Comet / Poppea*. I first conceived of the idea of simultaneous storytelling while staging John Cage's *Europeras 1 & 2* with the LA Philharmonic. I started imagining what other results might emerge if we used Cage's methodologies in new ways, with less-than-intentional musical assemblage as a formal principle. I was also working with librettist Douglas Kearney on *Sweet Land*, which similarly split the audience into two experiences of the same opera. In the case of *Sweet Land*, our attention focused on the dislocations and expulsions of American history. We created that project to see if a new experience of opera can open up the art form to new perspectives. Both of these processes influenced the form of what we are now presenting as *The Comet / Poppea*.

Throughout this project, I kept finding myself thinking about one of opera's most intractable problems: the sense of privilege and elitism attributed to the genre. *Poppea* seems particularly susceptible to this stereotype: unless you are an Italian in the 17th century, it's hard to approach *Poppea* as anything but a learned piece, and one you have to learn to love. It implies leisure to luxuriate in. Inherent in that elitism is the experience of exclusion—one that is compounded when we also consider race. W.E.B. Du Bois's wrenching story "The Coming of John," as told in *Souls of Black Folk*, uses an experience at the opera to illustrate how cultural institutions enforce a culture of racism and segregation. Du Bois's fictional tale depicts a Black man who accidentally finds himself at the Metropolitan Opera and is unexpectedly transported by the music of Wagner's *Lohengrin*. But his communion with the music is short-lived: he is chased out of the theater by his white *doppelgänger*, the one who actually holds the ticket for that seat. John is evicted from the theater—but the music of the opera haunts him in the violent last moments of his life. It's an ominous final image of cultural hegemony predicated on an intractable line those in power draw between the invited and the expelled.

Du Bois also wrote about the concept of "striving," a word that is at the heart of *Poppea*. We see characters in Monteverdi's opera attempting to strive upwards in

society—particularly Poppea herself, who tries to take charge of her destiny and find her way towards becoming Empress, no matter what the expense. Du Bois encouraged a sense of striving upwards as a solution to the psychological state he called “double consciousness”—the painful division of the psyche between one’s true identity and how one is *seen* by others. Identifying and eradicating double consciousness was one of the fundamental struggles in achieving the uplift he hoped to see in the Black community. *The Comet*, however, offers a bleak vision for the elimination of double consciousness: would it take a disaster on the level of the country’s complete destruction to create the conditions for a society without racism? Maybe it will take a comet wiping out society as we know it for us to have a chance at escaping both our social divisions and the division within ourselves.

Thinking about double consciousness led me to imagine the constantly spinning turntable, where a Black science fiction story and Monteverdi’s classic opera could perform simultaneously, giving the audience a constantly alternating back-and-forth between two worlds. The goal is the transformation and expansion of the operatic form, which we force open to investigate its anti-elite potential—pointing out its tendencies towards exclusion while offering up a counter-proposal.

—Yuval Sharon

Scan for Additional Program Notes and
Artist and Designer Bios



MEET THE ARTISTS

YUVAL SHARON (concept and direction)

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 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.

GEORGE LEWIS (*The Comet* composer)

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 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. His opera *The Comet* was a 2025 Finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in Music.

DOUGLAS KEARNEY (*The Comet* librettist)

Poet, interdisciplinary writer, and performer Douglas Kearney grew up in Altadena, CA. 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.

CATH BRITTAN (producer)

Originally from Manchester, England and now a resident of California, Brittan's recent and upcoming productions include *Aci, Galatea e Polifemo* (dir. Christopher Alden); Messiaen's *Des Canyons aux étoiles* (with Deborah O'Grady); *Glass Handel* (2018, 2019, BBC Proms 2022); *Bandwagon* (New York Philharmonic); *Amadigi de Gaula* (dir. Louisa Muller); 2018-19 and 2019-20 Soundbox Season, San Francisco Symphony; *Orphic Moments* (dir. Zack Winokur); *Perle Noir* (Tyshawn Sorey & Julia Bullock); *Arkhipov* (composer Peter Knell); *Birds in the Moon* (Mark Grey, Elkhannah Pulitzer); *...Iphigenia* (Wayne Shorter & Esperanza Spalding); *The Hunting Gun* (dir. François Girard); *No One is Forgotten* (Prestini/Shirey); *Only an Octave Apart* (dir. Zack Winokur); *UnRavelled* (dir. James Bonas); *American Patriots* (Yaniv Segal/Samantha Williams); *In a Grove* (Christopher Cerrone, Stephanie Fleischmann, dir. Mary Birnbaum); *Number Our Days* (Luna Pearl Wolff, David van Taylor); *The Secret Sharer* (DNAWORKS); *We the Messiah* (Darian Dauchan, Daniel Banks); *Kronos Quartet Triptych Project* (2025-26); and *The Known Lost* (Allado-McDowell, Skye, Fleischmann). Between 2018 and 2022 Cath was the producer for AMOC* (American Modern Opera Company).

