

CONTACT: **Louisa Spier**
Cal Performances
(510) 643-6714
lspier@calperformances.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: February 16, 2022
[Press Room](#)



Images of Ted Hearne, *Place*, and Saul Williams are available for download from the Cal Performances [press room](#).

**CAL PERFORMANCES AT UC BERKELEY
PRESENTS THE WEST COAST PREMIERE OF
TED HEARNE AND SAUL WILLIAMS' *PLACE*
A STAGED ORATORIO EXPLORING URBAN GENTRIFICATION
SATURDAY, MARCH 12
AT ZELLERBACH HALL**

Part of Cal Performances' 2021–22 *Illuminations*: “Place and Displacement” series

Berkeley, February 16, 2022 — Cal Performances at UC Berkeley presents the West Coast premiere of **Ted Hearne and Saul Williams' *Place***, a staged, evening-length oratorio created in collaboration with director **Patricia McGregor**, on Saturday, March 12 at 8pm at Zellerbach Hall. *Place*, with music composed by Hearne and a libretto by Williams, explores urban gentrification from several vantage points and perspectives, addressing displacement through the lenses of settler colonialism, police violence, and Afrofuturism. The work was a finalist for the 2021 Pulitzer Prize, and its recording for New Amsterdam Records received two 2021 Grammy nominations. *Place*, which premiered in 2018, is the latest in a series of acclaimed socially and politically engaged dramatic works Hearne has created in recent years, works that include *Sound From the Bench*, a cantata setting texts from Supreme Court oral arguments and inspired by the idea of corporate personhood;

and *The Source*, which draws on the Iraq and Afghanistan War Logs for its libretto. The March 12 presentation will be the first performance of *Place* with a live audience since start of the COVID-19 pandemic. The most recent performance was a video premiere in 2020.

Place was born from Hearne's observations and unease as he witnessed the demographics of his neighborhood of Fort Greene, Brooklyn change rapidly before his eyes. The work is presented as a two-part dialogue between Hearne, a white millennial man grappling with his complicity in oppressive structures, and Williams, a Black poet and writer who challenges Hearne's views and perspectives, puts gentrification in a broader social and cultural context. Hearne describes *Place* as a "patchwork, meant to be heard as a jarring, Sanford Biggers-esque quilt, where the edges make it clear the materials have their own infungible properties, not a neoliberal melting pot where all perspectives can combine to make a pleasant if bland smoothie." The first part of the libretto is a collage of Hearne's own writings and autobiographical reflections, which are placed in conversation with—and overtly challenged by—Williams' text in the second half, which addresses displacement through the lens of history, social justice issues, and critical race theory. The music is scored for six vocalists and an 18-member ensemble, and blends urban R&B and electronic music with acoustic orchestral sonorities. The vocalists for this performance are Steven Bradshaw, Sophia Byrd, Josephine Lee, Isaiah Robinson, Sol Ruiz, and Ayanna Woods. The ensemble includes members of the Berkeley Symphony joined by Taylor Levine, electric guitar; Braylon Lacy, electric bass; RC Williams, keyboard; Rohan Chander, electronics; and Ron Wiltrout, drums.

Ted Hearne and Saul Williams' *Place* is presented as part of Cal Performances' 2021–22 *Illuminations*: "Place and Displacement" series, which explores effects of migration and gentrification on individuals and communities through performances, public programs, and academic encounters. Additional related events will be announced at a later time.

Place was co-commissioned, developed, and co-produced by Beth Morrison Projects (BMP) and the Los Angeles Philharmonic. 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. 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.

Ticket Information

Tickets for *Ted Hearne and Saul Williams' Place* on Saturday, March 12 at 8pm at Zellerbach Hall range from \$32–\$82 (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, visit calperformances.org/discounts.

In order to enter Zellerbach Hall for the performance, patrons must show proof of being fully vaccinated to the maximum extent for which they are eligible. This means having received a booster at least 14 days before the performance if they qualify to have done so. Masks must be worn by all attendees throughout the event. Cal Performances strongly recommends wearing N95, KN95, KF94, or FFP2 masks; if these masks are not available, double masking should be employed. More information about the precautions Cal Performances is taking to protect the health and safety of its audiences, performers, and staff can be found on [Cal Performances' COVID-19 Protocols page](#).

#

CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:

CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS

Saturday, March 12, 8pm

Zellerbach Hall
Bancroft Way at Dana Street
UC Berkeley campus

Theater/New Music

Ted Hearne and Saul Williams' *Place* (West Coast Premiere)

Created by Ted Hearne, Patricia McGregor, and Saul Williams

Ted Hearne, *composer*

Saul Williams and Ted Hearne, *librettists*

Patricia McGregor, *director*

Sanford Biggers and Tim Brown, *scenic designers*

Program: Composer Ted Hearne confronts the inequities of urban gentrification head-on in *Place*, an oratorio created in collaboration with director Patricia McGregor and librettist Saul Williams. The staged, evening-length work—seen here in its West Coast premiere—features six vocalists and an 18-member ensemble that blends the energy of rock, pop, and electronic music with acoustic

orchestral sonorities. The first part of the libretto is a collage of Hearne's own writings and autobiographical reflections, which are placed in conversation with—and overtly challenged by—Williams' text in the second half, which addresses displacement through the lenses of settler colonialism, police violence, and Afrofuturism.

Tickets: \$32–\$82 (prices subject to change). Information about Cal Performances' COVID-19 protocols can be found [here](#).

This performance is part of Cal Performances' *Illuminations: “Place and Displacement”* series

– Cal Performances –