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ARTSEMERSON RETURNS TO IN-PERSON PERFORMANCE
WITH THE WORLD PREMIERE OF
IPHIGENIA

THREE PERFORMANCES ONLY - NOVEMBER 12 – 13, 2021
EMERSON CUTLER MAJESTIC THEATRE

A NEW OPERATIC COLLABORATION OF 11-TIME GRAMMY AWARD-WINNING
COMPOSER AND SAXOPHONIST **WAYNE SHORTER** AND 4-TIME
GRAMMY AWARD-WINNING BASSIST, COMPOSER AND VOCALIST
ESPERANZA SPALDING, DIRECTED BY **LILEANA BLAIN-CRUZ**, AND
FEATURING
SCENIC DESIGN BY LUMINARY ARCHITECT **FRANK GEHRY**

PLAY READING BOOK CLUB TO PROVIDE DEEP DIVE INTO THE WORK

ARTSEMERSON ANNOUNCES A FREE PANEL DISCUSSION,
AFTER THE CURTAIN CALL: IPHIGENIA,
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 2021 AT 7:00 PM
EMERSON PARAMOUNT CENTER'S ROBERT J. ORCHARD STAGE

[Boston, MA – Wednesday, October 20, 2021] – ArtsEmerson, Boston's leading presenter of contemporary world theater and film and the professional presenting and producing organization of Emerson College, is excited to gather audiences once again in a physical theatre following a gap of 20 months with the World Premiere of **Iphigenia**. This premiere piece disrupts the traditional tale of the sacrificial daughter of Greece in a work that envelopes the classical with the contemporary with three performances only November 12 – 13, 2021 at the Emerson Cutler Majestic Theatre, presented in association with New England Conservatory.



(L-R) Frank Gehry and Wayne Shorter.
Photo: Courtesy of Mika Shino



esperanza spalding at **Iphigenia** workshop in DC.
Photo: Courtesy of Real Magic

Two of the most visionary and daring musical voices of our time – composer Wayne Shorter and librettist and performer esperanza spalding – have created a modern operatic re-imagining of a powerful ancient story. The production is directed by Obie Award winner Lileana Blain-Cruz, and conducted by Clark Rundell, with scenic design by Frank Gehry — a longtime friend and creative collaborator of Shorter and spalding’s.

Shorter and spalding’s **Iphigenia**, unlike its forebears, is not an adaptation of the Greek myth as much as it is an intervention into myth-making itself, and into music and opera as we know it. Classical and jazz forms collide in a full orchestral score that features Shorter’s groundbreaking method of symphonic improvisation. spalding’s libretto is deeply poetic and then suddenly radical - **Iphigenia** is multiplied, her identity is fractured and shared until the stage is occupied by a chorus of her. **Iphigenia** stares down the history of opera and makes some demands on its future: No more tragic women singing through suicide and going mad in perfect pitch. No more spectacles of women dead and dying. In the end, Shorter and spalding turn their gaze outward beyond the stage: What will we make, they ask, at this precise moment in our collective present when we are so desperately in need of new visions for the world?

“We are really excited to reintroduce our audiences to gathering in our spaces for such a spectacular and visionary event – the World Premiere of **Iphigenia**,” says David Howse, Executive Director at ArtsEmerson. “It is a true privilege to present work by esperanza spalding, who has a long-standing relationship with us here at ArtsEmerson, and the legendary Wayne Shorter – a piece that will undoubtedly expand our imagination and association with the myth and the woman. We are honored to present this epic work and thrilled that it will bring our community together in person once again in the beautiful Emerson Cutler Majestic Theatre.”

"ArtsEmerson has been a pillar of support and encouragement from the beginning of this Opera's inception," says spalding. "I and the whole creative and production team are so honored and beyond excited to be premiering **Iphigenia** with this beautiful community."

"On behalf of the College community, I welcome back theatre patrons, and express my deep gratitude for the collaborative work of so many to bring the remarkable **Iphigenia** to a world premiere with ArtsEmerson," said William P. Gilligan, Emerson College Interim President.