ANTHONY ROTH COSTANZO (Producer, Nero/Julia's father)

Countertenor Anthony Roth Costanzo began performing professionally at the age of 11 and has since appeared in opera, concert, recital, film, and on Broadway. In June 2024, he began his tenure as the General Director and President of Opera Philadelphia. He has appeared with many of the world's leading opera houses including the Metropolitan Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, San Francisco Opera, Opéra National de Paris, English National Opera, Houston Grand Opera, Opera Philadelphia, Los Angeles Opera, Canadian Opera Company, Glyndebourne Opera Festival, Dallas Opera, Teatro Real Madrid, Spoleto Festival USA, Glimmerglass

Festival (where he served as the 2023 Artist in Residence), and Finnish National Opera. A champion of new work, Costanzo created roles in the world premieres of John Corigliano's *The Lord of Cries* and Gregory Spears' *The Righteous* at Santa Fe Opera, Jimmy Lopez's *Bel Canto* at Lyric Opera of Chicago, and Jake Heggie's *Great Scott* at Dallas Opera. He has also premiered works written for him by Joel Thompson, Matthew Aucoin, Paola Prestini, Gregory Spears, Viet Cuong, Carlos Simon, Suzanne Farrin, Bernard Rands, Scott Wheeler, Mohammed Fairouz, Steve Mackey, and Nico Muhly. Costanzo works as a producer and curator in addition to his singing, creating shows for The BBC Proms, New York Philharmonic, Opera Philadelphia, National Sawdust, Philharmonia Baroque, The Barnes Foundation, St. John the Divine, Princeton University, WQXR, the State Theater in Salzburg, Master Voices, and Kabuki-za, Tokyo. During the 2020-21 season, he created and produced the New York Philharmonic's Bandwagon initiative, the orchestra's innovative response to the pandemic. It began with 81 impromptu concerts in all five boroughs of New York City, where Costanzo, musicians from the orchestra, and other special guests performed a wide range of repertoire, including world-premiere commissions. It evolved into a series of festivals created with partner organizations throughout the city, which utilize the resources of the Philharmonic to center and amplify the voices of the community.

LINCOLN CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts (LCPA) is a nonprofit dedicated to ensuring the Lincoln Center campus is a destination that welcomes all—where every visitor, whether a native New Yorker or New Yorker for a day, can find inspiration, artistic innovation, and community in the creative achievements realized on campus. Year-round, we offer robust seasons of programming, representing a broad spectrum of performing arts disciplines and complementing the artistic and educational activities of the 10 fellow resident arts organizations with whom we share a home. LCPA presents hundreds of programs each year, offered primarily for free and Choose-What-You-Pay, helping ensure that the arts are at the center of civic life for all. [LincolnCenter.org](https://www.LincolnCenter.org)

AMERICAN MODERN OPERA COMPANY

AMOC* is a company of creators that commissions and produces bold new work in music, dance, and opera. Founded in 2017 by composer Matthew Aucoin and director and producer Zack Winokur, AMOC* (American Modern Opera Company) comprises 17 of today's most sought-after composers, choreographers, directors, vocalists, instrumentalists, dancers, writers, and producers. These artists are united by their commitment to collective authorship through long-term generative relationships. AMOC* supports these creators with unparalleled resources to develop their work, maintains a robust national and international touring schedule, and upholds a rigorously equitable

and artist-led development model. AMOC* is deeply committed to making its performances financially accessible.

