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Tith the fast-approaching end of Fall Semester—and as we move towards the holidays—things are unusually busy on the UC Berkeley campus. The same can be said about Cal Performances, where—this weekend alone—we'll enjoy visits by an array of world-class talent: the Bay Area's beloved Kronos Quartet with special guest, Persian classical and world music vocalist and composer Mahsa Vahdat (Dec 2); musical polymath Damien Sneed with his delightful *Joy to the World: A Christmas Musical Journey* program (Dec 3); riveting performer of the 16-string đàn tranh (zither) Vân-Ánh Võ and her acclaimed Blood Moon Orchestra in an exciting world premiere (Dec 4); and two of the brightest lights of their generation—choreographer/dancer Caleb Teicher (and their

amazing dance company) and pianist **Conrad Tao** in the Bay Area premiere of *More Forever*, a fresh, new music and dance collaboration. I'm so happy you could join us during what promises to be a memorable weekend; it's wonderful that we can gather together again, enjoying great live performances under the same roof!

This robust activity is especially meaningful this year, following such a prolonged period of shutdown! When the pandemic forced Cal Performances to close its doors in March 2020, no one could have imagined what lay ahead. Since then, we've witnessed a worldwide health crisis unlike any experienced during our lifetimes, an extended period of political turmoil, recurring incidents of civil unrest and racially motivated violence, and a consciousness-raising human rights movement that has forever—and significantly—changed how each of us views social justice in our time.

Of course, the pandemic remains with us to this date and future challenges—including many adjustments to "normal" procedures and policies—can certainly be expected. I encourage you to check Cal Performances' website regularly for the most current information regarding our COVID-19 response. First and foremost, I assure you that there is nothing more important to us than the health and safety of our audience, artists, and staff. (And I remind one and all that proof of vaccination is mandatory today, as is protective masking throughout the event.)

Our season continues later this month with an exciting return concert by jazz phenom Jazzmeia Horn, a hit on last year's *Cal Performances at Home* streaming season (Dec 10); the ever-popular Canadian Brass with its festive *Making Spirits Bright for 50 Years and Counting!* holiday program (Dec 11); and the long-awaited return to Zellerbach Hall (the group's favorite home-away-from home) by the great Mark Morris Dance Group (Dec 17–19). And our full 2021–22 calendar offers even more, packed with the kind of adventurous and ambitious programming you've come to expect from Cal Performances. In particular, I want to direct your attention to this year's *Illuminations:* "Place and Displacement" programming, through which we'll explore both loss and renewal, disempowerment and hope, while seeking paths forward for reclaiming and celebrating vital cultural connections that can fall victim to political and social upheaval.

Please take the opportunity to explore the complete schedule through our website and season brochure and begin planning your performance calendar; now is the perfect time to guarantee that you have the best seats for all the events you plan to attend.

Throughout history, the performing arts have survived incredible challenges: periods of war, economic collapse, and, yes, terrible disease. And if it will take time for us—collectively and individually—to process the events of the past 18 months, I'm certain that the arts have the power

continued on p. 27





Saturday, December 4, 2021, 8pm Zellerbach Playhouse

# Vân-Ánh Võ and the Blood Moon Orchestra Songs of Strength

(World Premiere)

Kev Choice, lyrics and rap
Joel Davel, marimba lumina
Kai Echkardt, electric bass
Tunjie, breakdance and contemporary ballet
Jimi Nakagawa, percussions and taiko drums

Vân-Ánh Vanessa Võ, orchestra lead, zither, monochord, bamboo xylophone, lyrics, and vocals

Mahsa Vahdat, lyrics and vocals

This performance is made possible, in part, by Patron Sponsors Jerome and Thao Dodson.



# Songs of Strength

## Music and Concept by Vân-Ánh Vanessa Võ

Songs of Strength highlights the animacy, creative vigor, and relevance of traditional music in the modern world. A Blood Moon Orchestra production, this collection brings into alignment various musical traditions and performance arts to emphasize the generative power of cross-genre and cross-culture collaborations.

Songs of Strength radically reimagines the past and offers a new vision for traditional music-making in a deeply interconnected world.

