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[Press Room](#)



Images of *Triptych (Eyes of One on Another)* are available for download from the Cal Performances [press room](#).

CAL PERFORMANCES AT UC BERKELEY PRESENTS
TRIPTYCH (EYES OF ONE ON ANOTHER)
A MULTIDISCIPLINARY WORK INSPIRED BY
THE PHOTOGRAPHY OF ROBERT MAPPLETHORPE
WITH MUSIC BY BRYCE DESSNER,
PERFORMED BY ROOMFUL OF TEETH, GUEST SOLOISTS,
AND THE SAN FRANCISCO CONTEMPORARY MUSIC PLAYERS

A BAY AREA PREMIERE AND CAL PERFORMANCES CO-COMMISSION

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 28 IN ZELLERBACH HALL

A panel discussion about the art of Robert Mapplethorpe, featuring librettist korde arrington tuttle and UC Berkeley scholars and artists, will take place the afternoon of the performance

**Audience members are invited to participate in a Catharsis Café
post-performance discussion**

Berkeley, August 22, 2019 — Cal Performances at UC Berkeley presents *Triptych (Eyes of One on Another)*, a singular mix of music, words, images, and video that reflects on the impact and artistry of **Robert Mapplethorpe's** bold, provocative photography nearly 30 years after it instigated an now-infamous obscenity trial and controversy at the National Endowment for the Arts. The Cal Performances co-commission features a score composed by **Bryce Dessner**, who collaborates with librettist **korde arrington tuttle**, designer **Carlos Soto**, and director **Kaneza Schaal** to reconsider Mapplethorpe's work and legacy through a fusion of song, poetry, large-scale projected imagery, and theatrical staging. The music is performed by the Grammy-winning vocal ensemble **Roomful of Teeth**, joined by mezzo soprano **Alicia Hall Moran**, actor **Isaiah Robinson**, and the **San Francisco Contemporary Music Players**. The production has its Bay Area premiere in a single performance on Saturday, September 28 at 8pm in Zellerbach Hall. Please note: *Triptych* features sexually explicit images from the Robert Mapplethorpe collection that may be inappropriate for some audience members. Discretion is advised.

Cal Performances executive and artistic director Jeremy Geffen shared, "There are many ways to engage an audience. *Triptych* accomplishes this by approaching viewers from several directions at once—through Mapplethorpe's striking visuals, the immense musical gifts of Bryce Dessner and the talented performers and creators he has assembled, the artistry of poetry and the spoken word, and the boldness of a thrilling theatrical production. This important new piece reflects on an incident from the not-too-distant past, drawing attention to questions of censorship, identity, and the AIDS crisis. Most importantly, it also explores what these questions reveal about who we are, as a society, today. Cal Performances is proud to launch our season with such an important project, and even more proud to act as the production's co-commissioner."

Composer Bryce Dessner, known to many as a founding member of the American rock band The National, has been commissioned to compose orchestral, chamber, and vocal compositions by leading international organizations and groups including the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Ensemble InterContemporain, Kronos Quartet, eighth blackbird, Sō Percussion, New York City Ballet, the Metropolitan Museum of Art (for the New York Philharmonic), the Brooklyn Academy of Music's Next Wave Festival, London's Barbican Centre, the Edinburgh International Festival, and Carnegie Hall. Dessner's lifelong fascination with the transgressive beauty of Mapplethorpe's work began

when he was a teenager living in Cincinnati; exposure to the protests of the Mapplethorpe obscenity trial in 1990—the first time a museum was taken to court on criminal charges related to an exhibition—inspired a lifelong kinship to this galvanizing artist’s pivotal body of work.