AMOC* has developed and premiered over 20 new productions in its eight seasons as a company. Past partners include 92nd Street Y, American Repertory Theater, Baryshnikov Arts Center, Brown Arts Institute, DACAMERA (Houston), Harvard University, La MaMa, Park Avenue Armory, Stanford Live, and Yale University. AMOC* has appeared internationally at the Aix-en-Provence Festival, Centre Pompidou (Paris), de Singel (Brussels), Elbphilharmonie (Hamburg), and Erholungshaus (Leverkusen). In 2022, AMOC* served as Music Director for the 75th Ojai Music Festival, presenting 18 performances, eight world premieres, and six new theatrical productions.

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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. Founded by director Yuval Sharon in 2010, the organization prizes site-specific approaches in dialogue with our cultural landscape, creating new relationships among artist, audience, and community. *Hopscotch* (2015) was an audacious and ground-breaking production staged across the entire city, with scenes unfolding on rooftops, in abandoned parking lots, and inside speeding limousines. Subsequent productions have taken place in locations ranging from Los Angeles Historic Park, where *Sweet Land* (composed by Raven Chacon and Du Yun) meditated on American mythologies around manifest destiny, to Mt. Wilson Observatory, where artists Malik Gaines and Alexandro Segade's *Star Choir* envisioned a new species whose telepathic powers make possible a new model for society. Later this year, Ash Fure's *ANIMAL [the underground]* will transform the massive concrete basement beneath the historic MacArthur Building in Los Angeles into an "underground listening gym." 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*). Through 2024, Fure, Gaines, and Sharon were Artistic Co-Directors of The Industry, which is currently led by the team of Tim Griffin (Artistic & Executive Director) Sarah Wass (Deputy Director), and Marc Lowenstein (Music Director), in collaboration with its larger Company.

theindustryla.org | @theindustryopera

CURTIS INSTITUTE OF MUSIC

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Based in New Haven, CT and located in the historic heart of the Yale University campus, Yale Schwarzman Center is a commons for university life where art, culinary, and wellness experiences converge to build bridges, nurture creativity, and foster kinship and belonging. Positioned at the crux of social cohesion, creativity, and self-expression, the Center includes several flexible spaces in which members of the Yale and New Haven communities engage through free, public programming that ranges from the intimate to the grand. The Center's iconic building—constructed in 1801, rebirthed in 2022 following a renovation by Robert A.M. Stern Architects, and recognized for excellence by the Institute of Classical Architecture & Art—has recently been the site for world premieres and commissions by Nathalie Joachim, Bryce Dessner, and Ash Fure, to name a few. The Center's impact extends well beyond its walls through programming and programmatic partnerships within its home city and across the country.
schwarzman.yale.edu | @yale_schwarzman

THE OFFICE PERFORMING ARTS + FILM

THE OFFICE performing arts + film develops, produces, and presents art that makes a difference. Based in New York and London, THE OFFICE works in ongoing partnerships with festivals, venues, and institutions to create cultural programming that is unique and mission-specific. We do this to provide platforms for artists across all disciplines—artists who strive in their practice to illuminate and advance the causes that move them—to bring their work to the public.

As producers, we help artists we love to realize their vision by taking projects through all stages of creation: from concept, creative development, fundraising, and commissioning to tour planning, company management, and performance.

We are honored to have produced work around the world with William Kentridge, Carrie Mae Weems, Angélique Kidjo, Yo-Yo Ma, and many others, as well as ongoing collaborations with visionary partners including For Freedoms, Theater of War, The FreshGrass Foundation, and MASS MoCA.

As programmers and curators, we work closely with institutions, museums, universities, and other cultural organizations to build programs that respond to their missions and engage the communities they serve. Current and recent programming partnerships include MASS MoCA, the FreshGrass Festival, ArtYard, the BRIC Celebrate Brooklyn! Festival, the Momentary, The Wallis Center, the Margaret Mead Documentary Film Festival, the New York Jewish Film Festival, Sundance Feature Film & Theater Development Labs, the SNF Nostos Festival, the Kennedy Center, the Williams College '62 Center for Theatre & Dance, Symphony Space, Carnegie Hall, and the American Museum of Natural History.