### - The Songs -

### How About Us\*

Composed by Vân-Ánh Vanessa Võ Arranged by Vân-Ánh Vanessa Võ and Blood Moon Orchestra

### Lullaby

Poem by Atabak Elyasi Music and vocals by Mahsa Vahdat, based on *Bakhtiari Gooshe in Homayoun* Arranged by Blood Moon Orchestra

### Born To Rise\*

Composed by Vân-Ánh Vanessa Võ English lyrics by Kev Choice Vietnamese lyrics by Vân-Ánh Vanessa Võ Arranged by Blood Moon Orchestra

The Five Nuances of Emotion (*Luyện Năm Cung*)† Northern Vietnamese traditional folk composition (*Chèo*) Arranged by Vân-Ánh Vanessa Võ

### Fire\*

Poems by Hồ Xuân Hương Composed and arranged by Vân-Ánh Vanessa Võ



### Don't Leave Me\*

Poem by Rumi Music and vocals by Mahsa Vahdat Arranged by Vân-Ánh Vanessa Võ

### My Endless Treasure\*

Poem by Rumi Music and vocals by Mahsa Vahdat Arranged by Nguyen Le

### Gnossiennes No. 3 and "Purple Haze" Mash-up†

Gnossiennes No. 3 by Erik Santi "Purple Haze" by Jimi Hendrix Arranged by Blood Moon Orchestra

### 86,400\*

Lyrics by Kev Choice and Vân-Ánh Vanessa Võ Composed by Vân-Ánh Vanessa Võ Arranged by Vân-Ánh Vanessa Võ and Blood Moon Orchestra

## On Sharing A Husband (Kiếp Chồng Chung)\*

Poem by Hồ Xuân Hương Composed by Vân-Ánh Vanessa Võ Arranged by Vân-Ánh Vanessa Võ and Blood Moon Orchestra

### The Trouble (Xẩm Lưu Lạc)

Northern Vietnamese Traditional Folk Song (*Xẩm*) Composed by Vân-Ánh Vanessa Võ Arranged by Vân-Ánh Vanessa Võ and Blood Moon Orchestra

\*Written for Blood Moon Orchestra

† Arranged for Blood Moon Orchestra

Songs of Strength was made possible, in part, by grants from the MAP Fund, Center for Cultural Innovation, Zellerbach Family Foundation, and the Creative Work Fund, a program of the Walter and Elise Haas Fund also supported by the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation.

Please note: This performance will employ the use of strobe lights and a fog machine, and empty and harmless artillery shells will be used as gongs.





calperformances.org/illuminations

Illuminations

the Great Migration of six million Black Americans from the rural South to northern cities and beyond.

Feb 17

ZELLERBACH HALL

VÂN-ÁNH VANESSA VÕ is an award-winning composer and one of today's most celebrated performers of Vietnamese traditional instruments. In addition to the đàn tranh (zither), Vân-Ánh performs as soloist on the đàn bầu (monochord), the đàn trung (bamboo xylophone), and trống (traditional drums). She dedicates her life to combining the traditional music of Vietnam with other genres, creating fresh, new compositions.

Since settling in the San Francisco Bay Area in 2001, Vân-Ánh has focused on bringing Vietnamese traditional music to a wider audience and preserving her cultural legacy through innovation, collaboration, and teaching. Her albums, which include *Twelve Months*, *Four Seasons* (2002), *She's Not She* (2009), and *Three-Mountain Pass* (2013) have garnered praise from NPR, the BBC "The World," the *Los Angeles Times*, and others.

Vân-Ánh has collaborated with artists including the Kronos Quartet, Yo-Yo Ma, Alonzo King LINES Ballet, Apollo Chamber Players, and the Oakland Symphony. Additionally, she has composed and arranged for the Academy Award-nominated and Sundance Grand Jury Prize winner for Best Documentary, *Daughter from Danang* (2002); the Emmy Award-winning soundtrack for *Bolinao* 52 (2008); and the winner of multiple Best Documentary and Audience Favorite awards, *A Village Called Versailles* (2009).

She has performed at venues such as Carnegie Hall, Kennedy Center, Lincoln Center, NPR, and the Yerba Buena Performing Arts Center, and has participated as a screening judge in the world music category for the 2015, 2016, and 2018 Grammy Awards. During the = Obama administration, Vân-Ánh became the first Vietnamese artist to perform at the White House receiving the Artist Laureate Award for her contribution to communities through the arts.

Vân-Ánh has received numerous awards for her projects from foundations such as the Hewlett 50 Arts Commission, California Arts Council, Alliance for California Traditional Arts, City of San Jose, and the Zellerbach Family Foundation. Officially launched in August 2021, BLOOD MOON ORCHESTRA is a global musical collective whose mission is to advance traditional music through innovation, cross-genre collaboration, and social impact education. By relentlessly charting new pathways for artistic expressions, Blood Moon Orchestra aims to make unequivocal the role of traditional music in forging radical possibilities for the future. Blood Moon Orchestra seeks not only to preserve but also to propel traditional arts into the 21st century and beyond, and in doing so, create a vision for and commitment to a more expressive, connected, and socially just world.