Tickets for **Iphigenia** may be purchased 24/7 at [ArtsEmerson.org](https://www.ArtsEmerson.org), or by calling 617-824-8400 (Tue-Sat from 12:00PM ET - 6:00PM ET). The Paramount Center Box Office (559 Washington Street, Boston) is open for walk-up service Thu-Sat from Noon - 6:00 PM ET. Tickets may also be purchased as part of an ArtsEmerson Season Package, featuring discounts up to 40% off. Groups of 10+ attending a performance save up to 30%. Thanks to generous support from Rockland Trust, a limited number of \$10 Mobile Rush tickets will be available at 10:00 AM ET each performance day on a first-come, first-served basis, exclusively through the TodayTix mobile app. For more information, please click on “General Public” when you visit [ArtsEmerson’s Offers web page](#).

[Iphigenia Play Reading Book Club](#)

ArtsEmerson is also proud to announce that registration is open for the latest iteration of its wildly popular **Play Reading Book Club (PRBC)**. This pioneering theater literacy and community education program enriches the theater-going experience by offering unique and radical access to scripts, artists, and facilitates conversations that dive deeper into artistic events presented at ArtsEmerson, while expanding the social networks of its participants.

The **PRBCs** for **Iphigenia** will feature both in-person gatherings and a virtual Zoom option, each taking place over multiple sessions. These gatherings will take place over the course of three weeks where attendees will read the Euripides version of the *Iphigenia* myth, discuss the text, see the world premiere of Shorter and spalding’s intervention to opera as we know it, and enjoy a private reception with the artists. All PRBC participants will attend the live, in-person performance of **Iphigenia** at the Emerson Cutler Majestic Theatre on Saturday, November 13 at 8:00 PM (tickets sold separately).

Locations and Dates:

Boston Public Library Roxbury Branch
149 Dudley Street, Roxbury, MA 02119

Sessions:

- Monday 10/25 from 5:30 PM - 7:30 PM
- Monday 11/01 from 5:30 PM - 7:30 PM
- Monday 11/08 from 5:30 PM - 7:30 PM
- Saturday, 11/13 from 8:00 PM - 10:30 PM (PRBC Night at **Iphigenia**)
- Monday 11/15 from 5:30 PM - 7:30 PM
- Tuesday 11/16 from 3:45 PM - 5:45 PM

Face masks are required for all Boston Public Library visitors regardless of vaccine status. Visitors may not eat or drink in the library.

BCYF/ Jackson Mann Community Center
500 Cambridge St, Allston, MA 02134

Sessions:

- Wednesday, 10/27 from 5:30-8:30PM
- Wednesday 11/03 from 5:30 PM - 8:30 PM
- Friday 11/10 from 5:30 PM - 8:30 PM
- Saturday, 11/13 from 8:00 PM - 10:30 PM (PRBC Night at **Iphigenia**)
- Wednesday 11/17 from 5:30 PM - 8:30 PM

Face masks are required for all BCYF visitors regardless of vaccine status. Visitors may not eat or drink in the community center.

ArtsEmerson

Virtual Zoom gatherings

Sessions:

- Tuesday 10/26 from 6:00 PM - 7:30 PM
- Thursday 10/28 from 6:00 PM - 7:30 PM
- Tuesday 11/02 from 6:00 PM - 7:30 PM
- Thursday 11/04 from 6:00 PM - 7:30 PM
- Tuesday 11/09 from 6:00 PM - 7:30 PM
- Thursday 11/11 from 6:00 PM - 7:30 PM
- Saturday, 11/13 from 8:00 PM - 10:30 PM (PRBC Night at **Iphigenia**)
- Tuesday 11/16 from 6:00 PM - 7:30 PM

Participation in PRBCs for **Iphigenia** is free and advance registration is required.

Access to registration is currently open at [ArtsEmerson.org](https://www.ArtsEmerson.org).

[After the Curtain Call: Iphigenia](#)

ArtsEmerson is excited to announce that esperanza spalding, current Fresh Sound Artist-in-Residence at Emerson College, will be featured in a panel discussion on the Monday evening following the close of the **Iphigenia** engagement. **After the Curtain Call: Iphigenia** will join spalding in conversation with musicologist Dr. Carolyn Abbate and Boston While Black Founder Sheena Collier, moderated by Emerson College assistant professor Dr. Dana Edell.