At the heart of our work is a commitment to creating spaces where art can do what it does best—inspire, uplift, reveal, entertain, challenge, and catalyze change. We amplify the voices of artists making a difference locally, nationally, and internationally, and center our programming and producing around values of social justice, equity, race, gender, sustainability, and democratic ideals. Each project is shaped in response to the community it serves, with a focus on inclusion, collaboration, and bringing a diverse and reflective group of stakeholders to the table.
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Run AMOC* Festival **Part of Lincoln Center's *Summer for the City*** **June 18–July 16, 2025**

The Comet / Poppea | David H. Koch Theater | June 18–21

Canto Ostinato | David Rubenstein Atrium | June 25

Harawi | Alice Tully Hall | June 26

Julius Eastman: A Power Greater Than | David Geffen Hall | June 28

Julius Eastman: The End Is Not In Sight | Josie Robertson Plaza | June 29

Zarabanda Variations | David Rubenstein Atrium | July 2

Edinburgh Rollick | Jaffe Drive | July 3

Dance in the Park | Hearst Plaza | July 9–10

Music for New Bodies | David Geffen Hall | July 10–12

The Cello Player | Hearst Plaza | July 12

Rome Is Falling | Alice Tully Hall | July 13

the echoing of tenses | Alice Tully Hall | July 16

The American Modern Opera Company (AMOC*) is a leading force among today's most innovative and visionary interdisciplinary ensembles—recognized for producing deeply resonant and boundary-pushing art. This summer, AMOC* embarks on its most significant artistic endeavor to date with a bold slate of opera, dance, and music, creating an immersive landscape of art that redefines the festival experience. Performances will take place indoors and outdoors across Lincoln Center, moving fluidly between the spectacular and the intimate. Each production draws audiences into a realm where the lines between disciplines blur, celebrating the company's audacious creativity and intimate approach to storytelling
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Paul Appleby, tenor

Matthew Aucoin, composer, conductor, pianist

Doug Balliett, double bassist, composer

Julia Bullock, classical singer

Jay Campbell, cellist

Anthony Roth Costanzo, countertenor

Miranda Cuckson, violinist, violist

Julia Eichten, dancer, choreographer

Emi Ferguson, flutist

Keir GoGwilt, violinist, writer

Conor Hanick, pianist

Coleman Itzkoff, cellist

Or Schraiber, dancer, choreographer

Bobbi Jene Smith, dancer, choreographer

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Zack Winokur, director, producer

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Summer for the City welcomes all New Yorkers and visitors from around the world to a season grounded in the city's global cultural traditions, innovative spirit, and deep sense of community—all for free or Choose-What-You-Pay. Now in its fourth year, this highly anticipated summer tradition has served more than 1 million people since launching in 2022. The 2025 festival offers a bold lineup of multidisciplinary performances across the Lincoln Center campus, including world and New York premieres, participatory events, and more—all within transformed outdoor spaces that are destinations for a range of artistic experiences and spaces for respite for New Yorkers during the summer months. SummerfortheCity.org

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* In Memoriam As of June 2025

THE DAVID H. KOCH THEATER AND NEW YORK CITY BALLET

Designed by the renowned architect Philip Johnson especially for George Balanchine and New York City Ballet, the David H. Koch Theater is widely regarded as one of the world's greatest venues for dance. Originally named the New York State Theater, the venue opened in 1964, and was the second major theater to open at Lincoln Center.

Operated by New York City Ballet, in recent years the David H. Koch Theater has become one of this country's premiere destinations for dance performances, featuring engagements by an international roster of some of the world's most acclaimed dance companies.

In 2008 a transformative \$100 million commitment from philanthropist David H. Koch enabled major renovations to the theater, and the venue was renamed the David H. Koch Theater in his honor. The David H. Koch Theater is owned by the City of New York, which has also given funds for its refurbishment and which provides an operating subsidy through the Department of Cultural Affairs.

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Lead support for the Festival Orchestra of Lincoln Center is provided by Renée and Robert Belfer. Additional support is provided by Fan Fox and Leslie R. Samuels Foundation and Barbara H. Block. Chamber, orchestral and classical programs supported by the Leon Levy Endowment Fund.

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