SING OUT STRONG

DECOLONIZED VOICES

AN ACTIVIST OPERA COMPANY

Learn more at WHITESNAKEPROJECTS.ORG
What is Sing Out Strong?

This is the second year of a multi-year community-based project, Sing Out Strong, that commissions composers and writers to create songs based on themes that flow from our operas. For Sing Out Strong’s second year, our theme is colonization (flowing from our next main stage opera, *Cosmic Cowboy*), hence, Sing Out Strong: DeColonized Voices.

About DeColonized Voices

Sing Out Strong: DeColonized Voices composers and writers come from all over the world, reflecting the diversity of America, and Boston in particular. They bring with them the music and stories of the Nipmuc Tribe of Massachusetts, Cape Verde, Hong Kong, the Dominican Republic, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Vietnam, Haiti, the Chickasaw Nation of Oklahoma, and the multicultural melting pot of heritages in the United States. They come from diverse socio-economic, age, gender, and racial backgrounds. Some are professional musicians, some are high school students. But all are activists who believe that music and storytelling have the power to change lives.
Performers

MEZZO-SOPRANO  
JAIME KORKOS  
BRIANNA J. ROBINSON

SOPRANO  

MUSIC DIRECTOR  
TIAN HUING  
TIMOTHY STEELE  
AGNES KIM  
CLARE MONFREDO

PIANO  

CELLO  

CELLO

COMMISSIONED AND PRODUCED BY WHITE SNAKE PROJECTS

ASSOCIATE PRODUCER  
RACHEL STURM

PRODUCTION MANAGER  
TAYLOR HANSEN

AUDIO ENGINEER  
ANTONIO OLIART

VIDEographer  
KATHY WITTMAN,  
BALL SQUARE FILMS

White Snake Projects and its 2020 programs are supported in part by Mount Holyoke College, and a grant from the Boston Cultural Council and administered by the Mayor’s Office of Arts and Culture.
Songs

A COLONIZED FLOWER
TEXT BY CERISE LIM JACOBS
MUSIC BY ELENA RUEHR

A TERRIBLE NIGHTMARE IN HONG KONG
ANONYMOUS TEXT, ADAPTED BY CERISE LIM JACOBS
MUSIC BY MIKE VON DER NAHMER

COLONIALISM
TEXT BY GEOVANNA DE ANDRADE, ADAPTED BY CERISE LIM JACOBS
MUSIC BY STEPHANIE HENRY

CONGO SONG
TEXT BY CHIRUZA MUHIMUZI, ADAPTED BY CERISE LIM JACOBS

DOMINICAN
TEXT BY MELODY GUERRERO
MUSIC BY KUI DONG

FIGHT
TEXT BY LORDORINA HERCULES
MUSIC BY MICHELE CHENG

ITHÁNALI
TEXT AND MUSIC BY JEROD TATE

I WAS BORN IN SOUTH VIETNAM
TEXT BY VY LE, ADAPTED BY CERISE LIM JACOBS
MUSIC BY BRIAN MORALES

PARTING
TEXT AND MUSIC BY AVIK SARKAR

WHO WE ARE
TEXT BY LARRY SPOTTED CROW MANN
MUSIC BY DANIEL SABZGHABAEI
AVIK SARKAR

Avik Sarkar is a first-year student at Yale University, where he studies English and Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies. As a composer, Avik has been recognized by several national and international competitions. He has received awards from Webster University, Tribeca New Music, and the National YoungArts Foundation, and he was the youngest winner of BMI Student Composer Awards. His string quartet Stray Birds, commissioned by PUBLIQuartet, was premiered at National Sawdust in Brooklyn, New York. As a queer person of color and a first-generation immigrant, Avik strives to promote social justice and activist efforts through his work. He organized a benefit concert that raised over $5,000 dollars for the Boston Center for Refugee Health and Human Rights.