KEV CHOICE is a rap artist, MC, pianist, producer, composer, educator, and activist hailing from Oakland. He began studying piano, rapping, and producing music at age 11 and went on to earn degrees in piano performance from Xavier University of Louisiana (bachelor's degree) and Southern Illinois University (master's).

Kev has worked with artists including Michael Franti, Goapele, Too Short, The Coup, Zion I, and Souls of Mischief. He served as music director for Grammy Award-winning Lauryn Hill in 2007. In 2010, he began to focus on his Kev Choice Ensemble, whose original material combines hip-hop, jazz, soul, funk, and classical. Choice's albums include Social Distancing (2020), Oakland Riviera (2014), Love and Revolution (2015), 88 Steps to Eternity (2016), and collaboration projects The Lush and Luxurious Vibes (2020) and SEEDS 22 (2021).

In 2018, he composed *Soul Restoration Suite* for the Oakland Symphony under the direction of conductor Michael Morgan. For a 2020 collaboration with the San Francisco Symphony, he wrote and composed *Movements*, which combined elements of hip-hop and classical musiic with socially conscious lyrics.

Choice is on the faculty at Oakland School for the Arts, serves on Oakland's Cultural Affairs Commission, and is board vice-president of the Recording Academy's SF Chapter.

JOEL DAVEL's diverse career ranges from traditional folk and classical to highly experimental and electronic. He is best known for his



collaborative efforts with composer Paul Dresher, performing in duos and with the Electro-Acoustic Band. Often working in the worlds of dance, opera, and theater, Davel is music director for dNaga Dance Company. He collaborated with electronic music pioneer Don Buchla for 20 years, and the resultant marimba lumina has become Davel's signature instrument. Davel holds a bachelor's degree in music from Northern Illinois University and a master's from Mills College.

KAI ECKHARDT is an Afro-European musician who has made a significant contribution to the evolution of the electric bass since 1989. Heavily influenced by the emerging fusion of funk, rock, and jazz in the late 1970's, Kai developed a unique style on his instrument long before attending Berklee College of Music in Boston, the renowned music college from which he graduated with honors in 1987. Kai Eckhardt has performed at such distinguished international venues as the Royal Festival Hall in London, the Philharmonic in Munich, and the Esplanade in Singapore. Festival engagements include the Montreal Jazz Festival, North Sea Jazz Festival in the Hague, Womad World Music Festival in Spain, and Glastonbury in the UK. Kai has also performed for the King and Queen of Norway. In the educational field, Kai teaches clinics and master classes internationally. Engagements include Berklee in Boston, the Musician's Institute in Hollywood, the Bruckner Conservatory in Austria and Amsterdam Conservatory in the Netherlands. Perhaps the most unique band in Kai's career was the pioneering jam-band Garaj Mahal, which he colead between 2000 and 2010, producing nine albums and performing roughly 1,000 concerts in the US and Canada.

TUNJIE (BABATUNJIE JOHNSON) was born in Portland, Oregon and grew up on the Big Island of Hawaii. Though never formally trained as a child, Babatunjie was always moving his body to the beat. At age 15, he discovered the art of hip hop. Following more than a decade of self-taught street performance, he has developed a unique approach to various styles

of hip hop, including breakdance, popping, and krump. While cultivating his own movement language, Babatunjie simultaneously trained in ballet, modern, and contemporary dance, going on to work and perform around the world with Alonzo King LINES Ballet for six years and with other inspiring companies. In 2015, Babatunjie was awarded a Princess Grace Award as well as a Chris Hellman Award for his outstanding achievements and promise in the world of dance.

JIMI NAKAGAWA hails from Tokyo, Japan. He started playing drums when he was in high school and performed with local bands before coming to the US in 1981. In 1987, Jimi joined the San Francisco Taiko Dojo, directed by Grand Master Seiichi Tanaka, and became a performing member and instructor to adults and children. He has studied taiko with Sukeroku Daiko Hozonkai and Master Kenjiro Maru, tsuzumi (a Japanese hand drum) with Master Saburo Mochizuki, and jazz with drummer Robert Kaufman, a former professor at the Berkelee College of Music. In 1999, he and three other members founded a San Francisco Bay Area-based taiko group Somei Yoshino Taiko Ensemble and started the Oakland taiko school OH-IN TAIKO. Nakagawa left the ensemble in 2011 to pursue his solo career and expand his taiko school. Jimi has collaborated with artists including Peter Erskine, Habib Kahn, Ali Ryerson, and Charles Loos. He has also been a part of the VA'V Ensemble, working with Van-Anh Vo since 2002.

