



*The Clarice presents*

**WHEN ALIENS FALL FROM THE SKY—  
WORK-IN-PROGRESS READING  
By Lemon Andersen**

Friday, March 31, 2023 • 7PM

DANCE THEATRE

AT THE CLARICE SMITH PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

**VAS**

VISITING ARTIST SERIES

UNIVERSITY OF  
MARYLAND

Presented by *The Clarice*

## WHEN ALIENS FALL FROM THE SKY— WORK-IN-PROGRESS READING

Written and performed by **Lemon Andersen**

Developed and directed by **Elise Thoron**

Creative Producer **Paola Soto**

Production Manager/Line Producer **Chisa Yamaguchi**

Executive Producer **Rika Iino**



*WHEN ALIENS FALL FROM THE SKY* was produced by Spitking Media, Sozo Artists and ASU Gammage and originally commissioned by Joan Cremin and ASU Gammage. *ALIENS* was co-commissioned by Perelman Performing Arts Center.

This project is supported in part by the National Endowment for the Arts. The performance is also supported in part by the Maryland State Arts Council and The Morris & Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation.

THE MORRIS & GWENDOLYN  
CAFRTZ FOUNDATION

**LEMON ANDERSEN** (Writer/Performer) is a Tony Award-winning playwright, poet, performance artist, youth empowerment activist, brand creative and television writer. His most recent play *ToasT* was commissioned by The Public Theater in New York City and developed by the Sundance Institute. Andersen's performances and writing have been hosted in venues ranging from Theatre On The Square (San Francisco), Gammage Performing Arts Center (Arizona), Spoleto Festival (Charleston), Arts & Ideas Festival (New Haven), the Chicago Theatre and the Kodak Theatre (Los Angeles). *County of Kings*, Andersen's coming-of-age autobiographical memoir produced by Spike Lee at the Public Theater, was met with critical acclaim by The New York Times and was awarded Grand Prize at the New York Book Festival. The television adaptation of his Broadway appearances on Def Poetry Jam ran for six seasons on HBO and earned Andersen a Tony Award. His book of poems, "Straightrazor," was excerpted by actor and activist Hill Harper for his bestselling book *Letters to an Incarcerated Brother*. Marketing for premier brands and professional athletes seeking a unique cultural perspective is also a cornerstone of Andersen's work, with clients including Google, Nike, Red Bull, Absolut, Boost Mobile, LeBron James, Carmelo Anthony and Kobe Bryant. Andersen launched the LeBron James XIII "Akronite," an elite basketball shoe and apparel line, with Daniel Bernard Roumain performing a live score to his poetry. A native New Yorker, Andersen proudly represents Brooklyn.

### Engagement on Campus and the Community

As part of his residency with *The Clarice*, Lemon Andersen taught two workshops for students participating in the Latin American Youth Center's (LAYC) afterschool program at William Wirt Middle School in Riverdale, MD. A group of 30 high school students from the LAYC program at High Point High School are in the audience tonight.

**ELISE THORON** (Director/Developer) is playwright, director and creator of new theater work. She works cross-culturally abroad and within the United States, collaborating with poets, musicians and fine artists, using multiple languages to create unique performances. For over a decade she has collaborated with Japanese paper artist, Kyoko Ibe on “Recycling: washi tales” with a company of American and Japanese traditional performers. Her Afro-Cuban Yiddish opera, *Hatuey: Memory of Fire*, with composer Frank London, went from Sundance Theater Lab to a production at Opera de la Calle in Havana, to Peak Performances (USA). For over 20 years, Elise created cross-cultural exchanges with Russian and American theater artists; she adapted and directed “The Great Gatsby” in Russian at The Pushkin Theater in Moscow, where it played for nine years. She is the co-founding Artistic Director of Literature to Life, a highly successful theater literacy program, now in its third decade nationwide, adapting books into solo performances with educational discussion to spark a passion for reading and writing in young people. For Literature to Life, Elise adapted Diaz’s *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*, Baldwin’s *If Beale Street Could Talk*, Cisneros’ *The House on Mango Street* and developed *County of Kings* with Tony award winning poet, Lemon Andersen, with subsequent productions at the Under the Radar, The Public Theater and venues around the world.

**PAOLA ALEXANDRA SOTO** (Creative Producer) is a playwright, creative producer, director and actress who was born in the Dominican Republic and raised in Harlem. Most recently she earned her M.F.A. in Playwriting at Columbia University School of the Arts. Her writing credits include *Lucha Libre*, a one-act version of the play was then translated into Mandarin and performed by students at the Shanghai Theatre Academy. Her other plays include *The Sosa Sisters* (which was named a finalist of the Columbia@Roundabout Theater 2021 New Play Reading Festival), *D’Carnaval*, *The Commission*, *On The 1 Train*, *Bo+Li* and *Macbéf*. She also holds a B.A. in Creative Writing from CCNY, where she won the Jacob Weiser Playwriting Award for her one-act *On The 1 Train*.

