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**POET-PERFORMER MARC BAMUTHI JOSEPH  
BRINGS SPOKEN WORD AND LOVE OF SOCCER TO  
THE STAGE**

**ARTSEMERSON PRESENTS**

***/peh-LO-tah/***

***a futbol framed freedom suite***

**BY MARC BAMUTHI JOSEPH & THE LIVING WORD PROJECT**

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**FIVE PERFORMANCES ONLY**

**MAY 1 – 5, 2019**

**AT THE EMERSON PARAMOUNT CENTER**

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***Press Performance is Wednesday, May 1, 2019 at 7:30pm***

**[Boston, MA – April 12, 2019]** – ArtsEmerson is honored to welcome ***/peh-LO-tah/ a futbol framed freedom suite*** created by **Marc Bamuthi Joseph**, a child of Haitian immigrants turned poet-performer activist, and now Artistic Director of Social Impact at The Kennedy Center. ***/peh-LO-tah/*** (meaning ball/court game/soccer in Spanish) combines spoken word and futbol-inspired choreography to tell a love letter to black culture, and examines the promise of blissful freedom on the soccer field set within the realities of racial inequality. ***/peh-LO-tah/*** takes audiences from the pickup games in rural Haiti to the World Cup stadiums of Rio de Janeiro and Johannesburg, and plays ArtsEmerson for its closing five performances, May 1–5, at the Emerson Paramount Center Robert J. Orchard Stage. Tickets for ***/peh-LO-tah/*** start at just \$20 and may be purchased online at [www.ArtsEmerson.org](http://www.ArtsEmerson.org), by phone at 617.824.8400, or in person at the box office. Group, student, and senior discounts are also available.

*Photographer credit: Bethanie Hines*



**/peh-LO-tah/** first premiered in November of 2016 as a love letter to immigrant joy in a tense political moment,” says creator Marc Bamuthi Joseph. “Two years and more than a dozen cities later, we lovingly close our tour in the great city of Boston, a foundational site of both immigrant ambition and American promise. This piece places global futbol at the center of a universe of challenging parenthood, conflicting views of justice, and sincere inquiry about how we might all co-create a more inspired and inclusive world. ArtsEmerson is the perfect landing place for this maelstrom of ideas, because it, like **/peh-LO-tah/**, knows that even after the lights go down, the journey to the goal continues...”

“Marc Bamuthi Joseph is not new to Boston, but this is our first opportunity to include his work in an ArtsEmerson season,” says ArtsEmerson Artistic Director David Dower. “Bamuthi's signature is a high-energy, visually and emotionally ravishing, poetic style that weaves elements of hip hop culture, contemporary dance, spoken word, and his Haitian-American roots into powerful and moving odes to black joy. Here he's set his signature style on the world's most popular sport, and created an event that celebrates futbol's power to bring us together. And in the same breath, he shares the risk, the pain, and the challenges that confront him on and off the field in a culture determined to separate us. **/peh-LO-tah/** carries forward so many of the ideas we've been working with here at ArtsEmerson over these first nine seasons we are thrilled to share it with our audiences.”

### Listings Information for **peh-LO-tah**

#### **Dates**

May 1 - 5, 2019

#### **Venue:**

Emerson Paramount Center  
Robert J. Orchard Stage  
559 Washington Street Boston, MA 02116

#### **Performance Schedule:**

Wednesday, May 1, 2019	7:30pm	<b>Press Performance</b>
Thursday, May 2, 2019	7:30pm	
Friday, May 3, 2019	8:00pm	
Saturday, May 4, 2019	8:00pm	
Sunday, May 5, 2019	2:00pm	

#### **Ticket Information:**

Online: **ArtsEmerson.org**

Phone: **617-824-8400**

In Person: **Paramount Center Box Office**, open Tuesday-Saturday from 10am-6pm and 2 hours prior to any event until 30 minutes after the start of the show.