Mapplethorpe’s photographs both unite and divide viewers, provoking a consideration of perceived opposites—black/white, male/female, gay/straight, art/pornography, classical/contemporary. His images still have the power to seduce, shock, offend, excite, intrigue, and frighten. While these works are usually experienced in relatively private settings—flipping through coffee table books or viewing the photographs in museum galleries—Dessner and his collaborators conceived *Triptych (Eyes of One on Another)* to explore how an audience might experience these reactions collectively. Through text, image, and sound, the new work invites the viewer to reflect on the intimate acts of looking and being looked at. The libretto draws on the generation-defining poetry of Mapplethorpe’s close companion, **Patti Smith**, as well as on the writings of **Essex Hemphill**, who chronicled the African-American gay community during the AIDS epidemic and directly addressed some of the contradictions at the core of Mapplethorpe’s work.

A panel discussion, *Eyes of Artists on the World: Hearing and Seeing Today Through Mapplethorpe’s Legacy*, will take place before the performance on Saturday, September 28 at 5pm in Durham Studio on the UC Berkeley campus. Librettist korde arrington tuttle will be joined by conceptual artist and UC Berkeley professor of photography Liz Linden, Stanford University professor and scholar of queer art and visual culture Richard Meyer, and musician and scholar of sound and meaning Serena Le for a panel discussion on making meaning from the marriage of new music, performance, and imagery, moderated by Cal Performances director of Artistic Literacy Sabrina Klein. Free and open to the public. Additionally, performance ticket holders are invited to participate in a Catharsis Café reception and discussion after the performance in the Zellerbach Hall Lobby Mezzanine.

This is one of only five performances of *Triptych (Eyes of One on Another)* this fall. The production appears at Stanford Live on Thursday, October 3.

Ticket Information

Tickets for *Triptych (Eyes of One on Another)* on Saturday, September 28 at 8pm in Zellerbach Hall range from \$30–68 (prices subject to change). Half-price tickets are available for UC Berkeley students. Tickets are available through the Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall, at (510) 642-9988, at calperformances.org, and at the door. For more information about discounts, go to calperformances.org/discounts.

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CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:

CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS

Saturday, September 28, 8pm

**Zellerbach Hall
Bancroft Way at Dana Street
UC Berkeley Campus**

Triptych (Eyes of One on Another) (Cal Performances Co-commission, Bay Area Premiere)

Composed by Bryce Dessner

Libretto by korde arrington tuttle, featuring words by Essex Hemphill and Patti Smith

Featuring Roomful of Teeth, special guests Alicia Hall Moran and Isaiah Robinson,

and the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players

Kaneza Schaal, *stage director*

Brad Wells, *music director and conductor*

Program: The classical symmetry and bold eroticism of Robert Mapplethorpe's photography meet sound and text in a hybrid experience that invites the viewer to reflect on the intimate acts of looking and being looked at. Composer Bryce Dessner collaborates with librettist korde arrington tuttle, designer Carlos Soto, and director Kaneza Schaal to revisit the photographer's oeuvre nearly 30 years after it instigated a now-infamous obscenity trial and controversy at the National Endowment for the Arts. Dessner's score is performed by the Grammy-winning vocal ensemble Roomful of Teeth, joined by Alicia Hall Moran and Isaiah Robinson, and the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players in this Bay Area premiere (a Cal Performances co-commission).

This production features sexually explicit images from the Robert Mapplethorpe collection that may be inappropriate for some audience members. Discretion is advised.

Tickets: \$30–68 (prices subject to change)

Residency Activities

Eyes of Artists on the World: Hearing and Seeing Today Through Mapplethorpe's Legacy

Saturday, September 28, 5pm

Durham Studio, Dwinelle Hall, UC Berkeley

Cal Performances director of artistic literacy Sabrina Klein will moderate a panel discussion on making meaning from the marriage of new music, performance, and imagery. Panelists include *Triptych* librettist korde arrington tuttle, conceptual artist and UC Berkeley professor of photography Liz Linden, Stanford University professor and scholar of queer art and visual culture Richard Meyer, and musician and scholar of sound and meaning Serena Le. Free and open to the public.

Catharsis Café

Saturday, September 28, immediately following the performance

Zellerbach Hall Lobby Mezzanine

Performance ticket holders are invited to a post-performance reception and discussion with fellow audience members.

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