

"an unstoppable force"
(Praise for Paola Prestini)

- THE WASHINGTON POST



IN DEVELOPMENT

THE OLD MAN AND THE SEA



COMPOSER

PAOLA
PRESTINI

LIBRETTIST

ROYCE
VAVREK

DIRECTOR

KARMINA
ŠILEC

CO-PRODUCER

VISIONINTOART

CREATIVE TEAM

CELLIST

JEFFREY
ZEIGLER

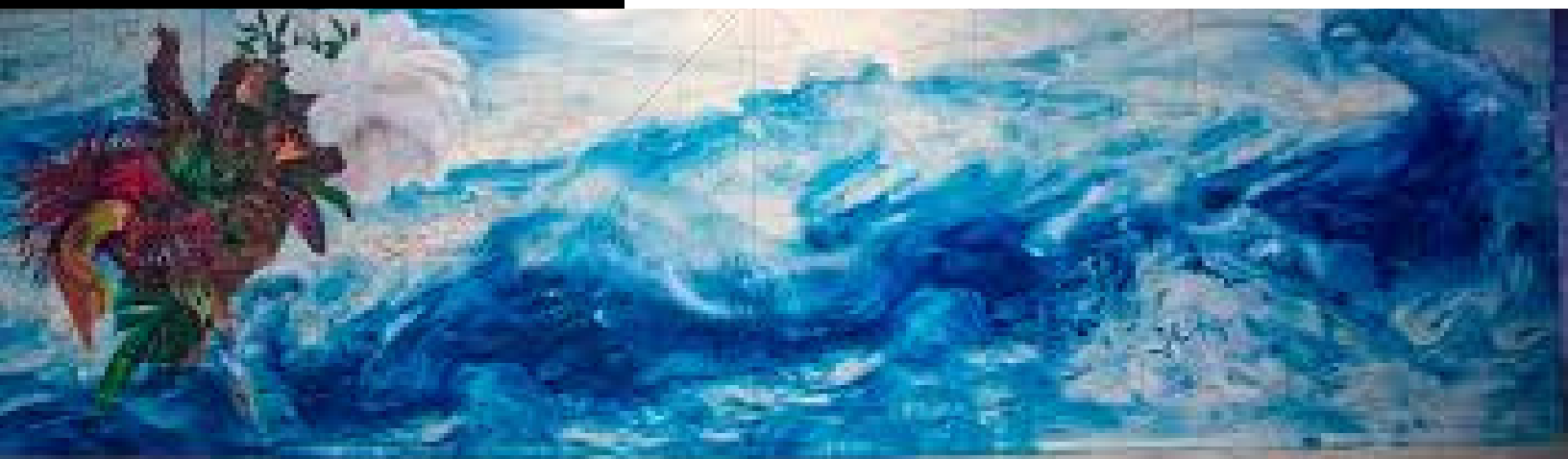
A B O U T

The Old Man and the Sea is an opera by Paola Prestini, Royce Vavrek and Karmina Šilec that presents a dual track of storytelling by combining the Hemmingway with original portraits of quotidian life to create a look at aging, legacy and our relationship to oceans. The work includes longtime collaborators/muses of prestini's including Helga Davis as the narrator and Jeffrey Zeigler as the featured cellist. The cast includes a choir, and brings to life the seminal characters: Santiago, Manolin, and the wife, recast as the Virgen del Cobre, a goddess in Santería, the Afro-Caribbean faith, who was found floating on a wooden board off the coast of eastern Cuba in 1628. Themes of baseball, ecology, religion, and economy paint a conflict between progress and tradition, craft passion and exploitation, ultimately shedding contemporary perspectives on this timeless tale.

"An exemplary creator of operatic prose."