After the Curtain Call: Iphigenia, part of ArtsEmerson's Public Dialogue initiative, will take place on November 15, 2021 at 7:00 PM ET at the Emerson Paramount Center Robert J. Orchard Stage (559 Washington Street, Boston). The event will also be livestreamed and accessible for virtual viewing. Both the in-person event and the virtual livestream will require tickets, which will be available soon. Full details are forthcoming at [ArtsEmerson.org](https://www.ArtsEmerson.org).

For rehearsal stills and other media assets, click [here](#).

LISTINGS INFORMATION FOR IPHIGENIA

Dates:

November 12 – 13, 2021

Venue:

Emerson Cutler Majestic Theatre
219 Tremont Street
Boston, MA 02116

Performance Schedule:

Friday, November 12, 2021	8:00pm	World Premiere + Press Performance
Saturday, November 13, 2021	2:00pm	
Saturday, November 13, 2021	8:00pm	

Ticket Information:

Tickets for **Iphigenia** may be purchased 24/7 at [ArtsEmerson.org](https://www.ArtsEmerson.org). Phone orders and group sales are available by calling the ArtsEmerson Box Office at 617-824-8400 (open Tue-Sat from 12:00PM ET - 6:00PM ET). The Paramount Center Box Office (559 Washington Street, Boston) is open for walk-up service Thu-Sat from 12:00PM ET - 6:00 PM ET

Tickets may also be purchased as part of an ArtsEmerson Season Package, featuring discounts up to 40% off. Groups of 10+ attending a performance save 30%.

Tickets range \$25-\$95

Content:

ArtsEmerson understands that certain types of content could trigger past traumatic experiences for some viewers. Please be aware that this production contains scenes of violence against women. For further detail, please visit [ArtsEmerson.org](https://www.ArtsEmerson.org).

More Information:

All guests at the theatre are required to agree to abide by ArtsEmerson's **Shared Code of Conduct**, which includes being fully vaccinated or testing negative for COVID-19 and indoor mask wearing, among other public health best practices. **Please visit this [Public Health Info page](#) on the ArtsEmerson website for more information.**

CREDITS

A Real Magic production (esperanza spalding & Jeff Tang)
in association with Octopus Theatricals

IPHIGENIA

an opera created by Wayne Shorter and esperanza spalding

Wayne Shorter, Composer
esperanza spalding, Librettist
Lileana Blain-Cruz, Director
Clark Rundell, Conductor

Featuring:

esperanza spalding, Brenda Pressley, Arnold Livingston Geis, Brad Walker, Kelly Guerra, Joanna Lynn-Jacobs, Sharmay Musacchio, Nivi Ravi, Alexandra Smither, and Samuel White

Frank Gehry, Set Design
Montana Levi-Blanco, Costume Design

Jen Schriever, Lighting Design
Mark Grey, Sound Design
Cookie Jordan, Hair and Make-up Design

Orchestrations by Wayne Shorter
Additional orchestrations and arrangements by Clark Rundell
Musical dramaturgy by Phillip Golub and Clark Rundell
A cappella vocal arrangements by Caroline Shaw
Additional text by Ganavya Doraiswamy, Joy Harjo, and Safiya Sinclair
Sunder Ganglani, Dramaturg

Produced by Jeff Tang, Cath Brittan and Mara Isaacs

Iphigenia is commissioned by Cal Performances at the University of California, Berkeley; The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts; The Broad Stage, Santa Monica, CA; ArtsEmerson Boston, MA; Mass MoCA, North Adams, MA and Carolina Performing Arts.

Generous support for **Iphigenia** is provided by the Ford Foundation, The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, the New England Foundation for the Arts' National Theater Project, Alexander Leff, Thomas M. Neff, the Stavros Niarchos Foundation, New Music USA, and everyone who gave to the **Iphigenia** crowdfunding campaign.

ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES

Wayne Shorter

"Generally acknowledged to be jazz's greatest living composer" (New York Times), Wayne Shorter has left an indelible mark on the development of music for the last half-century. He first rose to prominence in the late 1950's as the primary composer for Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers. He next joined the Miles Davis Quintet becoming what that bandleader referred to as the ensemble's "intellectual musical catalyst" before co-founding the pioneering group Weather Report. Since 2001, he has led his own highly acclaimed quartet.