BRIAN MORALES

California-native Brian Morales has established an exciting presence on the New York music scene, with a reputation for excellence as a composer, conductor, and orchestrator. Nominated for an Olivier Award (Best Orchestration for the West End production of *The Color Purple*), Morales continues to explore soundscapes with dramatic elements. He has been named the 2019-2020 Composer-in-Residence with fp Creative where his chamber ballet *Strangers* will be performed in collaboration with choreographer Julia Bengtsson and Catharsis Winds in Cleveland, Ohio. He recently received the 2018 Pittsburgh Philharmonic EQT Young Composer Contest, resulting in the premiere of his orchestral piece *Arrivals* and was also selected as a winning composer for the 2019 Stradella Baroque Festival in which his *Una Macchina Per Rosa* was premiered by the Bryggan Ensemble. He was a 2019 Academic Fellow at the Talis Music Festival and was recently announced as a Composition Fellow for the upcoming Alba Music Festival.
DANIEL SABZGHABAEI

Daniel Reza Sabzghabaei (ASCAP) is a creator whose work aims to emphasize the malleability of time and how we experience it. His music has been performed and commissioned by organizations including: Intimacy of Creativity Festival, International Contemporary Ensemble, Beth Morrison Projects, New York Festival of Song, Israeli Chamber Project, [Switch-Ensemble], Guerilla Opera, Pro Coro Canada, TAK Ensemble, Contemporaneous, Moab Music Festival, VocalEssence, Voices of Change, The Esoterics, Busan Choral Festival, and ICon Arts Festival, to name a few. Lately, Daniel has been studying and taking increasing inspiration from Persian melodic and rhythmic systems, folk music, art, and poetry. Daniel is currently a doctoral student and Sage Fellow at Cornell University. https://danielsabzghabaei.com/

ELENA RUEHR

Elena Ruehr’s work has been described as “sumptuously scored and full of soaring melodies” (The New York Times), and “unspeakably gorgeous” (Gramophone). An award winning faculty member at MIT, she has also been a Guggenheim Fellow, a fellow at Harvard’s Radcliffe Institute and composer-in-residence with the Boston Modern Orchestra Project, which performed and recorded her major orchestral works (O’Keeffe Images, BMOP Sound) as well as the opera Toussaint Before the Spirits (Arsis Records). She has numerous recordings including: Six String Quartets by Elena Ruehr (Avie), Averno (Avie with the Trinity Choir, Julian Wachner, conducting), Jane Wang considers the Dragonfly (Albany), Lift (Avie), Shimmer (Metamorphosen Chamber Ensemble on Albany), and Shadow Light (The New Orchestra of Washington with Marcus Thompson on Acis).
**KUI DONG**

Described by newspapers and magazines such as *The Washington Post, Gramophone International UK, San Francisco Examiner, Charleston Post and Courier, The Boston Intelligencer* as “21st-century sensibilities”, “exquisitely... ceaselessly compelling”, “exceptional beauty and imagination”, “a hybrid sonic labyrinth”, and “beautiful and haunting and thought-provoking,” Kui Dong’s music has been performed and commissioned by numerous ensembles and received honors and prizes from a wide spectrum of prestigious institutions, including Central Ballet Group of China, The National Centre for the Performing Arts of China, Hong Kong’s Phoenix Television Broadcasting Company, Japan’s Public Interest Incorporated Foundation and Fukuyama Arts Foundation, Spain’s Tenerife Symphony Orchestra, UK’s Arditti Quartet, Austria’s Ars Electronica, The Tanglewood Music Center, USA Commissioning Award, The Serge Koussevitzky Music Foundation and Library of Congress, the Fromm Music Foundation at Harvard University, Meet the Composer, ISCM, and ASCAP etc.

Kui Dong is a professor of Music and current Music department Chair at Dartmouth College.