*Prices range from \$20-\$85 (subject to change)*

#### **Credits**

Conceived and Written by Marc Bamuthi Joseph/The Living Word Project

Developed with and Directed by Michael John Garcés

Choreography by Stacey Printz

Composed by Tommy Shepherd

Produced by MAPP International Productions

Scenic and Video Design, David Szlasa

Lighting Design, Tom Ontiveros

Sound Design, Rob Kaplowitz

Costume Design, Meghan Healey

Producing Director, Joan Osato

Production Manager, Maximilian Urruzmendi

Stage Management, Michael Garcia  
Sound Engineer, Zachary McKenna  
Performed by The Living Word Project: Marc Bamuthi Joseph, Tommy Shepherd, Traci Tolmaire, Yaw Agyeman, Delina P. Brooks

**For production stills and other media kit assets, click [here](#).**

### **About /peh-LO-tah/ (Statement from Marc Bamuthi Joseph)**

**/peh-LO-tah/** explores the ecology of egalitarianism played out inside the world's game. It is a story of my body in its late summer years; the physics of a globally networked economy running in tandem with the fragile network of a dancer's anatomy. It is a bet that sweat has currency to transition both narrative point of view and visual dimension. For my company of collaborators, it is a structural experiment: physically demanding, visually deft, viscerally reaching, and linguistically twisted in hip hop and hope.

Ultimately, I'm intrigued by the elusive riddle of equality, and am fascinated by the curiosity that soccer is the only thing the entire planet can agree to do together. It is the official sport of this spinning ball. My inquiry involves the joy of the game against the complexity of the global south sites of the last two World Cups. It acknowledges that all conversations tied to ecology are ALSO tied to democracy and economy. The work is sprung from the bliss of a goal scorer's run; it shares what his countrymen do after the ball beats the goalie, the closest thing going to freedom...

### **About The Living Word Project**

The Living Word Project (LWP) was formerly the resident theater company of Youth Speaks, Inc. of San Francisco. Now operating independently, LWP is committed to producing literary performance in the verse of our time. Aesthetically urban, pedagogically Freirean, LWP derives personal performed narratives out of interdisciplinary collaboration. Though its methodology includes dance, music, and film, the company's emphasis is spoken storytelling. LWP creates verse-based work that is spoken through the body, illustrated by visual and sonic scores, and in communication with the important social issues and movements of the immediate moment. LWP is the theater's connection from Shakespeare's quill to Kool Herc's turntables; from Martha Graham's cupped hand to Nelson Mandela's clenched fist: a new voice for a new politic.

### **About ArtsEmerson**

ArtsEmerson is Boston's leading presenter of contemporary world theatre. We are dedicated to engaging all communities through stories that reveal and deepen our connection to each other. By cultivating diversity in the arts and in the audience, we ignite public conversation around our most vexing societal challenges as a catalyst for overcoming them. Founded in 2010 by Robert J. Orchard — the year the U.S. Census confirmed there was no single cultural majority in Boston — we committed to building a cultural institution that reflects the diversity of our city. We program a full season of performances, film and dialogue that invites each of us to engage in a more contemporary narrative of Boston as a truly global city. ArtsEmerson is led by Artistic Director, David Dower and Executive Director, David Howse. For more information, visit [ArtsEmerson.org](http://ArtsEmerson.org).

### **About Emerson College**

Based in Boston, Massachusetts, opposite the historic Boston Common and in the heart of the city's Theatre District, Emerson College educates individuals who will solve problems and change the world through engaged leadership in communication and the arts, a mission informed by liberal learning. The College has 3,780 undergraduates and 670 graduate students from across the United States and 50 countries. Supported by state-of-the-art facilities and a renowned faculty, students participate in more than 90 student organizations and performance groups. Emerson is known for its experiential learning programs in Los Angeles, Washington, DC, the Netherlands, London, China, and the Czech Republic. The College has an active network of 39,000 alumni who hold leadership positions in communication and the arts. For

more information, visit [Emerson.edu](http://Emerson.edu).

### Creative and Cast Biographies

**Marc Bamuthi Joseph (Creator & Writer)** is a 2017 TED Global Fellow, an inaugural recipient of the Guggenheim Social Practice initiative, and an honoree of the United States Artists Rockefeller Fellowship. He is also the winner of the 2011 Herb Alpert Award in Theatre, and an inaugural recipient of the Doris Duke Performing Artist Award. In pursuit of affirmations of black life in the public realm, he co-founded the Life is Living Festival for Youth Speaks, and created the installation “Black Joy in the Hour of Chaos” for Creative Time. Joseph’s opera libretto, ***We Shall Not Be Moved***, was named one of 2017’s “Best Classical Music Performances” by The New York Times. His evening length work, ***/peh-LO-tah/***, successfully toured across North America for three years, including at BAM’s Harvey Theater as a part of the 2017 Next Wave Festival. His latest piece, “The Just and the Blind” investigates the crisis of over-sentencing in the prison industrial complex, and will premiere at Carnegie Hall in March 2019. Formerly the Chief of Program and Pedagogy at YBCA in San Francisco, Bamuthi currently serves as the Vice President and Artistic Director of Social Impact at The Kennedy Center.

