



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Yerba Buena Center for the Arts Presents Three World Premieres for 2020 Spring Performances

Performances include world premieres from award-winning street dance theater company Embodiment Project, San Francisco–based Korean artist Dohee Lee, and critically acclaimed writer, actor, and producer Rafael Casal



MU/Æ: 9 Goddesses
Photo by Pak Han



The Limp
Photo courtesy Rafael Casal



X Rated Planet
Photo courtesy Embodiment Project

SAN FRANCISCO (January 17, 2020)—[Yerba Buena Center for the Arts \(YBCA\)](#) is pleased to present three transformative world premiere performances for the spring and summer of 2020 that interrogate gender through music, dance, and theater. [X Rated Planet](#) by the award-winning hip-hop dance theater company **Embodiment Project** is a street dance/choreo-poetry work examining how we repair ourselves after gender-based sexual trauma, with the voices of powerful women as our guideposts. [MU/Æ: 9 Goddesses](#), a new ritual theater performance by Korean artist **Dohee Lee**, features nine goddesses who take us through a multidisciplinary odyssey while inhabiting social struggles of the present time. In [The Limp](#), Bay Area writer, performer, and producer **Rafael Casal** presents musical theater in hip-hop verse, excavating paradigms of toxic masculinity that can lead to violence and abuse.

“In curating this year’s spring performances, the team has been thinking about the grip that toxic masculinity has had and continues to have on most of humanity, and how it asserts itself and

impacts all humans no matter his/her/their gender or sexual identification,” **remarks YBCA Performing Arts Curator Isabel T. Yrigoyen**. “Through these groundbreaking works, each artist inspires change even in the midst of pain, heartache, and violence.”

YBCA Chief of Program Meklit Hadero adds, “Art is how we get strong at transformation—at truly seeing the world differently, then building collective power from that place of clear vision. Behind each of these programs you’ll find powerful artists, global citizens, and engaged culture makers asking questions that generate social movement. They will move you and shake you, and in many cases will inspire you to action beyond our walls.”

In April, YBCA welcomes back the award-winning thirteen-performer ensemble hip-hop dance theater company **Embodiment Project** for the premiere of ***X Rated Planet***. Through a fusion of street dance forms, verbatim theater, choreo-poetry, live music, and interactive video art, this documentary dance theater performance explores gender-based sexual violence and the healing of sexual trauma. Artistic director **Nicole Klaymoon**’s signature approach to choreography emphasizes the sacred practice of voicing stories of trauma to reclaim power. Illustrated through the language of hip-hop, breaking, popping, waacking, voguing, and house dance, ***X Rated Planet*** presents real stories sourced from within the Embodiment Project company and interviews with formidable change makers: **Dr. Joy Degruy**, author of *Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome*; **Tarana Burke**, 'MeToo.' movement founder; and **Amikaeyla Gaston**, founder of the International Cultural Arts and Healing Sciences Institute.

Embodiment Project's X Rated Planet runs April 16-18, 2020, 7:30 PM in the YBCA Forum.

In May, YBCA brings back for a third time Bay Area-based Korean artist **Dohee Lee** for a new ritual theater performance, ***MU/ㄹ: 9 Goddesses***. Commissioned by YBCA and the Hewlett 50 Arts Commission in Music, ***MU/ㄹ: 9 Goddesses*** offers an immersive shamanic experience where ancestral traditions are transmuted through dance, singing, drumming, electronic soundscapes, and community participation. By transforming into nine goddesses from the past, present, and future, Lee transports audiences on a mythological journey of ancestral legacies and Indigenous resistance. The performance features Lee in solo sections interspersed with movements incorporating as many as thirty community performers on stage, drawn from the groups CoRazOn, Storytellers Bhutanese-Nepali Youth Ensemble, and leumsae.

MU/ㄹ: 9 Goddesses runs May 21-23, 2020, 7:30 PM in the YBCA Forum & Grand Lobby.

In June, YBCA presents ***The Limp***, a new performance piece combining musical theater and hip-hop-driven storytelling by Bay Area writer, poet, performer, and producer **Rafael Casal**, acclaimed co-creator and star of the 2018 film *Blindspotting*. Commissioned by YBCA and the Hewlett 50 Arts Commission, ***The Limp*** is a hilarious, philosophical, and brutal meditation on the constricting paradigms of male identity and intimacy. Drawing on the urgent poetry, sharp humor, and musicality of Casal’s work, ***The Limp*** combines the heightened language of spoken-word performance with contemporary storytelling and music in a one-of-a-kind story about love in the Bay.

The Limp runs June 11-14, 2020, 7:30 PM in the YBCA Theater.

CURATOR

Isabel T. Yrigoyen, performing arts curator at Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, has served in various roles in the organization for the past sixteen years. She has curated and produced

hundreds of large-scale projects, performances, and contextual programs, including site-specific music and dance projects, thematic concerts, cutting-edge global music festivals, and outside-the-box interdisciplinary experiences. In addition, Yrigoyen directs YBCA's Community Performance Rental program, overseeing more than 150 contracted performances for a wide array of Bay Area nonprofit arts organizations who present dance, theater, and music on YBCA's stages. Yrigoyen is active as an advocate and arts leader nationally. She just completed two years as a board member for California Presenters, a statewide organization committed to advancing professional touring and presenting of the performing arts. She has served on multiple panels for the San Francisco Arts Commission's Cultural Equity Grant panel, as a panelist on the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), and as a music judge for 3Arts Awards in Chicago. She recently served as a juror for an open call by YBCA to select exhibitions, open to curators and interdisciplinary artists.

Meklit Hadero is the chief of program at Yerba Buena Center for the Arts. She is an Ethiopian American vocalist, songwriter, composer, and cultural activist making music that sways between cultures and continents. Her innovative take on ethio-jazz has brought her around the world, from her home base of San Francisco to her home city of Addis Ababa (where she is a household name). Hadero has founded and led many creative and cultural initiatives, from musical collaborations to performance series. She is a National Geographic Explorer, a TED Senior Fellow, and a former co-director of the Red Poppy Art House, and has served as an artist in residence at New York University and Harvard University.

CREDITS

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ABOUT YERBA BUENA CENTER FOR THE ARTS

Yerba Buena Center for the Arts (YBCA) is one of the nation's most innovative contemporary arts centers. Founded in 1993, YBCA's mission is to generate culture that moves people. Through powerful art experiences, thoughtful and provocative content, and deep opportunities for participation, YBCA is committed to creating an inclusive culture that awakens personal and societal transformation. YBCA presents a wide variety of programming year-round, including performing arts, visual arts, and civic engagement. For tickets and information, call 415.978.ARTS (2787). For more information, visit ybca.org.

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