MAHSA VAHDAT is a prominent performer of Persian vocal music and a strong advocate of freedom of expression in music, a dedicated singer and musician in her musical path and artistic cause. Her career has communicated deeper knowledge about Iranian poetry and music to large audiences in Europe, America, Asia, Oceania, and Africa.

Mahsa has developed her personal style based on the Persian vocal tradition of classical and regional folk music, but conveyed with a contemporary expression. She has always searched for ways to make her music relevant to the present world. Even if the origin of her styles is Iranian, she believes in her music's ability to express a universal message of humanism and freedom. Her collaborations with musicians from Iran and many other parts of the world have contributed to the development of her personal expression.

Since 2007, Mahsa has been one of the ambassadors of Freemuse Organization, an independent international organization that advocates freedom of expression for musicians and composers worldwide. A recipient of the 2010 Freemuse Award, she has developed a long and intense pedagogical experience in teaching classical Persian singing to Iranian and non-Iranian students and led many projects with her students as a mentor.

### PRODUCTION TEAM

Allen Willner, *lighting design*Jesse Austin, *sound design*Pamela Wu, *creative consultant*Vân-Ánh Vanessa Võ, *artistic director* 

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS FROM VÂN-ÁNH VANESSA VÕ

I wish to express my deepest thanks to my husband, Steven Huỳnh, and my two daughters, Nicole Huỳnh and Andrea Huỳnh, for their unconditional love and support. My extended gratitude to Mr. and Mrs. Jerome and Thao Dodson, Dr. Alexander Cannon, the Kochan Family, Ms. Thiên-Nhiên Lương, Ms. Cathy Lâm, Mr. Mike Kane, Ms. Linh Huynh Howard, and Ms. Hăng Lê Tô for their sponsorship, encouragement, and guidance over the years.

Special acknowledgement for the Blood Moon Orchestra Board of Directors: Thuận Lê and Geoff Adam, Irene Nguyễn and Ron Lue-sang, Khuyên Vũ Nguyễn, and Ashley Walker.

Ashley Walker and Khuyên Vũ Nguyễn deserve kudos for their incredible work on the program book.

Warmest appreciation for my fellow artists and collaborators on this project: Kev Choice, Joel Davel, Kai Echkardt, Jimi Nakagawa, Tunjie, and Mahsa Vahdat.

This project could not have come to fruition with the generous support of the following organizations:

Vietnamese American Non-Governmental Network (VANGO) Âu Cơ Vietnamese Cultural Center Vietnamese Educational and Cultural Association (VECA) Việt Báo Daily News

Finally, many thanks to the entire staff of Cal Performances and our sponsors, supporters, and volunteers for making this project possible.

# لالايي

شعر: اتابک الیاسی ملودی: مهسا وحدت (با لاهام از گوشه بختیاری در همایون)

> لالا لا لا گل تنهای لاله گل خسته که آه و داغ داره پرستو رفته تا آفتاب بیاره که در دشت امید ما بکاره

لالا لا لا گل بی تاب خانه بخوان با ما که دلها درد داره قناری رفته تا شادی بیاره درون دشت غم هامان بکاره

### NOTES ON THE SONGS

### How About Us

Composed by Vân-Ánh Vanessa Võ Arranged by Vân-Ánh Vanessa Võ and Blood Moon Orchestra

Inspired by Amanda Gorman's poem "The Hill We Climb" and the idiom "If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together." In addition to Covid-19, we have been living another pernicious pandemic known as racism and bigotry. This pandemic has been spreading like wildfire in our communities and homes in recent years. This song is my plea for us to embrace our differences and to come together as a beloved community. Let our humanity, our creativity, and our passions take us into the future.

### Lullaby

Poem by Atabak Elyasi Translated by Mahsa Vahdat Music and vocals by Mahsa Vahdat, based on Bakhtiari Gooshe in Homayoun Arranged by Blood Moon Orchestra

### La la la la

The lonely tulip flower The flower with sigh and burn Swallow went to bring the Sun to plant in our fields of Hope

### La la la la

Restless flower of the home Sing with us, our hearts are filled with pain The lark went to bring joy to plant in the our sorrowful fields

.

WAYNE SHORTER & ESPERANZA SPALDING'S

# ...(Iphigenia)

West Coast Premiere
A Cal Performances Co-commission

Wayne Shorter, composer esperanza spalding, librettist and performer Lileana Blain-Cruz, director Clark Rundell, conductor Members of the Wayne Shorter Quartet

Frank Gehry, set designer Montana Levi-Banco, costume designer Jen Schreiver, lighting designer Mark Grey, sound designer

A living legend of jazz collaborates with one of the brightest lights of the younger generation in this new work that reimagines what opera can be, and asks us to reexamine the stories we have inherited and the choices we make as a society.