**Michael John Garcés’ (Director)** Michael John Garcés’ previous work with the Living Word Project, in collaboration with Bamuthi, Stacey Printz, Tommy Shepherd (aka Emcee Soulati) and many other collaborators, includes directing **red, black and GREEN (a blues)** and the **break/s**. He is the Artistic Director of Cornerstone Theater Company in Los Angeles where recent directing projects include **Urban Rez** by Larissa FastHorse, **California: The Tempest** by Alison Carey and **Plumas Negras** by Juliette Carrillo, as well as writing **Magic Fruit** and **Los Illegals**. Other recent directing credits include **Wrestling Jerusalem** by Aaron Davidman (various venues, including the Guthrie Theatre, Mosaic Theatre and The Cleveland Public Theatre), **District Merchants** by Aaron Posner (The Folger Theatre), and **The Box** by Sarah Shourd (Z Space). He is a company member at Woolly Mammoth Theater Company in Washington, DC, where projects he has helmed include **Lights Rise on Grace** by Chad Bekim and **The Convert** by Danai Gurira. Other theater companies where he has worked include New York Theater Workshop, Second Stage, The Cherry Lane, INTAR, South Coast Repertory, The Humana Festival and A Contemporary Theater. Garcés is the recipient of the Princess Grace Statue and the Alan Schneider Director Award.

**Stacey Printz (Choreographer)** Artistic Director of Printz Dance Project is a Bay Area based choreographer, dancer and educator; she graduated Cum Laude from UC Irvine with degrees in sociology and dance. She teaches for A.C.T’s MFA program, and at Alonzo King’s LINES Dance Center where she has been on faculty for 15 years. She has taught her hybrid contemporary-jazz technique across the U.S. and annually in Europe. Her company has performed in SF for 15 years, has toured across the nation and internationally in Russia, Lithuania, Ireland, the Virgin Islands and Mexico. Her show, Hover Space had reviewers saying, “With a talented cast, unique concept and inventive movement, Hover Space is a slam dunk.” Printz also choreographed: Aaron Davidman’s, “Wrestling Jerusalem”, Sarah Shourd’s The Box, and YBCA’s Director of Performing Arts, Marc Bamuthi Joseph’s internationally recognized works, “Scourge”, “The Break/s”, and “Red, Black & Green: A Blues”. [Printzdance.org](http://Printzdance.org)

**David Szlasa (Scenic and Video Design)** is a versatile video artist and designer spanning performance, installation, public art, and social practice. His work revolves around ideas of remix and re-appropriation, using popular imagery, ideas, and actions in unexpected ways to challenge structures of authority and question social standards. His project Studio 1 was dubbed a Living Innovation Zone by the City of San Francisco and he has taught design at Stanford, NYU, and St Mary’s College. Collaborators include Marc Bamuthi Joseph, Sara Shelton Mann, Joanna Haigood, Dohee Lee, Yuri Zhukov, Hope Mohr, Bill Shannon, Rennie Harris, Deb Margolin, Myra Melford, and others.



**Tom Ontiveros (Lighting Design)** Recent awards: *Best Lighting Design* (LADCC, *My Barking Dog*), *Nomination for Best Projection Design* (Stage Raw, *Shiv*), *Nomination for Best Lighting Design* (Ovation!, *Completeness*). Credits include designs for The La Jolla Playhouse, South Coast Repertory, Cornerstone, L.A. Opera, Hungarian National Theatre, Hong Kong Cultural Centre, LA Opera, Culture Project, Park Avenue Armory, Danspace Project, MOCA (Chicago), San Diego Museum of Art, Ojai Music Festival, Phoenix Symphony, and the Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music. Upcoming work includes *Vicuña* (CTG, Kirk Douglas Theatre) and *They Don't Talk Back*

**Robert Kaplowitz (Sound Design)** has spent the last 24 years designing sound and composing, and has been honored with an OBIE for Sustained Excellence and a Tony® for *Fela!* A Philadelphian since 2010, he has designed there for PlayPenn, Interact, Arden, Lucidity Suitcase, Pig Iron, Lantern, PTC and others; other regional credits include the Guthrie, Alley, Sundance, O'Neill and National Theatre of England. Previous work with Mr. Garces includes *The Body of An American* and *Light, Raise the Roof*. In NYC, his work has been heard on Broadway, at Lincoln Center, The Public, MCC, 2<sup>nd</sup> Stage, the Vineyard, MTC, and innumerable 99 seat venues (Perseverance Theatre). Tom is an Assistant Professor of Lighting Design at USC.