**RIKA IINO** (Executive Producer) oversees a trio of Sozo companies: Sozo Artists, a dynamic roster of artists in dance, music, spoken word, new media and film focused on innovation and social justice; Sozo Impact, a non-profit organization dedicated to incubating work by BIPOC artists and producers; and Sozo Vision, a consultancy which partners with institutions to design social impact-facing programs and strategies. Rika’s work as producer/manager spans two decades and hundreds of live and digital projects with artists and organizations globally. Rika plays an active role in arts advocacy and leadership development across the industry including work with Creative & Independent Producer Alliance, Association for Performing Arts Professionals and International Society for the Performing Arts. She is the first woman of color to receive the Patrick Hayes Award for transformative leadership in the arts.

Born into a multicultural family, **CHISA YAMAGUCHI** (Production Manager, Line Producer) simultaneously celebrates her passion for tradition and innovation. Her desire to discover, collaborate and deepen her connection with people, place and planet has taken her to six continents whether embarking on community service projects, undertaking family pilgrimages or gracing historic stages and theaters as a professional dancer for over a decade. Driven by intuitive nurturing and a zealous need to contribute joy to the world, she avidly advocates for interdisciplinary art and collaborative practices as means to dissolve perceived barriers to open emotional and physical pathways to truth, justice and love. Fervently on a mission to align her personal power with her professional values, Chisa brings her caring presence, grounded discipline and deep listening to everything she undertakes and creates; she most recently celebrated her stage directorial debut with Lincoln Center’s 2021 Restart Stages Series and continues her role as Creative Producer on several location-aware app experiences across the U.S. in partnership with Sozo artist The Holladay Brothers. Mindful to balance her psyche with fire and nectar, she nourishes herself with yoga, sending hand-written letters, burpees and never turns down a glass of bubbles.

# COMING UP

## **AWADAGIN PRATT, PIANO**

SUN, APR 2 • 3PM

Awarding-winning pianist Awadagin Pratt is acclaimed for his musical insight and intensely involving performances. This recital includes selections from Philip Glass' *Glassworks*, Couperin's *Les Baricades Mystérieuses*, Rachmaninoff's Prelude in D major, Chopin's Nocturne in B major and more.

## **BRENTANO QUARTET**

THU, APR 13 • 8PM

Hailed as "brilliant, virtuosic, and still mellow" (Los Angeles Times), the dynamos of the Brentano Quartet treat masterpieces with reverence and enthusiasm, rendering performances with equal passion and precision.

## **JAZZ JAM AT THE HALL CP**

WED, APR 26 • 7:30PM

Welcome the warm weather with this new monthly jazz jam session led by D.C.-based saxophonist Elijah Balbed! The house band will play a set starting at 7:30PM. Bring your instrument—after enjoying their set, you'll have a chance to call a tune!

## **MARYLAND DAY**

SAT, APR 29 • 10AM-4PM

Explore the creativity of Terps and the local community on Maryland Day! This annual campus-wide open house features artistic and creative performances, experiences and activities at The Clarice, and across the University of Maryland campus. Bring your family and your friends for a day of fun and frolic!

## **RUBBERBAND: EVER SO SLIGHTLY**

THU, MAY 4 • 8PM

In *Ever So Slightly*, 10 dancer-athletes explore the behavioral mechanisms we develop against the flow of irritants that bombard us in daily life.

## **TESLA QUARTET**

SUN, MAY 7 • 3PM

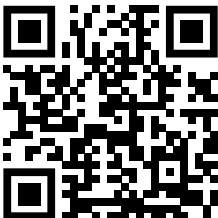
Praised for their "superb capacity to find the inner heart of everything they play, regardless of era, style, or technical demand" (The International Review of Music), the Tesla Quartet brings refinement and prowess to both new and established repertoire.

## **NATIONAL ORCHESTRAL INSTITUTE + FESTIVAL**

JUNE 3–JULY 1

*Tickets Go On Sale In April*

More than 100 of America's best young musicians share awe-inspiring performances of works by today's leading voices and bring a fresh perspective to orchestral classics.



Scan to view the full 2022–23 Season at the Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center and to buy tickets to upcoming events

ALL TICKETS ARE PAY WHAT YOU WISH WITH A \$5 MINIMUM. AS ALWAYS, UMD STUDENT TICKETS ARE FREE!