...(Iphigenia) is co-commissioned by Cal Performances; The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts; The Broad Stage, Santa Monica, CA; ArtsEmerson Boston, MA; Carolina Performing Arts; and Mass MoCA.

Produced by Real Magic, Cath Brittan, and Octopus Theatricals

Feb 12
ZELLERBACH HALL

### Born to Rise

Composed by Vân-Ánh Vanessa Võ English lyrics by Kev Choice Vietnamese lyrics by Vân-Ánh Vanessa Võ Arranged by Blood Moon Orchestra

Inspired by Maya Angelou's poem "Caged Bird," Kev Choice and I co-composed "Born To Rise" to celebrate the strength and resilience of people of color in the face of systemic violence and historical oppression. Like our musical collaboration, I believe there is much to be gained in coming together to face our struggles.

I was born to fly I was born to rise Even through all this oppression still dignified expressions of culture I amplify Like words of our ancestors prophesized Eyes on the prize as I look to the sky And know even through tragedies I can defy laws of gravity Soar above negative energy, poverty, violence, Police brutality, In my community, I am light, Strength in our spirit Despite all our plights Stand up for rights Demand equality Extend a hand to uplift our society They can not lock me down They can not hold me down This is a new day and age You'd be amazed The beauty, the love, from sounds of a soul of bird, even locked in a cage

No limitations, No hesitations
Living my dreams
My self esteem
Make me feel I have wings
Anything's possible
Jump over obstacles
Touch constellations
I am part of a flock that has endured generations
Solid as rock my foundation
My inspiration
How I maintain
Nothing to lose
So much to gain

My minds in the clouds

I remove every doubt
and take route with the wind
And forget all my pain
Living on land that's been occupied
Colonized, genocide, homicide, slavery
modernized
They can't lock me down
They can't hold me down
This a new day and age
You'd be amazed
The beauty, the love, from the soul of a bird,

Where is my freedom they never will answer It can't be defined by the terms of oppressors Whose privilege allows them to abuse their power

even locked in a cage

And leave it to them we will never move forward But i'm free in these melodies, harmonies, rhythms

And I use em to tear down the system
We come together we prosper
These are my prayers at the altar
Fears I will overcome
Tears from my sorrows
Cleanse the hopes of tomorrow
I will transcend all the clouds that still hover
Nothing can hinder expression connected to
presence
From which is our essence

wings get spreaded
They can not lock me down
They can't hold me down
This is a new day and age you'd be amazed
The beauty, the love from the sound of a bird
even locked in a cage

Một con chim bay theo gió nhẹ trong nắng vàng Sải đôi cánh dài lượn cùng với gió và mây Ở nơi cuối sông nhúng đôi cánh trong nước nguồn

Thoải mái vẫy vùng dưới bầu trời tự do khát khao và hy vọng!

Ở bên kia sông có chú chim bị giam cầm Những thanh sắt nhỏ kìm kẹp đôi cánh tìm tự do Dù đôi cánh kia đã bị chặt và trói buộc Làm sao dừng được lời hát của sự khát khao và hy vọng! Tôi sẽ là gió, tôi sẽ là Mây Bay đi bay đi tới khung trời mơ ước Tôi sẽ là cánh chim, cánh chim Bay đưới bầu trời tự do!

Chim trong lồng hót Chim trong lồng ca Và vẫn mỏi-í mong, Ngong-óng trông Trông về, một ngày tự do.

Tôi sẽ là gió, tôi sẽ là Mây Bay đi bay di tới khung trời mơ ước Tôi sẽ là cánh chim, cánh chim Bay dưới bầu trời tự do!

The Five Nuances of Emotion (Luyện Năm Cung) Northern Vietnamese traditional folk composition (Chèo) Arranged by Vân-Ánh Vanessa Võ

### Fire

Poems by Hồ Xuân Hương Translated by John Balaban Composed & arranged by Vân-Ánh Vanessa Võ

During the early months of the pandemic, like many others I felt frozen by sadness, confusion, and uncertainty about the future. Composing this piece for San Jose Jazz gave me the much needed energy to keep on going. When "Fire" was selected for the SJZ New Work Fest, I decided to invite more artists to perform the piece with me. Since creating it filled me with so much joy and optimism, I wanted to share that with others. I hope the fire of creativity and community will light the way for a brighter future.

