

THE NEW VICTORY THEATER 2016-17 SEASON

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The New Victory Theater Presents Beth Morrison Projects, VisionIntoArt and Brooklyn Youth Chorus'



New Opera-Theater Work by Julian Crouch, Rinde Eckert, Paola Prestini Featuring Rinde Eckert and Brooklyn Youth Chorus

Off-Broadway Premiere March 3-12

New York, NY (January 24, 2017)—Co-created by Tony Award nominee and Drama Desk Award winner **Julian Crouch** (*Hedwig and the Angry Inch*; *The Addams Family*; *Shockheaded Peter*, New Vic 1999; *Wolves in the Walls*, New Vic 2007), Grammy Award winner and Pulitzer Prize finalist **Rinde Eckert** (*Renée Fleming VOICES*, *Orpheus X*, *Horizon*, *And God Created Great Whales*) and composer and National Sawdust and VisionIntoArt Director **Paola Prestini** (*Gilgamesh*, *Labyrinth* Installation Concertos, *The Hubble Cantata*), **AGING MAGICIAN** makes its Off-Broadway Premiere at The New Victory Theater from March 3-12, 2017.

AGING MAGICIAN is an epic new opera-theater work that tells the story of Harold, a world-weary clockmaker near the end of his unusual life as he is transported, dreamlike, to his memories of Coney Island. The performances feature Eckert and the Grammy Award-winning **Brooklyn Youth Chorus**, for which Prestini composed the work, and which co-produced it along with **Beth Morrison Projects** and **VisionIntoArt**. Prestini weaves the Brooklyn Youth Chorus into the story by using traditional Greek chorus techniques of consolation, chiding and commenting on the protagonist's journey.

AGING MAGICIAN will fill the New Victory stage with a remarkable installation designed by **Mark Stewart** (*Bang on a Can*, Theatre for a New Audience's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *King Lear*) that can be played like an instrument—blown, struck, whistled, plucked and bowed. Water, stars and sky, in addition to scenes from Harold's imagination, are projected onto the set as the performers unwind Harold's past and reveal the legacy he hopes to leave with the

departed world. This compelling mix of music, theater, puppetry, instrument making and scenic design paints a poignant allegory on time, youth and the peculiar magic of ordinary life—or perhaps, the ordinary magic of a peculiar life.

“Each lead artist in *Aging Magician* sees and identifies with Harold in a personal way, and this is what I believe ultimately, will bring universality to the theme at hand: the aging process and subsequent wisdom, seen through young people's eyes,” says Prestini, who found inspiration in the Greek myth of crossing the river Styx. “We are each unique artists with very different aesthetic entry points—uniting these disparate threads is at the center of my own artistic voice.”

The Chorus' founder and artistic director, **Dianne Berkun-Menaker**, will conduct the young singers and the **Attacca Quartet**, which will accompany them on stage. For the Chorus, the New Victory Theater engagement of *AGING MAGICIAN* represents an Off-Broadway debut and a highlight of its 25th anniversary season. It is also part of a growing body of evening-length stage works the Chorus has co-produced or produced, including *Black Mountain Songs*, *Tell the Way* and the upcoming *Silent Voices*.

AGING MAGICIAN is performed by Eckert and features Brooklyn Youth Chorus' Concert Ensemble. The Attacca Quartet, which accompanies them, includes Amy Schroeder on violin, Keiko Tokunaga on violin, Nathan Schram on viola and Andrew Yee on cello. Prestini is composer/co-creator; Eckert is writer, performer and co-creator; and Crouch is director, co-scenic designer and co-creator, with instrument design by Stewart, co-scenic design and costume design by Amy C. Rubin, and video and lighting design by Josh Higgason.

VIA Records will release a book and accompanying album about the creation of *AGING MAGICIAN* on February 24. The set will include the full libretto, production designs and samples of the art created by the show's protagonist.

AGING MAGICIAN was commissioned by Beth Morrison Projects, VisionIntoArt, Walker Art Center and the Krannert Center for the Performing Arts, and received residency support from MASS MoCA, Park Avenue Armory and The Watermill Center's Artist Residency Program. *AGING MAGICIAN* made its World Premiere at the Walker Art Center in March 2016 and was presented in workshop at MASS MoCA, the Krannert Center for the Performing Arts and the 2015 PROTOTYPE Festival.

AGING MAGICIAN is supported in part by an award from the National Endowment for the Arts, and by the New England Foundation for the Arts' National Theater Project, with lead funding from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

Performance Schedule: 9 performances

Friday, March 3 at 7pm

Saturday, March 4 at 2pm / 7pm

Sunday, March 5 at 12pm / 5pm*

Saturday, March 11 at 2pm / 7pm**

Sunday, March 12 at 12pm / 5pm

*audio-described performance

**sign-interpreted performance

AGING MAGICIAN has a running time of 65 minutes with no intermission, and is recommended for everyone ages 10 and up.

Learn more about **AGING MAGICIAN** on the [New Victory website](#) at NewVictory.org

Ticket Information

Full price tickets for *AGING MAGICIAN* at The New Victory Theater (209 West 42nd Street) are \$16-\$38 based on seat locations; for New Victory Members, tickets are \$10-\$25 based on seat locations. Tickets are available online (NewVictory.org) and by telephone (646.223.3010). The New Victory Theater box office (209 West 42nd Street) is open Sunday & Monday from 11am-5pm and Tuesday through Saturday from 12pm-7pm.