(Praise for Royce Vavrek)

- THE NEW YORK TIMES



MEET THE TEAM



Through an illustrious career being equal parts creator and connector, composer Paola Prestini is known both for her “otherworldly...outright gorgeous” music (The New York Times), as well as the “visionary-in-chief” (Time Out New York) and Co-Founder/Artistic Director of the non-profit music organization National Sawdust. As the Wall Street Journal says, many recognize Prestini for “pushing the boundaries of classical music through collaborations.” Composer Paola Prestini has collaborated with poets, filmmakers, and scientists in large-scale multimedia works that chart her interest in extra-musical themes ranging from the cosmos to the environment. Her compositions have been commissioned and performed at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, Barbican Centre, Cannes Film Festival, Carnegie Hall, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, The Kennedy Center, Los Angeles Philharmonic, and the Los Angeles Opera, among others. She created the largest communal VR work with The Hubble Cantata, and was part of the New York Philharmonic’s legendary Project 19 initiative in a project with Maria Popova, and has written and produced large scale projects like the eco-documentary The Colorado narrated by Mark Rylance (premiered and commissioned by the Metropolitan Museum of Art and Houston Da Camera Series) and the lauded opera theater work Aging Magician (premiered and commissioned by the Walker Arts Center and the Krannert Center, with performances at ASU, the New Victory Theater and San Diego Opera). Prestini is known for her genre- and glass ceiling-breaking roles, including being the first woman in the New Works Initiative with her grand opera Edward Tulane (Minnesota Opera), and bringing artificial intelligence and disability visibility/impact together in the chamber opera Sensorium Ex (Atlanta Opera and Beth Morrison Projects for the Prototype Festival).



Royce Vavrek is a Canada-born, Brooklyn-based librettist and lyricist who has been called “the indie Hofmannsthal” (The New Yorker) a “Metastasio of the downtown opera scene” (The Washington Post), “an exemplary creator of operatic prose” (The New York Times), and “one of the most celebrated and sought after librettists in the world” (CBC Radio). His opera “Angel’s Bone” with composer Du Yun was awarded the 2017 Pulitzer Prize for Music. Royce has worked extensively with composer Paola Prestini, first on the song cycle “Yoani,” inspired by the blog posts of Yoani Sanchez, and then on “The Hubble Cantata,” a virtual reality oratorio produced by VisionIntoArt/National Sawdust in association with Beth Morrison Projects. They recently presented the workshop premiere of “Silent Light,” an opera based on the Cannes Jury Prize-winning film by Carlos Reygadas at the Banff Centre for Creativity, a collaboration with the director Thaddeus Strassberger, and are currently working on a new opera inspired by Ernest Hemingway’s “The Old Man and the Sea.” They are also developing “Film Stills,” a project for mezzo-soprano Eve Gigliotti that dramatizes four of Cindy Sherman’s iconic photographs. With composer Missy Mazzoli he wrote “Song from the Uproar,” premiered by Beth Morrison Projects in 2012, and subsequently seen in multiple presentations around the country. Their second opera, an adaptation of Lars von Trier’s “Breaking the Waves,” premiered at Opera Philadelphia, co-commissioned by Beth Morrison Projects, and directed by James Darrah to critical acclaim in September of 2016. The work won the 2017 Music Critics Association of North America award for Best New Opera and was nominated for Best World Premiere at the 2017 International Opera Awards. Their next opera, an adaptation of Karen Russell’s short story “Proving Up,” was commissioned and presented by Washington National Opera, Opera Omaha and The Miller Theatre in 2018, was a finalist for the MCANA Best New Opera Award of that year. They are currently developing a grand opera for Opera Philadelphia as well as an adaptation of George Saunders’ Booker Prize-winning novel “Lincoln in the Bardo” for The Metropolitan Opera. Royce is co-Artistic Director of The Coterie, an opera-theater company founded with Tony nominee Lauren Worsham. He holds a BFA in Filmmaking and Creative Writing from Concordia University’s Mel Hoppenheim School of Cinema in Montreal and an MFA from the Graduate Musical Theater Writing Program at New York University. He is an alum of American Lyric Theater’s Composer Librettist Development Program.
www.roycevavrek.com