### Vinh Hang Cắc Cớ

Trời đất sinh ra đá một chòm Nứt làm hai mảnh hỏm hòm hom Kẽ hầm rêu mọc trơ toen miệng Luồng gió thông reo vỗ phậm phòm

Giọt nước hữu tình rơi lòm bõm Con đường vô ngạn tối om om Khen ai đẽo đá tài xuyên tạc Khéo hở hang ra lắm kẻ nhòm

### Viewing Cac-Co Caven

Heaven and earth brought forth this rocky mass

Its face cut by a deep crevasse Crack's dark mouth shagged with moss Pines rocking in wind rush

Here sweet water spatters down And the path into the cleft is dark Praise whoever sculpted stone The left it base for all to see

### Chế Sư

Chẳng phải Ngô mà chẳng phải ta Đầu thì trọc lóc áo không tà Oản dâng trước mặt năm ba phẩm Vãi nấp sau lưng sáu bẩy bà

Khi cảnh, khi tiu, khi chũm choẹ Giọng HÌ, giọng HỈ, giọng HI HA Tu lâu có lẽ lên sư cụ Ngất nghều toà sen nọ đó mà.

### Mocking A Monk

Not a Chinese, nor really one of us With his shaved head, robe without flaps Cakes are placed before him, four or five kind Behind him, nuns hover, six or seven

Sometimes he strikes a cymbal, sometime a bell or gong

Chanting hee, chanting haw, chanting hee – haw – ho

Perfecting that, maybe he'll be a Venerable Perched high up there on the Lotus Seat of Buddhas

. . .

Cal Performances

# تو مرو

ملودی: مهسا وحدت شعر: مولوی

گر رود دیده و عقل و خرد و جان تو مرو

که مرا دیدن تو بهتر از ایشان تو مرو

تو مرو گر بروی جان مرا با خود بر

گر مرامی نبری با خود از این خوان تو مرو

با تو هر جزو جهان باغچه و بستان است

در خزان گر برود رونق بستان تو مرو

هجر خویشم منما هجر تو بس سنگدل است

ای شده لعل زتو سنگ بدخشان تو مرو

ای شده لعل زتو سنگ بدخشان تو مرو

## Don't Leave Me

Poem by Rumi Translated by Mahsa Vahdat and Erik Hillestad

Music and vocals by Mahsa Vahdat

Arranged by Vân-Ánh Vanessa Võ

If my vision, wisdom and reason disappear, don't leave me I value your presence more than

all of them, don't leave me

Don't leave! If you do, bring my

heart with you Bring me along when you depart from this gathering, don't leave me

Your presence turns the world into a rose garden In the winter, when the blossom decays, don't leave me

Don't leave! Your farewell is so stone hearted You turned the Badakhshan stone into ruby, don't leave me

The letter of my heart has the length of eternity
From the beginning to the end it spells: "don't leave me."

• • •



# گنج روان

شعر: مولوی ملودی: مهسا وحدت

تو مرا جان و جهانی چه کنم جان و جهان را
تو مرا گنج روانی چه کنم سود و زیان را
ز وصال تو خمارم سر مخلوق ندارم
چو تو را صید و شکارم چه کنم تیر و کمان را
چه خوشی عشق چه مستی چو قدح بر کف دستی
خنک اَنجا که نشستی خنک اَن دیده جان را
ز تو هر ذره جهانی ز تو هر قطره چو جانی
چو ز تو یافت نشانی چه کند نام و نشان را
ز شعاع مه تابان ز خم طره پیچان
دل من شد سبک ای جان بده اَن رطل گران را

"Don't Leave Me" and "My Endless Treasure" are two of my favorite poems by Rumi, and I could not be more thrilled to collaborate with Mahsa Vahadat on performing these compositions for this Blood Moon Orchestra world premiere. I was highly motivated by the desire to shorten the distance between Iranian and Vietnamese cultures, a desire that led me to explore several extended techniques on the đàn tranh (16-string zither) in order to "extend" my ability to learn and appreciate Persian traditional music and culture.

My Endless Treasure
Poem by Rumi
Music and vocals by Mahsa
Vahdat
Arranged by Nguyen Le

You, the life and the world, the rest of Earth is vain! You, the endless treasure! Who counts loss and gain? My sustenance, my breath! My wine in times of pain! Stranded alone, the turn of stars drags me in the bane! I cut my ties with them all, and I tore up the chain; In hiding no more; yet unseen I stroll amid the plain... I desire no mate, your love has earned its reign! I gave up baits and preys; now All Yours to detain!