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**JEROD TATE**

Jerod Impichchaachaaha’ Tate (Chickasaw) is a dedicated American Indian classical composer and pianist who expresses his native culture in symphonic music, ballet, and opera. His commissioned works have been performed by the National Symphony Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony and Chorus, Dallas Symphony Orchestra, Detroit Symphony Orchestra, Minnesota Orchestra, Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra, Oklahoma City Philharmonic, Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra, Colorado Ballet, Canterbury Voices, Dale Warland Singers, and Santa Fe Desert Chorale. Tate was Composer-in-Residence for League of American Orchestras, Joyce Foundation/American Composers Forum, Oklahoma’s NewView Summer Academy, Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation, and Grand Canyon Music Festival. He taught composition for the Chickasaw Summer Arts Academy and to American Indian high school students in Minneapolis, the Hopi, Navajo, and Lummi reservations and Canada.
MICHELE CHENG

Michele Cheng is a composer, multimedia producer, improviser-performer, educator, and activist-artist. She often uses music, experimental theater, and other forms of media to be in dialogue with social issues and cultural identities. Her works have been performed in North America, Europe, and Asia. Examples include: a modern fairytale about criminal justice, an experimental music theater project about Asian women experiences, an ambisonic & three-screen video piece with hand puppet which reflects the online dating culture, among others. Michele also performs with diverse groups that feature experimental, classical, world, and pop music. She is a co-founder of fff, an interdisciplinary artist collective led by feminist media artists, as well as the experimental pop duet Meoark.

MIKE VON DER NAHMER

Mike von der Nahmer is a composer, sound researcher, music psychotherapist, and creator of MuTaDra (Music – Theater – Drama) home of transformative music theater. His American/German/Cuban heritage influences the questions of identity, complexity, and transcendent connection that shape his music. He has written over 30 works for stage and over 100 works for concert and film; many have received national/international awards and been performed around the world.

Mike holds a B.A. in composition from the University of Music and Performing Arts, Munich/Germany, an MA in Music therapy from the University of Augsburg, and an M.F.A. in Musical Theater Writing from New York University. Besides his formal training, he studied traditional Chinese music with Chinese composer, pianist, and ethnomusicologist Wang Ai Qun. www.petermichaelvondernahmer.com
Stephanie Henry is a classically trained pianist and composer from Minneapolis, MN. She has performed with classical and theatrical ensembles, as well as with rock bands. She composed original works for film, a web series, musical theater, orchestras, quartets, and solo piano. Her music has been applauded for its originality and charismatic charm. She studied music at St. Olaf College and received her Master’s from Hamline University. In 2018, Stephanie participated in Oregon Bach Festival Composer’s Symposium as a composer and pianist. In 2019, Stephanie composed music for the Minnesota Film Score Festival. Outside of composing and performing, Stephanie has maintained a piano studio where she has taught music to people of all ages.
CHIRUZA MUHIMUZI

Chiruza Muhimuzi was born in the Democratic Republic of Congo and is 21 years old. He has been in the United States for 11 months and speaks Swahili Luganda and English. He is a student at the Boston International Newcomers Academy.

CERISE LIM JACOBS

Cerise Lim Jacobs creates new American opera from her chequered past in multicultural Singapore, and her sojourns around the world. Her original libretti are inspired by the myths that live in our imaginations and the excitement of current events and people she encounters. She is the founder of White Snake Projects, an activist opera company that produces original opera with activist themes. Her work includes the Ouroboros Trilogy, comprising Naga (by Scott Wheeler), Gilgamesh (by Paola Prestini) and the 2011 Pulitzer Prize winning Madame White Snake (by Zhou Long). Ouroboros Trilogy was hailed as “enchanted” (Boston Globe) and “binge worthy” (Boston Musical Intelligencer). “The music should be heard, the production should be seen and there is wisdom in the text.” (BMINT). Cerise’s other operas include REV. 23 with Julian Wachner (2017) which received its NYC premiere in 2020; PermaDeath: A Video Game Opera, the first in the world using real time facial motion capture, with Dan Visconti (2018); I Am A Dreamer Who No Longer Dreams with Jorge Sosa (2019); and Cosmic Cowboy: A Space Opera with Elena Ruehr (2020).