His works have been performed by the Chicago Symphony, Detroit Symphony, Lyon Symphony, National Polish Radio Symphonic Orchestra, Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, Prague Philharmonic and Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra. Acclaimed artists and ensembles as Renée Fleming and the Imani Winds have also performed his works. He has received commissions from the National, St. Louis, and Nashville Symphony Orchestras, the Los Angeles Philharmonic and the La Jolla Music Society. In all, Mr. Shorter has realized over 200 compositions and dozens of these works have become modern standards.

esperanza spalding

esperanza spalding (also known as irma nejando, or, i.e.) is a being who has grown to recognize love in the abstract and aspirational, and is now fully dedicated to learning how she can serve and embody actualized love through honor for and receptivity to, fellow humans, teachers, and practitioners of various regenerative arts.

bass, piano, composition, performance, voice and lyrics are tools and disciplines she is engaged in deeply to cultivate her own channel for transmitting care and beauty through vibration/sound/presence.

she has written an Opera with Wayne Shorter slated for premier in Fall 2021 // she is currently developing a mockumentary in collaboration with brontë velez and San Francisco Symphony // researching and developing liberation rituals in jazz and black dance // and continuing a lifelong collaboration with practitioners in various fields relating to music, healing and cognition to develop music with enhanced therapeutic potential.

she is presently paid by Harvard University to co-create and learn with students enrolled here, working on developing creative practices that serve the restoration of people and land.

Lileana Blain-Cruz

Lileana Blain-Cruz is a director from New York City and Miami. Recent projects include: *Hansel and Gretel* (Houston Grand Opera); *Afrofemonomy* (PSNY); *Anatomy of a Suicide* (Atlantic Theater Company); *Fefu and Her Friends* (TFANA); *Girls* (Yale Repertory Theater); *Marys Seacole* (LCT3, Obie Award); *Faust* (Opera Omaha); *Fabulation, Or the Reeducation of Undine* (Signature Theatre); *Thunderbodies and Revolt. She Said. Revolt Again* (Soho Rep.); *The House That Will Not Stand and Red Speedo* (New York Theatre Workshop); *Water by the Spoonful* (Mark Taper Forum/CTG); *Pipeline* (Lincoln Center); *The Death of the Last Black Man in the Whole Entire World* (Signature Theatre, Obie Award); *Henry IV, Part One and Much Ado About Nothing* (Oregon Shakespeare Festival); *The Bluest Eye* (The Guthrie); *War* (LCT3/Lincoln Center Theater and Yale Rep.); *Salome* (JACK); *Hollow Roots* (the Under the Radar Festival at The Public Theater). Upcoming projects include: *Dreaming Zenzile* (St. Louis Rep) and *The Listeners* (Opera Norway). She was recently named a 2018 United States Artists Fellow and a 2020 Lincoln Center Emerging Artist. She is currently the resident director of Lincoln Center Theater. She is a graduate of Princeton and received her MFA in directing from the Yale School of Drama.

Clark Rundell

With a repertoire spanning centuries, continents and styles, Clark Rundell has established himself as a champion of music ranging from the 18th century to the current day, from Jazz to Kora, from Tango to European modernism and from large, multidimensional projects to music of complexity and intricacy. Opera world premieres include James MacMillan's *Clemency* at Covent Garden, Orlando Gough's *Voices & Votes* in Bergen, Julian Joseph's *Tristan and Isolde* in London and Oscar Bettison's *The Light of Lesser Days* in the Netherlands

Deeply committed to the performance of new music, Clark Rundell has given world premières of works by composers such as Louis Andriessen, Steve Reich, Mark-Anthony Turnage, James MacMillan, Django Bates, Sir Richard Rodney Bennett, Oscar Bettison, Gary Carpenter, Trish Clowes, Tansy Davies, Tim Garland, Adam Gorb, David Horne, Julian Joseph, Steve Mackey, Steve Martland, Brad Mehldau, Martijn Padding, Gwilym Simcock, Wayne Shorter and Julia Wolfe.