Khóm Vi Lau
Poem by Hàn Mặc Tử
Music and vocals by Vân-Ánh Vanessa Võ
Arranged by Nguyen Le

Gió rủ nhau đi chốn cả rồi Nhỏ to, câu chuyện, ô kìa coi Trong lau như có điều chi lạ, Hai bóng lung lay, thấy cọ mài... Chen chúc, bóng trăng dòm thiệt kĩ:

Hai cành lau siết vì yêu thương Cái Nàng năm ngoái không quay lại

Ngôi nghỉ bên lau để vấn vương Âm thầm, gió quyến mùi hương mất

Để khóm vi lau đứng trẻn trơ Từ trước say sưa tình quấn quýt, Lạnh lùng không nói tận bao giờ...



### Gnossienne #3 and Purple Haze Mash-up

Gnossienne No. 3 by Erik Satie "Purple Haze" by Jimi Hendrix Arranged and transposed for monochord by Vân-Ánh Vanessa Võ

When I first looked at the piano score of Erik Satie's Gnossienne No. 3, I immediately wondered how it would sound on dan hau, the Vietnamese monochord. When I started to experiment, I felt energized by the many layers of possibility that this beautiful composition unfolded for me. The first time I listened to "Purple Haze" was in my first year of moving to America (2001). I did not know much about Jimi Hendrix at the time but I felt deeply moved by his brilliant artistry. To mash up an avantgarde minimalist composition against an inventive rock number and place them in conversation through đàn bầu and đàn tranh continues to be one of my favorite creative challenges to date.

86,400

English lyrics by Kev Choice Vietnamese lyrics by Vân-Ánh Vanessa Võ Composed by Vân-Ánh Vanessa Võ Arranged by Vân-Ánh Vanessa Võ and Blood Moon Orchestra

. . .

Inspired by Dr. AnhLan Nguyen, I collaborated with Kev Choice to write "86,400." In her talk, Nguyen posed the question: "Imagine if you have \$86,400 in your bank account every day. Start of the day, you have all \$86,400 to spend, but you have to spend all of it throughout the day because at the end of the day, it will all be gone. You can't put it in the savings bank account. You can't invest it. You must spend it all because at the end of the day, you will lose it all! How would you spend this money?" Indeed, each of us wakes up in the morning with that amount of precious commodity at our disposal, which is the 86,400 seconds in each day that we have. This song is Kev's and my answer to the question.

Cuộc sống rất dễ khi bạn nghe tôi nói Cuộc sống rất khác khi ban biết mim cười

Buổi sáng lấp lánh mỗi ngày ta thức dậy, Mỗi ngày trôi qua đều là một món quà!

Ở trước mắt ta

The sound of time (*Rôi một ngày bạn sẽ nghe thấy tiếng thời gian sôt soat*)

Slips away through your fingers like sand (như những hạt cát khi tràn qua những kẽ ngón tay)

Từng phút giây như hạt mưa rơi trên miếng đất cắn khô.

Tám sáu ngàn bốn trăm giây Mỗi ngày đã trôi qua Tám sáu ngàn bốn trăm giây Thời gian cũng sẽ kéo ban đi

*Giờ trôi chậm* – but the days go fast The sound of time... slipping away ...

Tám sáu ngàn bốn trăm. Mỗi ngày đã trôi qua. Tám sáu ngàn bốn trăm giây. Mỗi ngày đã trôi aua.

Bạn làm gì. Bạn nghĩ gì, Bạn làm gì. Bạn giúp gì

[86,400 seconds in a day Can't let em slip away]

Thời gian đo đếm như đồng đo-lơ, đo-lơ Thời gian phá hết những tính toán của con ngươi-ười

And TIME destroys spe-cu-la-tion of human (Thời gian phá hủy những tính toán của con người)

But it confirms nature của con người. (Nhưng nó — thời gian — khẳng đỉnh bản tính của con người!)

Hãy nhớ rằng Đời bướm đo bằng Bằng khoảng khắc không bằng tháng ngay-ày Mà bướm đã trưởng thành Trở thành đôi cánh, bay – đi, bay – đi, đi xa Rồi tự do bay đi, Bay – đi, bay – đi xa!

Trở thành đôi cánh, bay – đi, bay – đi, đi xa Rồi tự do bay đi, Bay – đi, bay – đi\_\_\_\_\_ BAY ĐI XA!