Theatergoers who buy tickets for three or more New Victory shows qualify for free Membership benefits, including locked-in discount ticket prices, free unlimited exchanges (up to 48 hours in advance) and access to a first-look purchase period for newly added performances.

About the Creators

Paola Prestini is “the enterprising composer and impresario” (The New York Times) behind the new Brooklyn venue National Sawdust and the “Visionary-In-Chief” (Time Out NY) of the production company VisionIntoArt (VIA), home to VIA Records. Named one of Musical America’s “Top 30 Musical Innovators” and one of NPR’s “Top 100 Composers in the World under 40,” her compositions are deemed “radiant... amorously evocative” by The New York Times, and “spellbinding” by The Washington Post. She has collaborated with poets, filmmakers, conservationists, and astrophysicists in multi-media works that have been commissioned by Carnegie Hall, the New York Philharmonic, and the Kronos Quartet, and have premiered at BAM, the Krannert Center, the Walker Art Center, and Celebrate Brooklyn. Her music is released on VIA Records, Innova, and Tzadik. She studied at the Juilliard School and was a Paul and Daisy Soros Fellow for New Americans. [paolaprestini.com](#).

Rinde Eckert is an acclaimed writer, composer, librettist, musician, performer and director. His virtuosic command of gesture, language and song goes beyond the traditional boundaries of what a “play,” a “dance piece,” an “opera” or a “musical” might be. Eckert creates solo work, chamber pieces and through-composed operas with larger casts, collaborating with choreographers, composers, directors, and new music ensembles. His New York theater work, which includes *Highway Ulysses*, *Horizon*, *Orpheus X* and the award-winning *And God Created Great Whales*, has received the Lucille Lortel Award and several Drama Desk nominations. Current projects in which he also performs include *My Lai* with the Kronos Quartet; *Five Beasts* with composer/performer Ned Rothenberg and beat box artist Adam Matta; and his new solo show *My Fools*. Eckert was the 2007 finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in Drama. He was an inaugural Doris Duke Artist in 2012, and has also received the 2009 Alpert Award in the Arts for Theatre, a 2007 Guggenheim Fellowship, and the 2005 American Academy of Arts and Letters Marc Blitzstein Award.

Originally from the UK, **Julian Crouch** is a Brooklyn-based theater practitioner, artist and musician, known for his groundbreaking production of *Shockheaded Peter* (U.S. Premiere, The New Victory Theater), *Satyagraha* at the Met Opera, and the Tony-nominated set of *Hedwig and The Angry Inch*. A co-founder and former artistic director of Improbable, his shows have been seen throughout the world. He is particularly known for his incorporation of large scale live animation within his productions. He has worked extensively at the Met Opera and on Broadway in addition to a myriad of more unusual locations; most recently, he’s designed and co-directed the Berlin Staatsoper’s production of *King Arthur*, and designed the set and costumes for Christopher Wheeldon’s *Nutcracker* at the Joffrey Ballet. Forthcoming productions for the Met Opera include their Gala for 50 years at Lincoln Center, and *Marnie*, a new co-commission with

the English National Opera. This summer sees his design for *Hansel and Gretel* for La Scala, in Milan, Italy. Together with Saskia Lane he has been internationally touring *Birdheart*, an intimate chamber piece of animated theater that was developed, in part, with New Victory LabWorks, the new work development program of The New Victory Theater.

About the Producers

Founded in 2006, **Beth Morrison Projects** identifies and supports the work of emerging and established composers and their multi-media collaborators through the commission, development, production and touring of their works, which take the form of opera-theater, music-theater, multi-media concert works and new forms waiting to be discovered.
bethmorrisonprojects.org

Founded in 1999 by Paola Prestini, **VisionIntoArt** has created and performed over 70 original works of various disciplines with the belief that collaboration sustains artistic innovation.
visionintoart.com

Founded in 1992 by Artistic Director Dianne Berkun Menaker, and now in its 25th anniversary season, **Brooklyn Youth Chorus** is a collective of young singers and vocal ensembles re-envisioning choral music performance through artistic innovation, collaboration and their distinctively beautiful sound. With an emphasis on commissioning new music and producing evening-length stage productions, the Chorus now has in its repertoire more than 100 original works and world premieres. brooklynouthchorus.org

About The New Victory Theater

The New Victory Theater brings kids to the arts and the arts to kids as New York City's premier theater devoted to the highest quality performing arts for kids and families. Serving the city in all its diversity, The New Victory Theater on 42nd Street presents theater, dance, circus, opera and music from around the world at affordable ticket prices. In addition to its public performances, the New Vic is also the largest provider of live performance to NYC school kids, serving 40,000 students in grades PreK-12 from more than 200 schools, after school programs and day camps each year. The New Victory Theater's contributions to the cultural landscape of the city have been honored by the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities with the National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Award, a national Arts Education Award from Americans for the Arts and a Drama Desk Award for "providing enchanting, sophisticated children's theater that appeals to the child in all of us, and for nurturing a love of theater in young people."

About The New 42nd Street

Founded in 1990, The New 42nd Street is an independent nonprofit organization charged with the continuous cultural revival of 42nd Street between 7th and 8th Avenues. Committed to the transformational power of the arts, The New 42nd Street builds on the foundation of seven historic theaters to make extraordinary performing arts and cultural engagement part of everyone's life. The New 42nd Street fulfills this purpose by ensuring the ongoing vibrancy of 42nd Street's historic theaters; maintaining and fully using the New 42nd Street Studios and The Duke on 42nd Street to support performing artists in the creation of their work; and through The New Victory Theater, New York's premier theater for kids and families.

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