As an arranger, he collaborated with Louis Andriessen on two suites from the late Dutch master's operas *Rosa* (*Rosa's Horses*) and *Writing to Vermeer* (*Vermeer Pictures*). Clark Rundell spent much of his childhood in Bloomington, Minnesota. He studied conducting and trombone at Northwestern University before joining the faculty at the RNCM in Manchester.

PRESENTER INFORMATION

ArtsEmerson

ArtsEmerson is the professional presenting and producing organization at Emerson College, and its mission is to bring people together to experience powerful performances that delight, provoke, and inspire, celebrating both our differences and common humanity. Founded in 2010 by Robert J. Orchard — the year the U.S. Census confirmed there was no single cultural majority in Boston — ArtsEmerson is committed to building a cultural institution that reflects the diversity of our city. Our imaginative and globe-spanning live and virtual performances, films, and conversations invites each of us to be part of a Boston that is more creative, equitable, and connected. ArtsEmerson is led by Executive Director, David Howse. For more information visit [ArtsEmerson.org](https://www.ArtsEmerson.org).

Emerson College

ArtsEmerson and HowlRound Theatre Commons both operate from within the Emerson College Office of the Arts. 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 3,700 undergraduates and 1,400 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 as well as its new Global Portals. The College

has an active network of 51,000 alumni who hold leadership positions in communication and the arts. For more information, visit Emerson.edu. For media inquiries specific to Emerson College, please contact Michelle Gaseau (E: Michelle_Gaseau@emerson.edu, O: 617-824-3547, C: 617-429-2624).

New England Conservatory

Founded by Eben Tourjée in Boston, Massachusetts in 1867, the New England Conservatory (NEC) represents a new model of music school that combines the best of European tradition with American innovation. The school stands at the center of Boston's rich cultural history and musical life, presenting concerts at the renowned Jordan Hall. Propelled by profound artistry, bold creativity and deep compassion, NEC seeks to amplify musicians' impact on advancing our shared humanity, and empowers students to meet today's changing world head-on, equipped with the tools and confidence to forge multidimensional lives of artistic depth and relevance.

As an independent, not-for-profit institution that educates and trains musicians of all ages from around the world, NEC is recognized internationally as a leader among music schools. It cultivates a diverse, dynamic community, providing music students of more than 40 countries with performance opportunities and high-caliber training from 225 internationally esteemed artist-teachers and scholars. NEC pushes the boundaries of music-making and teaching through college-level training in classical, jazz and contemporary improvisation. Through unique interdisciplinary programs such as Entrepreneurial Musicianship and Community Performances & Partnerships, it empowers students to create their own musical opportunities. As part of NEC's mission to make lifelong music education available to everyone, the Preparatory School and School of Continuing Education delivers training and performance opportunities for children, pre-college students and adults.

Real Magic

Formed in 2018 by Creative Producer Jeff Tang (The Metropolitan Opera, National Sawdust) and Grammy Award-winning bassist, composer, and vocalist esperanza spalding, Real Magic was created to produce *Iphigenia* independently, in an environment of radical experimentation and open collaboration free from commercial expectations. www.iphigenia.live

Octopus Theatricals

Founded by Tony and Grammy-winning producer Mara Isaacs, Octopus Theatricals collaborates with artists and organizations to foster an expansive range of compelling theatrical works for local and global audiences. We eschew boundaries—aesthetic, geopolitical, institutional—and thrive on a nimble and rigorous practice. Current projects include *Hadestown* by Anaïs Mitchell (Broadway, 8 Tony Awards including Best Musical; Grammy Award, Best Musical Theater Album); *Dreaming Zenzile* by Somi Kakoma; *SOCIAL! Dance Club* created by Steven Hoggett, Christine Jones and David Byrne; *An Iliad* by Lisa Peterson and Denis O'Hare (Obie Award); Dianne McIntyre's *Speaking In The Same Tongue*; *And So We Walked* by DeLanna Studi; Bill Irwin's *On Beckett*; and Theatre for One and many more. In 2020, Octopus launched the Producer Hub, an online resource supporting independent producers in the experimental and performing arts sectors. www.octopustheatricals.com

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