Every Moment is so crucial I'm thinking what would Huey, what would

Martin, what would Malcolm do I'm wishing that I had the mental discipline of Coltrane

Practice all day, I'm just out here trying to maintain

They say time is money,

I say time is knowledge and wisdom, And science, religion, and rhythm not a

minute

To waste, as I chase life's luxuries trying to keep up with the pace and still find peace

Can't let it slip away

Set intentions, step relentless, towards the vision

Stay committed, no permission, nothing hindering

goals I'm listed, bold prediction, I'm gon get it, My whole existence, so persistent, I know I'm limitless

I know my impact infinite Keep distractions at distances Tryna build like my ancestors did constructing pyramids

My emotional intelligence, motivation, regulation, self awareness

Can't let it slip away

Put it all in perspective It's all about relationships we all connected I walk the intersection Between Struggles and blessings Learning life's lessons You will be uplifted if you listen to the message Every second, is destined, no time like the present
The mind full of jewels like treasures
Can't let them slip away
No ideas, no thoughts, motivate
86,400 seconds in a day
Can't let em slip away

On Sharing A Husband (Kiếp Chồng Chung)

Poem by Hồ Xuân Hương Translated by John Balaban Composed by Vân-Ánh Vanessa Võ Arranged by Vân-Ánh Vanessa Võ and Blood Moon Orchestra

This composition draws its power from a famous poem by the renown feminist Vietnamese poet Hô Xuân Hương. This particular poem conveys a woman's anger toward—and ultimate rejection of—sharing a husband with other wives.

I use *ca trù* singing style for storytelling. Originated in the 12th century in northern Vietnam, *ca trù* features many different shades of vocal timbre, which allows for multiple expressive possibilities.

### Kiếp Chồng Chung

Chém cha cái kiếp lấy chồng chung, Kẻ đắp chăn bông kẻ lạnh lùng. Năm thì mười hoạ chăng hay chớ, Một tháng đôi lần có cũng không. Cố đấm ăn xôi, xôi lại hẩm, Cầm bằng làm mướn, mướn không công. Thân này ví biết dường này nhỉ, Thà trước thôi đành ở vậy xong.

### On Sharing A Husband

Screw the fate that makes you share a man.
One cuddles under cotton blankets; the
other's cold.

Every now and then, well, maybe or maybe not, Once or twice a month, oh, it's like nothing. You try to stick to it like a fly on rice but the rice is rotten.

You slave like the maid, but without pay. If I had known how it would go, I think I would have lived alone.

### The Trouble (Xẩm Lưu Lạc)

Northern Vietnamese Traditional Folk Song (Xẩm)

Translated by Translated by Hùng Nguyễn Arranged by Vân-Ánh Vanessa Võ and Blood Moon Orchestra

Inspired by a traditional folk song (xåm) about the insurmountable injustices women havefaced during wartime, each member of the orchestra takes on a solo section based on a given structure and scale to narrate his/her own view toward "the trouble" that we are facing in the contemporary moment. I wish to offer "The Trouble" as not only a social commentary on the entrenched nature of social oppression but also as a site for collective enunciation and renunciation.

ấy bởi vì đâu, thân lửa bời bời Tôi đành dắt mẹ. Mà để tới nơi. Tới nơi lâm tuyền tôi đã gặp những loài ác thú, hổ hoang.

Người đòi khoét mắt. Lòng thành tôi kính dâng vậy cho nên mù mịt mà tối tăm.

Ői ông trời ơi!

Ác thú hổ hoang.

Người đòi khoét mắt. Lòng thành tôi kính dâng vây cho nên mù mit mà tối tăm.

Bởi thế cho nên, mù mit tối tăm.

Học nghề nghề đàn hát. Kiếm ăn qua ngày tôi đã nuôi mẹ chồng.

Cắt thịt mà cắt tay.

Chàng Trương Viên ơi, chàng đâu có biết. Đến nông nỗi này. Mà sao, thấu cho chăng!

Why, oh why has it come to this, fire raging in my heart

I had to take my mother -in-law to this place Deep in the forest with savage beasts and wild tigers.

People wanted to gouge my eyes.

Sacrificing my eyes to save my mother's eyes; now I am blind and in darkness.

Oh heaven!

Sacrificing my eyes to save my mother's eyes; now I am blind and in darkness.

Playing the strings and singing to survive, and to feed my mother.

Cutting into my flesh, cutting into my fingers O my husband Truong Vien, did you even know that I have succumbed to this misery? Could you even feel my agony?

—Program notes by Vân-Ánh Vanessa Võ

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### FROM THE EXECUTIVE AND ARTISTIC DIRECTOR (cont. from p. 3)

to play a critical role as we come to terms with what we have experienced and move together toward recovery.

I know you join us in looking forward to what lies ahead, to coming together once again to encounter the life-changing experiences that only the live performing arts deliver. We can't wait to share it all with you during the coming year.

Cal Performances is back. Welcome home!

Jeremy Geffen Executive and Artistic Director, Cal Performances

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Proof of vaccination status is required for entrance and masking is mandatory throughout the event. COVID-19 information is updated as necessary; please see Cal Performances' website for the most up-to-date policies and information.

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None of these precautions eliminate the risk of exposure to COVID-19.