GEOVANNA DE ANDRADE

Geovanna de Andrade, a high school student at the Boston International Newcomers Academy, comes from Cape Verde, a little archipelago of 10 islands in the coast of Africa – a little dot on the map, but the best things come in small portions. Cape Verde became independent just about 45 years ago; Geovanna’s lyrics are about all the suffering she hears from her people.
LARRY SPOTTED CROW MANN

Larry Spotted Crow Mann is a citizen of the Nipmuc Tribe of Massachusetts.

He is an award winning writer, poet, cultural educator, Traditional Story Teller, tribal drummer/dancer, and motivational speaker involving youth sobriety, cultural, and environmental awareness. Mann has travelled throughout the US, Canada, Europe, and parts of South America sharing the culture, history, music, and beauty of his Nipmuc culture.

LORDORINA HERCULES

Lordorina Hercules’ home country is Haiti. With a passion for health care and social justice, she is the Vice President of the student government at Boston International Newcomers Academy where she is a senior.

MELODY GUERRERO

Melody Guerrero, a high school student at the Boston International Newcomers Academy, is from the Dominican Republic. Something that inspired her to write her song was the memories of living in her country. Some of her hobbies are sleeping, listening to music, and reading, and in her free time she loves to decorate her room. Melody hopes to achieve her goal of being a biologist or a doctor.

VY LE

Vy Le’s home country is VietNam, a country with an “S” shape in Southeast Asia. Like other countries in the world, her nation spent thousands of years fighting for independence. They won; they failed; this kept repeating until 1945 and was her inspiration to write her song. Vy is a high school student at the Boston International Newcomers Academy.
BRIANNA J. ROBINSON, SOPRANO

Soprano Brianna J. Robinson returns to Boston Lyric Opera as a Jane and Steven Akin Emerging Artist, having covered roles in BLO’s The Handmaid’s Tale and performed the role of Lucy in Spears’ Fellow Travelers. She served as a Rising Artist with Pegasus Early Opera, performing in Purcell’s Dido and Aeneas. Brianna also sang the title role in Caccini’s La Liberazione di Ruggiero dall’Isola d’Alcina with the Baroque performance ensemble, Collegium Musicum. Her most recent work include singing the role of Florence Price in Florence Comes Home by Francine Trester with Shelter Music Boston. Brianna has also participated in international programs, Berlin Opera Academy and Opernfest Prague. In January 2020 she was awarded 1st prize at the 6th ‘Getting to Carnegie’ Competition, at Carnegie Hall, New York City.

JAIME KORKOS, MEZZO SOPRANO

Acclaimed for her “winning and beautifully balanced voice” (San Francisco Classical Voice), and her “depth and sensitivity” (Opera Wire), mezzo-soprano Jaime Korkos is equally at home in classic and contemporary repertoire. An impassioned actress, her diverse roles include Orfeo (Orfeo ed Euridice), La Périchole (La Périchole), Cendrillon (Cendrillon), Rusalka (Rusalka), and Hannah After (As One). Recent and upcoming performances include Odyssey Opera’s La belle Hélène (Orestes), and Boston Lyric Opera’s The Handmaid’s Tale (Widow/Wife/Martha), and Pocket Opera’s Don Giovanni (Donna Elvira). Other favorite roles include Cherubino (Le nozze di Figaro), Donna Elvira (Don Giovanni) and Dorabella (Cosi fan tutte).
TIMOTHY STEELE, PIANO

Timothy Steele is an active vocal coach, collaborative pianist, and conductor, and has taught for 26 years on the opera faculty at New England Conservatory. He has conducted outreach tours with the Boston Lyric Opera and is a former music director for Opera Providence. He has served as assistant conductor/pianist for over 180 productions with 25 opera companies, including Opera Theatre of St. Louis, Boston Lyric Opera, Boston Symphony Orchestra, Boston Youth Symphony Orchestra, Wolf Trap Opera, Central City Opera, and Opera Maine. He assisted with the Pulitzer Prize winning opera Madame White Snake for productions in Boston and Taiwan and the Ouroboros Trilogy in 2016, and for three years collaborated with WaterFire Providence on a unique and popular series of opera evenings. In Boston, he has performed with Emmanuel Music, the Handel and Haydn Society, and the Commonwealth Shakespeare Company, among others.