MEET THE TEAM



Karmina Šilec has brought freshness and originality to the world of music and theatre. As a theatre director, conductor and composer she has projects with various companies: drama and opera houses, festivals and ensembles worldwide. She has developed the artistic concept Choregie theatre driven by music, which focuses on the creation process that brings the musical notion of composing to the theatrical aspects of performing and staging. Her projects are provocative, daring; her ideas break taboos, those of the society as well as of music. In a creative process Šilec is interested in the things that do not only have an unambiguous meaning. Different elements (movement, music, word, the visual) are merged into a »meta composition« and this the fusion gives various semantic directions. Her choregie projects are 'theatrical' but 'dramatic' comes from the way how materials are used and performed, and not through "acting" in a classical sense. With her boldness, provocativeness and erudition Karmina Šilec transformed various ensembles into superior artistic formations of the highest rank. Her productions have received many awards and have been performed at most prestigious festivals and stages worldwide, such as the Ruhrtriennale (DE), Festival d'Automne à Paris (FR), Holland Festival (NL), Moscow Easter Festival (RU), Dresdner Musikfestspiele (DE), Golden Mask (RU), Melbourne Festival (AU), Operadagen Rotterdam (NL), Teatro Colon (AR), Prototype Festival NYC (USA); and were broadcasted by the EBU and Eurovision. Karmina Šilec was awarded with highest prizes for her work: ITI - Music Theatre Now award, was nominated for the prestigious Europe Theatre Prize - New Theatrical Realities (EPTR), won the Golden Mask theatre award (together with Heiner Goebbels), Robert Edler award, Sterija award and more than 20 other highest international awards. In 2018-2019 she was a fellow at Harvard University/Radcliffe Institute for advanced studies. She is artistic director of world well-known vocal theatre Carmina Slovenica and of Newmusic theatre Choregie.



VisionIntoArt, "always intriguing and frequently beguiling", is a multimedia production company that "facilitates flamboyant, confounding and enticing collaborations" (New York Times). VIA creates and commissions works that involve various disciplines, presented around the world for the general audience, and forged from the most exciting emerging and established artists living today as well as interdisciplinary experts including scientists and conservationists. We are a one-stop-shop for artists in many disciplines - we incubate, produce, and disseminate. VIA works often bridge impact, community building and scientific inquiry, with the belief that collaboration sustains artistic innovation and promotes a healthier society. VIA's works range from the Hubble Cantata-the largest communal VR operatic event, to multiplatform works like The Colorado, now viewable on PBS. VIA productions have been seen at Lincoln Center, the Barbican Centre, HIFA in Zimbabwe, The Brooklyn Academy of Music, and the Kennedy Center, along with residencies at MASS MoCA and The Park Avenue Armory. They have also toured to colleges and universities in the US, and to international festivals such as Apertif in Concerto at Teatro Manzoni, Etna Fest in Italy, and BEMUS in Belgrade, Serbia.



PRODUCTION INFORMATION

Commissioned by ASU Gammage, UNC Carolina Performing Arts, Beth Morrison Projects, VisionIntoArt, Trinity Wall Street and Jill & Bill Steinberg. Co-Produced with VisionIntoArt. Developed with The Shed.



Beth Morrison Projects (BMP) is one of the foremost creators and producers of new opera-theatre and music theatre, with a fierce commitment to leading the industry into the future, cultivating a new generation of talent, and telling the stories of our time.

Founded by “contemporary opera mastermind” (LA Times) Beth Morrison, who was honored as one of Musical America’s Artists of the Year/Agents of Change in 2020, BMP has grown into “a driving force behind America’s thriving opera scene” (Financial Times), with Opera News declaring that the company, “more than any other... has helped propel the art form into the twenty-first century.”






Operating across the US and internationally, with offices in Brooklyn and Los Angeles, BMP’s unique model offers living composers the support, guidance, and freedom to experiment, allowing them to create singularly innovative and impactful projects. Since forming in 2006, the company has commissioned, developed, produced and toured over 50 works in 14 countries around the world, including the Pulitzer Prize-winning chamber operas *Angel’s Bone* and *p r i s m*.

In 2013, BMP co-founded the PROTOTYPE Festival with HERE Arts Center, which has been called “utterly essential” (The New York Times), “indispensable” (The New Yorker), and “one of the world’s top festivals of contemporary opera and theater” (Associated Press).

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