**Meghan Healey (Costume Design)** Recent work includes costumes for *The Body of an American* (Wilma Theater), *WE ARE PROUD...* (Woolly Mammoth Theater), costumes for *URBAN REZ*, *Love On San Pedro* and scenery for *Plumas Negras* (Cornerstone Theater). She has designed costumes and scenery for world premiere productions from playwrights such as Larissa Fasthorse, Octavio Solis, Eduardo Machado, Lars Noren, Jose Rivera, Andrea Thome, Clive Barker, Najla Said, Nilaja Sun, Rob Handel, among others. She received her MFA in Design from NYU's Tisch School, and is Chair of the Department of Drama, Theater, and Dance at Queens College CUNY.

**Tommy Shepherd (Composer and Performer)** Tommy Shepherd is the GRAMMY-nominated Music Director of Alphabet Rockers, and internationally renowned for his beatboxing, featured in Oakland's Antique Naked Soul. Tommy (aka Emcee Soulati) tours internationally in hip hop theater (Campo Santo, Dan Wolf) and is a co-founder of the live hip hop collective. Felonious. Shepherd has performed and toured internationally with Marc Bamuthi Joseph, collaborating on *Scourge*, *the break/s*, *Spoken World* and *red, black and Green: a blues*.

**Traci Tolmaire (Performer)** is an actor, dancer, singer, and choreographer from Chicago. Credits include *Jelly's Last Jam* (Le Petit Theatre); *The High Priestess of Dark Alley* (Le Petit Theatre); *Cherchez La Femme* (La MaMa ETC); *Dancing On Eggshells* (The Billie Holiday Theatre); *Black Joy In the Hour of Chaos* (Creative Time); *The Circle Unbroken is a Hard Bop* (651 Arts/MAPP International Productions); *red, black, & GREEN: a blues* (MAPP International Productions/Living Word Project); *Plenty of Time* (New Federal Theatre); *Mirrors In Every Corner* (Intersection for the Arts/Campo Santo); *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* (Fulton Opera House); and *Trouble in Mind* (Actor's Express). Choreography credits include *Jelly's Last Jam* (Le Petit Theatre); *Gee's Bend* (Hartford Stage); *Rejoice!*, a holiday musical (Lorraine Hansberry Theatre); and *Dancing On Eggshells*. Visit [www.tracitolmaire.com](http://www.tracitolmaire.com).

**Yaw Agyeman (Performer)** has toured in the play *red, black & GREEN: a blues* (MAPP) and performed in the world premiere of the musical, "Mister Chickee's Funny Money" (Chicago Children's Theater). The play features music from the Motown Great, Lamont Dozier. He has been featured on VH1's "Soul Cities", a show produced by Nelson George that showcases singers in cities all over the country, as well as on the Africa Channel's, "Soundtracks at Red Kiva", a program that focuses on artists of African descent. Currently, he is a member of the artistic collaboration, "Black Monks of Mississippi", headed by the dynamic and prolific, Theaster Gates.

**Delina Patrice Brooks (Performer)** is a producing artist, writer, director, and diasporic dancer from San Francisco, CA. Highlighted performances include: Campo Santo's *Superheroes*,

*Babylon is Burning*, *Global Masquerade*, and *Casa de Spirits* (actor & movement director), written & directed by Roger Guenvuer Smith, Marc Bamuthi Joseph's *Scourge* and *Peh-lo-tah*, Willow Theater's *Hair: The Musical*, City Circus' *And If We Shadows* and *Echo's Reach*, Cheri Moraga's *A New Fire* and more. Commissioned & Presented by AfroSolo, CounterPulse Theater, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, LA Women's Theater Festival, Dance Brigade's D.I.R.T. Festival, The Black Choreographer's Festival and more. In addition to her work with Bay Area theater and dance companies, she produces her own work including the recent "Bare Soles Bare Soul", a docuseries premiered at Grand Lake Theater, and Izzie-awarded *An Open Love Letter to Black Fathers: A Choreopoem*. Delina is co-producer and curator of Life is Living's "Africa in Oakland' Dance Zone and was the Project & Production Manager of the inaugural SF Aerial Dance Festival. She also facilitates healing-based writing workshops throughout San Francisco and Oakland. Visit her at [www.delinadream.com](http://www.delinadream.com)

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