AGNES KIM, CELLO

Cellist Agnes Kim, described as a “hair-raising performer” in The Boston Musical Intelligencer, is a member of the highly respected Arneis Quartet and has appeared as a soloist with the Hwaum Boston Chamber Orchestra and the Busan Philharmonic Orchestra. Her orchestra experiences include performing with the Emmanuel Music and the Boston Philharmonic, and serving as the principal cellist for the Haffner Sinfonietta and the Philharmonia Boston. Agnes teaches cello and chamber music at Boston Youth Symphony Orchestra, and has been on faculty at Boston University Tanglewood Institute, Point Counterpoint, and Lyceum Music Festival. She received her Doctor of Musical Arts from Boston University where she was a student of Leslie Parnas and holds degrees from the New England Conservatory and the Peabody Institute of the Johns Hopkins University where she studied with Yeoung Kim and Steven Kates.
CLARE MONFREDO, CELLO

Clare Monfredo is a New York City-based cellist currently pursuing her DMA at the CUNY Graduate Center, where she is the recipient of the five-year Graduate Fellowship. Before moving to New York, Clare studied in Leipzig, Germany on a Fulbright Scholarship. Clare's festival appearances have included Chamber Music Northwest, Norfolk Chamber Music Festival, Piatigorsky International Cello Festival, Tanglewood Music Center, and Music Academy of the West. Clare graduated with distinction from Yale University with a Bachelor of Arts in English and received her Master’s of Music degree from the Shepherd School of Music at Rice University where she was recipient of the Jack Kent Cooke Graduate Arts Award. She also currently teaches at Hunter College and is a member of the Victory Players ensemble and the multidisciplinary Sprechgesang Institute arts collective.
TIAN HUI NG, MUSIC DIRECTOR

Tian Hui Ng is Music Director of the Pioneer Valley Symphony, Boston Opera Collaborative, and the Victory Players, a new music ensemble supported by the Massachusetts International Festival of the Arts. An advocate of new music, he has assisted in and premiered new works by internationally lauded composers Chaya Czernowin, Curt Cacioppo, Aaron Jay Kernis, David Sanford, and Joan Tower, among many others. Since his first opera, Stravinsky’s *The Rake’s Progress*, at age 20, he has conducted many new works, including unusual firsts like the first opera in Yoruba (Nigeria), *Irin Ajo* by Olabode Omojola in 2018, works for orchestra and interactive electronics like *GreyNoiseLitanies* by Gregory W. Brown, and *Dark River*, the arresting story of Civil Rights activist Fannie Lou Hamer in an opera that fuses Motown and Verdi.

RACHEL STURM, ASSOCIATE PRODUCER

Rachel Sturm is a Boston-based Stage Manager and arts professional. She is so pleased to be back this year working with White Snake Projects after having stage managed the world premiere of *I Am a Dreamer Who No Longer Dreams* last fall. Other area credits include: *The Children, Fun Home* (SpeakEasy Stage Company); *Aida, The Magic Flute, La Bohème, and Eugene Onegin* (Boston Youth Symphony Orchestras); *A Christmas Carol* (The Hanover Theatre); *Becoming Dr. Ruth* (New Repertory Theatre); *Being Earnest, Calendar Girls, She Loves Me, and Gabriel* (Greater Boston Stage Company); *Shrek: The Musical, Saturday Night Fever: The Musical* (North Shore Music Theatre); *Cosi Fan Tutte, Dialogues of the Carmelites, and Die Fledermaus* (New England Conservatory); and *Twelfth Night* (Commonwealth Shakespeare Company).
ANTONIO OLIART, AUDIO ENGINEER

Antonio Oliart Ros has been at WGBH since 1995. His training includes a bachelor’s and master’s of Music degrees in flute performance from The Mannes College of Music in New York City. He also holds a Masters Degree in Sound Recording from McGill University in Montreal, Quebec.

He has produced CDs for labels such as Warner Classics, Analekta Records, Centaur, and Hungaroton and has worked for Philips, Erato, Teldec, Telarc, Koch International, Deutsche Grammophon, and many other record companies as producer, recording engineer, editor and mastering engineer.

Antonio has won several awards including three GRAMMY® nominations and two GRAMMY® wins for best Chamber Music Recording and Best Opera Recording and four New England Emmy® awards for outstanding individual achievement in audio.

TAYLOR HANSEN, PRODUCTION MANAGER

Taylor Hansen is pleased to be working with White Snake Projects once again, after last year’s production of I Am A Dreamer Who No Longer Dreams. Taylor has been working in technical theater lots, recently at the Institute for Contemporary Art, Boston Conservatory at Berklee, Speakeasy Stage, and Global Arts Live. Previously he was the Production Manager at Central Square Theater for 8 years. In 2017, Taylor launched TH.ESP Event Safety Planning, a theater and production consulting business which focuses on safety planning for theater and live events. He is a member of USITT and the Event Safety Alliance, as well as a volunteer disaster supervisor for the Red Cross of Massachusetts.
KATHY WITTMAN, BALL SQUARE FILMS, VIDEOGRAPHY

Kathy Wittman has designed video projections and interactive media design for opera and theatre companies including Heartbeat Opera, the Florentine Opera, Odyssey Opera, and Queer Soup Theatre. In addition to projection design, she is the founder and principal artist at Ball Square Films, a video production company specializing in documentary photo and video for the performing arts. Current and favorite clients include the Boston Early Music Festival, Handel and Haydn Society, Boston Baroque, Blue Heron, Chameleon Arts Ensemble, New England Conservatory, Heartbeat Opera, Beth Morrison Projects, White Snake Projects, the Huntington Theatre Company, Merrimack Rep, Peregrine Theatre Ensemble, and the Mass Cultural Council.

Zoom Concert Guidelines

TIPS, TRICKS, AND BEST PRACTICES TO ENJOY OUR SING OUT STRONG CONCERT

Download the Zoom application on your phone or computer for the best experience.

STEP 1: JOIN THE MEETING
From a computer or Zoom enabled device, click on the event link you received in your emailed invitation.

From the Zoom App: Tap the “Join a Meeting” button within the app. When prompted, enter the Meeting ID. Tap the “Join” button to proceed.

STEP 2: JOIN AUDIO
From a computer, if you are using the computer’s microphone and speakers, click the “Join by Computer Audio” button. From the app, it will default to join via device audio.

As the host, we will mute you during the introductions and songs. We'll unmute you after each song so you can applaud the artists. Please feel free to cheer us all on!

STEP 3: SCREEN SETUP
When the singers are screensharing the accompaniment, you will see a green notification along the top of your screen letting you know you are viewing their screen and next to it, a black button that says “View Options.” If you click the “View Options” button you will be able to select “Side By Side Mode” which will put the singer next to the accompanists. You can then adjust how much of the screen each of them occupies by clicking on and sliding the black bar between them. This function enables you to feature the accompanists and the singer with equal prominence.
Cosmic Cowboy, a poli sci-fi opera, blends ancient history and fantasy to discuss colonization. Inspired by the 400th anniversary of the landing of the Mayflower at Plymouth Rock and the historic landing of the space probe Philae on Comet 67P/Churyumov-Gerasimenko, it’s an eclectic romp through the universe, ranging from the formation of the cosmos by the mating of the Sumerian gods Tiamat and Apsu to a touching pas de deux between the robotic probe Cooper and Tiamat’s daughter, Tia. Ultimately, this is an intimate story that asks deep questions about the consequences of the colonizing impulse and what it means to be human.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 25 AT 7:30PM*
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 26 AT 7:30PM*
SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 27 AT 3:00PM*

EMERSON PARAMOUNT THEATER, ROBERT J. ORCHARD STAGE
559 WASHINGTON ST, BOSTON

* dates subject to change